

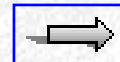
Hidden Forces

Exciting Revelations About The Supernatural

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Introduction

Those who have attended a séance and actually experienced the moving of a glass seemingly of its own accord, as it spells out a message by moving towards specific letters placed around a table, usually find this quite a disturbing experience. What is more, they generally remain convinced that no one present was exercising undue physical pressure and thereby causing the glass to move. Hidden forces must have been at work.

If this is indeed so - and if, likewise, the experiments carried out by serious researchers, during which tables were seen to levitate without being lifted by anyone in any way, are genuine - then there may indeed be mysterious forces that perhaps regularly shape our lives in all sorts of different ways without us being aware of it.

Might it even be possible for some to harness such power so that they can wage wars psychically, as it is thought that a few gifted Soviets did at one time in order to gain access to secret information? Can mass hysteria perhaps be produced in a similar way, enabling such evil-mongers as Hitler to gain widespread influence? What sort of force is it that has enabled some of the greatest mediums of all time to perform such horrific tricks as the stopping of the beating of a frog's heart simply by staring at it intently? Is it actually possible to create an object, or even a live creature, straight out of the ether, as it were? Some people even claim to be able to see the aura around you that is quite invisible to ordinary folk but which apparently reveals an enormous amount, by virtue of its colour and intensity, about your health and state of mind. Kirlean photography can produce an image of the aura; but a few remarkable individuals say they can see it with the naked eye. Further astonishing phenomena are about to be revealed ...



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Legions Of Hell

The Nazi Party's rise to power has often been attributed to occult practice. Adolf Hitler himself was undoubtedly fascinated by the 'black arts': But how and why did this somewhat bizarre association develop? In the late summer of 1940, as the Battle of Britain was drawing to its close, Toby O'Brien, press secretary to Winston Churchill, suddenly had a flash of inspiration. He was sitting in his bath when the words of a coarse comic song began to form, 'unbidden', in his mind. When he repeated his composition over lunch later that day to a group of high-ranking British officers in Whitehall, they were convulsed with mirth. Some of them wrote it down, while others memorised it. Within weeks, it had filtered through the ranks and was on the lips of squadron leaders, squaddies and admirals alike. Sung to the tune of Colonel Bogey, it went:

'Hitler, he only had one ball; Göring had two but very small. Himmler was very similar, But poor old Goebbels Had no balls at all.'

Toby O'Brien certainly did not believe his composition was accurate: precious little was known about the sexual endowments or habits of the Führer. But when Russian military surgeons examined Hitler's charred remains in the Berlin bunker in May 1945, they discovered that Hitler was indeed monorchid - that is, he possessed but one testicle. It was a bizarre and extreme coincidence.

What is more, this defect may indeed have had a profound significance for the development of Hitler's occult ideas. According to Dr Walter Stein, whose observations on personal conversations with Hitler in Vienna formed the basis of Trevor Ravenscroft's *The Spear of Destiny*, Hitler had formed, as early as 1912, a passion for the music of Richard Wagner - particularly for *Parsifal*, which praised Teutonic knighthood and exalted the Aryan race. Soon, Hitler discovered Wagner's source: the medieval poetry of Wolfram von Eschenbach. In fact, it was through buying a copy of Eschenbach's *Parsival* that had once belonged to Hitler that Stein met him. Dr Stein was impressed by the meticulousness of the marginal notes, though he was simultaneously appalled by the pathological race-hatred that they showed. Among them, there appeared numerous references to the character Klingsor, whom Hitler apparently identified with the notorious ninth-century tyrant, Landulph II of Capua.

Landulph's avaricious grasping for power had led him to study the black arts, and it was for these practices that he was excommunicated in AD 875. But one other fact must have given Hitler a sense of identity with the ninth-century Führer. Landulph seems to have been either partly or totally castrated: indeed, Eschenbach described him as 'the man who was smooth between the legs.'

We know that Hitler was easily influenced as a youth, avidly soaking up the ideas of those - Wagner and Nietzsche, for instance - who impressed him. Landulph's power mania and the unfortunate anatomical similarity to himself must have struck the young Adolf, and there is reason to suspect that Landulph's black magic did so, too. There is also evidence that Hitler was impressed by magical symbolism from the beginning of his political career. Pagan rites

Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, German pseudo-intellectual circles had been obsessed with a movement compounded of pagan ritual and notions of Nordic purity, invented by a man named Guido von List. Born in 1848, the son of a rich trader in leather goods and boots - pointers, perhaps, to things to come - von List had renounced his Catholicism when he was 14 with a solemn oath that he would one day build a temple to Woden (or Odin), the war god of Scandinavian mythology. By the 1870s, von List had a sizeable group of followers, dedicated to observing pagan feasts at the solstices and equinoxes. In 1875, they attracted attention to themselves by worshipping the Sun as Baldur, the Nordic god, slain in battle, who rose from the dead. The rite was held on a hilltop near Vienna, and concluded with von List burying eight wine bottles that were carefully laid out in the shape of a swastika.

The swastika had been a widespread symbol of good fortune from earliest times and among all nations: it had been found on Chinese, Mongolian and American Indian artifacts, was used by the ancient Greeks as a pottery decoration, and by medieval architects as a border design for stained glass windows. (Its name in Middle English, *fylfot*, means 'fill foot', since it was a device used for 'filling the foot' of windows.) 'Swastika' stems from the Sanskrit *Su asti*, which means, literally translated, 'Good, he is.' In fact, the swastika, with its arms trailing as if the pattern were spinning clockwise, symbolised nothing more sinister than the Sun and the power of light.

In the 1920s, when the National Socialist Movement was still in its infancy, Hitler asked for designs to be submitted for an easily recognisable symbol, akin to the hammer and sickle of the Russian Communists. Friedrich Krohn, a dentist who was also an occultist, suggested a swastika on a white disc with a red background - red for blood and the social ideal, white for nationalism and purity of race, and the swastika for 'the struggle for victory of Aryan man.'

Hitler was delighted but for one detail - he insisted that the traditional 'right-handed' swastika was to be reversed to form what the writer Francis King terms 'an evocation of evil, spiritual devolution and black magic'.

Rituals and robes

Dr Krohn fully realised Hitler's intention in changing the ancient sign, for he was a member of the Germanenorden - German Order - which, with the Thule Society, had taken over where von List's rather amateurish organisation had left off in the years before the First World War. Both societies, which eventually became almost interchangeable in ideas and even membership, were originally composed of the German officer class and professions, who were convinced of a massive international Jewish conspiracy, backed up by occult practices. To counter this, they established their own Nordic occult-based Freemasonry, complete with elaborate rituals and robes, Viking helmets and swords.

More importantly, the Thule Society - which took its name from the fabled land of Ultima Thule, a sort of paradise on Earth - began to recruit new members from the lower and working classes who were used to disseminate anti-Semitic material in its various newspapers. One of these, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, eventually became the official journal of the Nazi Party.

There is no doubt that Hitler, both in his down-and-out days in Vienna and later, as leader of the rising Nazi Party in the 1920s, was constantly fascinated by fringe occult theories. One of these was the lunatic 'World Ice Theory', a complicated set of ideas propagated by an Austrian engineer named H. Hrbiger (1860-1931). He held that the planets had been created by the collision of stars, such as our Sun, with huge chunks of ice. Hrbiger also held that his system enabled him to forecast the weather accurately. Some occult writers, notably Pauwels and Bergier in their *Dawn of Magic*, have even suggested that Hrbiger's forecasts influenced Hitler's disastrous Russian campaign.

Latterly, Hitler also became obsessed with map dowsing - swinging a pendulum over a map to find the whereabouts of hidden objects. The topic was brought to the attention of Hitler's aides by an architect named Ludwig Straniak, yet another amateur occultist, who demonstrated to German naval officers his apparent ability to pinpoint the whereabouts of their ships at sea, simply by dangling a pendulum over an admiralty chart. They were particularly impressed when he succeeded in locating the pocket battleship *Prinz Eugen*, at that time on a secret mission.

Hitler's involvement with astrology, and prediction in general, has been much debated. It has even been claimed that he had powers of precognition, which allowed him to foresee the lack of opposition to his invasions of Austria and Czechoslovakia. But Hitler's real talent was as a masterly judge of the European political mood - an intuition that deserted him when he decided to invade Poland in 1939.

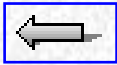
Josef Goebbels, propaganda minister, meanwhile, used astrology cleverly but cynically - quoting Nostradamus, for instance, in support of Nazi domination. Hitler and, in particular, SS chief Himmler, took astrology seriously. In view of this varied preoccupation with the occult, many have suggested that, among high-ranking Nazis, Hitler and Himmler at least were in a real sense black magicians. However, one great question confronts those who claim this. Why, when the Nazis had risen to power, were so many occult writings and practices suddenly so rigorously stamped upon?

In 1934, a first move was made when the Berlin police issued a ban on all forms of fortune-telling, from fairground palmists to society astrologers. That the instructions came from central headquarters is certain, and the officers who carried out the orders were very confused as to the intention behind them. Next came a general suppression of all occult groups, even - to the chagrin and surprise of members - the German Order and the Thule Society. Both contained many Nazis, of course, but even for these there was no exemption. For instance, Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, whose writings inspired much of the German racial mystique, and who boasted that by introducing Hitler to occult groups he had been his guru, was told that he must not publish occult works in future.

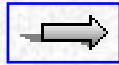
With the sole exceptions of inner party members, such as certain of Himmler's personal SS aides, occultists of all shades had been done away with or driven underground in German-occupied countries by 1940.

Quite simply, Nazi Germany had to trample down 'freelance' occultists, because thereby it would be

sure to subdue potential opposition to its regime. There was, in fact, only one occult movement permissible under the Third Reich, and it was hidden deep in its coils. It was led by the supreme magus, Adolf Hitler, and his acolyte, Heinrich Himmler - both of them known to have been powerful black magicians.



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A Psychic Revolution

Telepathic commands and even world domination through mind control.' who would have dreamt that psychical experimentation in the USSR was originally inspired by nothing more innocent than circus stunts? 'Human intelligence has discovered much in nature that was hidden,' wrote Lenin, 'and it will discover much more, thus strengthening its domination over her.' Although, in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, he did his best to stamp out ancient superstitions, before his death in 1924 the young Soviet Union had become the first country to provide official support for research into nature's most baffling area - later to be called parapsychology.

Half-a-century later, it was clear that Soviet scientists had learned a good deal about this supposedly hidden branch of knowledge, and were ready to put their discoveries to good use. But there is a very sinister ring to some of their terminology - 'distant influence', 'mental suggestion' and 'transfer of motor impulses', for instance - indicating a desire to make people act and think according to instructions of which they are not consciously aware. Indeed, the theme of domination, as forecast by Lenin, runs through much Soviet work in parapsychology, and little imagination is needed to speculate on the uses to which such practices, were possibly put.

Soviet interest in psychic matters was not initially inspired by Lenin, nor even by a scientist, but by a circus performer, Vladimir Durov, one of the most skilful animal trainers of all time. His animals, especially his dogs, delighted audiences with their well-rehearsed tricks. Although these were produced not by telepathy but by means of thorough training and the use of signals from an ultrasonic whistle, Durov was convinced that he could make direct mind-to-mind contact with his performers and persuade them to carry out complex tasks.

'Suppose', he said, 'we have the following task: to suggest that the dog go to a table and fetch a book lying upon it.-..., I take his head between my hands, as if I am symbolically inculcating in him the thought that he is entirely in my power... I fix my eyes upon his...' Durov would then visualise the exact nature of the task to be performed, adding: 'I fix into his brain what I just before fixed in my own. I mentally put before him the part of the floor leading to the table, then the leg of the table, then the tablecloth, and finally the book.' Then, on the mental command, the dog would rush off like an automaton, leap on to the table and seize the book in its teeth.

After watching Durov and his dogs perform at a circus, one of the country's leading neuropathologists, Academician Vladimir Bekhterev (1857-1927), a colleague of the world-renowned physiologist Ivan Pavlov, decided to put his claims to the test in his laboratory. After several demonstrations, which involved a variety of different dogs, Bekhterev became satisfied that animal behaviour could indeed be influenced by thought suggestion, even when dog and trainer were out of sight of each other. Some of the tests, carried out in Durov's absence, involved tasks known only to Bekhterev himself, however; and he only achieved limited success with his own dog.

Inconclusive as it was, this work with Durov encouraged Bekhterev to take telepathy seriously. On becoming head of the Brain Research Institute at Leningrad University, he founded a Commission for the Study of Mental Suggestion in 1922 and now set to work - not with dogs, but with humans as subjects. In one series of experiments, successful attempts were made to send visual images to a subject who was told to write or draw whatever came into her mind. An extract from the sender's notes reads:

`Transmitted: triangle with a circle inside it. The subject completes the task [draws the target] at once.
Transmitted: a simple pencil drawing of an engine. The percipient carries out the task precisely, and goes over the contour of the engine several times.' Members of the Commission then tried concentrating on objects instead of drawings, and found that, while subjects rarely identified the object itself, they often picked up particular features of it, and even the sender's mental associations with it. A subject whose target was a block of cut glass, for instance, reported `reflections in water - sugar loaf - snowy summit - iceberg, ice floes in the north illuminated by the sun - rays are broken up.' In another experiment, the sender stared at a framed portrait of a woman and noticed a reflection on its glass surface from a light bulb in the shape of the letter N. `Napoleon - the letter N flashed by,' he said to his assistant. A minute later, the subject, who was out of earshot, announced: `I see either Napoleon or Vespasian.' Altogether, the Commission ran 269 experiments in transmission of objects or images, and reported that no less than 134 were wholly or partly successful.

At the 1924 Congress of Psychoneurology, delegates were to be given a spontaneous demonstration of telepathic control in action. On his way to the meeting, Professor K. I. Platonov happened to meet one of his patients, whom he asked to come along without telling her why. In full view of the audience, Platonov put the girl to sleep in a matter of seconds by mental suggestion from behind a blackboard, and then woke her by the same method. Afterwards, the girl asked him: `Why did you invite me to the Congress? I don't understand. What happened to me? I slept, but I don't know why....' Platonov later revealed that this subject was so suggestible that he could send her to sleep even while she was dancing a waltz.

His experiment was repeated independently, and at almost the same time, by a group of researchers at the University of Kharkov, where psychologist Dr K. D. Kotkov reported that a series of about 30 experiments, held over a two-month period and designed to influence the behaviour of a girl student, were all successful. He described exactly how he did it. He would sit quietly and mentally murmur the words of suggestion to his subject. Then he would visualise her doing what he wished, and finally he would strongly wish her to do so. (This last stage was, he felt, the most important.) In this way, he could not only send the girl to sleep and wake her up, but even summon her to the laboratory. When asked why she had turned up, the bewildered girl replied: `I don't know. I just did. I wanted to come.' The most alarming aspect of this early example of behaviour control was that at no time was the girl aware of what was happening. `When are the experiments about which you warned me going to start?' she kept asking - even after they had been carried out.

In addition to its own research, Bekhterev's Commission studied reports of spontaneous telepathy, which the Revolution had not managed to suppress totally from members of the public. One well-documented case concerned a student who had seen a bright light on his bedroom wall `transforming itself into the

clear head of a young lady.' He recognised her as his friend Nadezhda. After smiling at me,' he reported, 'she spoke a sentence of which I only managed to catch the last word - "decay". Then the girl's image seemed to melt into the wall and disappear.' The student wrote out an account of his experience on the same day, and six days later he learned that Nadezhda had died within minutes of his vision. Moreover, her mother testified that the girl's last words, addressed specifically to the boy, had been: 'There is neither dust nor decay.'

Impressed by the mounting evidence for telepathic phenomena, the 1924 Congress resolved that an investigation on strictly scientific lines was called for. The man who was to devote his life to doing this was one of Bekhterev's students, Leonid I. Vasiliev (1891-1966). He began his career knowing that telepathy existed because he had experienced it himself. When he was 12, he had nearly drowned after falling into a river. He begged his guardians not to tell his parents, who were 800 miles (1,300 kilometres) away; but as soon as his mother came home, she retold the whole story, right down to the detail of his new white cap being swept away by the current. She had dreamed the whole episode at the time.

Despite this personal experience, Vasiliev embarked objectively on his research into telepathy. He assumed there must be some physical explanation for it; and although he never found one, he did discover a number of practical ways in which telepathy can be made to work. In 1926, he carried out a series of experiments in a Leningrad hospital. These were designed to convey mental suggestions to a hypnotised subject, and comprised trivial actions such as raising a certain arm or leg, or scratching the nose. He was wholly or partly successful 16 times out of 19. Later, after repeating the experiment, he declared that both conscious and unconscious movements of a human body could be caused by mental suggestion alone.

Remote control

Vasiliev also found that it was possible to send somebody to sleep or wake them up by a kind of mental remote control, even at distances of up to 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometres). Moreover, he found that screening the sender inside a Faraday cage (through which almost no form of electromagnetic radiation can pass) had no appreciable effect on his success rate. But Vasiliev failed in his main aim, to establish a physical basis for telepathy. His greatest achievement was to provide continuity between the pioneer days of the 1920s and the sudden renaissance of Soviet psi research that began after Khrushchev's historic denunciation of Stalinism in 1956. Little is known about Vasiliev's research over the latter part of his life, although in 1940, a few months before the siege of Leningrad, he was carrying out experiments in his laboratory that showed how the muscles of an insect's intestines respond to electrical impulses emitted from contracting human muscles. Such work might not seem a vital part of the Russian war effort, yet it appears that Vasiliev was still determined to find physiological evidence for 'brain power' transference.

1940 also saw none other than Joseph Stalin himself acting as psychical researcher for a short while, after showing an interest in one of the country's most popular stage performers, telepathist Wolf

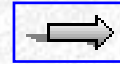
Messing. According to Messing's story, as published in the Soviet press (and never officially denied), Stalin put the telepathist's power of mind control to the test by having him persuade a bank clerk that a blank piece of paper was a cheque for 100,000 roubles. He then walked unchallenged through the dictator's own security guards after hypnotising them into thinking that he was secret police chief, Lavrenti Beria. If his report is true, Messing, who died in the early 1970s, could have been the greatest spy of all time.

However, despite Messing's undoubted popularity, and Stalin's private views on the subject, telepathy was defined in the 1956 Great Soviet Encyclopedia as 'an anti-social, idealist fiction about man's supernatural power to perceive phenomena which, considering the time and place, cannot be perceived.' Vasiliev's whole life had apparently been spent in vain, at least as far as public recognition was concerned. Yet, after a typically sudden policy reversal by the Soviet authorities, Vasiliev was allowed to re-enter the field of parapsychology, with the full backing of the government, in 1960. The specific task of his so-called Laboratory of Aero-ions and Electromagnetic Waves at Leningrad University (where he had by then become head of the physiology department) was 'to study the phenomena of telepathy.' He must have felt his life had come full circle after 40 years.

Czech parapsychologist Milan Ryzl claimed that Vasiliev was almost certainly engaged in secret work, and it seems plausible that it was the prospect of discovering the mechanism of telepathy that kept research funds flowing in. If indeed they had discovered it, the Soviet authorities would have had in their power a means of domination of which even Lenin probably never dreamed.



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The Experimenter Effect

Can the scientist remain detached from the phenomena he studies? Or is he inevitably so bound up with them that he actually creates many of the effects that he observes?

A disturbing idea has gained currency in certain scientific circles in recent years, and it is one that conflicts completely with the basis on which most scientists conduct their experiments. Most scientists, most of the time, assume that the physical world is 'out there', quite independent of themselves (though the scientist's own body, with its sense organs, is clearly a part of that world). Science is considered to be, firstly, a process of describing that physical world, and then of devising hypotheses as to how things work. If the hypotheses are sound, they stand up under test, and assume the status of established theory. For example, the movements of the planets and other celestial bodies could be predicted with considerable accuracy by Newton's theory of gravitation; and, after two centuries of successes, the theory came to be regarded as unshakeable knowledge. However, when hypotheses do not stand up under test, they are changed, or scrapped and replaced by better ones. Thus, much of Newton's work was eventually to be replaced by Einstein's fundamentally different general theory of relativity, finalised in 1915.

Most scientists would probably be willing to accept that, when constructing their theories, they are actually building mental 'models' representing experience. But they would no doubt react violently to the suggestion that the realist's view is never the whole truth. And if it were suggested that mental activity could perhaps affect the results of an experiment, they would probably be completely incredulous. Indeed, they would no doubt point out that a most important step in the establishment of a scientific theory is that relevant experiments should be repeatable by other experimenters in other laboratories, in order to provide the assurance that the result obtained is not the product of chance, error or self-deception.

Admittedly, the attitude of modern nuclear physicists is perhaps a little different. In the models they have devised to explain the behaviour of elementary particles, for example, very strange things do happen. Time runs backwards, and particles may disappear at one place and reappear in another without crossing the space between. But nuclear physicists on the whole do not worry too much about the physical interpretation of their equations. They believe that, provided these lead to correct predictions as to the outcome of experiments, their interpretation does not matter. So it is that nuclear physicists are often far more open-minded than other scientists when it comes to matters of the paranormal.

Odd as it may seem, certain scientific theories also sometimes actually give room for paranormal happenings. It is an old idea that, just as everything we can learn about or become aware of in the Universe influences us, directly or indirectly - otherwise we could not gain knowledge about it - so we influence everything else in the Universe, to some degree at least. In quantum mechanics, this takes on a new twist. For instance, some of the most eminent physicists have claimed that, when a nuclear particle is observed by a scientist - or, perhaps, when a measurement is made of it by an automatic instrument -

the observation directly affects the particle. If, for example, its position is measured, the particle acquires a definite position at that moment - having previously been in an indefinite, 'spread-out' state. According to this view, scientists intervene very directly in the phenomena that they study, both creating them as well as observing them.

Indeed, many psychical researchers have actually been encouraged to look for the effects of the mind on physical processes at the micro-level. One of these was Helmut Schmidt, who built a test machine using radioactive decay. The radioactive emissions from a sample of strontium 90 controlled a number of lamps arranged in a circle. When a Geiger counter recorded the arrival of radiation from the strontium, the equipment switched off the lamp that was illuminated at that moment, and then switched on a neighbouring lamp. It was a rapidly oscillating switch that determined whether the neighbouring lamp in the clockwise or in the counter clockwise direction was lit. But Schmidt's subjects were asked to try to influence the lamps to light up in a specific direction - say, clockwise - and his results indicated very strongly that they could.

A matter of belief

Psychical researchers have long noticed apparent effects of mind on matter, and many fascinating experiments have been carried out to study the phenomenon. Dr Gertrude Schmeidler found, for example, in experiments that have been repeated many times, that subjects who had a belief in the possibility of psychic phenomena were more likely to be successful. Equally remarkably, subjects who strongly disbelieved in the very possibility of such phenomena were more likely to get results that were worse than would be expected by chance. This, too, involves an interaction of an unknown type between the subject and the system that the subject is trying to observe or influence. Schmeidler called the believing subjects 'sheep' and the disbelieving ones 'goats'.

Psychical researchers have also put each other under scrutiny. Some researchers frequently get good results with their subjects, and are referred to as 'catalysts'. (The term comes from chemistry, and refers to a substance that promotes some reaction between other substances.) Sceptics might suggest that the results of the 'catalysts' are actually due to fraud or incompetence. But many of these experimenters have unblemished reputations. Other experimenters regularly fail to demonstrate effects, and have been described, unflatteringly, as 'inhibitors'. Usually, such experimenters claim to be open-minded as to the possibility of psychic phenomena occurring in their experiments: if, therefore, they are causing their own lack of success, the reason may lie in their unconscious minds.

So what consequences for science in general follow from this? Suppose a scientist, who has a long cherished belief in a particular physical theory, spends a great deal of time clarifying it in his mind, and conducts experiments that are suggested by the theory: it seems possible that physical effects confirming the theory could perhaps be created by his or her very own thought processes. Now that in itself is quite a thought.



Vladimir Durov, one of the most popular stars of the Moscow State Circus at one time, is seen above with one of his trained wolves, with whom he could communicate telepathically. His abilities are said to have inspired a psychic revolution in the former Soviet Union, with remarkable results.



There are many legends in which hapless victims are pursued by paranormal beings such as ghosts. The

most famous of these were the Furies of Greek legend who hounded Orestes, as depicted above. You can read more about the nature of hallucinations and a particular case of a modern girl who was stalked by such a nightmare.



The hectic quest of the medieval alchemist for the secret of life is depicted in the illustration below. As outlined on page 69, a twentieth-century researcher firmly believed he had discovered the very life stuff of the Universe.



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Curse Of The Hexham Heads



It was in the back garden of a council house in Hexham, northern England, that two small boys found crudely carved heads, believed to carry an ancient curse. But were the heads genuine?

The discovery of two carved stone heads in a back garden of a house seemed unremarkable enough at first. But it was when the heads triggered the appearance of a wolf-man that the nightmare began.

One afternoon in February 1972, 11-year-old Colin Robson was weeding the garden of his family's council house in Rede Avenue, Hexham, a market town some 20 miles (32 kilometres) west along the Tyne valley from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in northeast England. To his surprise, he suddenly uncovered what appeared to be a lump of stone about the size of a tennis ball, with a strange conical protrusion on one side. Clearing the earth from the object, he discovered that it was roughly carved with human features, and that the conical protrusion was actually meant to be a neck.

Excited by the find, he called to his younger brother Leslie, who was watching from an upstairs window. The boys continued to dig, and soon Leslie uncovered a second head.

The stones, which soon became known as the Hexham heads, appeared to be of two distinct types.

The first had a skull-like face, seemed to be masculine to everyone who saw it, and was dubbed the 'boy'. It was of a greenish-grey colour, and glistened with crystals of quartz. It was very heavy - heavier than cement or concrete - with hair that appeared to be in stripes running from the front to the back of

the head. The other head - the 'girl' - resembled a witch, with wildly bulging eyes and hair that was combed off the forehead in what was almost a bun. There were also traces of a yellow or red pigment in her hair.

After the heads had been unearthed, the boys took them inside the house. It was then that the strange happenings began. The heads would turn round spontaneously, and objects were broken for no apparent reason. And when the mattress on the bed of one of the Robson daughters was showered with glass, both girls moved out of their room. Meanwhile, at the spot at which the heads had been found, a strange flower bloomed at Christmas.

It could be argued that the events in the Robson household had nothing to do with the appearance of the heads - that they were, instead, poltergeist phenomena triggered by the adolescent children of the Robson family. But the Robsons' next door neighbour, Mrs Ellen Dodd, underwent a truly unnerving experience that could clearly not be explained away so easily. As she recounted:

'I had gone into the children's bedroom to sleep with one of them, who was ill. My ten-year-old son, Brian, kept telling me he felt something touching him. I told him not to be so silly. Then I saw this shape. It came towards me and I definitely felt it touch me on the legs. Then, on all fours, it moved out of the room.'

Ellen Dodd later described the creature that had touched her as 'half human, half sheep-like'. Mrs Robson also recalled that she had heard a sound like a crash as well as screams from next-door on the night in question. Her neighbour told her that the creature that made them was like a werewolf. And when Mrs Dodd went downstairs, she found that her front door was open. Whatever caused the phenomenon, Ellen Dodd was terrified, and as a result was rehoused by the local council. Eventually, the heads were removed from the Robsons' house, the abode itself was exorcised, and all became quiet in Rede Avenue.

Celtic rituals

Meanwhile, however, a distinguished Celtic scholar, Dr Anne. Ross, had become interested in the stones. In an article for Folklore, Myths and Legends of Britain, Dr Ross had claimed that the heads were around 1,800 years old and had been designed to play a part in Celtic head rituals. When the heads were banished from the Robsons' house, Dr Ross took charge of them. She recalls what happened next:

'I didn't connect it with the heads then. We always keep the hall light on and the doors kept open because our small son is a bit frightened of the dark, so there's always a certain amount of light coming into our room, and I woke up and felt extremely frightened. In fact, panic-stricken and terribly, terribly cold. There was a sort of dreadful atmosphere of icy coldness all around me. Something made me look towards the door, and as I looked, I saw this thing going out of it.

'It was about six feet [2 metres] high, slightly stooping, and it was black against the white door. It was

half-animal and half-man. The upper part, I would have said, was wolf and the lower part was human. It was covered with a kind of black, very dark fur. It went out and I just saw it clearly and then it disappeared and something made me run after it - a thing I wouldn't normally have done, but I felt compelled to run after it. I got out of bed and I ran, and I could hear it going down the stairs. Then it disappeared toward the back of the house. When I got to the bottom of the stairs, I was terrified.'

That, however, was not the end of the story. A few days later, Dr Ross and her husband arrived home from London one evening to find their teenage daughter in a state of shock. Dr Ross described her daughter's experience as follows:

'She had opened the front door and a black thing, which she described as near a werewolf as anything, jumped over the bannister and landed with a kind of plop. It padded with heavy animal feet, and it rushed toward the back of the house and she felt compelled to follow it. It disappeared in the music room, right at the end of the corridor; and when she got there, it had gone. Suddenly, she was terrified. The day the heads were removed from the house everybody, including my husband, said it was as if a cloud had lifted; and since then there hasn't been, really, a trace of it [the paranormal activity].'

Unwelcome guest

Before the heads were removed, however, there were a number of other manifestations of the unwelcome 'lodger'. During those frightening months, Dr Ross insisted, the creature appeared to be very real. It was not something shadowy, or only glimpsed out of the corner of the eye. It was noisy, and everyone who came to the house commented on a definite presence of evil. While he never observed it directly, Dr Ross' archaeologist husband was fully aware of his unwelcome guest's presence, although he is not usually sensitive to psychic phenomena. The phenomena ceased after the heads had been removed and the house was exorcised - but not before Dr Ross had disposed of her entire collection of Celtic heads.

The story took on a new twist in 1972 when Desmond Craigie - then a truck driver - announced that the Celtic heads were actually a mere 16 years old. They had not been fashioned as votive offerings by a head-hunting Celt - for, Craigie claimed, he himself had made them as toys for his daughter, Nancy. He explained that he had lived in the house in Rede Avenue that was now the Robsons' home for around 30 years; indeed, his father had remained a tenant there until the previous year. One day, his daughter had asked him what he did for a living. At that time, Craigie worked with artificial cast stone, making objects such as concrete pillars. In order to explain to his daughter what he did during the course of his working day, he made three heads especially for her in his lunch break, and took them home for her to play with.

'Nancy played with them as dolls,' he said. 'She would use the silver paper from chocolate biscuits as eyes. One got broken and I threw it in the bin. The others just got kicked around and must have landed up where the lads found them.'

Embarrassed by the publicity that his own handiwork had attracted, Desmond Craigie said he was concerned merely to set the record straight. Speaking of the heads, he said: 'To say that they were old would be conning people.' But Dr Ross was not entirely convinced. 'Mr Craigie's claim is an interesting story... Unless Mr Craigie was familiar with genuine Celtic stone heads, it would be extraordinary for him to make them like this. They are not crude by any means.' Scientific analysis has, surprisingly, been unable to determine the precise age of the heads.

If the heads are indeed Celtic, it is easy to imagine that they may be the carriers of some ancient curse. But if they are not, why is it that they appear to provoke paranormal phenomena? The evidence that they do so is strengthened by the testimony of inorganic chemist Don Robins, who has explored the idea that mineral artifacts can actually store visual images of the people who made them. He also suggested that places and objects can store information that causes specific phenomena to occur - an idea similar to Tom Lethbridge's notion that events can be 'tape-recorded' into the surrounding in which they take place. He has stated, too, that certain minerals have a natural capacity to store information in the form of electrical energy in their crystals.

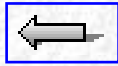
Summing up this theory, Dr Robins stated: 'The structure of a mineral can be seen as a fluctuating energy network with infinite possibilities of storage and transformation of electronic information. These new dimensions in physical structure may well point the way, eventually, to an understanding of kinetic imagery encoded in stone.'

Robins was interested, too, in reports of sounds that had allegedly been induced by the presence of the heads, and drew a tentative parallel with a creature from Norse mythology, called the wulver, powerful and dangerous, but well-disposed towards mankind unless provoked. There are several reports of sightings of this creature in the Shetlands this century.

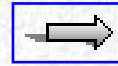
Dr Robins' interest in the heads prompted him to agree to take charge of them. As he put them in his car in order to take them home, however, and turned on the ignition, all the dashboard electrics suddenly went dead. He turned to look at the heads, telling them firmly to 'Stop it!' - and the car started! No one could have been more surprised than he was.

Now Dr Robins, in his turn, began to find the presence of the heads disquieting. Perhaps disappointingly, however, Dr Robins did not witness any paranormal events that might have been caused by the heads. There were, however, some perturbing moments. One day, leaving the house, he muttered to the heads: 'Let's see something when I get back!' Moments later, he re-entered the house to collect a book he had forgotten. Outside, it was fresh and blustery - but in his study the atmosphere seemed 'almost electric with a stifling, breathless quality.' Attributing the effect to the 'girl' head, he left hurriedly. But he found absolutely nothing amiss on his return home.

The present whereabouts of the Hexham heads is unfortunately not known. Consequently, there remains a three-fold mystery; their whereabouts, their age and why they should have produced such startling phenomena.



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Stalked By Nightmares

As a child, a woman had been sexually assaulted by her father. But the horror really began when, years later, hallucinations of him started to plague her. It is a case that provides unique insight into the very nature of reality.

What is `reality and what are dreams? To the scientist, things are only real when they can be communicated by the senses or by instruments that are extensions of the senses, when their measurements can be taken and their behaviour observed, when deductions can be made about them and certain laws subsequently established. In the realms of thought, sane men also distinguish, mainly without difficulty, between fantasies and `real' concepts.

But research has shown that there are, indeed, `realities' beyond those generally perceived by our five senses, such as notes with a pitch too high to be heard by human ears. And there may be yet another form of `reality, confirmed by the experiences of mystics while in their ecstasies. In spite of this, the fact remains that `sanity for most of us is the common ground of shared sensory perception: on the whole, the cat sits on the mat and not vice versa.

But what if our minds betray us, not in casual mistakes but by completely misinterpreting data supplied by our senses? What of Sybil Isabel Dorsett who, among her 16 personalities, saw herself in the mirror variously as a sophisticated blonde, brown-haired, a tall, willowy redhead, a dark, brown-eyed man, a blue-eyed man, a timid ash-blonde, a small, slim brunette - and with widely differing characters to match. She even bought clothes to suit one personality that would be utterly unsuitable for her `real' physical self, the choice later utterly bewildering her other selves when they inhabited her body.

And what of Ruth, a 25-year-old American woman, married to Paul and living in London with their three children, the patient of Dr Morton Schatzman, psychiatrist? Her experiences are narrated in Schatzman's book, *The Story of Ruth*, dramatised on television by the BBC in 1982.

Ruth described her symptoms to Dr Schatzman:

sex with Paul seemed `dirty', she was scared of doors, avoided company, panicked in crowds and hated going shopping; she had no appetite, felt negative towards her children, and sensed that her brain was going to explode. She had been the third in a family of four, the youngest being 10 years her junior. While her mother was having the last baby, Ruth's father attempted to rape her - and nearly succeeded. That the assault was likely to have been real, not imagined, is supported by the fact that the father was an habitual drunkard and regularly took drugs. He was also violent - once he actually fired a gun at Ruth (but missed); he had forged cheques; and he was a frequent inmate of mental homes and jails.

Sickening hatred

Ruth told her mother about her father's assault, but she professed not to believe her daughter, and packed her off immediately to the children's home where she had gone to live whenever her father deserted the family. Ruth married at 17, never lived with her parents again and felt what she described as a 'sickening hatred' towards her father.

But what Ruth did not immediately tell Schatzman was that, almost every day, she had seen an hallucination of her father that appeared as real and solid as any living person. He had begun to appear a year after the birth of her youngest child. Sometimes she saw his face superimposed on Paul's or on her baby's; and even when she did not see him, she felt his presence in the house. She believed he wanted her dead and was prompting her to suicide. Once he sat with her at a friend's dining table, and looked so solid and ordinary that, if Ruth had been at home, she felt she would have offered him coffee. On another occasion, he occupied a chair between two visitors. She heard him speaking and watched him following their conversation - although he was invisible and inaudible to the others present.

Ruth became an in-patient at the Arbours Crisis Centre set up by Dr Schatzman and colleagues in London in 1971. There, she continued to see her father. She even felt her bed moved by his legs knocking against it (although it did not actually move). She saw him very clearly - 'I can see each tooth' - heard him laughing and even smelt the sweat on him while in the doctor's presence.

Schatzman saw that Ruth thought rationally: her overall pattern of behaviour was not that of a psychotic, and he knew that it was statistically common for mentally healthy people in the West to have some experience of hallucinations. Having read that the Senoi, a Malayan tribe, thought dream life so important that they taught children to face, master and use whatever caused terror in their nightmares, he suggested to Ruth that she follow their example and confront her father's apparition.

The victory was not immediately, nor easily won, however. Ruth continued to see her father, sometimes superimposed even on to complete strangers, and to hear and smell him. She also felt that he read her thoughts and sensed that he was trying to master her and take her over. The psychiatrist told her to send the apparition packing, which she eventually did on occasions - but sometimes his distinctive smell remained.

On her sixth day at the centre, Ruth saw Paul change into her father; and when he lightly touched her hand, she felt it squeezed until it hurt. She refused to sleep with her husband that night as she felt he was her father. Then, the next day, she saw her father's face superimposed upon Dr Schatzman's. The doctor had suggested that she try to change him into her father because confronting something usually makes one fear it less and it would prove to Ruth that she had control: if she could summon the apparition at will, she could also will it away. This achieved, the next step was to create the illusion without using a real body as a 'model', and dismiss it: this she managed to do.

Further advance was made when Ruth again superimposed her father on to Schatzman, but he appeared to be wearing different clothes from the doctor. When Schatzman moved towards her, the apparition did so too; and when Schatzman lightly laid his hand upon Ruth's, she again felt her hand being painfully

squeezed. She succeeded in dismissing the appearance, but the experience left her very tired.

When Ruth left the centre after 11 days, Schatzman suggested that, far from being crazy, she was gifted in being able to summon and dismiss apparitions at will. Her family history suggested to him that the gift might be hereditary. At this point, the doctor had to go to New York for two-and-a-half weeks, during which time Ruth's father appeared to her at least eight times. She heard the rustle of his clothes and the popping of his cigarettes out of a packet, and was awoken once when he sat on her bed. She managed to send him away once, confused him on another occasion by casual reference to coffee and on a third, when he appeared while she was having a bath, asked him to pass her a towel. The apparition subsequently ceased for 19 days, its longest continuous absence, but then suddenly reappeared, superimposed upon Paul in bed.

On his return, Schatzman suggested that Ruth should try to create a friendlier apparition as an experiment in control. After some effort, she projected a complete image of her best friend Becky, and held mental conversations with her.

Ruth's apparitions usually behaved normally (although occasionally they walked through closed doors), but she also hallucinated the consequences of their actions, could feel a draught of air through a door that had been opened by them and even saw Becky squeezing toothpaste on to a brush before handing it to her. The duration of the appearances varied from seconds to 15 or 20 minutes, and their creation both excited and drained her. She found that her apparitions also had personalities: and although she could finally dismiss them, she could not always make them do what they did not want to do.

Ruth next 'doubled' Dr Schatzman in his presence - creating, in effect, his doppelgänger sitting in a chair on his left. When Schatzman went to sit in his double's chair, the latter sat in his, and when he passed in front of the apparition, he blocked it from Ruth's sight. She saw both men, reflected simultaneously in a mirror; and when Dr Schatzman held out his arms to thin air, Ruth saw him actually dance with his double!

Ruth made further progress when she produced an apparition of herself with which she established mental communication, although she found the experience exhausting. She repeated the experiment in Dr Schatzman's presence, her head hurting and heart pounding with all the effort this involved.

A twilight world

By this time, in many respects Ruth had changed from patient to co-researcher with the psychiatrist. When she observed that an apparition's legs cast a shadow, experiments were carried out with light and darkness. Ruth could hallucinate the darkening and lighting-up of a room, yet failed to be able to make out the words on a book cover in a room that was actually dark but which she saw as lit. She could walk round an apparition, viewing it from every angle, could feel it (it was, she said, a little colder than a living being), and could see and feel it moving parts of her body, though these did not really move, or only very slightly. The apparitions could write messages that Ruth was also able to read, but the paper

remained blank to everyone else, and they did not appear in photographs of the chairs in which she saw them, nor did their voices register on tape recorders - thus proving they had no objective reality.

Ruth next discovered she could create her father's apparition superimposed upon her own reflection in a mirror, and did so with Dr Schatzman sitting by. 'He', in reply to the psychiatrist's questions, gave information about himself. For Ruth, the experiment resulted in considerable discomfort; but, although she felt her father's fear, anger and sexual desire, she was not taken over by him. The experience involved similarities to mediumistic trances. However, whether the information that was given by her 'father' was true could not be determined.

During several such sessions, a number of facts connected with her father's previous history and Ruth's childhood emerged. She seemed to feel his and her own emotions simultaneously; and the more she learned about him, the more she pitied him. She also found she could create him and merge with him without using the mirror, and still sense his feelings as before. 'The more I relaxed,' she said, 'the less I saw him and the more I became him.' Schatzman discovered that he could talk directly to the father through Ruth and found a plausible personality consistent with itself but not with Ruth's. Schatzman wondered whether this personality could have been a buried aspect of herself.

A startling development occurred when Ruth visited the USA and spent some time with her father there. She created an apparition of Paul in her car - what is more, her father apparently also saw it. Perhaps even more startling was her success in twice making love with apparitions of Paul whom she created on nights when he was absent. Both experiences were, she reported, sexually very satisfying.

Ruth even succeeded in making a double of herself. This doppelgänger-which brought memories of forgotten incidents from her youth - may simply have been a mechanism that enabled her to tap into subliminal recollections. Whatever the explanation, Ruth recalled past incidents in great detail, many of which were later confirmed by her mother. Sometimes, she could even merge with her own apparition, so that she would enter 'memory trances', which in some respects were like those of spirit mediums and in others like hypnotic regression. In time, she learned to use this 'trance' technique without having to create her double, but did need someone else to be present in order to tell her what she had said, because she would not remember it.

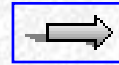
In her regressions, Ruth talked and behaved like a child or an adolescent; and given a number of psychological tests while regressed to various ages, she performed in them as girls of those ages would be expected to do, thereby showing that she was reliving her past. Other tests proved that Ruth's apparitions affected her sight and hearing exactly as flesh and blood entities would have done.

But why did these hallucinations come when they did? In 1976, when they began, her elder daughter was three years old - the age at which Ruth first :` entered the children's home - and her eldest child was ` seven, her age when her father returned to the family after his first period of desertion. These recollections of childhood traumas, perhaps subconscious, allied to the loneliness of living overseas in England - another Ruth amid the alien corn - could well have triggered such experiences.

And what of Ruth after the therapy? Her apparitions were to become pure entertainment. When driving alone, for instance, she found she could put one in the passenger seat for company, or converse with another, silently, at a boring party. The implications of her story for psychical research are far-reaching indeed.



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Diagnosis By Kirlian Aura

Exponents claim that by photographing your aura, they can diagnose all manner of diseases. A disturbed corona may also indicate stress and anxiety, they say. What else can such Kirlian images detect?

When Russian scientists first announced the discovery of an `energy body, composed of so-called 'bioplasma' existing quite separately from the physical body, few scientists in the West were prepared to take them seriously. What evidence was there, they asked, to substantiate such a claim?

This question, despite much scientific investigation, still awaits a conclusive answer. What the Russians believed to be the `energy body' turned out to be the curious corona shown by Kirlian photography to surround almost all living things. But, as sceptics in the West have asked: what exactly is the strange corona effect that Kirlian photography captures on film? Is it, indeed, a picture of the 'aura that has been described by mystics and clairvoyants? Or is there perhaps some other perfectly ordinary explanation?

Recent research has concentrated on showing that whatever the nature of Kirlian photographs, they can be used to achieve practical benefits in medical diagnosis, as well as insight into the human mind. A relationship has been found to exist, for example, between the various patterns of Kirlian photographs of the human hand and the physical and psychological condition of the subject.

The left hemisphere of the brain corresponds to the right hand, and radiations from it detected by Kirlian photography provide clues, it is said, to the logical ability of the subject. The intuitive potential of the subject, meanwhile, can be discovered by a reading of the corona effect of the left hand, which correlates with the right hemisphere of the brain. Thus a well-balanced Kirlian image of both hands is said to indicate a well-balanced personality.

Characteristics that can be recognised by this method of analysis - characteristics that even the subject himself may not realise he possesses - include healing ability, creative potential and qualities of leadership. Kirlian photographs are also said to show the nature and extent of conflicts arising from professional and emotional life, as well as the existence of physical tension.

Initial investigations into the diagnostic uses of Kirlian photography have revealed a wide range of possibilities. Studies on rats, carried out by Dr Thelma Moss and Dr Margaret Armstrong of the University of Rochester, New York, indicate that marked changes occur in the corona discharge of the tails of cancerous rats, for example. Similar corona patterns have even been found in cancerous plants and in the fingertips of cancerous humans. Indeed, virtually all areas of the body photographed by the Kirlian method have yielded information about the physical and mental condition of the subject. However, the clearest corona pictures are usually obtained of the hands and feet.

The basic equipment used in Kirlian photography is simple. It consists of a high voltage `Tesla coil', which is connected to a metal plate and insulated from the subject by a non-conductive layer. A sheet of

light sensitive material - bromide paper or film is generally used - will be placed between subject and machine.

The Kirlian machine radiates a high-voltage, high-frequency field. The 'energy body' of the hand or object to be photographed repels the field and causes a pattern of interference to be established. This 'energy body', or whatever it is that creates the pattern, varies. When the 'energy body' is in a balanced condition, a regular interference pattern is produced when the field of the machine and that of the subject interact. When there is an imbalance in the field of the subject, irregularities appear in the corona that shows up. It is these irregularities, as research has shown, that can often be correlated to some physical or mental ailment.

Despite what seem to be promising uses, Kirlian photography is still beset with many theoretical and practical difficulties. Debate about its reliability therefore continues; and perhaps the most controversial area of Kirlian photography centres on the interpretation of results.

There are at present four broad views taken of Kirlian photography. According to the cynical view, the so-called Kirlian effect is merely the result of normal discharge between the subject, the film and the machine. Any accurate diagnosis produced is purely coincidental and due solely to the intuition of the researcher, sceptics say. And while accepting that Kirlian photography can monitor certain physical symptoms, such as the activity of the sweat glands and temperature, even sympathetic critics maintain that it still needs to be shown that these reflect changes in the physical or psychological state of the subject before proper diagnosis can be made.

Parapsychologists, however, insist that, although purely physical causes, such as sweat, may play a part in the production of the corona effect, these causes " by themselves do not provide a full explanation. According to parapsychologists, Kirlian photography can only be fully understood if the existence of an 'energy body', 'aura', 'bioplasmic body or some other 'paranormal' phenomenon is accepted.

But the most radical interpretation is that of the enthusiasts who claim that Kirlian photography has nothing to do with mundane physical causes, such as sweat. It shows, quite clearly, they say, the energies of the soul. The colours and shapes revealed by Kirlian photography are what mystics and clairvoyants have been talking about for centuries.

Before considering which of these four competing views is most likely to be correct, there are a number of factors that the serious researcher has to take into account. The Kirlian machine used must conform to a standard to ensure that skin resistance, sweat and other physical manifestations do not interfere with the corona. The subject being investigated must also be relaxed. It has been found that, when the subjects try consciously to project their 'aura', the result is a weaker and more irregular radiation. A similar effect is caused by anxiety or fear on the part of subjects. The researcher must be able to distinguish between cases where the result is influenced by anxiety, sweat, or some other temporary physical manifestation owing to nervousness, and those effects that indicate some deeper physical or psychological significance.

There are, in addition, several areas in which the exponent needs to exercise caution if he or she is to avoid the more common criticisms levelled against Kirlian photography. First, the part of the body to be photographed needs to be chosen with care. A fingertip when photographed alone, for instance, presents a different image from that of the finger when photographed as part of the hand.

There is also often a temptation to correlate the colours of the corona with an emotional state. The colour cast, however, will often depend on the type of film used. Some 35mm film, for example, produces reds or yellows, while Polaroid film produces a red outer corona with a white inner band. Resin-coated paper produces blue and little else. The colours themselves are not always important, however. What may be rather more relevant is the regularity and extent of any colour effects.

Outside influences

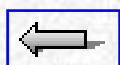
Operator effect also needs to be taken into account. The ability of the mind to cause structural and emotional changes in both living and inanimate objects has been observed on many occasions. An aggressive attitude on the part of observers can sometimes be seen to inhibit the performance of ESP subjects, for instance; and we know that the voltage patterns of wired-up plants will change when disharmonious thoughts are projected. In order to exclude any possible effects of this nature, the operator should stand at least 4 feet (1.5 metres) away from the subject, maintaining a relaxed and open frame of mind.

Excessive voltage, meanwhile, will usually produce an artificially bright corona, so the operator needs to be able to recognise what voltage and waveform characteristics ought to look like. The golden rule is to use the minimum possible voltage to produce a readable pattern.

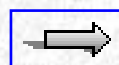
Too long or too short an exposure time can also produce misleading results. There appear to be slow cycles of activity that can be missed if exposure time is too short. For fingertip photographs, one second is sufficient; for a hand, two seconds.

In recent years, Kirlian photography has been used successfully in a number of quite surprising applications. In one study, for example, Dr Thelma Moss was able to predict the incidence of germination of Soya bean seeds with almost 100 per cent accuracy. The implications for agriculture are clearly immense. Other areas where Kirlian methods of interpretation might be used include personnel selection, compatibility assessment and estimation of the effect on young children of parental conflict.

While the practical benefits of Kirlian photography may have been clearly shown, doubt remains, however, as to whether this actually proves the existence of the 'aura'. There does seem to be a flow of energy surrounding almost all living things. But precisely what that energy is remains unknown.



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The Horror Of Glamis

For centuries, Glamis Castle has had a reputation as a place of strange and awful happenings - events that strike terror at the hearts of all who experience them.

Glamis Castle stands in the great vale of Strathmore in Tayside, Scotland. For centuries, the vast fortified house with its battlements and pointed towers - looking very much like the setting for a fairy tale - has been the home of the Earls of Strathmore, whose family secret is reputedly hidden within the very walls of Glamis, famous as one of the most haunted houses on earth.

That there was some form of unpleasantness within the castle's walls is an undoubted historical fact. And that the castle is today the centre of a triangle formed by three biblically named villages - Jericho, Zoar, and Pandanaram - may indicate the terror felt by its minions; for, according to a Scottish National Trust guidebook, the men who built and named them 'had at least some knowledge of the Scriptures and regard for the wrath of God.' That wrath, claim locals, was called down on Glamis for the sins of the first dozen or so lairds. In recent times, however, there is little to suggest that life at the castle has been anything other than pleasant and peaceful, in contrast with what once came to be known as the 'horror' of Glamis.

It is the obscure nature of the 'horror' that makes accounts of it all the more terrifying. Indeed, no recent Earl has ever spoken of it to an outsider, except in enigmatic terms, and no woman has ever been let in on the secret. It is passed on only to the Strathmore heir on his 21 st birthday.

The historical record of horror at Glamis Castle goes back to 1034, when King Malcolm 11 was cut down by a gang of rebellious subjects armed with claymores, the large broadswords peculiar to Scotland. It was said that every drop of Malcolm's blood seeped from his body into the floorboards, causing a stain that is still pointed out today, in what is called King Malcolm's Room. That the stain was made by Malcolm's blood is disputable, however, for records seem to show that the flooring has since been replaced. Nevertheless, Malcolm's killers added to the death toll of Glamis by trying to escape across a frozen loch: but the ice cracked and they were drowned.

The Lyon family inherited Glamis from King Robert 11, who gave it to his son-in-law, Sir John Lyon, in 1372. Until then, the Lyon family home had been at Forteviot, where a great chalice, the family 'luck', was kept. Tradition held that if the chalice were removed from Forteviot House, a curse would fall on the family. Despite this, Sir John took the cup with him to Glamis. The curse, though, seems to have had a time lapse: Sir John was indeed killed in a duel, but this did not occur until 1383, and the family misfortunes are usually dated from this time.

The 'poisoned' chalice may well have also influenced events 150 years later when James V had Janet Douglas, Lady Glamis, burned at the stake in Edinburgh on a charge of witchcraft. The castle reverted to the Crown; but after the falsity of the charge was proved, Glamis was restored to her son. The spectre of

Lady Glamis - the 'Grey Lady' as she is known - is said regularly to walk the long corridors even today.

It was Patrick, the Third Earl of Strathmore, who made the idea of a Glamis 'curse' widespread in the late 17th century: indeed, to many people he seemed the very embodiment of it. A notorious rake and gambler, he was known in both London and Edinburgh, as well as throughout his home territory, for his drunken debauchery. Facts covering his career and his character are festooned with folklore, but he must have been something of an enigma; for despite his wild ways, he was philanthropic towards his tenants at least. The Glamis Book of Records, for instance, details his plans for building a group of lodges on the estate for the use of retired workers. Now known as Kirkwynd Cottages, they were given to the Scottish National Trust by the 16th Earl of Strathmore in 1957.

Two principal stories endure about Patrick. The first is that he was the father of a deformed child who was kept hidden somewhere in the castle, out of sight of prying eyes. The second is that he played cards with the Devil for his soul -and lost.

The first story is fed by a picture of the Third Earl. It shows Patrick seated, wearing a classical bronze breastplate, and pointing with his left hand towards a distant, romanticised vista of Glamis. Standing at his left knee is a small, strange-looking, green-clad child; to the child's left is an upright young man in scarlet doublet and hose. The three main figures are placed centrally, but two greyhounds in the picture are shown staring steadfastly at a figure, positioned at the Earl's right elbow. Like the Earl, this figure wears a classical breastplate, apparently shaped to the muscles of the torso - but if it is a human torso, it is definitely deformed. The left arm is also rather strangely foreshortened. Did the artist paint from life - and if so, does the picture show the real 'horror' of Glamis?

The second story goes like this. Patrick and his friend the Earl of Crawford were playing cards together one Saturday night when a servant reminded them that the Sabbath was approaching. Patrick replied that he would play, Sabbath or no Sabbath, and that the Devil himself might join them for a hand if he so wished. At midnight, accompanied by a roll of thunder, the Devil appeared and told the card-playing Earls that they had forfeited their souls and were therefore doomed to play cards in that room until Judgement Day.

Another story tells - with curious precision - of a grey-bearded man, shackled and left to starve in 1486. And a later one, probably also dating from before Patrick's time, is gruesome in the extreme. A party of Ogilvies from a neighbouring district came to Glamis and begged protection from their enemies, the Lindsays, who were pursuing them. The Earl of Strathmore led them into a chamber, deep in the castle, and left them there to starve. Unlike the unfortunate grey-bearded man, however, they had each other to eat and began to turn cannibal - some, according to legend, even gnawing the flesh from their own arms.

One or other of these tales may account for a skeletally thin spectre, known as Jack the Runner; and the ghost of a black pageboy, also seen in the castle, seems to date from the 17th or 18th century, when young slaves were imported from the West Indies. A white lady is also said to haunt the castle clock tower, while the grey-bearded man of 1486 appeared, at least once, to two guests simultaneously, one of

whom was the wife of the Archbishop of York at the turn of the 20th century. She told how, during her stay at the castle, one of the guests came down to breakfast and mentioned casually that she had been awakened by the banging and hammering of carpenters. A brief silence followed her remarks, and then Lord Strathmore spoke, assuring her that there were no workmen in the castle. According to another story, as a young girl, Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother (daughter of the 14th Earl, Claude George Bowes-Lyon), once had to move out of the Blue Room because her sleep was being disturbed by rapping's, thumps, and footsteps.

Fascinating as all these run-of-the-mill ghosts and their distinguished observers are, however, it is the 'horror' that remains the great mystery of Glamis. All the principal rumours - cannibal Ogilvies notwithstanding - involve a deformed child, born to the family and kept in a secret chamber, who lived, according to 19th-century versions of the story, to a very old age. In view of the portrait openly displayed at Glamis, and always supposing that it is the mysterious child who is actually portrayed, subsequent secrecy seems rather pointless. If Patrick himself was prepared to have his 'secret' portrayed in oils, then why should successors have discouraged open discussion of the matter?

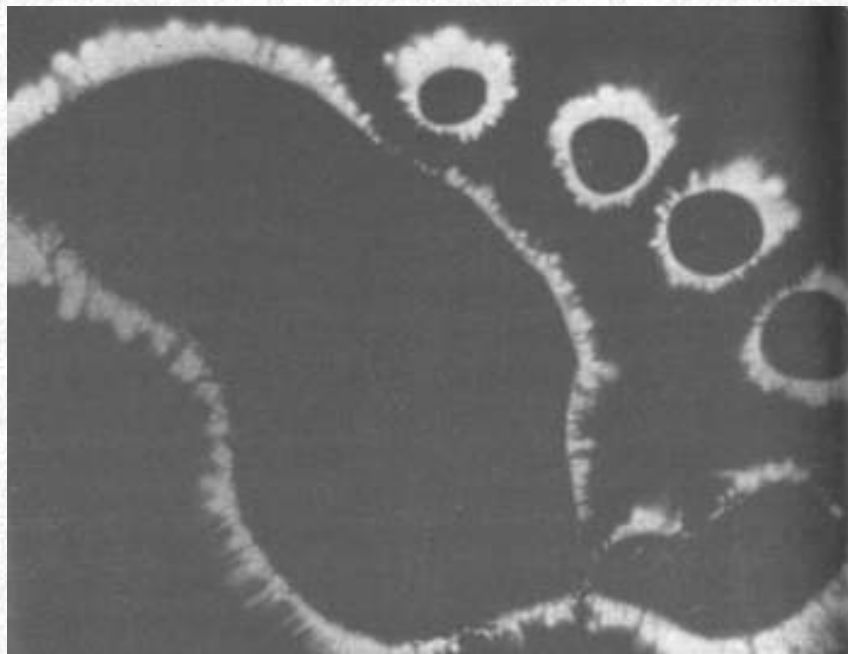
Despite such secrecy, at the turn of the 19th century, stories were still flying thick and fast. Claude Bowes-Lyon, the 13th Earl who died in 1904 in his 80th year, seems to have been positively obsessed by the 'horror', and it is around him that most of the 19th-century stories revolved. It was he, for instance, who told an inquisitive friend: 'If you could guess the nature of the secret, you would go down on your knees and thank God it were not yours.' Claude, too, it was who paid the passage of a workman and his family to Australia, after the workman had inadvertently stumbled upon a secret room at Glamis and been overcome with horror. Claude questioned him, swore the man to secrecy, and bundled him off to the colonies shortly afterwards.

In the 1920s, a party of young people staying at Glamis decided to track down the secret chamber by hanging a piece of linen out of every window they could find. When they finished, they saw there were several windows that they had not been able to locate from the inside. When the 14th Earl learned what they had done, he flew into an uncharacteristic fury. Unlike his forbears, however, he broke the embargo on the secret by telling it to his estate factor, Gavin Ralston, who subsequently refused to stay overnight at the castle again.

When the 14th Earl's daughter-in-law, the next Lady Strathmore, asked Ralston the secret, Ralston is said to have replied: 'It is lucky that you do not know and can never know it, for if you did, you would not be a happy woman.' It remains to be seen whether further light will ever be shed on the 'horror' of Glamis.



When lemmings, above, make their suicide leaps into the sea, they are responding to an instinct that in many ways is equivalent to human mass hysteria.



A strong corona around someone's foot, above, suggests good health. But notice the absence of the corona round the big toe. This is said to indicate that the subject is suffering from a headache. Massaging the toe, it is believed, will relieve this.



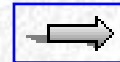
In general, a tense subject will produce a Kirlian image that is spikey in appearance. The more relaxed subject, however, will generate a softer, more regular corona, as below.



Thomas Alva Edison, above, invented the phonograph and the electric light bulb. In 1920, he also worked on a device that would, he believed, make possible a form of telepathic contact with the dead.



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The Cosmic Orgasm

Wilhelm Reich believed that the secret of physical and mental health is contained in the orgasm, and that sexual energy is tangible and can be harnessed to rid the world of all ills.

The quest to discover the secret of life, and to identify some force that distinguishes living protoplasm from inanimate matter, has obsessed occultists, alchemists and scientists alike for centuries. But although, in most cases, the investigator has pursued knowledge for its own sake, in others he has tried to usurp the divine prerogative and actually create life from inorganic material. Occasionally, he has even claimed to have succeeded in this.

As late as the 1930s, a London-based alchemist, named Archibald Cockren, attempted to create life in the form of the 'alchemical tree': this was supposed to be a living mineral, and had been described in the 16th century by Paracelsus as 'a wonderful) and pleasant shrub, which the Alchemists call their Golden hearb.' The poet C. R. Cammell said that he had actually seen this mineral 'hearb' in Cockren's laboratory and had watched it grow to a considerable size over a period of months.

But the claim to have created life has not been confined to eccentric occultists. The late Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957), a scientist with an impeccable academic background, asserted not only that he had created life but also that, by doing so, he had solved many mysteries of nature, from the causes of cancer to the significance of UFO sightings.

Reich was the son of prosperous Austrian-Jewish parents. After serving in the Austrian army during the First World War, he studied medicine at Vienna University and qualified as a doctor in 1922. While still a medical student, he studied the writings of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and other pioneer psychoanalysts, becoming convinced of the central importance of sexuality in human life. On 1 March 1919, he wrote in his diary: '... from my own experience, and from observation of myself and others, I have become convinced that sexuality is the centre around which revolves the whole of social life as well as the inner life of the individual.'

Reich, however, went further than Freud and concluded that almost all illness, including schizophrenia and manic depression, resulted from the failure to achieve 'true orgasm', which he defined as 'the capacity for complete discharge of all dammed-up sexual excitation through involuntary pleasurable contractions of the body.' The object of psychoanalytical therapy, Reich argued, was to establish 'orgastic potency' and to enable the individual to achieve a sexual climax that would be long-lasting, fully satisfying and unaccompanied by fantasies or fetishes. It would also be without subsequent feelings of guilt or inadequacy; and above all, it would be the result of a heterosexual relationship.

Reich also believed that the failure of dammed-up sexual energy to find release in the convulsions of orgasm resulted in 'muscular armouring' - muscular tension and rigidity. This armouring reinforced the original disturbance, which in turn led to more tension and rigidity - a self-perpetuating process of

physical and mental degeneration.

Vegetotherapy

Neither the traditional Freudian type of analysis (the unveiling of repressed memories) nor Reich's own practice, based on examining 'present-day character', was adequate to cope with such armouring. For this, Reich developed a new technique, which involved character analysis, deep massage, breathing exercises and violent physical manipulation of the patient's body to break down tension and release blocked-up sexual energy. Reich called this process vegetotherapy, because he believed that the energies trapped by muscular armouring were stored in the vegetative (otherwise known as the autonomic, or involuntary) nervous system.

Reich was also interested in the nature of sexual energy. He believed it to be a specific force, comparable to the forces of gravitation and electromagnetism, and that it could be accumulated in the same way that electricity is stored in a battery. To prove his point, he embarked on a series of experiments to ascertain 'whether the sexual organs, in a state of excitation ... show an increase in their bio-electric charge.' Volunteers were wired up and the results of their sexual activity monitored: the results were spectacular. Sexual excitation, Reich reported, was accompanied by a significant increase in the bio-electrical charge of the genitals; anxiety, pain and guilt, by a reduction. The orgasm was a biological thunderstorm.

In 1935, Reich (who was now living in Norway as a refugee from the Nazis) began an even more ambitious series of biological experiments. He subsequently announced to his astonished scientific contemporaries that he had succeeded in producing, from substances such as sterilised coal and soot, what he termed 'bions'. These, he claimed, were energy vesicles (sacs), halfway between dead matter and living tissue, capable of developing into protozoa (single-cell organisms). One of Reich's assistants filmed these 'bions' through a microscope, but biologists were not impressed. The 'bions', they argued, were no more than tiny particles of nonliving matter and their movements were the result of ordinary physical phenomena.

Undeterred by this criticism, Reich continued with his experiments. He concentrated his attention on a 'radiating bion' that he believed he had derived from sterilised sea sand; and, in 1939, he announced that the radiation given off by these sand-packet bions (which he named 'sapabions') was a hitherto unknown form of energy, the basic life-stuff of the Universe. He called it 'orgone', and devoted the rest of his life to studying it.

In the same year that he claimed to have discovered orgone energy, Reich emigrated to the USA where he began to attract a small but enthusiastic following. He continued his research on orgone, which he maintained was identical with both the *vis animalis* ('animal force') of the ancient alchemists and the 'life force' - a mysterious quality distinguishing living from dead matter, as postulated by the philosopher Henri Bergson. Orgone was no metaphysical abstraction. It could not only be measured with an 'orgone energy field meter' (a modified electroscope of Reich's own devising) but could be seen by the naked

eye in 'the blue coloration of sexually excited frogs', and also collected and stored in an 'orgone energy accumulator', another Reichian invention. These accumulators, said Reich, could be used in the treatment of every human ailment, from depression to cancer.

Orgone energy accumulators were (and are) boxes made of alternate layers of inorganic and organic material (usually metal and wood). The more layers there are, the more powerful the accumulator. Those intended for human use are large enough for the patient to sit inside; and in appearance, they strongly resemble an old-fashioned privy.

Between 1939 and 1957, Reich published many articles and books, making increasingly astounding claims for orgone. Originally, he had regarded it as an energy exclusive to living organisms, but by 1951 he was asserting that it was the original building-matter of creation, the primal 'stuff' from which reality had evolved, and that physical matter was the offspring of the superimposition (the 'cosmic orgasm') of two streams of orgone. Everything from radio interference and the blueness of the sky (orgone was coloured blue) to hurricane formation and the force of gravity was a manifestation of orgone. The only exception was atomic radiation, which Reich saw as the antithesis of the life energy -a Satan to the Jehovah of orgone.

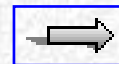
All this was strange enough, but even odder were Reich's writings on the subject of UFOs. Earth, Reich asserted, was the centre of an intergalactic conflict, and UFOs were the warships of the antagonists. One side was utterly evil, and extracted orgone from the Earth and its atmosphere with the intention of .' reducing the planet to a radioactive cinder; their opponents were allies of humanity and thus of Reich, and dedicated to replacing the stolen orgone.

Reich died in prison in 1957. He had been sentenced for defying a Federal injunction banning the sale of his accumulators on the grounds that they were fraudulent. For a time, it seemed that Reich and his theories would quickly be forgotten. Some of his followers became even odder than their teacher: one group, for instance, spent much time sitting in semidarkness, clad in blue robes (in honour of orgone), attempting to communicate with their dead master through the ouija board. Other alleged Reichian groups, closely associated with the writers Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs, combined Reichian theories with the use of psychedelic drugs, something that Reich would not himself have condoned.

However, some of Reich's writings have attracted more serious study, and a number of therapists, influenced by his ideas, now practise in major cities. But no one has yet attempted to repeat his laboratory work, with the object of establishing the extent to which his orgone experiments had any validity.



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Waking Up To Psi

When two people compare their dreams, they may well uncover telepathic links. Here, one ESP researcher, Joe Friedman, tells of his experiments in this area.

There are few examples of a sustained telepathic link between two people. One is the telepathic link between the American novelist Upton Sinclair and his wife Mary, a link that was tested in a series of ESP drawing experiments, subsequently described in detail in Sinclair's book *Mental Radio*. This book, published in 1930, so impressed Albert Einstein that he wrote an introduction to it.

In the late 1970s, I myself was involved in a sustained and well-documented series of dreams that were telepathically linked to those of a close friend and former student of mine. Most of these dreams took place between May and December 1979. There were more than 20 in all, equally distributed between the two partners.

Dave Ashworth first became a student in one of my parapsychology courses, held in London, in April 1978. Aged 23, he had been interested in the occult and psychical research for some time. He was also deeply aware of his dream life, often remembering and recording several dreams a night. After a class that I held on telepathic and precognitive dreams, Dave came up to me and said that, though he had been writing down his dreams for some time, he had never had one that he considered to be precognitive. I told him confidently that he would have such a dream the following week. In saying this, I was partly trying to bring about the desired result - but I also felt a genuine conviction that Dave would indeed have a precognitive dream.

The following week, however, he told me of the failure of his attempt. He had remembered and recorded 13 dreams during the week, but none of them had proved precognitive. I asked him to tell me just one. After looking through his dream diary, he recounted one in which, he said: 'The brat next door comes into my room. I am very hospitable and feed him, but he acts boorishly, as if he owns the place. He opens the wardrobe and, to my amazement, there is another door in the back of the wardrobe, which leads into the attic next door... '

I then told Dave he had just had his first telepathic dream. I had been intending to lead my class in a guided fantasy that evening: they would be urged to have a dream in which they opened their wardrobe door to find that there was another door in the back, a door that opened magically for them.

This experience inaugurated a telepathic dream series that was to last over two years and that was marked by an all-important factor - that of selection.

In this case, Dave chose the psychic dream from a total of 13 that he had recorded during the week. He could hardly have picked out the 'right' dream by pure chance; so he must have had some awareness that this dream was precisely the psychic one for which he was looking. Later in the series, this awareness

became more explicit, so that each of us became better able to pick out his own psychic dreams.

In March 1979, Dave joined a dream group that I was leading. We met fairly regularly, sometimes as often as once a week, for a period of a little more than a year. It was during this period that most of the psychic dreams occurred.

Often, Dave and I would dream of similar topics, themes or metaphors on the same night. In one such spontaneous coincidence, I dreamed of visiting a friend who lived in Colliers Wood in south London. In part of Dave's dream of that night, most of which involved eating at my flat, he dreamed of a picnic in a forest. As he recounted: 'All around are people in orange clothes... some single, some in groups. They are either walkers or miners... There are stones and stone circles ... I stand in one circle and am aware that this is a place of power. I touch my forehead to a tree and then wonder if I am emitting psychic power.'

Could those in the forest, possibly miners, be a reference to Colliers Wood? Whether or not this is so, the dream is important for other reasons. In it, Dave seems to have had an awareness that it was connected with me - he dreamt of eating a meal at my flat - and that the dream was psychic because he dreamt that he might be emitting psychic power.

Many psychoanalysts who have studied psychic dreams have encountered this sort of 'tracer' - an indication in the dream itself that it will prove psychic. Indeed, I have found that most people who have regular telepathic dreams have some sort of tracer in them. Psychic dreams also often have a peculiar quality of vividness. On other occasions, they might have a distinctive 'feel' to them. In Dave's psychic dreams, a grey cat often appeared. In other people's dreams, the tracer is to be found in the fact that the dream is set in a certain place of power.

Sleeping dialogue

Many of the dreams in our telepathic series contained such tracer elements. Their presence indicated that both of us were becoming more aware of the dream dialogue that was gradually developing between us.

Another sort of psychic dream may involve a reference to an event occurring in the waking life of the other person in the friendship. In one such dream, I had gone to a park with a friend of Dave's and mine called Laura. According to my dream diary, while I was preoccupied with listening to some music that was being played in the park:

'A youth started to remove my bike. I rushed over to him and started pushing him around, really enjoying myself, saying "What are you doing with my bike?" While I was doing this, the boy's father came and got on my bike and started to ride it off. I realised that I had allowed myself to get carried away... '

Shortly before I dreamed this, in the evening, I later learned that Dave had left his bike outside a friend's

house during a visit. While he was inside, his rear light was stolen, for the second time from this location. On the way home, Dave fell to daydreaming of leaving his bike outside this house and hiding, waiting for the thief to come. He then caught the thief and gave him a good beating. His daydream continued with the boy's father coming to his friend's house and asking for the person who owned a bicycle.

I did several forms of informal experiment with Dave. In one, I bought a postcard of a fantasy scene that I thought would be a good target and sent it to him while I was on holiday in the United States. I wrote on the back: 'Dear Dave, This card was your precog. target for last night - did you dream about it?' In fact, Dave's dream on the night before he received the card did have a resemblance to the target. It was as follows:

'At Joe's, seeing him for the first time after the break. He tells me of some sci-fi film - did I see it? I didn't, but it seems Roy [Joe's flatmate] did. They talk about it. Joe then mentions a series of sci-fi fantasy films, but I have seen none of them.'

On another occasion, Dave picked up a photograph I was 'transmitting' to another group with which I was involved. On the night of this transmission, of which he had no knowledge, Dave dreamed:

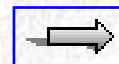
'In a street I come unexpectedly upon Jeff [a friend] - he looks absolutely amazing, dressed in a yellow safari suit ... with a butterfly net in one hand, stalking butterflies... There are many brightly coloured butterflies, large furry ones, yellow ones and somewhere amidst them all is one which is very special.'

The photograph showed a dance troupe which included a number of people wearing wings - they did indeed look like butterflies.

These are a few personal, well authenticated examples of dream telepathy. They certainly seem to suggest that two, or more, people who are open to the possibility of the paranormal can radically increase the amount and quality of ESP occurring in their lives by making a practice of remembering, recording and sharing their dreams.



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Voices From The Dead

Thousands of voices -purporting to be those of the dead - have been recorded on tape without any rational explanation for their origin. What are we to make of them?

Thomas Alva Edison was one of the greatest practical scientists of the 19th century. His achievements included the perfection of the 'duplex' telegraph, the invention of the phonograph and the introduction into the United States of the first electric light. In 1882, his generating station brought electric street lighting to New York for the first time; and 12 years later, his moving picture show, which he called his 'kinetoscope parlour', was opened in the city.

Despite such solid successes, however, an interview he gave to the Scientific American in 1920 caused concern among his contemporaries, some of whom must have thought that the 73-year-old inventor had lapsed into senility. What he proposed, in the issue of 30 October, was no less than an instrument for communicating with the dead.

'If our personality survives, then it is strictly logical and scientific to assume that it retains memory, intellect and other faculties and knowledge that we acquire on this earth. Therefore, if personality exists after what we call death, it is reasonable to conclude that those who leave this earth would like to communicate with those they have left here... I am inclined to believe that our personality hereafter will be able to affect matter. If this reasoning be correct, then, if we can evolve an instrument so delicate as to be affected, or moved, or manipulated... by our personality as it survives in the next life, such an instrument, when made available, ought to record something.'

Edison worked on the development of such an instrument, but was unsuccessful in his attempts to record voices from the dead. However, in the opinion of many modern scientific researchers, his views were apparently vindicated in 1959.

Ghosts in the machine

At that time, a celebrated Swedish painter, musician and film producer named Friedrich Jürgenson took his battery-operated tape recorder out into a remote part of the countryside near his villa in order to record birdsong. Playing the tapes back later, Jürgenson found not only bird sounds but faint human voices, speaking in Swedish and Norwegian and discussing nocturnal birdsong. Despite the 'coincidence' of subject matter, Jürgenson first thought that he had picked up a stray radio transmission. On repeating the experiment, however, he heard further voices, this time addressing him personally and claiming to be dead relatives, as well as friends of his.

Over the next few years, working from his home at Mölnbo, near Stockholm, Jürgenson amassed the evidence that he was to present in his book *Voices from the Universe* in 1964. This proved sufficiently convincing to attract the attention of the eminent German psychologist Professor Hans Bender, who was

director of the Government-funded parapsychological research unit at the University of Freiburg. Soon, a team of distinguished scientists was set up in order to repeat the experiments and analyse the results.

Under differing conditions and circumstances, a factory-clean tape, run through an ordinary tape-recording head in an otherwise silent environment, they found, will contain human voices speaking recognisable words when played back. The origin of these voices is apparently inexplicable in the light of present day science, and the voices themselves are objective in that they yield prints in the same way as normal voices, registering as visible oscillograph impulses on videotape recordings. The implications of these 'voices from nowhere' are enormous. Dr Bender himself is even reported to consider them of more importance to humanity than nuclear physics.

Other scientists, too, were to become fascinated by Jürgenson's odd discovery. Dr Konstantin Raudive, former professor of psychology at the Universities of Uppsala and Riga, was living in Bad Krozingen, Germany, when he heard of the Jürgenson-Bender experiments in 1965. A former student of Carl Jung, Dr Raudive had been forced to flee from his native Latvia when it was invaded and annexed by the Soviet Union in 1945. Thereafter, he became well-known as a writer on experimental psychology.

Dr Raudive also began recording tests on the mysterious voices with conspicuous success; and between 1965 and his death in 1974, in partnership with physicist Dr Alex Schneider of St Gallen, Switzerland, and Theodor Rudolph, a specialist in high-frequency electronic engineering, he made over 100,000 tapes under stringent laboratory conditions. An exhaustive analysis of his work was published in Germany in the late 1960s, under the title *The Inaudible Made Audible*. This caught the attention of British publisher Colin Smythe, who subsequently brought out an English language edition, entitled *Breakthrough*.

Peter Bander, who wrote the preface to the book, later gave an account of how he first heard a strange voice on tape. This nicely illustrates what happens as a rule, and also points out the objective nature of the phenomenon. Colin Smythe had bought a new tape and had followed Dr Raudive's instructions on how to 'contact' the voices. A certain rhythm resembling a human voice had been recorded, but it was unintelligible to Smythe. Peter Bander played the relevant portion of tape over two or three times, and suddenly became aware of what the voice was saying. It was a woman's, and it said: 'Mach die Tür mal auf - German for 'Open the door'. Bander immediately recognised the voice as that of his dead mother - he had been in the habit of conducting his correspondence with her by tape recordings for several years before she died. What is more, the comment was apt: his colleagues often chided him for shutting his office door.

Startled by the voice, Bander asked two people who did not speak German to listen and write down what they heard phonetically. Their versions matched what he had heard exactly. Dr Bander was now convinced of the authenticity of the voices.

Since the publication of *Breakthrough* in 1971, serious research has begun in all parts of the world, and the interest of two very different bodies reflects the spiritual and temporal aspects of the voices. Even the Vatican has shown a great deal of 'off the record' awareness of the phenomena, and a number of

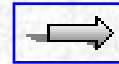
distinguished Catholic priest-scientists have conducted experiments of their own. Pre-eminent among these researchers was the late Professor Gebhard Frei, an internationally recognised expert in the fields of depth psychology, parapsychology and anthropology. Dr Frei was the cousin of the late Pope Paul VI who, in 1969, decorated Friedrich Jürgenson with the Commander's Cross of the Order of St Gregory the Great, ostensibly for documentary film work about the Vatican. But, as Jürgenson told Peter Bander in August 1971, he had found 'a sympathetic ear for the voice phenomenon in the Vatican.'

The interest of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) also came to light in the late 1960s when two American engineers from Cape Kennedy visited Dr Raudive at Bad Krozingen. The visitors examined Dr Raudive's experiments minutely and asked many 'unusually pertinent questions', as well as making helpful comments. They refused, unfortunately, to give the scientist any indication of what relevance the voice phenomena might have to Americas space programme.

But as Dr Raudive reasoned, if he could achieve clear and regular results on his relatively simple equipment, how much more likely was it that the sophisticated recorders carried in spacecraft would pick up the voices? From whatever source they spring, Jürgenson's voices represent the start of a whole new field in the study of the paranormal.



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The Warning Voice

The sinking of the Titanic, the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers, and the Aberfan disaster - all have been the subject of remarkable successes on the part of those with the extraordinary gift of precognition.

At 5 o'clock one morning in 1979, a knock at her apartment door woke Helen Tillotson from a very deep sleep. Suddenly, she heard her mother calling out: 'Helen, are you there? Let me in!' Helen hurried to the door to find out what was wrong. Her mother, Mrs Marjorie Tillotson, who lived in a Philadelphia apartment block just across the street, demanded to know why Helen had been knocking on her door a few minutes earlier.

Helen, 26, assured her mother that she had gone to bed at 11 o'clock the previous night and had not woken at all until she heard her mother knocking at the door. 'But I saw you. I spoke to you,' said Mrs Tillotson. She said Helen had told her to follow her home immediately without asking questions.

Suddenly, there was a loud noise from outside. Both women rushed to the window: across the street, a gas leak in Mrs Tillotson's block had caused an explosion, and her apartment was gutted. 'If she had been asleep there at the time,' said a fire chief, 'I doubt whether she would have got out alive.'

Had Helen been sleep-walking? Or did her mother have a psychic vision? Whatever the explanation, either mother or daughter had apparently sensed the danger of an explosion, and saved Mrs Tillotson's life. Such incidents are known as premonitions; and although they are rare, enough cases have been documented to suggest that mysteriously, some people do seem able to catch a glimpse of the future.

Premonition of death

Early in 1979, Spanish hotel executive Jaime Castell had a dream in which a voice told him he would never see his unborn child, due in three months. Convinced that he would die, Castell took out a 50,000 (pounds) insurance policy - payable only on his death, with no benefits if he lived. Weeks later, as he drove from work at a steady 50 mph (80 km/h), another car travelling in the opposite direction at over 100 mph (160 km/h) went out of control, hit a safety barrier, somersaulted and landed on top of Castell's car. Both drivers were killed instantly.

After paying the 50,000 (Pounds) to Castell's widow, a spokesman for the insurance company said that a death occurring so soon after such a specific policy had been taken out would normally have to be investigated thoroughly. 'But this incredible accident rules out any suspicion. A fraction of a second either way and he would have escaped.'

Sometimes a number of people will even have forebodings of the same event. Many of them have no direct connection with the tragedy they foresee; but some, like Eryl Mai Jones, become its victims. On 20 October 1966, this nine-year-old Welsh girl told her mother she had dreamt that, when she had gone to school, it was not there. 'Something black had come down all over it,' she said. Next day she went to school in Aberfan - and half a million tons of coal waste slithered down onto the mining village, killing Eryl and 139 others, most of them children.

After the disaster, many people claimed to have had premonitions about it. They were investigated by a London psychiatrist, Dr John Barker, who narrowed them down to 60 he felt were genuine. So impressed was he by this evidence for premonitions of the tragedy that he helped set up the British Premonitions Bureau, to record and monitor such occurrences. It was hoped the Bureau could be used to give early warning of similar disasters and

enable lives to be saved.

When Dr Barker analysed the Aberfan premonitions, he noticed that there had been a gradual build-up during the week before the Welsh tip buried the school, reaching a peak on the night before the tragedy. Two Californian premonitions bureaux - one at Monterey, south of San Francisco, the other at Berkeley - have since sifted through predictions from members of the public in the hope of detecting a similar pattern.

Sceptics often point out that information about premonitions is published only after the event, and that the vast majority of such predictions are discarded when they are found to be wrong. This may be true in many cases, but there are exceptions.

Prophet arrested

A Scottish newspaper, the Dundee Courier & Advertiser, carried a story on 6 December 1978, headlined 'Prophet didn't have a ticket.' It told of the appearance of Edward Pearson, 43, at Perth Sheriff Court, charged with travelling on the train from Inverness to Perth on 4 December without paying the proper fare.

Pearson - described as 'an unemployed Welsh prophet' - was said to have been on his way to see the Minister of the Environment to warn him about an earthquake that would hit Glasgow in the near future. The Courier's readers doubtless found it very amusing. But they were not so amused by the earthquake that shook them in their beds three weeks later, causing damage to buildings in Glasgow and other parts of Scotland. Earthquakes in Britain are rare; and prophets who predict them are even rarer. But the most remarkable prophecy ever made must surely be the story of the Titanic, the great ocean liner which sank on her maiden voyage in 1912 with terrible loss of life. In 1898, a novel by a struggling writer, Morgan Robertson, had predicted the disaster with uncanny accuracy.

Robertson's story told of a 70,000-tonne vessel, the safest ocean liner in the world, which hit an iceberg in the Atlantic on her maiden voyage. She sank and most of her 2,500 passengers were lost because, incredibly, the liner had only 24 lifeboats - less than half the number needed to save all the passengers and crew on board.

Fiction becomes fact

On 14 April 1912, the real-life tragedy occurred as the 66,000-tonne Titanic was making her maiden voyage across the Atlantic. She, too, hit an iceberg; she, too, sank. And, like the liner in the novel, she did not have enough lifeboats on board - only 20, in fact - and there was terrible loss of life. Of the 2,224 people on board the luxury liner, 1,513 perished in the icy waters. Robertson even came remarkably close to getting the vessel's name right - he had called it the Titan.

Curiously, another work of fiction about a similar tragedy had appeared in a London newspaper some years earlier. The editor was a distinguished journalist, W.T. Stead, who added a prophetic note to the end of the story: 'This is exactly what might take place, and what will take place, if liners are sent to sea short of boats.' By a particularly ironic twist of fate, Stead was one of the passengers on the Titanic who died for that very reason.

Such cases are rare, however, and for every prediction that is fulfilled there are perhaps a thousand that are not. In 1979, the Mind Science Foundation of San Antonio, Texas, USA, came up with a novel experiment to test how accurately people could predict an event. The American Skylab space station had begun to fall out of orbit and, although it was known for certain that it would eventually fall to Earth, scientists did not know when this would occur, nor where it would land. The foundation therefore invited people known to have psychic powers - and

anyone else who wanted to participate - to predict the date of Skylab's fall and the spot on Earth where its remains would land. It called the exercise 'Project Chicken Little', and over 200 people responded to the appeal. Their predictions were analysed and published before Skylab fell. Virtually all were wrong: very few even came close to the date of Skylab's return (11 June), and even fewer guessed that it would land in Australia.

While such experiments to prove that the future can be predicted have not been very successful, some individuals nevertheless seem to excel at prophecy. Nostradamus, for example, the 16th-century seer, made many prophecies that have apparently come true. Not everyone agrees with their interpretation, however. Take this one for example:

'Near the harbour and in two cities will be two scourges, the like of which have never been seen. Hunger, plague within, people thrown out by the sword will cry for help from the great immortal God.'

But what does it predict? Nostradamus' followers say it is a prediction of the atom bomb attacks on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945. But no one could have used his prophecy to foretell these events. In other words, it is hindsight that gives credibility to writing such as this.

Assassinations foretold

Jeane Dixon, a modern seer, successfully predicted the assassinations of President John F Kennedy, his brother, Robert Kennedy, and civil rights leader Martin Luther King. Intriguingly, her premonition of the future President's murder came 11 years before the event and before he had even been elected.

A devout woman, she had gone to St Matthew's Cathedral in Washington one morning in 1952 to pray, and was standing before a statue of the Virgin Mary when she had a vision of the White House. The numerals 1 - 9 - 6 - 0 appeared above it against a dark cloud. A young, blue-eyed man stood at the door. A voice then told her that a Democrat, who would be inaugurated as President in 1960, would be assassinated while in office.

She predicted Kennedy's brother's death in 1968 - in an even more startling way - while addressing a convention at the Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles. She invited questions from the floor and someone asked if Robert Kennedy would ever be president. Suddenly, Jeane Dixon saw a black curtain fall between her and the audience, and she told the questioner: 'No, he will not. He will never be President of the United States, because of a tragedy right here in this hotel.' A week later, Robert Kennedy was gunned down in that very hotel.

Sceptics, of course, will argue that it is impossible to look into the future, many of them feeling that, until the existence of precognition is proved in the laboratory, it cannot be taken seriously. But, although it may not be easy to look ahead at will, there remain on record some extraordinary stories of premonitions that are difficult to explain according to the laws of conventional science - unless there is something wrong with our concept of space and time.

A first-class example of this is the experience of Mark Twain. Before he became a famous writer - and while he was still known by the name of Samuel Clemens - he worked as an apprentice pilot on a steamboat, the *Pennsylvania*, which plied the Mississippi river. His younger brother, Henry, worked as a clerk on the same boat. Samuel went to visit his sister in St Louis; and, while he was there, had a vivid dream, featuring a metal coffin resting on two chairs. In it was his brother and, resting on his chest, a bouquet of white flowers with a crimson one in the middle.

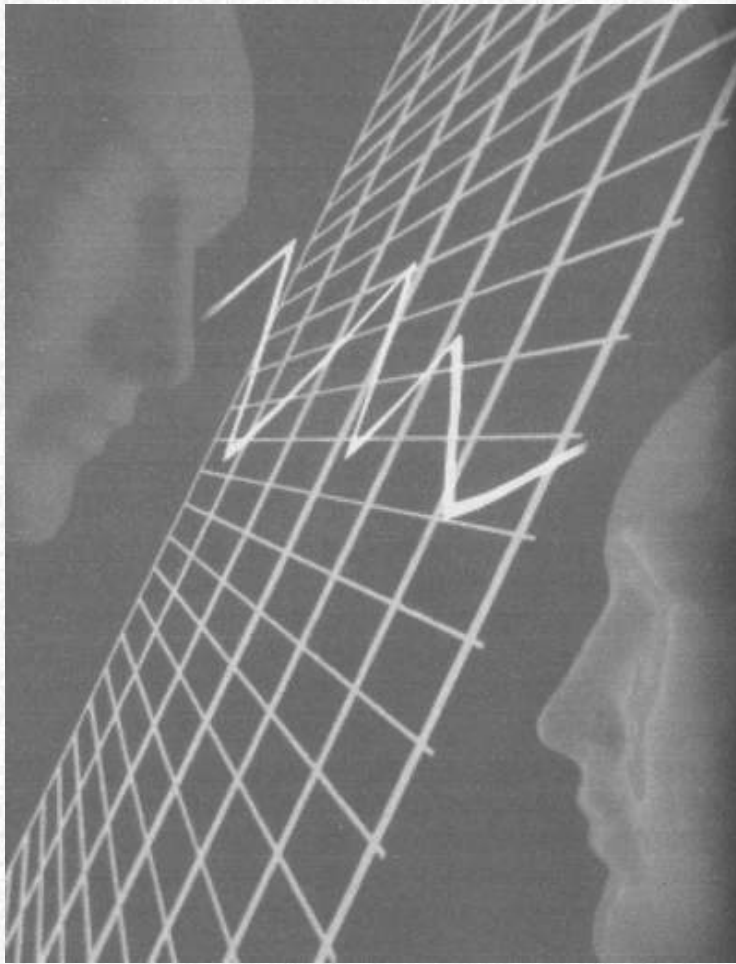
A few days later, back on the boat, Samuel had an argument with the chief pilot of the *Pennsylvania* and was transferred to another boat, the *Lacey*. His brother, however, stayed aboard the *Pennsylvania*, which was travelling

up the river two days ahead of the Lacey. When Samuel reached Greenville, Mississippi, he was told that the Pennsylvania had blown up just outside Memphis with the loss of 150 lives. His brother Henry, however, was still alive, though badly scalded, and Samuel spent six days and nights with him until he died. Exhausted, he fell into a deep sleep. When he awoke, he found his brother's body had been removed from the room, so he went to find it.

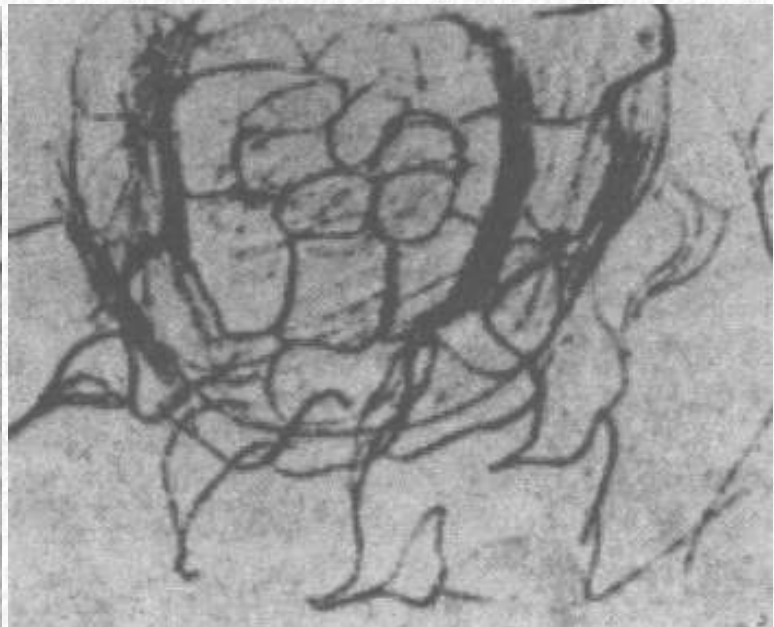
It was just as he had seen it in the dream. Henry was in a metal coffin, which rested on two chairs. But one detail was missing - the flowers. Then, as Samuel watched, an elderly woman entered the room carrying a bouquet of white flowers with a single red rose in the centre. She placed them on Henry's body and left. Mark Twain's glimpse of the future had been fulfilled in practically every detail.



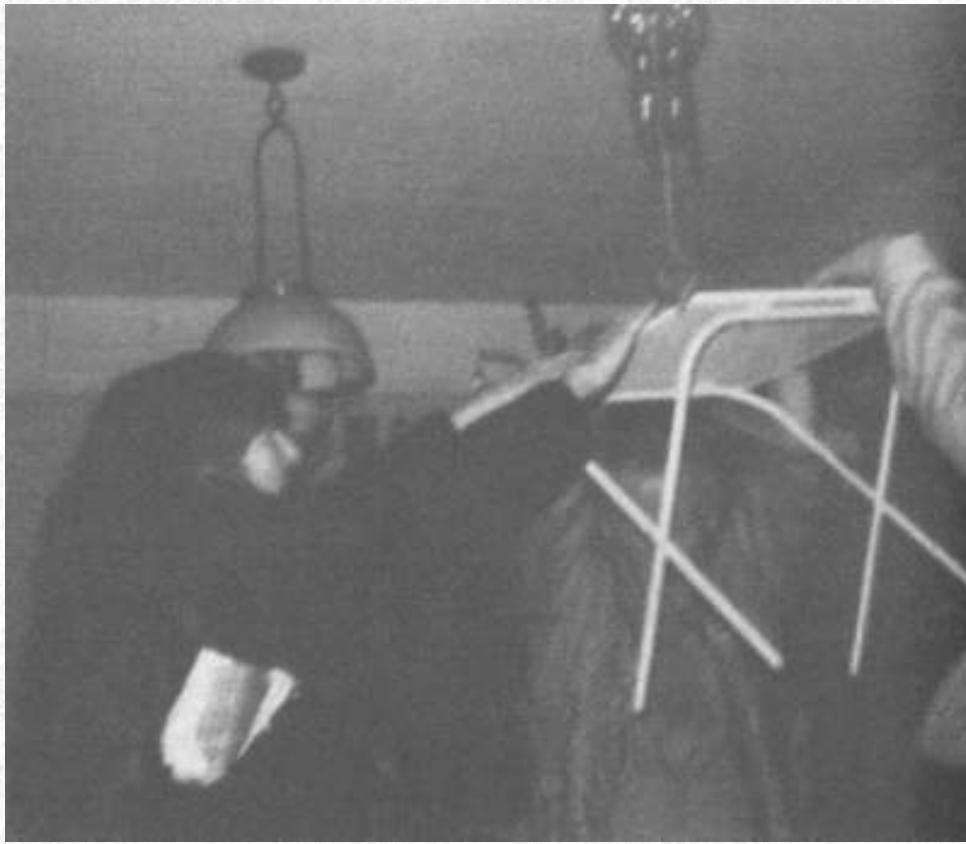
Children and adolescents often have astonishing psychokinetic powers. June Knowles, left, could cause a plastic mobile to move inside a bell jar by thought alone; and a young Californian psychic, David Shepherd, right, specialized at one time in bending metal.



The illustration, above, symbolically depicts the intriguing telepathic link that researchers have found in the dreams of certain subjects with a close relationship.



To test his wife's telepathic powers, American writer Upton Sinclair sent her the sketch of a bird's nest, shown top. It was sealed in an envelope. Prior to opening it, she concentrated on the 'target' and produced the sketch above.



Members of the Society for Research into Rapport and Telekinesis can be seen, above, levitating a table. The group became so good at inducing such phenomena that they were soon regular occurrences at their meetings.



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Battling Against Science

Often deemed the arch-enemy of science, Charles Fort is believed to have gained valuable cosmic understanding as a result of collecting anomalous phenomena.

The publication of *The Book of the Damned* by Charles Hoy Fort in 1919 undoubtedly changed the standard of reporting of anomalous phenomena in the American press for the better. Nonetheless, there was a sting in the tail. For whenever journalists reported a sighting of a sea serpent, or a home disrupted by a poltergeist, or a shower of frogs, they would tend to dismiss such matters as fodder for the arch-enemy of science, Charles Fort.

The unfortunate reputation of Fort as an enemy of science still lingers. Anyone who has actually read his books, however, must disagree, for Fort was extremely well-versed and up-to-date in nearly all branches of science for his day and understood the scientific method, the rules of evidence and proper scholarship. Indeed, he had looked closely at the great and impressive edifice of science and proclaimed it full of cracks. He had found, he said, scientists who made pontifical pronouncements without bothering with the facts of the case, who substituted dogma for true scientific enquiry, and who suppressed, ignored or explained away any embarrassing data. For his part, he was convinced that anomalies could well hold significance for science and should be studied.

The history of science is not one of orderly progression; it resembles more a battle, full of seemingly chaotic advances, retreats and skirmishes. This view of disorder and accident in scientific progress has been endorsed in one of the essential works on the history of science, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, by Thomas Kuhn. At any time in its history, says Kuhn, science is the prisoner of the 'basic preconceptions' of the day. These preconceptions are limiting factors, which he calls 'paradigms'. But paradigms are essential to the formal expression of a science because they serve as models or structures within which to organise whole areas of knowledge and to provide the context for explanations.

Kuhn shows that the rise of a new paradigm in science, and the demise of the outdated one, is not always the 'graceful surrender' by fair-minded individuals that science propagandists would have us believe. On the contrary, it is often as painful and protracted as any religious or political revolution, and for much the same reason. Scientists are human beings with innate weaknesses and worries. They have a great deal invested in their jobs, status and credibility - factors of more value to their security than the ideal of an open mind. Above all, they tend to be loyal to the familiar paradigm.

The classic example of reluctance to accept something new is that of the group of Italian scientists who refused to look through Galileo's telescope lest they, like the Jesuit Clavius, be tempted to abandon their comfortable view of a geocentric Universe on seeing Jupiter's satellites through the instrument. Indeed, the revolutions of moons about Jupiter, the model for the new idea of the solar system, remained in contention for many years after Galileo first proposed the idea.

New paradigms

A new paradigm, or the data that leads to it, can seem threatening, even sinister. So the body of orthodox science behaves like an invaded organism and closes ranks against 'infectious' data. Eventually, anomalies mount up, and there comes a time when they can no longer be ignored. There ensues a crisis period during which whole fields of science are broken apart, the pieces reassembled to incorporate the new data. What was once anomalous is now accepted or explained as a self-evident fact. But recurrent crisis is not only typical of scientific progress, Kuhn says, it is essential to it. In his book *Lot, Fort* called science 'the conventionalization of alleged knowledge,' explaining: 'It acts to maintain itself against further enlightenment, but when giving in, there is not surrender but partnership, and something that had been bitterly fought then becomes another factor in its prestige.'

The study of strange phenomena is clearly not at the same stage of development as mainstream science. In the field of 'anomalistics', as some American scholars call it, collections of oddities have long abounded. Indeed, many of the works of Greek philosophers such as Pliny, Pausanias and Athenaeus are rich in so-called *Fortean*a. So are the writings of travellers such as Ibn Batutah and Marco Polo, and of the compilers of early bestiaries and natural histories such as Olaus Magnus and Edward Topsell, their work forming a vast data base on subjects currently lumped under the heading of unexplained phenomena.

An unbridgeable gap

Fort also was convinced that orthodox science is, by its own definition, 'exclusionist'. A scientific experiment, for example, is an attempt to isolate something from the rest of the Universe. The flaw of orthodoxy lies in its attempts to put things into units or categories. Yet anyone who has seriously investigated strange data knows that they usually defy categorisation. Exclusionist science functions well enough, but bases its criteria on arbitrary decisions.

As science progresses, such distinctions become obsolete and collapse. Thus, in the early 19th century, many biologists still regarded living things as essentially different from non-living things: for these 'vitalists' there was an unbridgeable gap between the animate and inanimate worlds.

But from around 1828 onwards, as chemists learned to synthesise organic compounds (compounds such as urea or acetic acid, which are produced by living organisms), the distinction between the animate and the inanimate lost its fundamental importance. Today, there is a tendency to forget that many of the dividing lines drawn by contemporary science - such as that between mind and matter, for example - may be redrawn or abandoned; and scientists frequently slavishly accept or reject data by criteria that are, at best, transient. It is clear that this arbitrary structure predetermines how we interrogate the Universe and how we interpret its answers. The German physicist Werner K. Heisenberg wrote: 'What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning.' In other words, light will behave like a wave or a particle according to the context in which it is investigated.

The barriers between the acceptable and unacceptable in science are changing all the time: moreover, what is dismissed as magic or superstition by one era may even become the science of the next.

The great French chemist Antoine Lavoisier told the Academy of Sciences in 1769 that only peasants could believe stones could fall from the sky, because 'there are no stones in the sky.' Indeed, it was his influence that prevented scientific study of meteorites - 'stones from the sky' - until 1803.

Radical progress

But some barriers are gradually breaking down. Indeed, today's life sciences contain much by way of rehabilitated folklore: old herbals have been used for new pharmaceuticals and the practices of shamans have been adapted for new treatments. Apparitional phenomena, once the preserve of theologians and demonologists, are now the subject of both psychical research and psychology. What is more, a number of Fort's special correlations - strange lights on the Moon, curious aerial lights, sounds that accompany earthquakes, lunar periodicities in biological processes and behaviour, lake monsters and UFOs - all are matters of serious academic study today.

In answer to how strange phenomena could relate to the main body of science, Fort suggested that it was science that would eventually make the move to assimilate anomalous phenomena by adopting a more 'inclusive' approach. Inclusionists would 'substitute acceptance for belief', he said, but only temporarily until better data or theories arose. This is exactly what true scientists do, of course - because, for them, enquiring after the truth is more important than being right or first. Inclusionism would recognise a state of existence in which all things, creatures, ideas and phenomena were interrelated and so of an underlying oneness. From his thousands of notes, Fort saw that the Universe functioned more like an organism than a machine and that, while general principles applied universally, deviations and anomalies were the inevitable result of local expression of those principles.

This almost mystical view anticipated C.G. Jung's notion of the collective unconscious and echoed similar beliefs that appear in the cosmologies of primitive and animistic religions. Yet another theory, in which the world is seen as functioning more like an organism than a machine, emerged in 1981. This was Dr Rupert Sheldrake's principle of formative causation. This appears to offer philosophical tools for exploring continuity and synchronicity by postulating a resonance between forms of similar structure, whether living or not, that operates outside time and space.

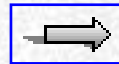
In earlier ages, most cultures had an appreciation of anomalies that we have lost. They also had some framework in which to study them, usually as omens or portents of social change. Priests in rural Scandinavia in the late medieval period were obliged to report to their bishops anything contrary to the natural order, for example, and the chronicles that survive are treasure troves of sea serpent sightings, falls of mice and fish, animal battles and other strange phenomena.

Today, such stories are absent from most scientific journals, and are instead used as small filler paragraphs in newspapers, often written up inaccurately and just for laughs. But one day, when orthodox

science widens its circle of attention and comes to realise that possibly there is much to be learned from thorough investigation of reports of bizarre occurrences, the task of assimilating such Fortean phenomena will have been made easier by dedicated collectors of obscure and weird data.



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Mass Hysteria

Its symptoms are often similar to those of serious illness - but hysteria spreads faster than any known disease. How can this be possible? Is there perhaps a link with some form of ESP?

Reports of outbreaks of mass hysteria in places throughout the world, together with the limited amount of research that has been done on the subject, strongly suggest that certain long accepted assumptions about the phenomenon should be revised. Three aspects, in particular, need reconsidering.

Firstly, it is unwise to think of hysteria simply in terms of self-indulgent shamming. A better description would be a 'breakdown' which, whether nervous or physical, may provide a form of protection from an intolerable situation by removing the victim from it. Thus, it can at times be seen to perform the same valuable function as does a fuse wire in an electrical circuit.

Secondly, the symptoms of hysteria are not necessarily always those we tend to associate with the term. In general, they will tend to manifest themselves in whatever form is associated with breakdown of normal behaviour by the society in which they occur.

Thirdly, the diagnosis of 'hysteria' should not be regarded as a sign that there was nothing really wrong with the victim. On the contrary, the prevalence of such outbreaks suggests that they should definitely be carefully investigated in order to find out precisely how displays of mob hysteria occur and for what reasons.

So what is the force that takes over a group of people and, in effect, breaks them down, inducing a range of symptoms that may vary enormously in different circumstances, but that are generally quite consistent within a single outbreak? What, in other words, is the nature of 'psychic' contagion, a phenomenon that results in scores or even hundreds of people breaking down at, or around, the same time, in much the same way - even when they are not all within sight of one another, so that simple imitation can be ruled out?

When dealing with such problems, it is always worth looking back over Man's evolutionary past, to see if there are any parallels. In this case, there are. Indeed, many species appear to use methods of communication that biologists have yet to explain.

At its most basic level, this communication seems to take place between cells. In his book *Supernature*, Lyall Watson describes the remarkable capacity of the common or bathroom sponge - a colony of cells in its natural ocean habitat - to reconstitute itself in similar form if destroyed. 'Some sponges grow to several feet in diameter,' Watson observes, 'and yet, if you cut them up and squeeze the pieces through silk cloth to separate every cell from its neighbour, the gruel soon gets together and organises itself and the complete sponge reappears.'

In his book *The Soul of the White Ant*, the South African scientist Eugene Marais describes his experiments with colonies of ants. These revealed that, although groups of ants and even individual ants were engaged in separate pursuits at any given time - feeding the queen, collecting the food for her, storing it, building larders for it, or fighting off intruders - the activities of all of them were dictated by what, for want of a better word, he felt bound to call a 'soul'.

Birds of a feather

The behaviour of starlings is a good example of such collective behaviour on a larger scale. Thousands of starlings roost in London, but they spend their days in the countryside, where food is more plentiful. At a certain time in the evening, starlings all round London - as far away as Essex and the Home Counties - will begin to make the same inward journey, so that day after day the flocks can be tracked on radar, spreading outwards in the morning, moving inwards in the evening.

Even more remarkable is the group behaviour of these starlings as they fly out and back. They do not follow a leader; rather, it is as if, in their whirling's, they are directed by what Marais termed a 'soul'.

The most plausible explanation for this kind of behaviour is that it depends on a form of communication that developed early in the evolutionary process. In the case of ants, it was a form of diversification, enabling the community as a whole to survive while various groups within it performed their various tasks. In birds, it developed into a mechanism for the protection of the group, providing large flocks of birds with collective guidance for their movements.

Could it be, therefore, that mass hysteria is a relic of a similar collective human instinct - an evolutionary device that by this point in time has largely outlived its usefulness?

This seems a likely hypothesis: but we are still no nearer an explanation of the way in which the symptoms are transmitted in an outbreak of mass hysteria. The most promising line of research in this connection has been into pheromones, free-floating scent molecules, the discovery of which has helped scientists to account for the way in which, for example, males of a species will come clustering round a female who is on heat.

In her novel *The Group*, Mary McCarthy claimed that women living in close contact with each other tend to menstruate at the same time; and research at Harvard and elsewhere has since shown that this is correct. Room-mates' periods do tend to move into synchronisation; and so do those of close friends who spend a great deal of time together. Pheromones are currently front-runners in the search for an explanation. But if pheromones are the channel of communication in this case, may they not serve the same purpose in other epidemics that hitherto have been thought to be spread solely by infection?

The pheromone connection

In a fascinating research project, two eminent astronomers, Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe,

demonstrated that, contrary to common assumption, influenza does not necessarily spread by person-to-person contact - a fact that had already been established globally, as large-scale epidemics do not follow the course that would be expected if person-to-person infection were the sole agent of the spread of the disease. The same phenomenon has been confirmed at the Common Cold Research Unit at Salisbury in England. Coughs and sneezes seem to be the obvious suspects, but they are not always guilty.

So in what other way might epidemics spread? An alternative theory is that viruses are constantly all around us, but that we can resist them unless, and until, an epidemic is signalled - by pheromones.

Pheromones, however, take us only part of the way on this voyage of discovery. Eugene Marais, who knew nothing of pheromones but had convinced himself that the secret of ant communication must lie in scent, was imaginative enough to recognise that the kind of scent involved was not quite the kind we generally think of. It was misleading, he argued, to assume the existence of a gas, or microscopic particles. 'Perfume is not entirely a physical substance. You may scent a large room for ten years with a small piece musk, and yet there will not be any loss of weight.' Scent, he felt, should be thought in terms of 'waves in the ether.'

Much of Marais' work has been superseded by subsequent research, but it remains stimulating. In *Tuning in to Nature*, Philip S Callahan, of the University of Florida, followed up Marais' idea, and came to the same conclusion: the sensory mechanism involved in ant communication is not straight smell. Insects, he claims, 'smell' odours electronically, by tuning into the narrow band infra-red radiation. If this turns out to be correct, and Callahan certainly presents impressive evidence for his theory, then the traditional assumptions about the way epidemics of all kinds are spread will need to be re-examined.

The origin of a number of serious conditions is still uncertain: these include epilepsy, Legionnaire's disease, Parkinsonism and multiple sclerosis. To date, the whole weight of research into their causes and spread has been on the quest for some common biological factor - germs, a virus, biochemical mix-up, or toxic substances. But up to the present moment, this research has achieved little.

Looters on the rampage

Sometimes, researchers find what they believe at the time to be the cause - and it is triumphantly paraded. But soon, other contributory factors are identified - or the suspected virus is also found in the bodies of perfectly healthy people. The whole idea that illnesses are always caused by viruses is, in fact, beginning to fall into discredit in many respects. Instead, it is now thought likely that their role is more like that of 'looters', who come out on the rampage only when law and order - in this case, the orderly and healthy functioning of the human body - have broken down.

But what causes this sort of breakdown, and resulting epidemics? The answer, of course, is that we do not know as yet. However, a detailed study of mass hysteria might perhaps bring us closer to an explanation.

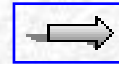
Many fascinating questions remain to be answered. Do pheromones elicit the responses that result in an epidemic, for instance? Or could it be that pathogens from outer space, falling to Earth, are responsible for disease, as Hoyle and Wickramasinghe have also suggested? Or is there perhaps some as yet undiscovered psychokinetic force - as reported so often in accounts of hauntings or poltergeist activity - that can affect groups?

Late in November 1978, a horrified world learned of the appalling mass suicide at Jonestown in the jungles of Guyana, on the northern coast of South America. There were 900 victims, all members of a religious sect known as the People's Temple, led by the psychopathic Reverend Jim Jones. It was a clear case of mass hysteria that made them succumb to the orders of a madman that they should kill themselves by drinking potassium cyanide mixed with a sweet fizzy drink.

More serious and systematic investigation of mass hysteria could provide the answers not merely to these questions, but to much that is imperfectly understood, or misunderstood, about disease in general. It might also help solve many of the problems that have baffled biologists in their study of animal, bird and insect behaviour, and psychologists in their study of the ways in which men and women communicate when no contact through the ordinary senses seems possible.



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Elusive Phenomena

It is often claimed that psychokinesis - the power of the human mind to influence physical objects - consistently proves elusive to investigators. Yet many exponents of PK have been tested under laboratory conditions over the years, with most fascinating results.

Of all paranormal phenomena, psychokinesis has proved the most difficult to pin down under experiment. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as 'the movement of physical objects by mental influence without physical contact'; more simply, it is mind over matter.

Psychokinesis manifests itself in many ways: the bending of pieces of metal; the movement of objects; the influencing of chemical processes such as the development of photographic film and of biological substances like blood or body tissue - all without direct contact or any explanation in terms of orthodox physics.

Psychokinesis - PK for short - has a long history and has engaged the attentions of scientists since at least the 17th century, when the English philosopher Sir Francis Bacon suggested using 'the motions of shuffling cards, or casting dice' as a way of testing what he described as 'the binding of thoughts.' (This is, of course, precisely what Dr J. B. Rhine did more than two centuries later, when he embarked upon his 50-year study of psychic phenomena under laboratory conditions.)

However, it was only after the birth of Spiritualism in the mid-19th century that serious attempts were made to find out exactly what was going on. In 1854, the French politician Count Agenor de Gasparin published an account of table turning experiments in Switzerland, and concluded that the human will could act on matter at a distance.

This opinion was supported the following year by Professor Marc Thury, a pioneer of telekinetic investigation at the University of Geneva. Both men reached their conclusions quite independently of each other, following thorough and extensive experiments with groups of friends, and neither thought it necessary to bring in the idea of 'spirits' to explain the workings of what they saw as a hitherto unrecognized force in nature.

At the same time, across the Atlantic, Professor Robert Hare of Pennsylvania University was determined to debunk what he called the 'popular madness' and 'gross delusion' of followers of Spiritualism. But after a number of careful experiments using standard laboratory equipment - in one of them, he succeeded in recording the exertion of a force equal to 18 pounds (8 kilograms) on an empty spring balance - he changed his mind, and even became a Spiritualist himself.

The psychic force

Then, in May 1871, two eminent English parapsychologists embarked upon a series of 29 wellcontrolled

and documented tests. One was the outstanding medium D.D. Home; the other was William Crookes, a foremost scientist of his time, who had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society while still in his thirties for his discovery of the element thallium, and who was later knighted. Crookes was soon fully convinced that Home was able to produce a variety of genuine PK effects, ranging from rappings on tables and levitations of objects (including people, among them Mrs Crookes) to alterations in the weight of inert bodies. Many such effects were measured and recorded. There was, Crookes declared confidently, a new form of energy, which he called the 'psychic force'.

He was also one of the first to draw attention to the 'manifest relationship to certain psychological conditions' of what we now call PK - the fact that psychic abilities are closely linked to the state of mind of the subject; and suggested that PK implies the existence of other dimensions, with the observer 'in infinitesimal and inexplicable contact with a plane of existence not his own.'

Later research gave Crookes' ideas considerable support, and many of his experiments with Home were repeated by several European scientists, including the French Nobel laureate Charles Richet and the English physicist Sir Oliver Lodge, with the Neapolitan medium Eusapia Palladino as subject. She was studied intensively over more than two decades, most successfully by a three-man team from the British Society for Psychical Research, headed by the Hon. Everard Feilding, in 1908.

Although Eusapia Palladino was not above faking 'paranormal' phenomena when she was unable to produce real ones, the team recorded a total of 470 events that satisfied them as being truly inexplicable. In their 263-page report, one of the classics of psychical research, Feilding and his two colleagues, Dr Hereward Carrington and WW Bagally - who, as well as being experienced psychical researchers, were also good amateur magicians - testified to their complete certainty as to the genuineness of the phenomena.

It seemed that more evidence for the existence of PK was hardly necessary; but the case of a young Polish medium, Stanislaw Tomczyk, provided useful confirmation. She was carefully studied between 1912 and 1914 by a number of researchers, including Feilding (who later married her). He noted that, while she could produce poltergeist-like phenomena spontaneously, and unexpectedly, in her normal state, she could also produce them more or less to order under hypnosis, making spoons and matchboxes move around and even rise into the air, just by placing her hands near them.

Binding thoughts

Thus, by the time Dr J. B. Rhine began his statistical analysis of PK in his laboratory at Duke University in North Carolina, USA, in 1934, there was already a volume of experimental evidence for its existence. Rather than amass still more evidence from the seance room, Rhine preferred to follow Francis Bacon's suggestion and see if people could indeed 'bind' their thoughts to dice and influence the way in which they fell.

After a series of rigorous experiments, using specially designed throwing machines to prevent any

possibility of the subjects being able to influence the outcome physically, Rhine was able to report that they could. His subjects - not people with any particular psychic ability, simply a more or less random selection of friends and students - recorded statistically significant results, sometimes against odds of millions to one.

As a result, towards the end of his career, Rhine was able to state his view that PK, like telepathy and clairvoyance, is an 'oft-repeated, demonstrated experimental fact', and is actually an ability that we all possess. But important as they were, Dr Rhine's findings left the world no wiser as to the mechanisms involved in PK. It seemed that it was produced by the influence of the human mind, and that certain paranormal phenomena, previously ascribed to other causes, might also have psychological explanations.

In 1964, a British psychologist, Kenneth J. Batcheldor, set out with a group of trusted friends to try to reproduce PK phenomena, using nothing more than positive thinking and a considerable amount of patience. If people really believed something could happen, he reasoned, then it would. And, sure enough, it did. In the course of 200 sittings, many of them recorded on tape, the experimental group was able to produce many of the phenomena that had usually been associated with the séance room - except that, in this case, no 'spirits' had been invoked.

The table at which the group sat rapped in reply to questions, tilted in all directions, and repeatedly rose into the air, even when somebody sat on it. At other times, it resisted attempts to move it 'as if it had been glued to the floor.' Cold breezes - a frequently reported feature of poltergeist cases - were felt, 'like standing in front of an open refrigerator'; objects were thrown around the room by unknown means; and one sitter was dumped on the floor as his chair was pulled from under him 'as if by a steel hand.'

An interesting feature of Batcheldor's work, also reported by a group in Toronto and the SORRAT (Society for Research into Rapport and Telekinesis) researchers in the USA, was that, although PK could certainly be produced to order, it tended to get out of control and manifest itself in the least expected ways, indicating either the action of some kind of subconscious force in the subjects, or the presence of independent entities - a possibility that seemed to lead right back to the controversial claims of the 19th-century Spiritualists. Whatever PK was, it was proving very elusive, and it came as a relief to researchers when physical mediums, who seemed to have disappeared from the scene altogether, suddenly began to reappear in the late 1960s. At last, it seemed to researchers that they had a more reliable source of PK phenomena.

Answer to a prayer

The most important of these physical mediums was Nina Kulagina, a Russian woman born in the 1920s who first became known to researchers in the West in 1968. She was rare among psychics in being a powerful PK medium who co-operated fully with scientists and was able to produce effects to order 80 per cent of the time. She was filmed in action several times, and there is no evidence that she ever used trickery. Benson Herbert, a British investigator, called her 'the answer to a parapsychologist's prayer.'

Kulagina could make small objects move either towards or away from her on a table top, and even cause three different articles to move in different directions at once. She was observed stopping a pendulum and then setting it swinging in a different plane. She caused the downward movement of one pan of a scale while the other pan carried an extra weight. In addition, according to the Russian psychic researcher Dr G.A. Sergeyev, she was able to stop the beating of a frog's heart and - even more alarming - to give a sceptical observer a heart attack.

Benson Herbert had good reason to believe in her powers. When she placed a hand on his forearm during a series of experiments held in a Leningrad hotel room in 1973, he felt unbearable heat. 'I think it possible,' he said, 'that if Kulagina had maintained her grip on my arm for half-an-hour or so, I would have followed the way of the frog.' Fortunately, like many PK mediums, she also appeared to have some healing abilities, and apparently managed to revive a dead fish in a tank on at least one occasion.

After seeing a film of Kulagina in action, a New York medical technician, Felicia Parise, decided to see if she, too, could move things with her mind. After more than two months of hard practice, she succeeded, and was able to cause movement of a plastic bottle under the watchful lens of a film camera. Then, in one of her few elaborate experiments, she was asked to try to deflect the needle of a compass that had been mounted inside an electronic metal detector and placed on a sealed packet of film. The needle swung through 15°, stopped, and would not move even when researchers Graham and Anita Watkins put a magnet near it. But when they removed the compass from the 'target area', the needle returned to north; when they put it back on the original spot, the needle again moved 15° and once more resisted attempts to move it with the magnet. The film under the compass was found to be strongly exposed, though pieces of film at other nearby locations were only partly exposed. This suggested that Parise had created a localized magnetic field through mind-power alone - a field that remained for some minutes after she had ceased to concentrate on it.

Psychic success

Parise might have become a second Kulagina, but she ended her brief career in PK in 1974, finding that the work was becoming too much of a strain. In the same year, the British psychic Matthew Manning began a three-year period of extensive laboratory tests before devoting himself to healing, and Benson Herbert published his work with another British medium, Suzanne Padfield whom he found to be consistently successful in influencing the intensity of a beam of polarized light.

Meanwhile, in the USA, New York artist Ingo Swann performed a number of successful PK tests in different laboratories, including the alteration of the temperature registered by an electronic sensor and the interference on the chart record of a shielded magnetometer.

The SORRAT group also continued to produce remarkable results. It was found, for instance, that areas of coldness would develop around their target objects; and it became almost 'normal' for them to hear strange rapping's that seemed to display intelligence in using codes to answer questions, thereby opening up a two-way channel of communication between an 'agency' or hidden force and the group.

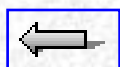
The 'agency' itself even claimed at one point to consist of a group of spirits. But their identity remained unclear. Gradually, the group's PK results became so strong that a table weighing all of 37 kilograms (82 pounds) was successfully levitated; while a light metal tray was made to remain in the air, without support, for a full three minutes. The 'agency' also caused direct writing: sometimes, it was mere scrawl, but whole words and even completely coherent messages were occasionally received.

Most commonly, it is thought that PK requires massive concentration on the part of the experimenters. But the work of the SORRAT group served to disprove this. Indeed, they produced evidence for a great many instances of entirely spontaneous psychokinesis. This was a particularly momentous discovery.

Other PK phenomena put to the test include the metal-bending feats of Uri Geller and others, and the well-known, equally famous 'thought photographs' (pictures taken without a camera and with the mind only) of American bell-hop Ted Serios. Advances in technology and research methods are, it seems, matched by the abilities of exponents of PK, for which no limit has yet been established.

'It staggers my imagination to conceive all the implications that follow now that it has been shown that the mind, by some means as unknown as the mind itself, has the ability directly to affect material operations in the world around it,' said Rhine, after a lifetime of studying PK and other psychic phenomena. 'Mind,' he concluded, 'is what the man in the street thought it was all along - something of a force in itself... '

Scientists must surely begin to take PK and other hidden forces into account if we are ever to reach a full understanding of the whole nature of Man and the astonishing powers and potential of the human mind.



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