
Psychic Astronomy

Martin Gardner

Over the centuries thousands of religious cult leaders, seers, psychics, and spirit mediums have favored the public with exotic revelations about astronomy, especially about life on other planets. A huge volume would be needed to survey these revelations, and a bibliography of books alone would run to hundreds of titles. Herewith a small sampling of the more outrageous examples.

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), called by Conan Doyle the “first and greatest of modern mediums,” began his career in Sweden as a distinguished scientist. In his middle years he began to experience trances during which he talked endlessly with Jesus, angels, devils, and departed human souls—Moses, Saint Paul, Luther, Calvin, popes and kings, and many others. So convinced was he that the Lord had chosen him to be the Bible’s infallible interpreter that he dated the Second Coming as having occurred in 1757, the year his vision of the Last Judgment marked the end of the Christian dispensation and the beginning of what he called the New Jerusalem.

The Church of the New Jerusalem, based on Swedenborg’s voluminous Latin writings, emerged in England after his death. Among the thousands of people who admired him were such literary lights as Baudelaire, Goethe, Emerson, Strindberg, Balzac, Blake, and the elder Henry James, father of William. (Of Henry’s book *The Secret of Swedenborg*, one critic complained that James had *kept it*.) The young Immanuel Kant was so impressed by Swedenborg’s alleged remote vision of a great fire in Stockholm that he wrote a treatise about it. The American parapsychologist Joseph B. Rhine called Swedenborg “the pioneer in the work I am doing.”

In a small book, *The Earths in the Universe*, Swedenborg described the inhabitants of all the Sun’s planets—except, of course, the then-unknown Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto—as well as those of their moons and planets in other solar systems. These visions are many cuts below tenth-rate science fiction. All Swedenborg’s extraterrestrials are monotonously humanoid.

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Most of them worship Jesus, who occasionally visits them.

Mercurians see the Sun as huge, but their climate is moderate. The women are small, beautiful, and wear linen caps. The men dress in tight-fitting blue raiment. They have good memories and a vast knowledge of astronomy. Their oxen and cows are like ours, only smaller. Venusians are divided into two races, one “mild and humane,” the other a race of cruel, stupid giants. Martians speak in “sonorous” tones, live on fruit, and wear clothes made from the barks of trees. The lower parts of their faces have a black skin color.

Jovians are kind and gentle, living on fertile lands where there are many wild horses. Although grouped into nations, warfare is unknown. Those in warm climates go naked except for loincloths. Their tents and low wooden houses have sides decorated with stars on blue backgrounds. When they eat they sit on the leaves of fig trees with their legs crossed. Curiously, they do not walk erect but “creep along” by using their hands.

Saturnians are “upright, modest” people who live on fruits and seeds. Their planet’s rings appear in the sky as “white as snow.” Moon people are about the size of our seven-year-olds. Their voices, which sound like “thunder,” are produced by expelling air from their abdomens.

In America the leading precursor of the Spiritualist movement, which began with the toe-rappings of the Fox sisters, was Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910), known as the Seer of Poughkeepsie (New York). He began his crazy career as a passionate Swedenborgian. When Davis was twenty the spirit of Swedenborg allegedly dictated to him, while he was in hypnotic trances, the most famous of his some thirty books: *Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelation, and A Voice to Mankind* (1847). My copy is a twelfth printing that runs to 756 pages. The book had more than thirty editions; a later tome, *The Great Harmonia*, is said to have had forty. Conan Doyle considered *Principles of Nature* “one of the most profound and original books of philosophy ever produced.” He believed it came from the same “divine source” as the “valour of Joan of Arc, the sanctity of a Theresa . . . [and] the supernatural powers of Daniel Home.”

Many familiar ploys of later psychic charlatans were pioneered by Davis. He earned large sums of money by clairvoyantly peering into people’s bodies, diagnosing their ailments,

and prescribing strange remedies. He performed what magicians call “eyeless vision”—having his eyes covered and reading documents handed to him. Doyle, who devotes a chapter to the Poughkeepsie Seer in his *History of Spiritualism*, was impressed by Davis’s prophecies of horseless carriages, airplanes, typewriters, and the growth of Spiritualism. Doyle makes much of the fact that Davis was uneducated and read almost nothing, though there is ample evidence he was a voracious reader of books on philosophy, science, and religion. He founded and edited magazines, spewed forth a steady stream of articles, tracts, and pamphlets, lectured widely, and was more admired by his contemporaries than any native psychic today. But, when he died in 1910, at the age of eighty-four, he was running a small bookshop in Boston and his popularity was on the wane.

Davis’s visions disclosed that all our planets are inhabited except Uranus, Neptune, and an unnamed ninth planet that occultists later identified as Pluto. The closer a planet is to the sun, the younger its age and the more gross and imperfect its inhabitants. Davis probably got this notion from Swedenborg, though it is also defended by Kant in a 1755 work on cosmology—“a view to be praised for its terrestrial modesty,” comments Bertrand Russell in his *History of Western Philosophy*, “but not supported by any scientific grounds.” Kant believed, as did Swedenborg, that there are other galaxies like our Milky Way, with planets that also teem with life.

Mercurians, Davis declared, have a “powerful retentive memory,” but their ferocious animal nature generates perpetual warfare. “At this moment,” he continues, “one of those destructive battles is about being consummated.” Bodies of the Mercurians are completely covered with hair, giving them an appearance that “would be to us no more pleasing than that of an orangutan.” Two barren deserts, covering almost all the planet’s surface, are surrounded by boiling water. Severe winds blowing over the hot water cause great destruction.

Most of Venus, Davis reveals, is covered with water, and its atmosphere is “nearly like that which encompasses the earth.” Astronomers then knew little about the rotation of Venus. Davis gives it a period of 23½ hours. It is now known to be 584 days, but let’s not waste time on dull errors. Venusians on one side of the planet are kind, but their reasoning powers are weak. On the other side of Venus the inhabitants are giant savages—Davis here follows Swedenborg—who practice torture and cannibalism, sometimes devouring their own children.

Seven pages are devoted to the Martians—small humanoids with blue eyes and yellow faces. He confirms Swedenborg’s revelation that the lower parts of their faces are dark in color. They are kind folk of high morals, who communicate by facial expressions. “When one conceives a thought . . . he casts his beaming eyes upon the eyes of another; and his sentiments instantly become known.”

Of the asteroids that circle the Sun between the orbits of Earth and Mars, Davis writes only about the four then known: Ceres, Pallas, Juno, and Vesta. All bear only plant life, “although an era is now approaching that will call into existence a class of zoophytes.” Eventually the four will coalesce into a single planet.

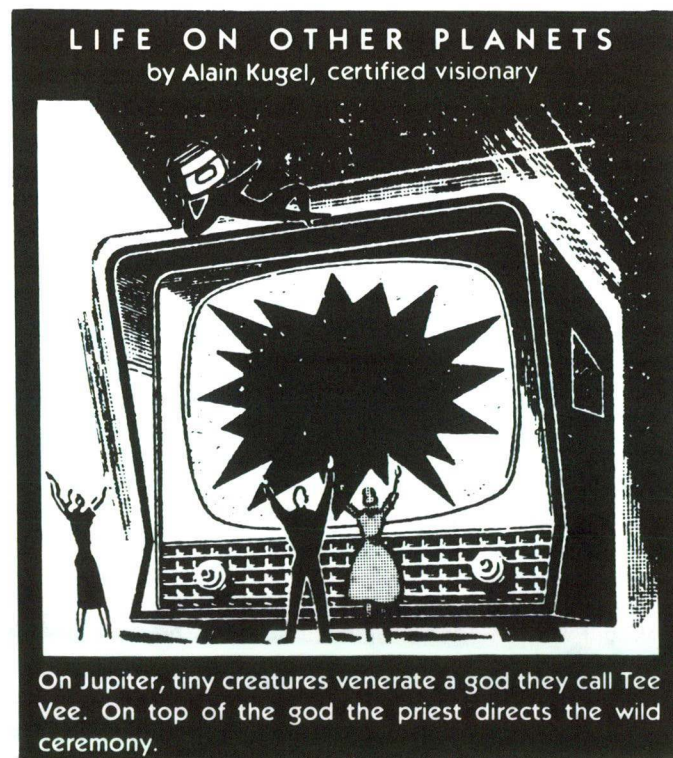
Davis’s vision of Jupiter closely parallels Swedenborg’s. The Jovians are larger and more beautiful than we are, and much

more intelligent. “They do not walk erect, but assume an inclined position, frequently using their hands and arms in walking.” Their upper lips are unusually prominent. The giant planet is free of diseases, but the Jovian life span is only about thirty years. Their nations are united in peaceful brotherhood.

The geography of Saturn is “very beautiful,” Davis writes, “it being divided into two-thirds water and one-third earth.” Its inhabitants represent the highest stage of development in our solar system—even more intelligent, beautiful, and good than the Jovians. Their heads are “very high and long,” with brains composed of cortical glands, “each of which attracts and repels, performing systolic and diastolic motions” like those of our heart. I spare the reader Davis’s dull descriptions of the lower forms of Saturn’s animal life.

Hundreds of psychics and mediums in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries followed Swedenborg and Davis in their visions of life on the Moon and the planets. They drew maps. They sketched pictures of the aliens and their dwellings, their flora and fauna. A few even spoke their languages. These great revelations were uniformly and singularly unimaginative, as vapid as descriptions of Heaven regularly channeled by the dead through the throats and hands of mediums.

Thomas Lake Harris (1823-1906) was born in England, his parents settling in upstate New York when he was five. As a youth of twenty he became an enthusiastic disciple of the Poughkeepsie Seer, but the pair soon had a violent falling-out. Harris founded his own colony of believers, first near Wassaic, New York, later moving to nearby Amenia, then to Brockton, Pennsylvania, and finally to Santa Rosa, California. Harris was in constant communication with good and evil inhabitants of planets in our solar system and elsewhere, as well as with earthly fairies whom he preferred to call “fays.” His astronomical revelations were recorded in books of mediocre verse,



“After one séance, when a floating trumpet was found warm on the sides and moist at the mouthpiece, Valiantine explained that spirits who spoke through it had to materialize both warm hands and wet lips. Supposed fingerprints of other discarnates came from his left big toe, his fingers, and an elbow.”

starting with his *Epic of the Starry Heavens*, which he claimed was dictated to him in a trance. Doyle, in a chapter on Harris in his *Edge of the Unknown*, thinks Harris’s poetry is of “high order,” even reminding him of Blake and Shelley!

As so often the case with weird religious cults, there was considerable free love in the colony where Harris was top guru to a motley group of wealthy women and befuddled men. Harris believed that everybody is bisexual, including all the angels and even God. He considered himself united to a spirit called “Lady Lily.” Lilistan was Harris’s name for Heaven. Doyle found his prose books incomprehensible and disliked the way Harris attacked the rising spiritualist movement as satanic in origin. He said he couldn’t decide whether Harris was a “megalomaniac ranter endowed with considerable worldly cunning, or one who really had a breath of the divine afflatus.”

Laurence Oliphant, a distinguished British diplomat and writer, and his beloved mother, Lady Oliphant, were Harris’s most notable converts. Both joined his colony, and for a dozen years obeyed the guru’s every whim. Laurence was forced to perform such menial tasks as cleaning stables and selling strawberries at railway stations. After he and his mother became disenchanted, he sued Harris for the return of property he had given the community, and Harris in turn tried to get Oliphant committed to a mental hospital.

Harris claimed to have achieved the seventh and final stage of breath control. This, he said just before his death at age eighty-three, made him young again. Unable to believe their leader truly dead, his followers waited several months before reporting his departure for Lilistan.

Hélène Smith was a young French medium whose spirit controls included Victor Hugo and the eighteenth-century Italian imposter Alessandro Cagliostro. Queen Marie Antoinette was one of her many incarnations. Hélène levitated tables, materialized flowers, fruit, shells filled with wet sand, vases, Chinese money, and other objects. Only a hopeless parapsychologist could suppose that these miracles were anything but conscious fraud. She is best known, however, for her frequent out-of-body trips to Mars. Not only did she (or Martians speaking through her) describe the Martians and their culture in boring detail, but she wrote and spoke fluently a bizarre Martian language.

Hélène’s Martians were three feet tall, with heads twice as wide as high. Both sexes dressed in trousers. Théodore Flournoy, a Swiss psychologist, investigated Hélène’s claims,

and wrote a book about them, *From India to the Planet Mars* (1900). He concluded that her Martian language was a form of French glossolalia, and that her visits to Mars revealed nothing except what was inside her head.

In the United States Miss Smith had a rival in Mrs. Smead, pseudonym of a medium who was the wife of preacher William Cleveland. About 1900 she began to channel messages from inhabitants of Mars and Jupiter. She sketched maps of the surfaces of both planets, including the famous Martian canals then widely promoted by astronomer Percival Lowell. She drew pictures of Martians, their houses, ships, airplanes, and so on, and began to speak the Martian tongue. The Martian word for man was *mare*, for woman *kare*. Sample sentence: *Moken irin trinen minin aru ti maren inine tine*, which means “Flowers bloom there, many of the great men plant them.” According to Mrs. Smead, Jupiter is where Earth’s babies go when they die. James Hervey Hyslop, professor of philosophy and psychology at Columbia University and one of the nation’s leading spiritualists, authenticated Mrs. Smead’s great psychic abilities.

America’s most famous “direct voice” medium—a medium through whom discarnates speak in their own natural intonations—was George Valiantine, of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Hundreds of different voices, in many languages, came through his lips as his controls varied. One control was Confucius. I mention Valiantine because a discarnate named Dr. Barnett fed him the usual dreary information about humanoids on Mars. Valiantine wrote numerous books. His devoted followers were typically undismayed whenever he was caught in fraud. After one séance, when a floating trumpet was found warm on the sides and moist at the mouthpiece, Valiantine explained that spirits who spoke through it had to materialize both warm hands and wet lips. A thumb print of Conan Doyle that Valiantine produced in a séance was discovered to be a print of the medium’s right big toe. Supposed fingerprints of other discarnates came from his left big toe, his fingers, and an elbow. Valiantine reportedly sobbed when confronted with these facts, though he denied any cheating and said he couldn’t understand what had happened. According to Doyle, Valiantine had “exceptional psychic powers.”

Among religious leaders who explored planets by way of clairvoyance or out-of-body travels, the most famous was Mrs. Ellen G. White, inspired prophetess of Seventh-Day Adventism. In her younger days she repeatedly went into trance states during which, her followers maintained, she completely stopped breathing. On the basis of her lurid visions, which she said came directly from God, she filled dozens of books with exotic details about biblical events—details missing from the Bible—as well as about doctrines peculiar to the Adventist movement. She also appeared before local church congregations to give what today would be called “psychic readings” about problems facing church members.

One day in 1846, when Ellen was nineteen, she went into her usual trance and made a quick tour of the solar system. She gave glowing descriptions of Jupiter and its four large moons, Saturn with seven moons, and Uranus with six. She failed to mention Neptune or Pluto, at that time unknown. Ellen insisted she knew nothing about astronomy. Church elder Joseph Bates, an amateur astronomer present during the trance,

murmured "This is of the Lord," and instantly abandoned his doubts that Ellen's visions were from on high. Unfortunately, a few years later telescopes spotted additional Jovian and Saturnian moons. The count now stands at seventeen or more for Jupiter, and at least twenty-two for Saturn. Uranus was found to have only four moons, correcting an earlier faulty report of six. A fifth, however, was discovered recently, and the count could go back up to six.

In 1849 Mrs. White wrote: "The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song. The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes, they were noble, majestic, and lovely. . . . Then I was taken to a world which had seven moons. There I saw good old Enoch, who had been translated."

Was Mrs. White referring to her 1846 vision of Saturn? Seventh-Day Adventist minister J. L. Loughborough, in his *Rise and Progress of the Seventh Day Adventists* (1892), quotes from a letter written by a woman who was present at the 1846 trance:

Sister White was in very feeble health, and while prayers were offered in her behalf, the Spirit of God rested upon us. We soon noticed that she was insensible to earthly things. This was her first view of the planetary world. After counting aloud the moons of Jupiter, and soon after those of Saturn, she gave a beautiful description of the rings of the latter. She then said, "The inhabitants are a tall, majestic people, so unlike the inhabitants of earth. Sin has never entered here." It was evident from Brother Bates's smiling face that his past doubts in regard to the source of her visions were fast leaving him. We all knew that Captain Bates was a great lover of astronomy, as he would often locate many of the heavenly bodies for our instruction. When Sister White replied to his questions, after the vision, saying that she had never studied or otherwise received knowledge in this direction, he was filled with joy and happiness. He praised God, and expressed his belief that this vision concerning the planets was given that he might never doubt again.

In 1905, when Pastor Loughborough revised his book for a new edition, an eighth moon of Saturn had been found. It is hard to believe, but the word "seven" in the above passage was changed to "eight." Adventists later claimed this was a printer's error! Incidentally, Mrs. White's allegedly God-inspired books are now known to swarm with long passages shamelessly plagiarized from earlier writers. (See *The White Lie*, by ex-Adventist minister Walter T. Rea, 1982, a book with such explosive disclosures that hundreds of Adventist ministers have since abandoned the church. See also Rea's article in *FREE INQUIRY*, Fall 1984.)

In 1848 Mrs. White had one of her most dramatic visions of the Second Coming. She saw the Holy City of Jerusalem emerge from an open space in the nebula of Orion. Here is how she spoke of the vision in *Early Writings*:

December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said

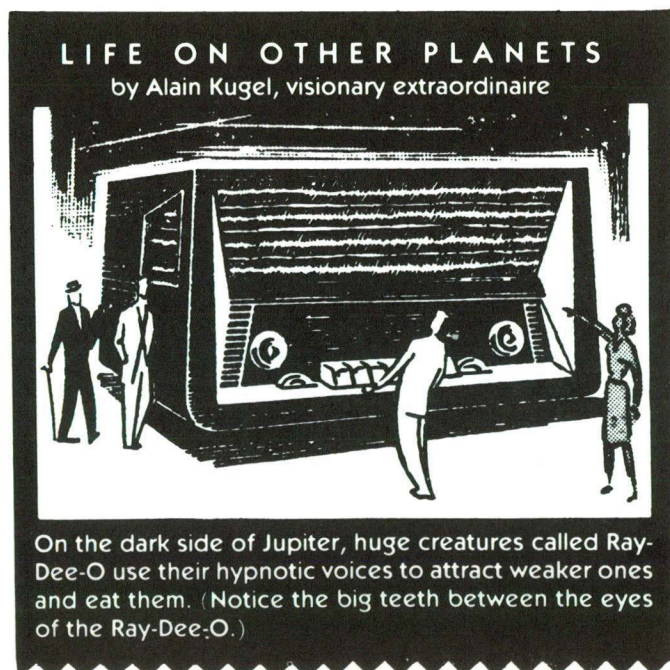
"heaven," in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said "earth" He meant earth. The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God.

Dark, heavy clouds came up, and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The holy city will come down through that open space. I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken, and that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers in Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations.

The beautiful nebula of Orion, which appears to the unaided eye as a bright star in Orion's sword, is a cloud of extremely low density luminous gas that has long fascinated astronomers and poets. Here is Merlin speaking in Tennyson's *Merlin and Vivien*:

A single misty star
Which is the second in a line of stars
That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,
I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
Of some vast charm concluded in that star
To make fame nothing.

Near the nebula's center is a small dark patch that seems



surrounded by four stars at the corners of a trapezium. In his book *Astronomy and the Bible* (published by the Adventist Church in 1919), Lucas A. Reed devotes his last three chapters to the "vast charm" of this nebula. It is nothing less, says Reed, than the entrance to God's dwelling place. He sees the nebula as shaped like a funnel, wide end toward us, the dark patch marking an open space that leads directly to God's throne. With the familiar combination of assurance and ignorance so characteristic of fundamentalists, Reed writes:

We believe, then, that without question, beyond or through this inapproachable light of Orion lie, somewhere, heaven and the throne of God. Mrs. White, without astronomical knowledge, told something about Orion that no astronomer of that time had yet measured up to. Now, without knowing a thing about her statement, and probably not caring to know, they tell us facts which bear out her statement about an "open space in Orion."

Astronomers still haven't measured up to this claim, and I cannot say how many Adventists today take it seriously. Most of them, I suspect, have never heard it made. Nor do I know how many now take seriously their church's early belief that millions of transparent hailstones are circling Earth, held there in reserve until the last days of Judgment when they will fall as one of the seven last plagues described in the Apocalypse.

You might suppose that in this enlightened age of science no educated person would take psychic astronomy seri-

ously. Alas, our age is far from enlightened. Probably a larger fraction of intelligent people today believe in astrology than did in thirteenth-century Europe. Parapsychologists tell us that remote viewing (clairvoyance) is independent of distance. If so, it is entirely reasonable to suppose that modern psychics can remote-view another planet as easily as they can a distant spot on Earth.

In 1973, when those two indomitable parapsychicists Harold Puthoff and Russell Targ were at Stanford Research Institute, they supervised a psychic probe of Jupiter. Two psychics were involved: the Manhattan Scientist Ingo Swann, one of the most successful subjects of earlier remote-viewing experiments by P and T (Puthoff and Targ), and Harold Sherman, an elderly psychic who runs the ESP Research Associates Foundation in Little Rock, Arkansas. Sherman's *ESP Manual* tells how to foresee the future, enter higher dimensions, communicate with the dead, and record spirit voices. His book *The Dead Are Alive* was praised by Norman Vincent Peale (in a letter that Sherman quotes in his *Fate* magazine advertisements) as "a masterpiece . . . [perhaps] the greatest of all your great books. I hope it will be widely read."

Sherman professes to have seen UFOs in the presence of hundreds of witnesses. "There has to be an intelligence behind them far surpassing our own," he told *Psychic Magazine* in an interview in 1973, "and they must have a purpose in visiting us in greater and greater numbers at this truly momentous time in our troubled earth history." Sherman believes he had precognitive knowledge of UFOs as early as 1946 and 1947, when he wrote two science-fiction yarns for *Amazing Stories*: "The Green Man" and "The Green Man Returns," which told of an extraterrestrial with enormous psi powers who visits Earth in a spaceship. The stories may have given rise to the popular view of "little green men" from other worlds. You can buy a book containing the two stories from Sherman. Here is how he advertises it in *Fate*:

Who knows—in keeping with world-famous Sherman's amazing psychic vision—the peoples of Earth may be on the eve of an actual visitation of Space Beings in a fleet of UFO's! So, why not prepare yourself for this possible future happening by reading about the coming of the Green Men, their appearance to be signalled by the sighting of a Great Light, to herald the bringing to earth of a New Plan of Living designed to bring Peace to Mankind!

Like all contemporary seers, Sherman has a miserable record as a prophet. Consider what he said (in the same interview) about the approach of the comet Kohoutek:

The spectacular advent of Comet Kohoutek is bound to have an immense effect upon man's mind. This issue of your publication is scheduled to be in the hands of your readers at the time that the comet is blazing in our skies.

I predict many will be struck with fear to the point of panic; others will regard this heavenly display as the most spiritual experience of a lifetime, and will look for new metaphysical and religious meanings. I also feel that the physical effects of the comet's passing may influence weather conditions on earth and lead to eventual meteoric showers and other

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astronomic happenings.

I do not, however, think the comet's appearance is by divine decree. Rather, I may have sensed an event such as this coming toward us in time, its arrival synchronized with a most critical time on earth, which could certainly be now.

Back to the Stanford Research Institute farce. On April 27, 1973, Sherman was at his house near Mountain Home, Arkansas, and Ingo Swann was at SRI in Menlo Park, California. Each simultaneously projected his astral body toward Jupiter in an attempt to preview the results of Pioneer 10, scheduled to fly by the giant planet in December. Each wrote down what he "saw." Swann then culled what the two reports had in common and submitted the results to P and T.

"I was asked to examine the accuracy of their account," Carl Sagan wrote in his book *Other Worlds* (1975). "If their reports had been submitted in my elementary astronomy course, they would have received grades of D. Their reports were not better than what can be extracted from the worst popularizations of planetary astronomy; they were filled with the most obvious misunderstandings both about Jupiter and about Pioneer 10."

Sagan continues:

As just one example, Pioneer 10 was reported shaped like a bullet—perhaps the average man's most naive picture of an interplanetary spacecraft. In fact, interplanetary spacecraft are not streamlined because they do not enter planetary atmospheres. They may have, and Pioneer 10 does have, all sorts of odd and convenient shapes because there is negligible atmospheric resistance in the medium through which they travel.

So far as I know, the results of this puerile probe have not been published, and P and T have had little to say about it. Undaunted, P and T sent the same two psychics to Mercury on March 11, 1974, in advance of the probe by Mariner 10 later that month. This time Swann was at his New York City apartment while Sherman was again in Arkansas. Swann wrote that his astral body was up into space in a few minutes, speeding toward the Sun. Sherman did not describe his own blast-off, though he spoke later of flying around Mercury to get good close-up looks.

The two psychics scored one lucky hit. They reported a magnetic field around Mercury; astronomers had not anticipated this because of the little planet's slow spin. But this success was balanced by huge blunders. Sherman described Mercury's surface as quivering like jelly, with "enormously hot energy bubbles of gigantic size and there seems to be depths or craters from which exude whitish yellow and green vapors." He also saw a "jagged mountain landscape" with "great black bands" that formed an immense "loop-like figure eight some hundreds of miles in width and length."

Although Mercury has an extremely thin atmosphere, there are no clouds. Ingo saw lots of clouds that "come and go very fast and they form sort of on the day side of the planet." He also saw primitive life forms: ". . . lichens, sort of water life which attaches to the rocks. . . ." Unfortunately, the Mariner probe showed no water, no clouds, no green vapors, no mountain ranges, no bubbles, no black figure eight, no quivering

jelly—only a desolate crater-pocked surface similar to the Moon's.

In 1976 Swann and Sherman collaborated on a visit to Mars, but I have been unable to locate information about that voyage. That same year they also remote-viewed a canoe trip by Canadian explorer Dale Graff down the Coppermine River north of the Arctic Circle. Each day Swann and Sherman mailed their impressions to P and T at SRI, and Sherman claimed dramatic success. But, if P and T have published the results of this out-of-body probe, I am unaware of it.

Sherman and Swann did not see any humanoids on Jupiter or Mercury (and presumably none on Mars). Does this mean that today's occultists are less naive than those of the past? I think not. When Davis had his remote visions, little was known about conditions on the planets, and the possibility they were inhabited could not be ruled out. Even as late as the early years of the flying-saucer mania it was believed that the aliens came from Venus or Mars. Today, new information makes it extremely unlikely that life of any sort exists in the solar system except on Earth, and possibly on Saturn's largest moon, Titan. The aliens have been moved outward to planets orbiting other suns, or up to "higher dimensional planes." Allowing for scientific progress, the astronomical visions of Sherman and Swann are no less flatulent than the visions of Davis.

Sagan has summed up the results of psychic astronomy crisply in *Other Worlds*:

There is no evidence that any mystic has done better in guessing the nature of the planets than he could do without his mystical powers but with the ability to read the better elementary astronomy books.

