

con el Alma y la Mente Cósmica y se puede proyectar más allá de sí mismo. La disfunción mental puede influenciar la función del cuerpo psíquico y tener un efecto adverso en el cuerpo produciendo enfermedad.

Definindo o Corpo Psíquico

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Sumário

O corpo psíquico é um aspecto imaterial da Consciência em seus aspectos superiores. Propomos que o corpo psíquico é parte dos espectros da consciência e se relaciona com um estado vibratório que entramos quando passamos para além das funções mentais comuns. Semelhante à aura humana, o corpo psíquico é uma manifestação da união da Alma Universal e da alma humana com o corpo físico. O corpo psíquico é nosso mensageiro em comunhão com a Alma e a Mente Cósmica e pode projetar além do eu. A disfunção da mente pode influenciar a função do corpo psíquico e afetar negativamente o corpo, produzindo doenças.

Der psychische Körper

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Zusammenfassung

Der psychische Körper ist ein immaterieller Aspekt des höheren Bewusstseins. Daher ist er Teil des Bewusstseinsspektrums und hat eine höhere Schwingungsfrequenz als unsere gewöhnlichen mentalen Funktionen. Der psychische Körper ist, ähnlich wie die Aura, eine Manifestation der Einheit zwischen der Universalen Seele und der menschlichen Seele im physischen Körper. Wenn wir uns verbinden mit der Universalen Seele und dem kosmischen Geist, ist er unser Botschafter, denn er kann sich über das Selbst hinaus projizieren. Funktionsstörungen in unserem Geist können die Funktionen des psychischen Körpers beeinflussen und nachteilige Folgen wie Krankheiten im Körper hervorrufen.

Introduction

Rosicrucians consider the psychic body to be an immaterial entity composed of energy that transcends ordinary thought and feeling. The *Rosicrucian Glossary* defines the psychic body as “an aggregate of the higher, more sensitive levels of consciousness permeating” humans that forms “a kind of conscious field that corresponds to the physical body.”¹ In *Mansions of the Soul*, H. Spencer Lewis, former Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, states that the psychic body is composed of mind and memory and is associated with, but is distinct from, the Universal Soul.² Furthermore, the psychic body exists for only a short period after a person passes away, known as “transitioning” in the Rosicrucian tradition.

The psychic body is closely related to, but should not be confused with, the psychic centers, psychic senses (e.g., psychic hearing or vision), or higher aspects of the aura. The psychic centers operate in concert with the autonomic nervous system and the corresponding individual glands. The human aura radiates from, and keeps centered on or close to, the physical body. The psychic body can be projected away from the physical body, partakes in conscious awareness, and operates in a more general manner described in this article.

In this essay, we wish to emphasize and elaborate upon the concept that the psychic body is a special aspect of consciousness. We hope our review will help the reader reach an understanding of the psychic body's function and relationships to the body, the soul, and the Cosmic. The "Cosmic" is a Rosicrucian term that refers to the infinite intelligence permeating the entirety of existence and the universe as a harmonious system of natural laws.

Projection and Extracorporeal Manifestations of the Psychic Body

Projection of the self involves the projection of our thoughts and other subjective aspects of awareness to others. Projection beyond the self is a truly mystical experience in which our psychic body can perceive beyond the limits of space and time. Mystical experiences thus differ from "psychic" experiences, which are "of the mind," originating within oneself, often triggered by one's own subconscious or other mental impressions that may tap into information gleaned from extrasensory perception.³ Mystical phenomena are also to be strictly differentiated from the Freudian concept of "projection," in which the person perceives that his/her [usually negative] thoughts and emotions originate in someone other than himself/herself.⁴

One could contend that there are various degrees of evolution among individuals. As individuals become more spiritually evolved, they can become proficient in the projection of the psychic body. According to the *Rosicrucian Manual* (first published in 1918), also written by H. Spencer Lewis, when referring to projections: "Projection is not only the act of releasing at will, on the psychic plane, the psychic body of man with all its consciousness, mind, powers, and functions, but it is also the freeing of the psychic body from the limitations of time and space and other hampering and conflicting conditions." The projection of the psychic body can be viewed as the focalization of consciousness within an all-pervading consciousness, within which time and space are illusions. Thus, the psychic body can have a manifestation separate from the body to which it belongs. In addition, the psychic body may manifest in an energy field that can be viewed by some, as in viewing the aura of a living thing.

Although one can conceive of the psychic body as being "sent" on a mission to examine or interact with some remote happening, person, or thing, one should probably not abstractly separate the psychic body from consciousness as an inclusive concept. Consequently, if there is to be any benefit from such an act of will and intent on the part of the "owner" of the psychic body that has been given such a mission, the psychic body must be able to gather certain impressions of the situation that it has been sent to engage with or examine. As the psychic body is a component or extension of consciousness, information gleaned by the psychic body can be shared with the subconscious or with objective consciousness. Thus, it is obvious that the psychic body must have the possibility of "sensing" the phenomena that it has been dispatched to examine. It is important to understand that just because the psychic body has extracorporeal

capacities, we must not consider that it is in any way a “shadow” or “mirror image” of its bodily owner. It may simply be that the human senses alone are capable of some extended sensory capacity, as psychic senses, which can operate remotely and make use of some perception-gathering system that is not currently well known or defined by us. The subjective or objective consciousness may interpret the higher rates of vibrations conveyed by the psychic body in familiar terms such as sensory stimuli.

In addition, the psychic body may account for the consciousness and memory that some individuals experience as out-of-body and near-death phenomena. For example, after cardiac arrest, when the brain is non-functional, restored patients occasionally have the memory of hovering above the doctors and nurses performing the resuscitation and of the ethereal “white light” and peace that draws them to it.⁵ There is a remarkable similarity to near-death experiences, with over 90 percent of cases reporting a sense of peacefulness.⁶⁻⁸ Such visual memories have even been experienced by blind persons.⁹ This could only be possible if a consciousness could extend beyond the body and self and then return after restoration of circulation and cerebral function. Indeed, AMORC maintains that the Universal Soul (or one Soul) and the human soul unite with the physical body during the first breath at birth and thereby form the psychic body. At the time of transition, initiated at the last breath, it is further maintained that the human soul begins its ascent into the Cosmic or Divine, while the psychic body gradually disintegrates. This sentiment is reflected in the Buddhist and ancient Egyptian traditions of leaving the body undisturbed for various amounts of time (up to 3 or more days) before preparing the body for burial.^{10,11}

Similarly, out-of-body experiences involve a sensation of floating outside of one’s body, often associated with sleep states, typically light sleep. The mechanism/origin of such experiences has been debated, but it is agreed that they do not depend upon the ordinary senses.¹²

The Psyche and Consciousness

The ancient Greek word for soul was “psyche.” Thus, from ancient times the psychic aspects of Man have been considered to be immaterial and distinct from the physical body. Since the soul is thought to have a divine origin, the psychic aspects of our being are linked to the Divine or the Cosmic. As stated in the text *Rosicrucian Questions and Answers* prepared under the supervision of Imperator Christian Bernard, “all human souls, whether incarnated or not, come originally from the Universal Soul.”¹³

However, also dating to ancient times, “psyche” has been considered to be the “mind,” in all its aspects, from simple consciousness to higher levels of mindfulness, including awareness of self and metacognition. Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, first articulated the concept that the mind/intelligence was separate from but linked to the soul, with the One being the third foundational element of human existence.¹⁴ (We suggest that, by “the One,” he is referring to the manifestation of either a “Supreme Being” or a divine principle, perhaps even the Vital Life Force.) The concept of the mind has since, in general, come to be conceptually separate from, even if somehow linked to, the soul.

Consciousness is part of what we consider to be “the mind.” Dualists argue that the mind is not the same as the brain, as the mind does not have a physical structure or physical attributes. However, much of consciousness is dependent on brain function, as, for example many mental functions (e.g., memory, comprehension of language, emotion, perception of various modalities) are profoundly altered by changes in brain structure or function. Some of these alterations are transient, e.g., the effects of epileptic seizures or anesthetic effects, while some are long-lasting or permanent, e.g., caused by stroke or trauma. Conversely, many mental functions, e.g., mental imagery and visual discrimination, have distinct brain networks as shown by functional magnetic resonance imaging.^{15,16} So, although the mind in itself is immaterial, it is a non-physical attribute of the brain, even if this does not negate the possibility of other mental functions that cannot be readily assessed.

Consciousness, in the medical sense, is absent when the person is in a coma, i.e., unconscious. Thus, brain function is necessary for the individual to be conscious; we have to be alive to be conscious. As Epicurus (341-271 BCE), the Roman philosopher, stated, “Where we are, death is not yet, and when death comes, there we are not.”¹⁷ “We,” thus recognized as personhood, are dependent on the integrity of brain function (to produce a conscious or potentially conscious state). Thus, if the psychic body is a component of consciousness, it cannot exist or function when brain function is totally and permanently lost. As the psychic body exists in a form of energy that is largely extracorporeal, it may persist for a finite time after death of the individual or brain death. This might account for reports of persons experiencing visits by the deceased. Of course, this does not preclude that other components of the person, e.g., the soul and soul personality, continue to exist.

How can we rationalize these material and immaterial concepts? How can something that is divine and immaterial be dependent on the function of a structural entity, namely the brain, an organ of the body? How can the mind deal with ordinary brain functions, such as perceptions, memory, and language that are, in many aspects, person-specific, and yet be part of the Universal Mind?

A Closer Look at the Mind and the Body

René Descartes considered the mind and the body (including the brain) to be completely separate from each other.¹⁸ We now know that this is either incorrect or, at best, overly simplistic. If we accept that “everything is energy” or exists in various vibratory states, and that there are indistinct boundaries between self and non-self and even within the various psychic centers or spectra that we consider to be within the body, then we must accept continuity between the concepts of mind and body. A common Rosicrucian aphorism states that “thoughts are things,” which suggests that there are no distinct boundaries between the seemingly immaterial products of the mind and physical consequences. This works both ways. For example, the vibrations of music can have a profound effect on our mental and spiritual state. At the lowest level of the body there is continuity with others who preceded “us” in the form of our genetic makeup or DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). Similarly, at the “top end,” there is a continuity of mental activity with the Cosmic Mind. As the *Rosicrucian Manual* states: “The true mystic does not draw a distinction between the physical, or material, and the divine insofar as *essence* and *source* are concerned.”¹⁹

Some insights into the organic connection of the psychic body with brain function have been provided by Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, a neuroscientist who suffered a hemorrhage into her dominant, left cerebral hemisphere.²⁰ With this stroke, Dr. Taylor lost concepts of time and felt united with the universe. When the linear, language-dominant left hemisphere was rendered temporarily dysfunctional, she felt liberated and her mind perceived at least some of the properties attributed to the psychic body. This suggests that to experience the messages imparted by the psychic body, the dominant left hemisphere has to cease directing our thinking. Perhaps this is what happens in meditation and psychic projection. This does not mean that the right hemisphere represents the psychic body, only that it may perceive what the psychic body is telling us when the “dominant hemisphere” is quietened.

The Psychic Body: Its Conceptual Origins and Evolution

The psychic body forms bridges between body, mind, and “everything else.” We propose that the psychic body arises out of consciousness, in all its dimensions and aspects. This concept overcomes Cartesian duality and allows for integration of the person with the immaterial mind/consciousness. It also allows for evolution in the sense that consciousness can deal with ordinary awareness, processing of information, integrating emotions, drives and motives, and generating output responses, yet it is capable of achieving higher levels, including enlightenment or integration with the Cosmic. While we offer this concept as a hypothesis rather than a proven theory, it is compatible with the human mind being capable conceiving of the abstract, which goes beyond our ordinary senses. The example of the “theory of mind,” in which one is aware of the thoughts and perspectives of others, demonstrates that humans are capable of extending their minds to perceive perceptions that have their origin outside their immediate, personal body. That this capacity is a property of the normal human brain/mind is reflected in the observation that children with various neurodevelopmental disorders may not be able to appreciate the thoughts and feelings of others.²¹

The mind can be viewed as having hierarchical organization, arising out of brain activity, but also extending beyond the confines of the body to external awareness. Some have considered a Darwinian type of evolution of the mind/psychic body, reaching its highest development in humans, and evolving over time and affected by experience and conduct.²²⁻²⁴ According to MacLean, who coined the term “the triune brain,” the lowest level is the reptilian brain, in which instinctive activity predominates.²⁵ Next is the “paleomammalian complex,” which is really the limbic system, responsible for emotion, aspects of memory and motivation, reproduction, and parenting behavior. The most advanced brain component is the neomammalian brain, which comprises the neocortex, evolved to its greatest extent in humans and possibly whales, including species of dolphins, and porpoises. This rough, hierarchical concept, although somewhat flawed, captures a theoretical hierarchy of evolutionary progression through species, and also reveals the baser aspects of brain function. However, it is the evolution of function and functional integration that provides the truly highest level of personal development of brain function, out of which the expression of mind emerges. One should not think, however, that the hierarchical levels are functionally distinct and totally separate from one another. For example, the appreciation of a beautiful work of art triggers both the neocortex and the limbic system, so that the intellectual appreciation is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure or enjoyment. It is possible

to modulate and integrate the lower levels with higher levels of function. In this way, impetus, motivation, and emotion from the limbic system can be harnessed to drive abstract concepts, e.g., altruism. Also, habits or habitual behavior can be transferred from cognitive awareness to areas of subconsciousness, including procedural memory that can function to some extent automatically.

Consciousness comprises both the synchronous appreciation of contemporaneous activity, e.g., the perception of something, as well as recall of relevant memories and, secondly, also the awareness of self. These aspects are also interconnected and give a “personal” quality to our awareness. The formulation of thought, including abstract and mystical thinking, of course, invokes the higher aspects of conscious mental activity. However, consciousness also allows us to achieve mystical experiences, including enlightenment. As Ralph M. Lewis, former Emperor of AMORC, has written: “Consciousness reaches beyond objectivity, beyond our ordinary daily world of mortal existence. Consciousness goes far beyond the mental world, far beyond the realm of thought, of contemplation and reason.”²⁶ Thus, consciousness includes ordinary perceptions, thought, and metacognition, but also mystical experiences, including projection of the self, and it goes beyond the self.

Rosicrucians view the interconnected hierarchy of consciousness as starting with an “objective consciousness” with perceptions, and then a “subjective consciousness” handling formulations and cognitive function. There is also a “subconscious,” which links other aspects of consciousness, harmonizes our psychic faculties, and helps to govern behavior, without necessarily being perceived. Then there is the mystical “Cosmic Consciousness” that links our minds with the Universal Mind in various degrees of enlightenment. As Christian Bernard, the current Emperor of AMORC, writes in his recent book *Rosicrucian Reflections*, these three phases of consciousness form a unity in human beings and should not be viewed as being distinct and separate from each other.²⁷

These concepts are in some specific schools within the world religions. For example, Japanese Soka Gakkai Buddhist philosophy states that there are nine levels of consciousness.²⁸ The first six include aspects of perception and integrate these into thought and decision-making by which we conduct our day-to-day lives. The seventh level is directed more towards apperception and personal identity, recognizing that the self is distinct from others and includes a sense of morality, or right and wrong. The eighth level is referred to as both the storehouse of consciousness, including karma, and grows with us. It extends beyond the self and probably accounts for “near death experiences”; to some extent, it reflects the self but is also linked to others and has interconnectedness with all things. The ninth level is true enlightenment or “fundamentally pure consciousness.”

As an analogy, we propose that the psychic body and soul personality are equivalent to the eighth level of Soka Gakkai Buddhist consciousness. (“Soul personality” is a Rosicrucian term that refers to one’s response to the Universal Soul. It is an image and reflection of the object, the perfect Universal Soul, yet it also relates to individual characteristics that make each person unique. As the human matures or evolves, the soul personality comes to be an increasingly clear reflection of the Universal Soul.)

As is expressed in this philosophy, the levels of consciousness are integrated and should not be thought of as totally discrete concepts.

Theoretical physics also offers insights into the generation of consciousness. Philosopher Roger Penrose proposes that consciousness arises from mental activity that is beyond computational processes of neuronal activity, i.e., it is something that artificial intelligence (AI) could not produce.²⁹ Penrose and his colleagues propose that quantum mechanics allows for nonlinear phenomena to occur at submicroscopic levels in the brain that could lead to consciousness, free will, and entanglement of all things, extending beyond the person. While highly theoretical, the theories of Penrose^{29,30} and Dr. Stuart Hameroff³¹ have features that are compatible with Rosicrucian and Buddhist philosophies.

Table 1 attempts to relate the various conscious levels to terms used by Rosicrucians, Buddhists, physicists, and those with a multidimensional approach.

Table 1

Entity	Rosicrucian Term	Soka Gakkai Buddhist Term	Theoretical Physics	Multidimensional Model Term
Mind	Consciousness and the Subconscious	First 7 levels of Consciousness	Nonlinear extension of brain activity	Lower level of “internal scaffolding” of the etheric body and the body
Psychic body	Psychic body/Soul personality	8 th level of Consciousness	Nonlinear extension of the Mind/Consciousness	Interwoven aspect of Etheric Body with the body/mind
Linking with the Universal Soul	Enlightenment/ Christ or Cosmic Consciousness/ The Greater Light	9 th level of Consciousness	Further nonlinear extension of consciousness	Highest level of scaffolding of etheric body and mind

Relationship of Terms and Conscious Levels

Disease

Rosicrucian teachings state that humans have both a physical and a psychic body and that the latter has interactions with the autonomic nervous system. Furthermore, “the cause of most illnesses is to be found in the psychic body,” according to Rosicrucian teachings.

The human mind, integrated with the psychic body, is also subject to disease. Disease, according to Rosicrucian teachings, often arises because of an imbalance or disharmony. This is in keeping with psychopathologic theory that various mind disorders relate to a problem with integration of the various components of the mind.³² This is due to a failure of the mind to modulate and limit its various functions. In Rosicrucian terms, this could be a failure to communicate with the Master Within or the loss of behavior reflective of self-mastery. (“Master Within” refers to the Divine Intelligence within each human. One of its expressions is conscience.) Many

Rosicrucians contend that the optimal state of equilibrium is happiness, which depends on the collective wisdom of the mind, which includes contributions from the psychic body, in communication with the Master Within.³³ Indeed, full awareness, Illumination, allows for communication of all human components, a conscious perception from all sources, including the psychic body, with the Master Within.

Loss of integration of all aspects of the body-mind may arise due to biochemical imbalances, physical injury, or other causes. Dysfunction of the mind-brain-psychic body can affect health in several dimensions or aspects. At the level of the mind, various mental disorders, ranging from uncontrolled fear, anxiety, or depression, arise in the limbic areas of the brain. Ineffective filtering and control at the metacognitive level may produce more complex disorders, such as are seen in the production of hallucinations and delusions in certain mental illnesses and brain disorders.

Speculatively, as in Soka Gakkai Buddhist philosophy mentioned earlier, this may be equivalent to a conflict within the seventh level of consciousness, in which there is poor communication with the lower levels of consciousness and with level eight.

The mind-body connection allows the dysfunction of the psychic body to produce various physical illnesses. These can occur, for example, through the altered function of the autonomic nervous system and immunological controls. The central nervous system is intimately involved with regulation of the immune system and balance of body functions, or homeostasis. The autonomic system can produce illness through stress hormones, especially the sympathetic nervous system and its cortisol secretion. The sympathetic nervous system-mediated release of catecholamines (epinephrine and norepinephrine) can also ameliorate the inflammatory response in joints in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.^{34,35} Sustained high blood pressure, altered gastric and bowel function, asthma, and even sudden heart failure or cardiac arrest from “takotsubo cardiomyopathy,” or the “broken heart syndrome,” are examples.³⁶⁻³⁸ The latter condition occurs after repeated stress and is thought to relate to increased secretion of catecholamines.³³ Dysfunction of the immune system through increased cortisol secretion, in turn regulated by the autonomic nervous system, can lead to reduced defenses to infection or surveillance for mitotic errors in cell division that can result in cancer.³⁹

Thus, the concepts of disease as related to dysfunction of the psychic body and its relation to the autonomic nervous system are in keeping with Rosicrucian teachings. Part of self-mastery is sustained harmony with the body, self, and environment, with a balanced wholeness that constitutes health. It should be noted that the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC’s recommendations are that healing methods are to be carried out in concert with standard medical therapy and are not meant to replace the latter. It should be acknowledged that when disease exceeds certain limits, medical help is needed. Also, some disorders are so overwhelming and sudden that only medical attention can deal with them – and some of these are beyond medical help.

Conclusion

The psychic body can be regarded as pure energy, an aspect of consciousness that is related to the functions of the brain and the body. The psychic body communicates with the soul and

extends beyond the body to allow for memory and interaction beyond the proximate functions of our nervous system. As Rosicrucians and evolving human beings, we strive to enhance our use of and communication with the psychic body to allow for closer ties with the soul and the Cosmic. It is there to serve us and to allow us to extend our consciousness. Also our health can be aided by understanding the mind-body's relation to the psychic body in regards to various diseases.

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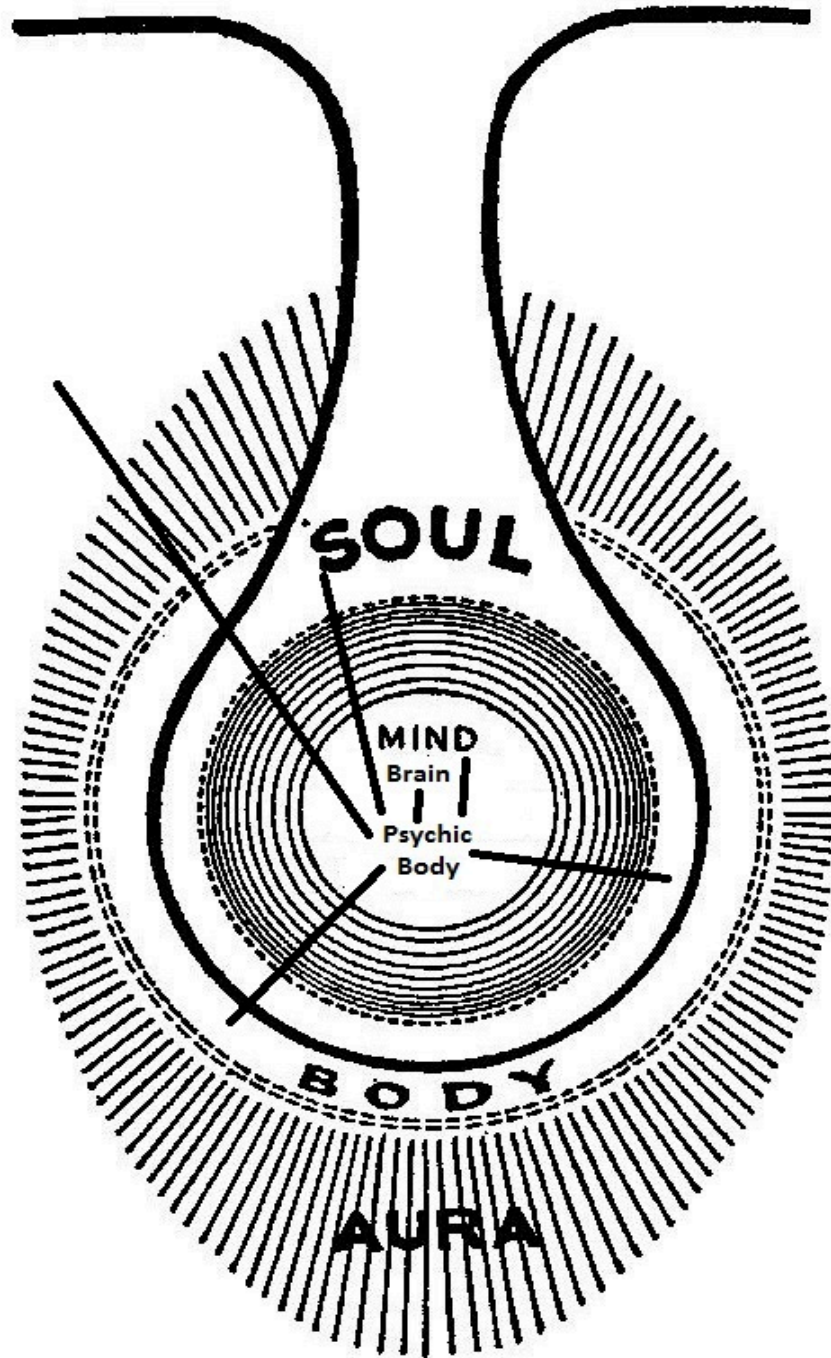


Fig. 1. The relationship of the psychic body to the Soul (the Universal Soul), the mind, the body, and extrapersonal space (note the lines symbolizing the interconnections with the psychic body; the line at about 10:00 o'clock represents the projection to the world outside of our body). (Modified from *Mansions of the Soul* by H. Spencer Lewis, p. 190.)