

Survival of Bodily Death  
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Episodic and Periodic Nature of Psi Phenomena

When looked at as a whole, the evidence for paranormal phenomena shows a curious asymmetry in prevalence. Our culture appears to go through certain phases in which different paranormal abilities or occurrences come to the foreground. Michael Murphy believes this relates to the technology of the day; in the 1880's there was no television to occupy people's evenings, so people played telepathic parlor games. This episodicity was also true with the flowering of psychic phenomena in the 1960's as a side result of yoga, meditation, psychedelics, etc. In the mid-70's, channeling hit the media, and channelers often acted as advisors to business people. This trend has largely disappeared. Now, the hot trend is near-death experiences. Each trend has affected different parts of the population; Arthur Hastings commented that it is as if selected parts of society are being intervened with. Another curious fact is that the most robust examples of psi phenomena often occur for a short period before fading. For example, 19th century mesmerists had enormous success in hypnotizing people for major surgeries such as amputations, an effect that largely disappeared after chloroform was used as an anesthetic. John Beloff wrote a paper on the decline of physical mediumship, commenting on the historical dimensions of this episodicity.

A recent and extreme example of the episodic nature of robust paranormal phenomena was the so-called Milk Miracle on Sept. 22nd, 1995, during which, for approximately 36 hours, statues in Hindu temples all over the world appeared to be dematerializing or drinking milk from glasses or spoons offered to them. ([web link](#)). So widespread was the phenomenon that the government of India was forced to shut down as people rushed to temples to wait in long lines to offer milk themselves. This massive, documented, filmed event has virtually disappeared from public discourse. The pseudo-scientific dismissal revolved around the capillary action of porous stones, which seems implausible since all the "miracles" happened on just a single day and there were dozens of different kinds of stone involved.

Michael Murphy wondered if this might reflect an evolutionary dynamic at work, that various historical crises create an opening in the collective consciousness of society which may permit the emergence of a true graduation, in the evolutionary sense. Most of evolution is a meandering process, but occasionally there are changes in grade (a significant advance over what came previously). These periods of robust phenomena might also indicate some kind of help or guidance from a transcendent order. Michael Grosso wrote a preliminary paper on this topic entitled "Cycles of Strangeness," looking at the fashions and cycles of weird phenomena. Steve Dinan mused that each evolutionary step, culturally and individually, might take a little nudge from the other side. Charles Tart joked that spirits are doing experiments and they only do them for a while before they run out of funding.

John Keel has written papers on UFO "flaps" and Charles Fort thought there were patterns to these phenomena. Charles Tart felt this might relate to the recent finding that remote viewing experiments work four times as well during a sidereal "notch" time of approximately two hours. Sidereal time changes as we orbit the sun and reflects our orientation to the greater universe. Will this effect go away in a few years? Perhaps something similar is at work with miraculous occurrences. Michael Grosso posits that there is something of a need factor at work. In his studies of Marian visions, he has found that they are analogous to NDE experiences in that they are crisis-based. However, instead of individuals coming close to death, it is cultures coming close to death or disaster. For example, in Medugorje in the 1980's, Marian visions preceded the terrible Yugoslavian war, and oddly enough, the town itself remained untouched by the hostilities. Likewise, the onset of the French revolution was preceded by Marian visions, and the Marian visions in Fatima, Portugal in 1917 correlated with World War I. This suggests a kind of collective anticipation of threat, triggering certain groups of people to become the locus of Marian visions as a way of guarding or buoying the culture.

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