

Monday 28 June 1971

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Greetings from Uphill----

Nobody here Sunday at all, no phone calls either. I got the dishes done and my meals cooked anyway.

Saturday evening I was invited over to dinner nearby, and among those present was a former resident of the upstairs apartemnt here--an artist, although I didn't see any of his artwork. And he had drunk too much and was busy continuing with whiskey and beer chasers. What a sad example of the success of Catholic brainwashing! No wonder so many famous Irish people are driven to drink! And there I might have been myself, but for happenstance. At least, I learned how the garages here came to be stuffed with junk--the elderly landlord had died and he only left because the house was sold out from under him.

I was to have been taken to a sort of rummage sale Saturday but nobody showed up. I might have gotten a kitchen table small enough not to block my passage and a bookcase to store the tapes in. Entire contents of a big house sold because of divorce. So marriage is nonsense and bunk. I could have been prevented. And I am supposed to be grateful to organized religion for getting born. Pfui!

The library had a weirdo book, so I read it over the weekend: PSYCHIC DISCOVERIES BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder. These two gals roamed Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria and a few other places in 1968, before the invasion. And before the new cold-war freeze. All about telepathy experiments and hypnotism and alleged radiations and fields. I think these two people were shamelessly USED--not only by the Soviet authorities--which they quite rightfully suspected themselves--but by anonymous personnel in Prentice-Hall publishing Co. that got out the book--I mean, their report which was sincere and Meant Well, was re-slanted subtly and insidiously by the publishing company so it would appeal to the muddy-fuzzy occult enthusiasts and be sold to lecturers at all the spiritualist and occult and astrological and mystical meetings throughout our fair land.

But distasteful though this might be to you and to the scientific community, it had to be done. It isn't all hokum. I'm sorry about it, in this wise: there is too much begging of the question by all concerned, too many axes to grind on both sides of the iron curtain, too much concession to the demands of organized religion in this country and too much concession to organized irreligion of the USSR.

There is a large group in this country that is a counterpart of certain hypocritical Soviet pseudoscientists: there are various quacks (and I have met too many of them) who are mechanistic atheistic materialists, but who shamelessly exploit their victims by pretending to be occultists and idealists or dualists, and who, curses upon their heads!, often believe some of their own b--- Sciendollargy isn't the only such.

Some of them are well-to-do; those I have met have all treated me with withering disrespect and ~~a~~ scorn. Some of them either were in that F.I.D. group or had been in the General Semantic group or closely associated with it. Imagine: the shameless, cynical, hardboiled promotion of confusion. The perversion of science, and the exploitation for selfish financial ends of poor unsuspecting victims. Is this what you were more or less alluding to about the Berkeley scene, in regard to the pseudo-occultists and imitation mystics who advertise in the underground press?

For instance, I know a Superhaviorist who pretends to be extremely objective and hardboiled, but who has fallen for Reich's Orgone-boxes and all that stuff. (That's very interesting, come to think of it: no mention of Orgone in this book which devotes pages to Odic forces and N rays and other ghostly entities of that ilk--no Ouspensky or Gurdjieff either, though that happened in and near Russia, and yet oodles of allusions to the late Mme Blavatsky. What the book does NOT say is as impressive as what it does say.)

Very loud claims for hypnotism and telepathic thought control, and all kinds of stuff about biological phenomena, such as accelerating or retarding the growth of plants. So far so good; these things are in principle such that they could be checked in any laboratory. If true, they should be repeatable. If false, it should be easy enough to disprove them. That isn't what bugs me.

No, what would make me gnash my teeth if I had any is this: they mix up auras, emanations, photographs taken while a Tesla coil is going, mesmerism and mesmeric fluids, astral bodies, Hindu speculations, Chinese acupuncture, and what-not, into an indigestible mess without rhyme or reason. There is some truth in it but there is also much quackery and cynical deception and cheap show-business. No one could possibly untangle this mishmash. And it is not respectable. Especially after Marr and Lysenko.

But don't start gloating over the exposure of Marryand Lysenko! They had their counterparts in the Western world. A lot of quackery has been hushed up. I suspect that in the 22nd century some famous 19th- and 20th-century figures will have been debunked and chuckled over. How are the mighty fallen and all that sort of thing.

At that, it's kind of amusing to compare the wild flights of fancy of Marryand Lysenko with those of those other Russians, Schillinger and Yasser. Get the picture?

Yours