

*Fifty years ago*



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## A Psychiatrist Looks at Psychic Doubles

*M.D.'s even have a name for psychic  
doubles—“autoscopy phenomena.”  
But that doesn't really explain them.*

by Curtis Fuller

**M**RS. A. WAS a retired school teacher who had been married 25 years when her husband died. She returned home from the funeral; when she opened the door of her bedroom she discovered a strange woman there!

Mrs. A. did not do what most of us would have done under like circumstances. She neither screamed nor fled. Instead, she turned on the light with her right hand and was startled to see the stranger make the same motion with her left hand. When their hands met it seemed to Mrs. A. as if all the blood ran out of her hand. Yet she was neither surprised nor afraid.

She observed the stranger and noticed that she was dressed exactly as she herself was dressed, wearing the same veil, hat and coat.

Mrs. A. continued to be calm. She felt very tired and began to undress. She took off her veil, her hat, and her coat. She was aware that the stranger was doing exactly the same thing. As she looked at the stranger's face she realized that she was seeing a mirror image of herself—a woman dressed as she was dressed, mimicking every action she made, and undressing as she undressed.

Except for one thing. There was no mirror!

It occurred to Mrs. A. that she was looking at her “double.” And it seemed to her that her double was more alive than she was herself. She felt exhausted and lay down on the bed. She shut her eyes and lost sight of her visitor.

Later she said that she felt stronger almost at once. It seemed as if the strength

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that resided within her double had merged with her own strength. Soon she was able to get up, change, and later eat.

This was the first time Mrs. A. had seen her "double" or "astral body" as she came to call it. But after this first meeting the double visited her nearly every day. She could make it disappear by closing her eyes but later it would come back. And later still, even with her eyes closed, Mrs. A. could see her double—with its eyes closed also.

What she saw was something like this: A nearly exact replica of herself from the waist up. It was lifesized, and its face, torso, and hands were especially distinct. The lower part of its body was "misty" and almost transparent.

In addition to seeing her double, Mrs. A. could feel it. She could feel its position in space as well as her own. She told her physician:

"In a detached intellectual way I am fully aware that my 'double' is only an hallucination. Yet I see it; I hear it; I feel it with all my senses. Emotionally, I feel it as a living integral part of myself, as a materialized form of my own 'astral body.' It is me, split and divided..."

THE CASE OF MRS. A. is one of seven recently discussed in the August issue of the *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, published by the American Medical Association. The author is Dr. Narcyz Lukianowicz of Barry Hospital near Bristol, England. His analysis refers also to other detailed studies of this phenomenon.

To Dr. Lukianowicz, the case of Mrs. A.

is not a psychical phenomenon but a medical or, if you prefer, a psychological phenomenon called "autoscopy." Dr. Lukianowicz is a psychiatrist who defines autoscopy in medical terms as a "complex psycho-sensorial hallucinatory perception of one's own body image projected into the external visual space."

The most important part of his definition from a viewpoint of persons who believe in the reality of an "astral body" that can actually be projected is his statement that autoscopic phenomena are "hallucinations." In other words they are not real.

If all alleged projections of the astral body are indeed autoscopic phenomena, then all of them are hallucinations and none of them are real. The dictionary defines "hallucination" as an "illusion" or "an apparent perception, as by sight or hearing, for which there is no real external cause."

All of the cases discussed by Dr. Lukianowicz fall under this category; all are illusions, all are hallucinations.

The question that FATE readers will want answered, therefore, is whether all "astral projections" are likewise hallucinations.

We can say immediately that we do not believe they are. There appear to be a number of striking differences between Dr. Lukianowicz's autoscopic phenomena and genuine astral projections. We will explain these differences later but in order to understand the differences we should examine some of the psychiatrist's other cases and hear what he has to say about them.

**M**R. B. WAS AN ARCHITECT who had an artificial right leg after a grenade injury in World War I. Eight years later he developed epileptic attacks which were preceded by terrible pains in his missing leg,

He first saw his double when a tall man, wearing a suit identical to his own and an identical monocle in his right eye, came through the closed door of his office like a "semi-transparent mass" and slowly approached his desk. The double did not at first limp, but when it left through the closed door it did limp.

Mr. B. was discussing some building plans with a contractor when the double entered. He felt paralyzed, as if all his strength and life had gone into the apparition. Apparently he lost consciousness for a few seconds, although his business visitor noticed nothing except that he seemed unwell.

After the contractor left Mr. B. went to his bedroom and fell asleep. When he awoke he felt fresh and well.

Another case involved Mr. C., a machine operator. Like Mrs. A. he saw his double as a mirror image of himself. And indeed, so did all the other cases described by Dr. Lukianowicz.

Mr. C's double wore his clothes in replica. It was like looking at a photograph of himself. He would see his double, as

though in a mirror, just in front of him conducting an orchestra. Mr. C. never actually saw the orchestra but he had a mental picture of it and could hear the music being played within his mind.

Mr. D., another subject, would see his double just within reach, and would often strike it, although he had no sense of touching the phantom. The apparition was not able to avoid his blows. Sometimes Mr. D. would force it to imitate his facial expressions. He could also hear it in his "head and in his mind."

**Other subjects saw their double but had only a visual awareness of it.**

Other subjects saw their double but had only a visual awareness of it. Mr. F. said his double was "like a photograph" with no color at all. He felt impelled to follow it until his empty body could seize it again into itself, "just as you catch the yolk into an empty half-shell." Not until he caught his double did F. feel like himself again.

Several of the subjects, including Mr. G., could hear their doubles speaking to them within their minds. Mr. G. said, "It's like hearing my own thoughts, yet not quite, because I can think and talk about something different while he keeps talking to me about something else."

Mr. G. felt his double was only a copycat. "He has no original movements or ideas of his own apart from the occasions when he scolds me."

SOME OF THE conclusions drawn by Dr. Lukianowicz after studying these patients include the following:

1. Usually the subject sees only the head or bust of his double but sometimes he does see the whole figure.

2. The double is usually seen clearly, with sharp outlines and often in fine detail.

3. The color is usually gray or "misty" but not always.

4. The texture may be like jelly, or may be semi-transparent.

5. The autoscopic double does not cast a shadow.

6. It is usually perceived through many senses—heard, felt, etc.

7. The person seeing the double usually feels sadness. The patient's real body feels cold and lifeless.

8. The subject always realizes that he himself is real and that the double is unreal, although only "at the back of his mind."

9. Usually the phantom appears in the visual space directly in front of the subject and only about a yard away—but generally out of reach.

10. The complex experience of "physical, emotional and psychical duality lasts usually a few seconds only." But it seems longer to the subject because his sense of time is impaired. Sometimes it seems to have lasted "for ages."

11. Many persons may see their double only once or twice in a lifetime. In these cases the experience is usually associated with emotional or physical stress. But in

other cases the double may be perceived continually.

12. Usually the double appears in poor light, and except for persons who see it all the time, usually in the evening, at night, or at dawn.

13. Approximately three times as many women see their psychic double as men.

14. There is no relationship between autoscopia and education or intelligence.

15. Age does not appear to play an important part in seeing the double.

16. There appears to be no relationship between autoscopia and a "morbid" heredity and no significant relationship with mental illness or psychiatric disorders.

17. There does appear to be "an affinity" between autoscopia and both epilepsy and migraine.

18. There exists a relationship between autoscopia and such phenomena as imaginary companions, eidetic images, self-appearances, hypnagogic imagery, and "phantom limb" phenomena.

19. There are two ideas about the cause of autoscopia. One is that it has a physical cause in an irritation or lesion of the brain. The other is that it is a projection of "memory pictures" with psychological causes.

20. No "treatment" is known.

IF DR. LUKIANOWICZ'S word be accepted as a final explanation not only of "psychic doubles" but of all kinds of astral projection, then obviously a great deal of ground has been cut from under the feet of persons who believe in psychic

phenomena.

For to Dr. Lukianowicz, all such phenomena are hallucinations, and therefore unreal.

But is this true?

Can criteria be set up which differentiate Dr. Lukianowicz's autoscopic phenomena from true apparitions and true astral projection?

It seems to me that they can, and here are some of the ways in which apparitions or astral projections can be tested:

1. Can the astral body deliver a message, or can it obtain information from distant places where it is impossible for the physical body to have traveled—both for reasons of time and geography?

2. Can the true astral body actually be seen by other persons?

3. Can other evidence be offered of the existence of psychic doubles or astral projection which contradicts their being hallucinations?

It seems to us that a resounding "Yes" can be answered to all three of these questions. Based upon FATE's own files and other records there are many cases which differentiate true astral projection from autoscopic phenomena.

**J**UST BEFORE WORLD WAR II, Dr. Thaddeus Pomeroy Hyatt, a New York dentist who later achieved considerable distinction, told author Roy M. Frisen of an astral experience he had had many years before. This experience could not possibly be explained as "autoscopy" and meets the

requirement of Condition 1, above.

Hyatt accidentally met a friend of his, a Theosophist, who was accompanied by a Mr. Everett, a stranger. Everett had business affairs in Argentina which were nearing a crisis stage. Hyatt's Theosophical friend proposed to hypnotize Hyatt and send him astrally to Argentina to check up on Everett's friends and affairs. Minute instructions were given.

Dr. Hyatt agreed. He later told Frisen that after an astral journey he passed through the walls of a building and found himself in a large room where several people were in serious conversation. He reported back constantly what he was seeing while in a hypnotic trance. Then he was recalled across the miles of ocean. He had a distinct feeling of flying over the ocean, and then of being pursued by a terrifying black cloud which nearly caught him.

Hyatt said it was several days before the nervous shock of his terrifying experience wore off. He was convinced that his astral self had been pursued by an evil entity.

Although no witness ever reported seeing Dr. Hyatt in Argentina, he was assured by Everett that the information he brought back was accurate.

Another interesting case occurred in 1873 and is reported in the *Book of Newfoundland*, by J. R. Smallwood. The story is widely known throughout the Province.

On March 10, 1873, John Dower sailed his ship *Eleanor* from Conche, Newfoundland, for the sealing grounds. Sealing was a hazardous business because of sudden

storms and ice flows. Captain Dower was recently married and left his pregnant wife home. His ship had hardly sailed when Mrs. Dower became seriously ill. Her condition grew alarming and in the early morning hours of the third day she ceased breathing. No sign of life could be detected. Her body was placed in a fireless room and a grave was dug.

About this time, knowing nothing of what had happened back in Conche, Captain Dower anchored at the edge of the ice fields where the seals were whelping.

Suddenly in the moonlight the watchman heard a woman's voice. He ran below and roused all hands. In the distance they could glimpse a moving shape. And then, in terror, they watched a woman come running across the water, calling the name of John Dower. It was the captain's wife. They heard her wail "Come Home!" and as they watched she began running away from them, a luminous wraith.

When he recovered his voice, Dower sobbed, "My wife is dead. We must go home."

When the ship *Eleanor* hove into Conche harbor, the townspeople confirmed his fear. Mrs. Dower had died, they said, at the time her apparition had appeared on the ocean.

As the company neared Dower's home a woman dashed out screaming: "She sat

up in her coffin!" They rushed in and Dower found his wife struggling with her winding sheet. "I am tired," she was muttering. "I have been far! I have been far with John."

They rubbed warmth and life back into her limbs and she lived for years and bore several children. She often told the story, saying that she had but one thought—to save her husband. And save him she had, because the other two ships that went out from Conche with the *Eleanor*, and refused to return with her, were lost in a wild storm that came up the night after Dower re-

turned. No trace of the vessels was ever found.

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THERE ARE MANY variations of this sort of thing. FATE has published dozens of such stories. And there are many

other cases where the astral body is merely seen and does not appear to have a message.

One such case, chosen because of the reputation of the author, comes from the Rev. Rowland Jones, Ph. D., who at the time was vicar of a large parish in Manchester, England.

Reverend Jones customarily was assisted at Communion Services by a server, who usually was his churchwarden, a man named Hartshorne.

Late on a Sunday during World War II Reverend Jones prepared for a Communion Service but Hartshorne was late. Rev-

erend Jones decided he wasn't going to come at all so he prepared the vessels and started the service without Hartshorne.

After only about two minutes Reverend Jones heard the west door of the church open rather noisily and was relieved to see Hartshorne come in. Soon he appeared, wearing his cassock, but instead of assisting he sat with the worshippers. Dr. Jones thought to himself, "He feels that he will not disturb the service by coming up to the front and intends to make his Communion this morning with the people."

When it was time to approach the rail, Hartshorne approached and knelt beside a little crippled girl. Reverend Jones gave them both consecrated bread and wine. Then they returned to their places. Hartshorne had been quite conspicuous in his black cassock but an instant later, when Reverend Jones looked around the congregation, numbering only a few dozen, Hartshorne was gone.

Nor was he around after the service. When it was time for the second service at 11 a.m. Reverend Jones arrived about 10:40 a.m., entered the vestry, and there was Hartshorne.

"Who has been wearing my cassock?" Hartshorne asked.

"Why, you used it yourself at the nine o'clock service," Reverend Jones told him.

"But I didn't," objected Hartshorne.

"I was ill and stayed in bed."

Reverend Jones sent a boy to fetch the little crippled girl who had knelt beside Hartshorne when both took communion. She verified the fact that Hartshorne had knelt beside her and then had left almost immediately. Other persons also testified they had seen him—while he actually was home in bed.

Another unusual story, well-attested by witnesses of the highest caliber, concerns the death of Pope Clement XIV, on September 21, 1774.

Alphonsus Ligouri, a prominent Neapolitan, put on his vestments that day in preparation for a community mass

in Arienzo, four days journey from Rome. Suddenly he fainted—or went into a deep trance. When Ligouri awoke several hours later he informed the anxious monks gathered about him that he had just come from the bedside of the Pope in Rome and that

the Pope was now dead.

The monks considered Ligouri's tale either a dream or a mental aberration. But four days later word came of the death of the pontiff and listed among those in attendance at the bedside was Alphonsus Ligouri.

Everyone present later testified to this, including superiors of the Dominican, Observantine, and Augustian orders. They said they not only had spoken to Ligouri but

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had joined with him as he led prayers for the dying Pope.

The same kind of thing still happens today. Mrs. Beeda Brown and her husband and small daughter were visiting with Mr. Brown's sister and mother-in-law at Weeksbury, Ky., over Valentine's Day in 1927. That night Mrs. Brown went into a deep trance. She heard herself called by an old man in a white beard, and could feel herself floating just over the treetops, beneath the stars. Soon they were over the sidewalk of a town she recognized as Hardy, Ky. They turned into the gate of a house where her brother, George Brewington, lived.

Going inside, Mrs. Brown found her mother ill in bed. No one else seemed to see her, but she talked with her mother who told her she was about to die. "Now I can die happy," her mother said, and fell back onto the bed.

In her trance, Mrs. Brown watched the doctor come and saw the entire deathbed scene. She saw her mother's body laid out. And then she was back in her bed at Weeksbury, her nightgown damp with perspiration, and her sister-in-law washing her face while her husband stood anxiously by. The time was 10:35 p.m.

She informed both her husband and her sister-in-law that her mother was dead—an event which was later confirmed as having happened at 10:30 p.m. She had died at the exact time of Mrs. Brown's trance and astral vision. Many details were confirmed, including the the exact appearance of the attending physician.

IT WILL BE SEEN that these cases involve other aspects of psychic phenomena than astral projection alone. In some instances the double is seen by other persons—in others it is not. In all cases except that of the server in Reverend Jones's church, a message was delivered.

It has been proposed by some psychical researchers that even when the double is seen by other persons it is actually an apparition implanted by strong telepathic influence from the subject. Such apparitions are not real, it is contended, but can be implanted in the minds of many persons, all of whom see the same phantom.

If this argument has merit, how is one to account for the fact that the astral body can bring back detailed messages and descriptions, which can be verified, of what it saw during its astral wanderings?

Clearly something more is involved here than telepathy. Either a separate entity of some sort actually detaches itself from the body shell and goes traveling, or time and space are so hopelessly mixed up that only our unconscious minds are occasionally able to vault their barriers.

Even the cases of autoscopy reported by Dr. Lukianowicz should not be summarily dismissed as mental aberrations only. Perhaps even they reflect a kind of short circuiting of minds unsuccessfully seeking to leap the time and space barrier. Even they may have some kind of reality; perhaps they may even offer a clue to the solution of the problem. ♥