

University Round Table
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by Raymond A. Palmer

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Following is a transcript of two round table discussions among the faculty of a Midwestern university. Due to the nature of the subject, they have requested that their names be withheld. They are, however, all competent in their respective fields, and represent the sciences of psychology, medicine, biology, physics, literature, and ancient history. The moderator and discussion leader is identified by the letter M.; the other five members of the group by the figures 1 to 5, inclusive.

(M) Our subject is the so-called Shaver Mystery: the claims expounded by Richard Shaver in a series of stories which he has written. The stories are written as fiction, but Mr. Shaver claims that they are based upon fact, and that the persons, things, and events he pictures are either actual or typical. He has gained quite a following.

Many of the students have expressed considerable interest in it, and I believe that some of the faculty are also quite interested, although not so openly as the students. We, therefore, decided that it might help clear the thinking on the subject to discuss it, and point out the fallacies, if any. Mr. Shaver's publisher says that he holds proof of Shaver's claim but, to date, has not made it public. Under these circumstances, all we can do is to examine each point by straight logic, and try to determine the probabilities. You gentlemen have all been given advance copies of Mr. Shaver's claims, but, in order to make the record complete, I shall try to outline them as briefly as possible.

Shaver's contention is that, in far pre-historic times, when our solar system was young, Earth was inhabited by a race of super-beings who came here from another solar system. He identifies them as the Elder Race, or, sometimes, as the Elder Gods, although the term is not used in its theological sense. Although they were not truly immortal, they had discovered how to prolong their lives almost indefinitely. This, and their highly developed science, seemed so miraculous to the early humans that they were regarded as gods, and the designation is continued by Shaver in order to more easily connect them with various myths.

The mechanical devices of the Elders, which Shaver calls "mech," were almost everlasting. With various rays, they could scan, or televise, over great distances, project thought and three-dimensional images, kill or destroy, extract thought from another person's mind, or implant thought into it, stimulate any of the emotions, and cure various diseases. Other "mech" could automatically make food, clothing, or any other article which they might need.

In time, Shaver tells us, the nature of our sun changed. At first, its radiations had been beneficial. Now they also contained detrimental rays which shortened the life-span by causing premature aging, and other ill effects. To escape this, the Elder Race went deep underground, where the solar rays could not penetrate. They constructed huge tunnels and caverns, disintegrating the rock with their rays. Here they built their cities, duplicating the beneficial rays of the sun with their mech, but excluding detrimental rays.

On the surface, the native human race, *Homo sapiens*, had evolved. The solar rays had stunted their growth, and shortened their life to its present span. The gods, particularly the lesser ones, seem to have had quite human emotions and foibles, and to have varied greatly in morality and intelligence. In general, they regarded the surface dwellers with contempt, much as we regard the natives of darkest Africa. Some of the more humane among them did help these early humans in various ways, and the ancient myths and legends are supposed to be the surface people's version of their activities.

Meanwhile, the Elders had been searching for a more suitable home, one where the sun was beneficial and they could live on the surface. One was eventually found in a far-distant star system. Due to the great distance and the limited transport, they could not take their mech with them. Its location and operation was known only to the higher gods. One of these wanted to make it available to the surface dwellers, but the others did not consider them worthy of it. After a struggle, of which the myth of Prometheus is said to be the surface people's version, the humane gods were overwhelmed. The most important mech

was hidden and sealed against the possibility that they might some day return to Earth, and the gods left for their new home.

It was not possible to take all of their race with them. Some of the lesser ones were left behind in the caverns. Freed from the restraint of their leaders, some of the lower of them now sank into the depths of depravity. Some of the hidden mech was found, and its use partially discovered by experiment. Various groups began to turn the rays to the surface, bringing in the detrimental solar radiations in a greatly magnified form. This, together with certain radiations caused by the unskilled use of the mech, destroyed a certain part of their brain, and produced a very dangerous form of hereditary insanity.

These insane cavern dwellers, whom Mr. Shaver calls "deros," are completely devoid of any moral sense or humane instinct. As normal persons will, by instinct, usually tend to do good, the deros will, by instinct, try to do harm at every opportunity, and derive great sadistic pleasure from the sufferings of others. With their tamper rays, they cause as much trouble among the surface dwellers as possible. When they can secure the necessary victims, who are usually surface people lured into the caverns, they indulge in unspeakable sadistic orgies. Details of some of these horrors filtered back to the surface, and are said to be the foundation of the devil, Hell, and underworld legends of the ancient peoples. The damage which the deros do is fortunately limited somewhat by their lack of skill in using the mech, and by saner and more moral groups. These groups are generally more skillful in the use of the mech, and much more intelligent than the deros. Due to the manner in which the defense mech is placed, they can easily defend themselves from the deros, but cannot completely liquidate them. Some groups have friendly feelings toward the surface dwellers, but hold to the ancient taboos against sharing the mech with them.

Besides these two groups, bands of surface dwellers seem to have found their way into unused parts of the caverns from time to time. They found a safe refuge from their enemies, and the means of a fairly easy living, and re-

mained. The descendants of some of these groups offer no threat so long as they are not interfered with. Others use the rays for evil purposes when it serves their ends to do so, but do not have the insane urge to kill and destroy which the deros have. The usual social order is the medieval lord and serf relationship. Some of the lords treat their people humanely, according to their standards, while other groups are subjected to great oppression.

I speak of these groups in the present tense because it is Shaver's contention that they still live there, with much of the cavern system and most of the mech still intact. He claims that some of these cavern dwellers are in contact with him, by means of rays which he calls "telaug," and that he has actually seen the mech in operation.

Some of the Elder race in the caverns have solved the secret of some of the more complicated mech, and have become "gods" themselves. The lesser among the cavern dwellers live in squalor, despite their wonderful mech. They either have not found, or are unable to operate, the mech which would supply them with the necessities of life. Having very little mechanical ability of their own, they can make these things only on the crudest scale, if at all.

In former times, an extensive trade was carried on between the caverns and the surface. Simple articles, either taken from the Elder storehouses or made with their mech, were traded for food, clothing, and other things needed in the caverns. As communications on the surface increased, the danger of discovery became greater for the cavern dwellers, and the trade dwindled. At the present time, trade is a mere trickle.

Even the most friendly among the cavern dwellers are determined to maintain the secrecy of their caverns, and the secrets of their mech. Shaver believes, however, that there is a chance to secure some of their mech, mainly of a medical nature, in exchange for the things which they so desperately need from the surface. His sole interest, he claims, is to arouse sufficient interest, belief, and pressure on responsible groups and agencies to bring this about.

Mr. Shaver presents his case in several fairly long stories. It is somewhat difficult to condense it into a short

summary, as I have tried to do. I have tried to do it fairly. If you believe that I have gone astray in any particular, you are, of course, at liberty to correct me. As I understand it, that is the essence of the Shaver Mystery. Is it a mystery, or is it a hoax? That is the question.

Dr. (1), I understand that some of your students have been in correspondence with Mr. Shaver, and that you have studied his replies. How does he appear to you as a psychologist? What can you tell us of Shaver, the man?

(1) First of all, Mr. Moderator, there is a third possibility which you have omitted in stating the case. Mr. Shaver might be entirely sincere, but might be suffering from a delusion.

Considering first the possibility of hoax, it must be remembered that Mr. Shaver is an author. It would be in his interest to make his work produce as large an income as possible. The greater interest he can arouse in his stories, the greater the financial return to both himself and his publisher. His claims of authenticity have aroused a great deal of interest and support. The motive for perpetuating a hoax is clearly present, but it must be remembered that motive is not proof of guilt. That must be determined by the evidence.

Against this, I have only my personal impressions. He impresses me as being honest and sincere—a man who feels that he has a mission in life. Whether this sincerity is based upon fact or delusion could be determined only by a very complete psychoanalysis. I would not commit myself on the basis of the present evidence. He is obviously above the average intelligence, but this would not necessarily be inconsistent with certain psychopathic conditions.

The remaining possibility, that it might be true, can only be proven, in the absence of material evidence, by eliminating the other possibilities. We are obviously unable to do this, and our conclusions, therefore, can only be comparative, and not decisive.

I do believe that the literary worth of Mr. Shaver's stories would have a bearing on the possibility of hoax. I should like to hear an analysis, based only upon literary

values, and disregarding the truth or falsity of the claims, from my old friend, Doctor (2).

(2) By comparison with the classics, Mr. Shaver's stories are not masterpieces. By comparison with contemporary fiction, they are very well written. He has a vivid and realistic manner of expression which holds reader interest. The theme of his stories is one which many people would consider too fantastic to be worthy of their time. *Amazing Stories*, his publisher, is not usually regarded as being among the more respectable or responsible publications. Were it not for these two facts, I believe that he would be well up among the popular fiction writers. If it is a hoax, I consider it a foolish one, because I believe that he could earn an even greater income by using more conventional themes, and dealing with a better accepted publisher.

(3) I should like to point out that the premise in the latter part of Doctor (2)'s statement would be true if it were a hoax. However, if it is true, or if Mr. Shaver believes it is true, then the vividness and realism could easily be dependent upon this. One can always write more convincingly if they themselves are convinced. If this should be the case, then he might be a very mediocre writer on more conventional themes.

(M) I think that Mr. Shaver's space ships should have a priority in our discussion. This Elder Race is supposed to have come to Earth in space ships, and to have departed the same way. It is claimed that the present cavern dwellers, and their counterparts on other planets, still use the space ships. If space ships are illogical, then the entire contention falls. Doctor (3), that is one of your pet subjects. Are space ships, and life on other planets, scientific possibilities?

(3) Emphatically yes! If some of the boys from the guided missile project were here, they would make it even more emphatic. We ourselves are right on the threshold of space travel. It needs only a very little more data, which could be

secured by more or less routine experimentation. It is quite possible that some other beings are more advanced than we, and have already solved the problems.

How soon we humans will make our first voyage into space is mainly a matter of funds. Space craft, even small ones carrying only instruments, would be expensive to build. We might have to build several. It is almost impossible to foresee every problem which will be encountered. Our first craft might be failures, from the layman's point of view, but, from these failures, we would gain the information which we needed to succeed. This would all take money; large amounts of it. So far, no government or group has been sufficiently interested to advance the funds. Meanwhile, the army, and a private group headed by Willy Ley, continue their experiments, but are badly hampered by lack of funds, and their progress is consequently slow.

If the funds should become available, I have not the slightest doubt as to our ability to successfully construct space ships. I recognize no limitation this side of the infinite on the possibilities of science. What men can imagine, man can accomplish. The only reason we cannot accomplish beyond the infinite is that our minds, in their present state of development, cannot imagine beyond it.

As for the possibility of intelligent life on other planets, I can see no other logical conclusion. There are, in our own solar system, two other planets which, so far as we can deduce from this distance, are possibly capable of supporting life forms similar to our own. The life forms with which we are familiar are based upon the carbon atom, and depend, among other things, upon the principle of oxidation, which dictates certain limitations of temperature and atmosphere. The carbon atom is not the only possible basis of life. The similarity between the carbon and silicon atoms immediately suggests the possibility of silicon based life forms, which would probably have entirely different temperatures and atmospheric requirements.

Besides our own solar system, there are millions of stars, most of which are believed to be solar systems similar to our own. It would be conceited to the point of in-

sanity to assume that, of these countless planets, ours is the only one capable of supporting intelligent life.

(5) Are you familiar, Doctor, with Mr. Shaver's theory of acceleration in space?

(3) Mr. Shaver may have been the first to publicly comment upon this, but I have heard it discussed by others long ago. It is merely an extension of the orthodox mass-acceleration formulae. Briefly this:

Mass is a relative and variable factor. Here on Earth any object, a space ship, for example, would have a certain mass relative to the earth. As it traveled away from the earth, its mass would decrease, roughly as the square of the distance. At the same time, it would be under the mass-influence of all the other bodies in space, in the same ratio. At some points in space, these forces would be in an approximate equilibrium. At such points, the mass would be zero. If there is no mass, there can be no inertia, because inertia is dependent upon mass. If there is no inertia, then an infinitesimal force will produce an infinite velocity.

(M) At this point, Doctor, some of your students will ask: if you have no mass, how will you produce your force?

(3) By the expenditure of energy in the form of a rocket blast, to mention only one method. Any action must produce an equivalent reaction. That, so far as we know now, would hold true regardless of mass. I'd like to make it clear that I am not claiming that the conclusions which I have cited are true. We won't know that until we get out into space. According to our accepted formulae, they are true, but errors and paradoxes have been found before. It was once conclusively proven, by facts which were considered sound at that time, that an airplane could not fly—but it does fly!

I should also like to point out to the young gentlemen of my classes who may read this, that, from the philosophical point of view, there is no such thing as a fact. Every

fact, every law, every theory, in every branch of science, is based upon an unproved assumption and is, therefore, possibly in error. That assumption may have an overwhelming weight of circumstantial evidence behind it but, in the strict sense, it has not been proven. What we do is to examine the sum total of our experience in any field of endeavor and, from that, deduce certain things which we thenceforth regard as facts. If our experience has been broad enough, our conclusions are likely to be correct. Otherwise, we may have to later revise our facts to agree with reality. Our experience in the fields of physics and mechanics have been very broad—on our own planet. The probability of our theories in these fields should be very high—on our own planet. Our experience with them in space is nil. Whether they would still hold true there remains to be seen. That is one reason why we are so anxious to get instrument carrying ships out into space. I do not mean to say that we should disregard our present concepts lightly. The preponderance of experimental evidence behind them makes their probability high. But we should not permit ourselves to fall into a blind and slavish acceptance of them under any and all circumstances. Under conditions different than which are familiar to us, they could be wrong.

(M) During the recent flying disc scare, the discs were immediately connected with the cavern theory. I do not know that Mr. Shaver ever made such a claim, but many of his followers did. Doctor (3), while we are on the subject of space ships, what is your opinion on this?

(3) Why pick on the flying discs in particular? They are only the most recent of a long series of similar reports. The Biblical stories of the prophets ascending to heaven on a pillar of fire could, if we felt so inclined, be considered as reports of space ships leaving Earth. People have been seeing mysterious objects in the sky ever since then.

Some of the reports can be eliminated at once, because the mental unsoundness of the observer is obvious from the report itself. Others are clearly reports of some natural

object, such as a meteor, or a strange but not unknown cloud formation. Others eventually prove to be mirages. I should like to explain, because of the popular misconception on the subject, that mirages are not hallucinations. They are true reflections in the sky of actual objects on the surface, after great distances away. They are due to certain atmospheric conditions as can be seen by anyone who is at the spot at that time, and can be photographed.

When all these cases have been eliminated, there still remain some to be explained. Either we do not have all the information needed to classify them, or there actually was some object there. Into the latter category apparently fall such cases as the objects seen in the mid-west in 1897, in New England in 1908 and 1909, and, last year, the flying discs. There were many reports about all these which were plainly hoaxes, or the rambling of disordered minds (as invariably happens when any mysterious event occurs), but there were many others from persons of unquestionable reliability.

Certain details, which I will not review at this time, seem to rule out any possibility of mirage or natural objects. The only remaining conclusion is that they were either unknown aircraft or space craft.

In the case of the flying discs, our government and all foreign governments, have denied ownership, or any knowledge, of them. There are very strong logical arguments which tend to confirm these denials. If they are not of extra-terrestrial origin, then they must be the work of some unknown group upon our own planet.

(M) We note that Mr. Shaver frequently alludes to myths and legends, particularly the old Greek legends, as supporting the facts of the Elder Race and the events which he mentions. Doctor (5), you are an archeologist and our expert on ancient history and literature. Can myths and legends prove any fact, or should they be dismissed as pure invention by our primitive ancestors?

(5) Myths and legends cannot be dismissed as pure fabrications, as they are invariably based upon fact. They

could be correctly defined, I believe, as obscure, and usually distorted, versions of actual events. To clarify my statement I shall have to digress from Mr. Shaver and touch upon the general subject of the formation of myths and legends.

The origin of most myths and legends is lost in antiquity. The cultural level of the human race at that time was very low. They had no written language, and little understanding of scientific facts which we consider elementary. Events which to us would be quite ordinary would, to our early ancestors, have appeared miraculous. His lack of understanding would make him a poor observer in the first place, and his report would further suffer from word of mouth transmission. As it passed from person to person, and generation to generation, it would be subject to the natural human tendency to magnify, distort, and embellish. This trait can be noted even today in the fantastic distortion of word of mouth rumors. By the time the myth or legend would be recorded in writing, it might bear little resemblance to the actual event. However, it would still be the report of some actual event, no matter how distorted it might be.

Something, at some far distant time, did actually occur, and made a sufficiently vivid impression on the observer to be remembered. By taking into account the social and intellectual level of the people, we can deduce the manner in which they might distort it, and are often able to get a fairly good idea of the actual event itself.

The events which Mr. Shaver relates could quite rationally be the basis of the myths and legends to which he alludes. They are not the only basis. Other events could be cited with equal logic and reasonableness. Mr. Shaver claims to have secured his information from the actual historical records of this ancient race. There is a possibility that, instead he has taken the myths and worked them back to a fictitious origin. If so, I give him credit for very excellent powers of logic and deduction, because he has arrived at a very logical answer. It is worth noting that the folk-lore of all peoples contains some account of individuals, or groups, usually of gigantic size, who had such re-

markable powers that the early peoples regarded them as gods. These tales are undoubtedly inaccurate in detail, but their very consistency would indicate that there was some superior race on Earth in early times.

There is also concrete evidence of some such superior race. For example, the length, width, and height of the Great Pyramid in Egypt are exact fractions of the equatorial and polar circumference and equatorial diameter of Earth, respectively. The ratios are so exact that it is only in recent times that our means of measurement have been sufficiently precise to verify them. To assume that all three dimensions just happened that way would be stretching the probabilities of coincidence quite a ways. The natives of Egypt at that time were semi-barbaric. They were patently incapable of the science and precise workmanship which would have been required.

Most Egyptologists now agree that the Pyramid was built, or at least designed and supervised, by some non-Egyptian race.

To cite another example: there is an ancient temple in South America built of huge stone block which interlock without mortar. The joints fit with such precision that we would have trouble duplicating it today, even with all our precision machine tools. The work was obviously beyond the abilities of the Indians who later occupied the temple. They themselves have legends of a gigantic super-race which built it, and then departed by means of great tunnels.

I shall not take the time to cite further examples, but there are enough others to firmly convince me that there was upon Earth in pre-historic times some highly advanced race. This makes Mr. Shaver's claim possible, but not, in itself, necessarily probable. It does not necessarily follow that this super-race was as he describes them, or that they still exist. Both of those points will have to be established by further evidence.

(M) I think that the plausibility of the caverns themselves would be next in logical order. How could such an extensive cavern system exist without having been found

in some of our mining operations? How could the entrances be so well hidden that they would not have been accidentally discovered by this time? Doctor (3), will you comment?

(3) As nearly as I can gather, Mr. Shaver places these caverns and underground cities deep in the earth, several miles below the surface. From what we know of the radiations of nuclear fission, and his detrimental rays appear to be something of the same nature, such depths would be quite logical, since a considerable thickness of earth would be necessary to absorb them. These depths are far below our deepest mines and wells, and would not thus be discovered.

Such underground works would have to have connections to the surface for access and ventilation. From Mr. Shaver's stories I gather that, in very ancient times, each underground city had its surface counterpart which served as a trading post between the cavern and surface dwellers. When the Elder gods left Earth, many of these entrances are supposed to have been closed. As communications on the surface improved, discovery of the caverns became more likely, and many of the remaining ones were closed by the people who then inhabited the caverns. It is said that there are still entrances and ventilating shafts, but that they are in isolated spots, and occasionally barred by movable rock barriers. In some of the stories, these entrances are placed in natural caverns, or abandoned mine workings.

It seem to be Mr. Shaver's contention that these entrances are found by surface dwellers at times, but that few return to tell the tale. If they fall into the hands of the Deros, they are likely to become the main attraction at some sadistic orgy. If they fall into the hands of certain other groups, they may become serfs. They occasionally return from the caverns, but these few find that their tales are not believed, and either soon learn to keep quiet about them, or else end up in a mental institution.

As for the caverns, they could exist; As for the manner in which they are said to have been constructed, this is

outside any scientific knowledge which we have today. The subject of temperature is open to question. Our experience in deep mines has been that the temperature increases one degree in each sixty feet. If this rate of increase remains constant, the caverns would be very hot places indeed.

On the contrary, Mr. Shaver describes them as being very cool, 53 degrees, as I recall. In fairness, I must point out that we are basing our idea of cavern temperature on the assumption that the rate of temperature increase remains constant, and this may not be correct. In our stratosphere, for example, it was found that the temperature fell as we went up, and it was assumed that the trend continued to the absolute zero of space. High flying rockets seem to indicate, however, that the trend reverses at certain points, and that there are also some very hot bands above us, while astronomers now believe that there are also some warm spots in space itself. Some similar conditions might exist in the downward direction.

(M) As you are probably aware, Doctor, the interest in the Shaver mystery has revived interest in a number of so-called mysterious caverns. I think a word from you about these would be very much in order.

(3) There are a great many caverns which are locally regarded as mysterious. Most of them have never been completely or competently explored, and we have little or no really accurate information about them. Some of them are apparently artificial. I think it is a good thing to explore them if it is done properly. However, I would very much hate to see the attempt made by persons, or groups, who were not qualified or prepared for this kind of work, as this might lead to some tragedies. Eliminating the possibility of meeting some of Mr. Shaver's Deros, there are many natural hazards in cave exploration. The field study groups in geology classes are occasionally taken into caverns, but only into those which are considered safe, and even then all precautions are taken. They should be capable of judging the safety of the roof of the cavern, should

maintain a guard against gas, with canaries or waltzing mice, and should have adequate supplies and equipment. I cannot, in a few words, cover all the important points but, if they are not familiar with working underground, they should seek the advice of experienced miners or cave explorers before going into a strange cavern.

(M) Our next question is on the Shaver claim that, along with the beneficial rays from our sun, there are certain rays which cause aging and other ill effects and, that if these rays could be eliminated, the life span would be extended indefinitely. Doctor (4), will you comment?

(4) In working with the atomic bomb, it has been noted that premature aging is one of the symptoms of radiation poisoning caused by emanations from nuclear fission. These same radiations are present, in very small quantities, in natural sun light. Whether they are the sole cause, or even an important contributory factor, in natural aging is not known. Certain physicists and biologists believe that to be the case. To date, no method of neutralizing or counteracting radiation poisoning has been found, although research on the problem is in progress. Some of these research workers believe that, when an effective treatment for radiation poisoning is perfected, it might be used to arrest, or even reverse, the natural aging process, thus extending the life span materially. In the present stage of development all that can be said is that several very competent scientists believe in something essentially the same as Mr. Shaver's claim, but that nothing has been definitely proven as yet.

(1) If I may introduce a philosophical note into the discussion, I would like to observe that one very eminent biologist of my acquaintance has refused to work on this particular project because he believes that the result would not be socially desirable. Beginning in infancy, and continuing throughout life, an individual acquires certain patterns of thought and action, better known as habits. These become more firmly fixed in their mind as time goes on. If

the process were continued long enough, their entire mental and physical life would be rigidly governed by these patterns. The brain would resist any change, and the individual would, therefore, become detrimental to, and parasitic upon, society.

This danger is illustrated by Mr. Shaver's description of certain of his Elder cavern dwellers who, by artificial means, have prolonged their lives for incredible lengths of time. What he pictures is a mere blob of almost inert organic matter. It has not the slightest interest in any material thing which does not concern its own welfare, nor the slightest human emotion toward any other individual. This, I believe, is a very good picture of the logical and eventual outcome of indefinitely prolonging human life.

The usual picture, as it appears to me in the stories, is a medieval organization consisting of one Elder god of incalculable age in each group, surrounded by, and parasitic on, a number of younger and lesser followers. The social organization brings to mind that of a bee hive or ant hill, where the entire effort of the group is centered upon maintaining one queen. Only, in this case, the central figure serves no useful purpose, so far as I can see, which makes the entire set-up seem asinine.

(4) I am afraid, Doctor, that I must register an exception to the spirit of inevitability which seems to pervade the theses of yourself and your colleague. It is true that some, from sheer mental inertia, fall into fixed mental patterns which occasionally become so deeply embedded that psychiatrists find it virtually impossible to alter them.

On the other hand, I personally know many persons of advanced age who are still mentally alert and fully receptive to any reasonable new concept.

It is my contention that physical aging is, in itself, an important cause of mental inertia. The realization that the physical powers are waning, and that the end of useful life is approaching, comes as a severe psychological shock to many persons. Many gynecologists believe that this one factor is the chief cause of the various psychopathical and pseudo-physical disorders of women during the meno-

pause, and of similar conditions in men during the climatic period of their lives. The feeling is one of insecurity and great mental uncertainty. The reaction is to hold fast to what they have, in both the mental and material sense. The result is extreme conservatism. I firmly believe that, if the period of physical vigor and well-being could be indefinitely extended, much of the ultra-conservatism and mental stasis associated with old age would disappear.

It was not my intention to imply inevitability in the strict sense of the word. However, I still contend that there would be such a strong trend toward what I pictured that it would be virtually inevitable. An increase in the life span would probably also increase the length of useful mental activity, as Doctor (4) has pointed out, but I do not believe that the final result will be altered.

It must be kept in mind that we are not discussing the increasing of the life span by two, or three, or any number of times. The proposition is that of extending it indefinitely. Some may hold that this makes the discussion entirely hypothetical. I do not share that belief, and several eminent biologists do not share it. If I do not believe that the proposition was scientifically possible of attainment, not in our time, perhaps, but ultimately, I would not waste my time discussing it.

Perhaps in my original statements I did not make clear what I had in mind. There would come a point in our almost-immortal man's life when the very variety and breadth of his experiences would cause him to become surfeited with every human occupation and diversion. At this point, his mind would automatically seek a psychological escape from the ennui by turning inward upon itself; devising and contemplating pleasant and fanciful situations; "daydreaming" on a grandiose scale.

The brain would resent and resist any change which involved mental or physical effort, because this would take it out of its pleasant dream world. The thing that contained the brain—I hesitate to call it a man—would, therefore, oppose and resist any progress, or any other change in the familiar and established order of things. Thus it would become a menace to society, because the mainte-

nance of the status quo is an impossibility. No matter how high a science has gone, it has never reached its ultimate potentiality. It always can be and must be advanced further. It is an inescapable law that nothing can remain static. It must either advance and grow, or decay and die.

When this intermediate stage had passed, and the creature had sunk into its dream world, it would cease to be an active menace, but the organization which it had formed might continue the evil work. In any event, it would be serving no good purpose and would, therefore, be parasitic upon society; unless you believe (I do not) that some good in the field of theology or metaphysics might ensue.

When this problem is solved, we shall not have discovered the secret of life, the Sunday supplement writers notwithstanding, because we shall not, as a necessary result, have the ability to create true life. I do not believe that we shall ever have that ability. A finite mind, by its very nature, is incapable of ever comprehending the infinite forces which are involved in the creation of life. All we shall have discovered is the means of prolonging life. I do not know how soon. Whether some other beings have already discovered it, as Mr. Shaver claims, I do not know. When it is discovered, I believe that it is likely to be a curse, rather than a blessing upon mankind.

(M) If we have finished with that subject, we will go to the next. What is your opinion of the alleged ray mech, Doctor (3)?

(3) All of the rays described by Mr. Shaver are beyond our science at present. Radar will bring us images of distant objects, but not in detail and not thru solid material. We know of certain rays which are lethal at distances of a few feet, but these particular rays, by their very nature, cannot be transmitted greater distances. We have no ray that will blast or disintegrate objects.

Electrical transference of thought, or telepathy, has been the subject of experiment ever since the discovery of electricity, but we have not succeeded to date. We do know

that the brain produces an electrical wave, and we have been able to record it and analyze it in a rather crude way. If this is ever perfected to the point where highly detailed variations can be recorded, then it might be possible to reverse the process and implant the thought in another mind.

Most of the rays described by Mr. Shaver involve the transmission of considerable energy. This our scientists cannot do, except on a very limited scale. A radio station transmits energy, but on a very small scale. Radar will set off photo-flash bulbs at a considerable distance, but here again the amount of energy transmitted is actually small.

To sum up, I would not care to call the ray mech impossible. Too many "impossibilities" have been accomplished to permit that attitude. They are so far beyond our present science, however, that I shall remain rather skeptical about them until more evidence is available.

(4) I do not think that skeptical is the proper word to use. As I understand its meaning, it impugns the possibility of the proposition, and with that I cannot agree. Mr. Shaver's ray mech may be the invention of his own mind, or they may be real. That I do not know. In either case, I do not believe that he has described anything that is scientifically impossible. Let us merely say that our science has not yet advanced to the point where it can duplicate these rays.

Take his telaug ray for example. I can see one way in which it might possibly be done, because I have been toying, mentally, for several years with a very similar idea which I thought could be used as an electronic telescope, and which would work through certain kinds of solid material. I was basing my hypothesis on the familiar radio principle of heterodyning, where two frequencies, brought together, will produce a third frequency which is the common divisor of the other two. What I had envisioned was transmitting two beamed frequencies, which could be a penetrating wave length, and bringing them to a focus at some distant point. The heterodyned frequency, which could also be of a penetrating nature, would be reflected

from the distant object back to the transmitter. There, by means of further heterodyning, it could be converted to a visible frequency, and the distant scene reproduced on a screen. I have never had time to do any actual experimental work on this, and do not know when I will have the time, if ever. I am firmly convinced that something along that line could be worked out, however. The principle would not have to be necessarily confined to the visual range. For example, Doctor (3) has noted that certain lethal rays are known, but that they can only be transmitted a few feet. It might not be necessary to transmit them at all. It might be possible to produce them right inside the victim's body, by combining two frequencies which could be transmitted easily. If the principle works out, it has many angles.

Take another of Mr. Shaver's rays, his "stim ray." We already have the beginnings of that. I recently attended a demonstration of ultrasonics, that is sound waves above the audible range. It is still in its infancy, but some of the effects stagger the imagination. It does have a very definite effect on the emotions at certain frequencies. At one point, everyone present had an overwhelming feeling of dread—of some impending doom. Another frequency went to the other end of the emotional scale and produced a feeling of light-hearted gayety.

Coming to his thought tapes and telepathic mech, we also have the beginnings of something along that line. Besides the brain wave patterns which Doctor (3) mentions, let us consider the E.S.P. experiments which Rhine has been conducting at Duke University. This has been going on for several years now, and the weight of evidence is so heavy that it is no longer logically possible to deny that extra sensory perception does exist, and that it is possible to transmit thought from one mind to another. The means of transmittal have not been discovered, but it must necessarily be an energy wave of some variety. If the nature of this wave can be discovered, then it should be possible to record it, to electrically transmit it, and to synthetically produce it.

With regard to the transmission of power without wires;

many years ago Nikola Tesla worked out formulae and design details of a means of transmitting power without wires. Tesla's output of theory was prodigious, and he seldom bothered to verify them by experiment. Unfortunately, he had an enormous superiority complex, which he did not bother to conceal, and his published disclosures were usually filled with studied insult to all other scientists. As a result, he was thoroughly hated by all other scientists, and his claims were always greeted with sneers. Whenever he would condescend to demonstrate his own claim, or could goad some other scientists into trying it in an effort to prove him wrong, his critics were usually forced to grudgingly admit that he was right. The A.C. motor is a case in point. Our present motors, which really form the backbone of our industrial system, are in every important respect the same as the one which Tesla theorized and sketched up without experimentation.

In the case of his wireless power theory, he was building a transmitting plant on Long Island when World War I began. In the spy scare which followed, everyone with a foreign sounding name was suspect. Some bright boy in Washington got the sudden idea that Tesla's towers might be used to send spy messages to Germany, and ordered them to be destroyed. After the war Tesla declared that he had neither the time nor the money to rebuild, and was no longer interested in giving his invention to a people who were so incredibly dumb as to destroy it. The distaste for Tesla the man still obscures the brilliance of Tesla the scientist, and the experiment has never been made. There is some reason to believe that all the details were not revealed, and some further research work might be necessary. It is possible that the theory would not hold up if tried, but until we have tried it we cannot say that it is impossible to transmit power without wires. Just as an accused man is legally considered innocent until proven guilty, so the claim of a scientist of proven ability must be considered correct until proven incorrect.

To recapitulate; our science has not as yet advanced to the point where it can duplicate the mech described by Shaver, but there is nothing seriously improbable about

them, and it is entirely possible that they exist.

(M) We have one other point before we close. Doctor (1), will you comment on the plausibility of Mr. Shaver's Dero?

(1) Insanity of the particular form described by Mr. Shaver is quite well known, but such persons are usually put under restraint before they reach the acute stage of the Deros. The condition could be caused by a brain injury, and such an injury could conceivably be caused by certain radiations. It is quite probable that environment would play an even greater part in creating such a group than heredity. According to the stories the ancestors of the Deros seem to have been the lowest of the Elders, somewhat sub-normal, in the beginning. Close inbreeding, which would seem to naturally follow the conditions which are described, would intensify the defects and tend to produce a moronic group. Children growing up in an environment of evil, depravity, and sadism would know no better emotions, and would probably never develop their nobler instincts.

To sum up: such groups could logically exist, if the other condition were as Mr. Shaver describes them, and the Dero is, therefore, plausible. It should be remembered, however, that there is a difference between plausibility and probability. All we can say is that Mr. Shaver, in describing his Deros, has not introduced any impossible factor.

RICHARD S. SHAVER

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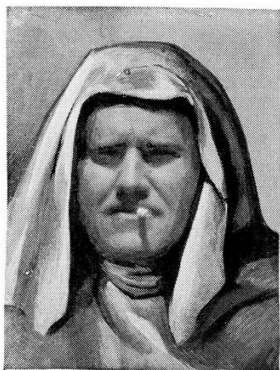
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This is a transcript of two round table discussions among the faculty of a Midwestern university. Due to the nature of the subject, they have

requested that their names be withheld. They are, however, all competent in their respective fields, and represent the sciences of psychology, medicine, biology, physics, literature, and ancient history.

—*Raymond A. Palmer, 1957*