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# SECOND LOOK



## DRAGONS

AND POINTS EAST  
Dreams, The Occult  
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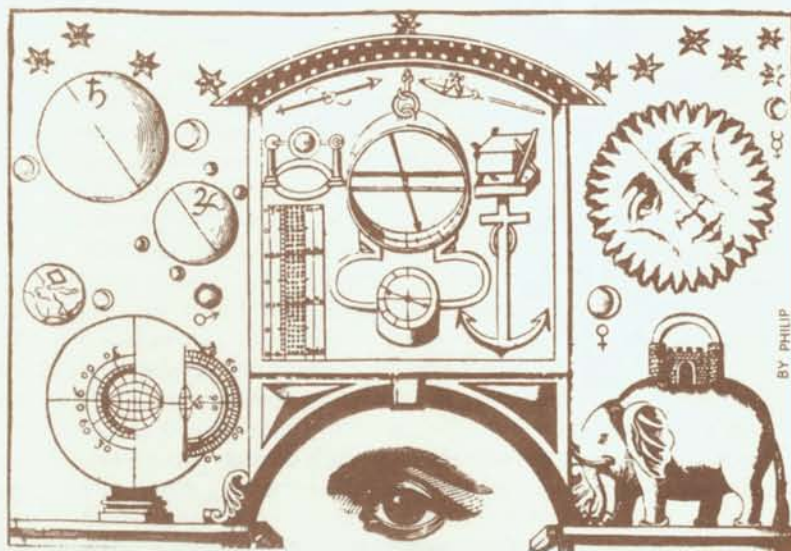
Messengers of Deception

Radio Signals from Space?

Lifecloud – Was Life Brought to Earth by Comets?

# The Eye Inside The Mind

by Robert K.G. Temple



*Note: This is the third in a series of retrospective reviews of important books which have not been newly published. Robert K.G. Temple is senior editor of Second Look and author of The Sirius Mystery. He resides in rural England.*

## DIVIDED CONSCIOUSNESS: MULTIPLE CONTROLS IN HUMAN THOUGHT AND ACTION

by Ernest R. Hilgard

John Wiley & Sons, New York, London, Sydney, Toronto, 1977, pp. 300

Anyone interested in the workings of the human mind should read this extraordinary book by one of the world's most distinguished psychologists, who is acknowledged in his field to know probably more about the phenomena of which he writes here than anyone else alive today. He has a remarkable breadth of vision and, like all major thinkers, is largely unconfined by fashion, habit, or convention in the formulation of his ideas. This book, because it is from a scientific publishing house, and is ostensibly addressed to Hilgard's colleagues, *seems to be* just a scientific book. But it is thoroughly accessible to any moderately educated person in the arts, and is guaranteed to enliven the jaded ennui of even the most bored armchair *savant*. If you can read this book and still look upn the workings of your own mind in the same way, you are either ineffably wise to start with (in which case, why read?), or beyond all help. This book is one of those rare intellectual adventures which will transform your awareness irrevocably.

Perhaps because he has spent a lifetime putting thousands of people under hypnosis, Hilgard's tone in writing seems effortlessly to encompass the immense range of his erudition and marshal the vast array of facts like dream-battalions which require no exertion to form into regiments on the shining, perfect parade grounds of anyone's imagination. Somehow the facts, as troops, stand all at attention, and Hilgard passes through them in his book like a Field Marshal on an inspection tour.

And some of these facts who stand so smartly to attention are revolutionary in their implications, especially when shepherded together in a *magnum opus* like this. For instance, how many of us were aware that "automatic writing" (where a nonconscious part of the mind directs the hand in writing messages on a piece of paper the contents of which are unknown to the conscious mind) is not a mere indulgence of a

handful of mystical little old ladies with teacups and seances on wet afternoons, or an eccentricity for poets' wives—such as Mrs. William Butler Yeats, who sought spirit messages by it—but a useful and respectable laboratory and scientific technique today in psychotherapy? And as for the technique's efficacy, there is this astonishing example:

"Mrs. Case, a St. Louis housewife, began playing with the ouija board. She had not graduated from high school and she showed no evidence of literary capabilities or pretensions. After Patience Worth introduced herself to Mrs. Curran on the ouija board and took over guidance of her hand, Mrs. Curran soon became a successful author with the help of this unseen spirit. Five novels were published under the authorship of Patience Worth between 1917 and 1928; although they were not great, they had some literary merit and received favorable reviews at the time. Gradually the ouija board was displaced, and Patience Worth began dictating directly to Mrs. Curran. There were a number of poems in addition to the novels. This case is of sufficient interest to have been given a recent thorough review (Litvag, 1972)."

For a professional psychologist, Hilgard shows very little fear. By that I mean that he dares to discuss things which really matter. It is the unspoken credo of many psychologists in this century to refuse to admit that the namesake of their discipline, the psyche, actually exists. But in this they resemble other modern professionals in assorted disciplines: theologians who say there is no God; musicians who compose only noise, disdaining music; painters who would never dream of doing a painting (perish the thought!—how much nicer it is to look at a bare canvas, sold for an enormous sum, which represents anguish and despair by being blank); "novelists" like Robbe-Grillet who write "anti-novels"; philosophers who say that philosophy is irrelevant and is to be replaced by linguistics. Similarly, we find states such as the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), which is neither democratic nor a republic. No, there is nothing wrong with us today, it is merely that Humpty Dumpty has paid all the words extra and now they mean what he likes. So it is with psychologists: as any innocent new university student learns very quickly, you do not take a psychology course in order to learn more about the human mind, but to learn more about rats.

Hilgard, however, is no exponent of what Arthur Koestler has called "the ratomorphic view of man." With great

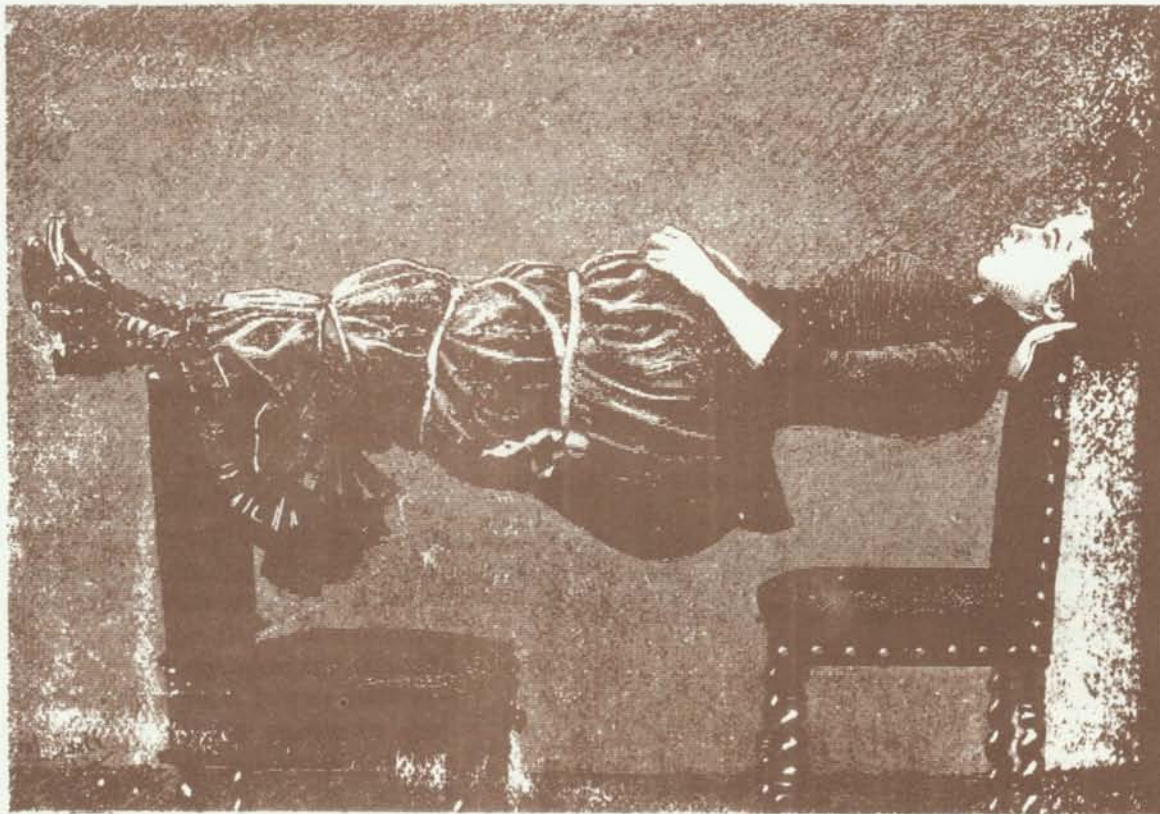
politeness, he administers continual reprimands to behaviourists in the field of psychology, and gently coaxes and nudges them with his collected evidence to liberalize their thought processes and realize that man is not a rat. This might seem a fairly harmless point to try to make, but with psychologists, unfortunately, one is often face to face entirely with Mr. Hyde; Dr. Jekyll is permanently out. Alas, the man in the white coat may be a snarling fanatic, fiercely intolerant, arrogant, pompous, presumptuous, and obnoxious, strutting about with a proud sign pinned to his chest: "There is no freedom, no dignity." Hilgard must infuriate these behaviourists all the more because of the gentle way in which he attacks them: he is like a great dane standing, serene, with a noisome terrier snapping impotently at his heels.

If one reads Professor Hilgard's book, one discovers that there is a whole world out there of truly serious and earnest students of the human psyche, but they are taking refuge in a

tegrate his research and thinking on . . . topics which tend to draw students to the field of academic psychology but which, as they soon discover to their consternation, are not usually dealt with within it. Among the topics included are possession states, multiple personality, hypnotic age regression, amnesia and repression, dreams, hallucinations, imagination, automatic writing, the hypnotic experience, and even spiritualism and the ouija board.

"The theme unifying this sprawl of topics is the doctrine of dissociationism, the view that the 'unity of consciousness is illusory' . . . expressed, for example, by Carl Gustav Jung in his Ravistock Lectures, delivered in 1935: 'The so-called unity of consciousness is an illusion . . . We like to think that we are one but we are not.'"

The review in *Science* appropriately concludes by admitting that "Hilgard's book stands out as unique in contemporary experimental psychology."



A 19th-century illustration of the "raideur cataleptique" induced by hypnosis.

quiet corner of psychology, and one of their rallying points is round *The International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*, published in Philadelphia. For it is the uses and practice of hypnosis which provide a central focus, a distinctive tool, by means of which these men can claw their way out of the rat hole. The phenomena of divided consciousness are indisputably the phenomena of *mind*—not of molecules and neurons. Hilgard says: "For many years psychologists paid little attention to central control functions, avoiding the problems of a central 'will' behind acts that they felt were better understood as 'habits' . . . psychologists had evaded the problems of a planning and initiating self . . . However, now that planning and control functions are gaining recognition, the entire matter of central processes requires examination."

A lengthy review in *Science Magazine* (12 May 1978) describes the book as follows: "Hilgard seeks to in-

When we think of such questions as the nature of intelligent life in the Universe, it should be—but often is not—obvious that the problem we are up against is essentially one of the nature of consciousness. *What kind of minds inhabit the universe?* Too frequently the discussion of these questions is monopolized by talk of formaldehyde molecules discovered in the depths of space or the frequency of planets occurring around stars. But what about the frequency of occurrence of minds around bodies? (And do not assume the mind has to be *in* the body; the body may be suspended in the mind

like a pearl secreted by a diaphanous oyster.) Is dissociated consciousness a freak condition of our species? Are we split personalities unique to our Galaxy? Or is this something quite common in the Universe which we are only now coming to comprehend? *Do we differ or do we resemble?* Perhaps we should begin hypnotizing dolphins, our only captive "alien intelligent species" on our own planet, to see if they have dissociated consciousness too. Hypnosis might anyway be the avenue to communication with them, for in trance their wayward dolphin minds might be focused more intently on our inquiries and less on their own complacency about our problems. There is such a thing as "animal hypnosis" or "fascination," first brought to general public attention in a book in 1646 by Athanasius Kircher. But it has been pointed out that animals seem merely to go into catalepsy, so that it is not actually hypnosis. How would a dolphin score on the Stanford Hypnotic Susceptibility Test which Hilgard so fre-

quently discusses? Alas, he would have to understand English first. But there are means to "fascinate" or induce trance without language.

**P**ossibly the most important discussion in Hilgard's entire book concerns what is called "the hidden observer." It has now been proved beyond doubt that there is a central core of self which is *quite separate from consciousness* and which monitors events from within hypnosis. Hilgard's experiments have dramatically demonstrated that when experimental subjects are deep in trance and feeling no pain while their arms are submerged in ice water for long periods, and the hypnotist asks the "hypnotized self" whether he feels pain and is told "no," a separate communication channel can be established with yet another department of mind, the "hidden observer," who will either interrupt the vocal communication or make its thoughts known by automatic writing, saying that it *does* feel the pain and is perfectly aware that its conscious mind is under the hypnotic spell. Hilgard emphasizes that this level of mind is extraordinarily rational. Unfortunately, Hilgard seems blinded by one of Freud's possibly spurious (or, it would seem, certainly very inadequate) concepts of "primary process" thinking (which is irrational) for the subconscious mind and "secondary process" thinking (which is rational) for the conscious mind. This gets Hilgard into a surprising fix. I say surprising because I would have thought he was too intelligent to be

trapped within the unnecessarily confining limits of this antiquated and over-simplistic Freudian dichotomy, which he does at one point actually disavow, only to resubmit to it again as if he were "fascinated" by it. For when he speaks of the "concealed part that 'knows more'" in the mind, he entirely unjustifiably decides it surely cannot be a "persistent system," for he just can't be comfortable about having to admit that despite its being separate from consciousness, it can nevertheless "be a dissociated fraction (of mind) representing 'secondary process' instead of 'primary process.'" But he does use these very findings to destroy forever the earlier notion in psychology that hypnosis is merely a "state of regression." Indeed, one subject's subjective account of her encounter with her own "hidden observer" is recounted by Hilgard as follows:

"... she indicated that the observing part ... was not hidden, was instead at the top of her hierarchy, observing everything with curiosity." Reactions varied, as he tells us: "There were others who disliked the experience of a hidden observer. One was offended by it throughout. She used the word 'betrayed' to signify what it meant to her." But generally, "The majority report in the interviews was that the hidden observer contributed to a feeling of unity and integration ..."

Our conscious minds are clearly just a portion of our discerning selves. Coming to terms with this realization is a major step towards understanding what one is. If sometimes in the middle of the night you awake and wonder who you are, far from your daily routine and the people around you who reassuringly tell you who you are *to them*, this book may help you. If you want to find out who you are, or at least who you are not, you could do worse than read Ernest Hilgard. □