

References

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The Shape of Things to Come by Jane Anderson. Sydney: Random House, 1998. xiii + 290 pp. Aust\$19.95 (p). ISBN 0-09-183667-0.

Written in clear, nontechnical English, Jane Anderson's *The Shape of Things to Come* deals with precognitive dreams and synchronicity, and how these phenomena do not conflict with relativity and quantum physics.

Major topics covered are dream recall and interpretation; hypnosis and precognition; neurolinguistic programming (NLP); the paradoxical nature of time; fate, free will, and individual responsibility; and the link between synchronicity and dreams, about which she writes: "We believe we distinguish a difference between precognition and synchronicity, whereas in fact the difference is an illusion based on our inability to rid ourselves of the concept of linear time" (p.196).

The book begins with many examples of dreams that literally or symbolically have shown future events. While some may be coincidences, no reasonable person would suggest that all of them fall into this category. This means that people around the world are, in their millions, glimpsing future events — an activity forbidden by many orthodox scientists.

Anderson, author of two previous books on dreams, says that most precognitive dreams use nonverbal symbolism. It takes effort to learn how to decode the messages, and: "... in endeavoring to understand how waking life events can follow dreams, we need to include a look at the multiple small, baffling, yet seemingly insignificant happenings as well as the big mind-blowing epics" (p.29). She then gives precise details on how to develop precognition, *via* dreaming, in which accurate records are kept of dreams, examples of synchronicity, and life events.

Part of her research involved in-depth interviews with four professional clairvoyants, perhaps the weakest part of the book. While we are told all four have impressive records, we are in the realm of anecdotes. Of more interest is the fact that the professionals share common views about time: that past, pre-

sent, and future somehow are all enveloped in “now,” and while the future already exists, it is a future of multiple outcomes. This of course recalls Hugh Everett’s theory of multiple universes containing all possible events.

Other research by Anderson involved psychics using NLP to induce clients to behave in ways that would bring about predictions. For, as she writes (p.107): “... the unconscious can be programmed without obvious hypnotism and with no conscious knowledge of what is happening.”

This led to serious research investigating the role hypnotism might play. After agreeing on protocol (*e.g.*, sessions videotaped), Anderson was several times hypnotized. In all sessions she was projected forward to future dates and asked what she saw. The results were typed up and locked away, so no one else in Anderson’s life knew what was being predicted.

While she claims a very high number of “hits,” I am mildly skeptical, for there is far too much subjectivity involved. A similar problem emerged years ago in remote viewing experiments, where deciding whether or not someone had successfully recorded a “hit” was often debatable.

Nevertheless, Anderson has developed here an interesting methodology that can be replicated, something scientists can get their teeth into. The problem is in how to evaluate the outcomes, because much of the time symbolism is being dealt with, something not taught in Physics 101.

Anderson uses her scientific background to show how precognition and synchronicity are not paranormal, but reasonable outcomes in a world where energy and matter are one and the same; where observing an event can bring about changes; where “things” can be particles or waves, depending on circumstances. For her, when the future touches us, *via* dreams, the energy involved can become matter if our thoughts resonate strongly enough. This reminds me of a parallel idea which Candace Pert explained to Steve Bunk (Can emotions alter health? *The Scientist*, March 2, 1998, p. 5):

Molecules are obviously the vehicle of... information flow, but they are not the information itself.

The thing about emotions that make them fascinating is that they’re in the material and the immaterial realm. They’re a transition element. In that way, they’re a key to information itself. Emotions are the trigger that moves an organism from one state of consciousness to another...

The Shape of Things to Come ends with Anderson’s thoughts on consciousness and spirituality. She sees us all sharing the same vast, universal mind, enabling us to view future events and communicate telepathically. For those relying on more prosaic means, Ms Anderson is located at: <http://www.janeananderson.com.au>.

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