

never been a disciple. I was a wanderer. . . being with many groups, schools, methods but never belonging to anybody. . . I was a guest at most, an overnight stay." Could it be that the need to turn oneself into a disciple at the feet of a guru is little different from any other form of religion or fanatical devotion? If the fears and doubts, the feelings of anxiety and meaninglessness which make life problematic for so many are linked to the deep-rooted unresolved needs of the infant's the attraction of religion becomes clearer. If I find in a God or a Master the all wise, all loving all forgiving parent I never had, perhaps I feel less tormented. The problem is that to keep these feelings at bay depends on an act of faith which may at any time be undermined. The therapist whilst accepting the transference of these idealized hopes from the patient, also takes all the negative transference as well. He/she is in turns both good mother, bad mother, good father and bad father. He does not set himself up as a Master with a crystal ball and all the suggestions of miracles this conjures up. Continually the patient is thrown back on him/herself and the relationship is always a finite one which at some point is to be phased out; and this is its strength. If Bhagwan offered the same advice to his disciples as was so useful to him i.e. "Don't be a disciple" he would be a less successful guru but a better therapist.

Donald Ellison

Treating Levitation with Levity but Gravitation with Gravity

In the September issue of *Self & Society*, Kevin Fleisch writes (p.92) about various methods of assessing the attainments of participants in certain training courses at Salford College, where he is on the staff. I was particularly struck by the exacting requirements prescribed for "meditative/levitational attainments"; a pass requires levitation to a height of two feet off the ground, a credit requiring levitation to a height of one metre.

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, "levitate" means "to rise and float in the air". Let us assume that among the more leaden aspirants to the heights of a pass in the qualifying course for what might be called a "certified levitator" at this college should it not call itself the Salford College of **Higher** Education? one inept student only got one foot off the ground. Do not misunderstand me, I mean levitated his entire body to a height of only twelve inches. He would not obtain a pass, but he could console himself with the thought that he had convincingly demonstrated, in T.H.Huxley's words, "the awkward fact that ruins the most beautiful theory". He might only have risen twelve inches, but he would have blown the theory of gravitational physics sky high, and made fools of both Newton and Einstein

I have a high regard for Newton and Einstein, even though I do not pretend to any detailed knowledge of their work, and even though neither of them cuts any ice with the average guru . I also see the arguments in favour of parachutes, scaffolding, buttresses, bras, ladders, staircases, lifts, postural realignment techniques and other devices which derive their practical usefulness from the necessity of taking account of gravity always, and not only in Salford, but everywhere else on this planet and above it, as far as the planet's gravitational pull extends.

I cheerfully accept the fact that gravity makes it impossible for me to levitate my body , however dedicated a meditator I may be or become. Nor do I believe that anyone else on this planet can levitate, or that anyone has ever been able to do so. From this it follows that I consider all claims to be able to levitate bogus, and all who pretend to teach levitation charlatans, and if they ask or accept payment for purporting to do so, fraudulent. As a corollary of this, I think anyone who believes in the possibility of learning to levitate is the naive victim the often only--too-willing victim - of deception.

What then is the origin of the widespread belief in, and desire for the ability to levitate? It seems obvious to me that the fantasy of levitation, like the fantasy of the resurrection of the dead, is based on the phenomenon of penile erection. To the unsophisticated an erection appears to be a rising and flotation of a vital part of the body by nonphysical means, i.e. levitation.

I would think that the ability to achieve an erection generally ensures a sufficient degree of satisfaction with the human body to make the inability to levitate the rest of the body a matter of no moment. Perhaps it is when, for whatever reason, doubt surrounds the ability to achieve an erection that the compensatory fantasy of levitation is activated.

Be that as it may, I suggest that a psychology which describes itself as humanistic owes it to humanity (and, in justice, to the reputation of Newton and Einstein) to expose the falsity of those who claim to be able to falsify correctly formulated laws of physics.
