
Poetry & Prose

And It Comes Out Here

by Stanley Korn, FSPE

The efforts of the researchers to construct a teleportation device were partially successful. They were able to make objects disappear from the sending chamber, but those objects didn't reappear in the receiving chamber. Where they went was a mystery.

There weren't any reports of the objects appearing elsewhere. Had the material been converted into energy, the result would have been an explosion akin to a nuclear bomb, which could hardly have gone unnoticed. Regarding the possibility that the objects underwent temporal displacement, while there was no record of such objects popping up in the past, the possibility that they were projected into the future could not be ruled out.

In an effort to solve the mystery, a radio transmitter was sent, but no signal was detected from it. As a last resort, a volunteer in a spacesuit—who knew where he might end up—carrying a powerful radio transmitter was sent; he never reported back.

As the researchers were about to abandon the project, someone had the idea that the technology could be used as a means of disposing of hazardous waste. A scaled-up version of the teleporter sans receiving chamber was constructed, and the DisposeAll company was formed, their slogan being, "We'll safely dispose of *any* waste, no matter how hazardous."

The first clients of DisposeAll were the nuclear power plants. The company would send a disposal unit on a flatbed truck to the site of the nuclear reactor, and workers in protective clothing at that site would load the radioactive waste into the disposal chamber. The disposal

device would then be activated and—*voilà*—no more radioactive waste.

The use of the DisposeAll technology was not without its critics. Some were concerned that all of the hazardous material disposed of could reappear at some inopportune time and place. Another worry was that the widespread and long-term use of that technology would eventually deplete the earth's resources. However, as is all too often the case, short-term benefit trumped long-term risk, and DisposeAll's business grew.

As DisposeAll's business continued to expand, something quite unexpected happened. People began reporting toxic waste seeping into their dreams. At first, such reports were dismissed as being, well, just dreams. As these "toxic dreams" continued to increase in number and intensity, people described having nightmares, including walking among mounds of garbage and drowning in a lake of foul-smelling goo.

Many people blamed DisposeAll for their nightmares, claiming that the garbage disposed of by that company was somehow ending up in their dreams. DisposeAll denied responsibility, asserting that the cause of the bad dreams was purely psychological and ridiculing the idea that the material that they disposed of could enter people's dreams. As a gesture of good will, the company offered to pay for the psychological counseling of anyone suffering from garbage dreams.

As the prevalence of garbage nightmares continued to increase, public opinion turned against DisposeAll, and Congress began debating a bill requiring a moratorium on DisposeAll's disposal operations while the matter was being

investigated. DisposeAll, whose business had become quite lucrative, fought back through its lobbyists and public relations operatives by arguing that there was no proof that the material that it disposed of ended up in people's dreams. In addition, the company attempted to garner support from environmentalists by contending that the alternative to their disposal operations would be environmental pollution.

As the controversy regarding DisposeAll's operations continued to roil, a woman named Martha reported having a recurring dream of seeing a man in a spacesuit standing among piles of garbage. Since a man in a spacesuit entering the teleporter had been reported in the news, Martha's dreams were not considered to be particularly significant. However, as Martha's dreams continued, she was able to establish communication with the man in her dreams, who stated that his name was Robert. Robert provided Martha with personal information about himself and his family that was not publicly known but was later confirmed by investigators; *that* caused people to take notice.

The members of the research team who had worked on the teleportation device were particularly interested in communicating with Robert, who had been a member of their team before his departure. With the money obtained from selling their DisposeAll stock at a considerable profit, they formed a company called DreamLink. DreamLink hired Martha as a consultant.

Martha would spend her nights in a sleep laboratory whose services DreamLink had contracted. Before going to sleep, she was given a list of questions to ask Robert. Her brain waves were monitored by an electroencephalograph, and she was awakened following periods of REM sleep, which are associated with dreaming. She would then report her dream, assisted by an interviewer. All sessions were recorded.

According to Robert, the teleporter and the DisposeAll units opened portals into the astral plane, which was the realm of dreams and inhabited by the souls of the departed who had not yet advanced (or perhaps never would advance) to the higher planes. The material going through the portals was converted into thoughtforms when it entered the astral plane.

Robert was present in his astral body. His appearance in a spacesuit was for the purpose of enabling Martha to identify him. He stated that he had conferred with other souls and that there was unanimous agreement that the dumping of garbage into the astral plane had to stop. Besides making life unpleasant for the inhabitants, the transfer of material was depleting the earth's resources. To bolster his case, he said that the astral denizens were, if necessary, prepared to return the favor by constructing a device that would send the garbage back from whence it came.

While there was considerable doubt as to whether the inhabitants of the astral plane could or would return the garbage, the possibility that they could make good on their threat, when combined with the continuing garbage dreams, was sufficient to turn public opinion strongly against DisposeAll. Recognizing that Congress was about to pass the bill requiring DisposeAll to cease its waste-disposal practice, the company announced that it would be phasing out its disposal operations.

The bill passed by Congress prohibited DisposeAll's method of garbage removal, effective six months after its signing. This was good news for the other waste-management companies that had seen their business decline as a result of DisposeAll's operations.

Recognizing that they needed to establish an alternative to Martha's dreams as a means of communicating with the astral plane—Martha indicated that she looked forward to sleeping in her own bed—DreamLink formed a task force to work with those in the astral plane to establish a

communication link between the two realms. In addition, they created an oneironautics division to recruit lucid dreamers to assist the astral inhabitants in cleaning up the garbage.

DreamLink, which changed its name to AstralLink, acquired the disposal units of DisposeAll at a liquidation sale of that company's assets and repurposed those units for teleporting volunteers to the astral plane to work with the astral dwellers. The volunteers consisted mainly of people with a terminal illness and those whose quality of life had deteriorated to the point where they considered it to be no longer worth living. While one would arrive in the astral plane following death, either from natural causes or by suicide, the advantage of using the teleporter was that one could then bypass the orientation normally given to new arrivals following death and get to work immediately, leaving the orientation for a more convenient time.

Operating in the astral plane took some getting used to for the new arrivals. Here in the physical world, the mind cannot directly interact with other minds or the external environment—psi phenomena are a rare exception—but must operate through the interface of the body. Quite often, tools are used as an interface between the body and the environment to enhance the effectiveness of that interaction. For example, one can dig a lot more effectively using a shovel than with one's bare hands. As a second example, a telescope can increase one's ability to see distant objects.

In the astral plane, unlike the physical world, the mind can directly interact with other minds (by telepathy) as well as with the environment. It's possible to mentally create and shape astral material into thoughtforms. Those new to the astral plane will often create astral arms and hands and even tools to manipulate the astral matter; while such constructs may serve to focus the mind, they are usually dispensed with by the more experienced astral dwellers.

A concomitant of the fact that the mind can interact with the external environment and other people only via the body in the physical world is that, in the latter, there is a clear separation between thought and action, where expressions of thought (e.g., speech) are included in the action category. Since our actions and expressions of thought affect other people as well as the environment, which in turn affect us, we learn at an early age to control these behaviors. By contrast, we receive no feedback from our unexpressed thoughts, so there is little, if any, motivation to manage them.

In the astral plane, there is no distinction between thought and action. For example, you wouldn't plan a trip and then execute that plan; the mere desire to be at another location instantly transports you there. Thoughts, including unconscious desires and fears, manifest themselves as thoughtforms, whether intended or not. Thus, managing one's thoughts in the astral plane is as necessary as controlling one's actions is in the physical world.

In many ways, there is greater freedom of action in the astral plane than in the physical world, where one must function within the constraints imposed by the laws of physics. However, operating in the astral plane is not without its limitations. The ability of an astral resident to effect changes in the environment is limited by his (or hers or its—gender has little, if any, significance here) mental energy. By contrast, humans in the physical world, motivated by survival needs (e.g., food acquisition), have developed the technology to harness forms of energy other than their own muscle power as well as the ability to work in organized groups.

Some new arrivals brought with them the organization and planning skills necessary to assist the astrals in developing a comprehensive plan to clean up the astral plane. Additional assistance was provided by helpers who descended from the mental plane.

The cleanup effort was incorporated into a more ambitious astral renewal project. Those involved in that project came together to come up with a plan. As the members of the team presented their proposals, these manifested as thoughtforms in the common space, resulting in a jumble, much like multiple artists painting on the same canvas. The project coordinator had the space cleared for another try.

For the second attempt, the coordinator directed those who wished to present a proposal to so indicate (by the telepathic equivalent of raising their hands) and wait to be called on. The first individual called on was able to successfully create the thoughtform that embodied his proposal; so far, so good. The coordinator then provided an opportunity for the others, when called upon, to comment on that proposal, indicating that they either liked it as is, didn't like it (and why), or wished to suggest a modification. The trouble began even before anyone had time to evaluate the proposal.

Thoughtforms in the astral plane, while more persistent than mental images created by the imagination in the physical world, are less permanent than physical structures. Thoughtforms become less distinct and eventually fade away over time unless they are continually refreshed by inputs of mental energy. Large thoughtforms, which require more mental energy to create, last longer than lesser thoughtforms. The massive amount of garbage dumped into the astral plane would eventually fade away of its own accord, but "eventually" in that case would be a very long time.

The natural lifespan of the thoughtforms associated with the proposals was sufficiently long to enable them, if undisturbed, to persist for the duration of the planning session without appreciable loss of detail. However, the mere act of mentally viewing a thoughtform unavoidably changes it, much like a blind person tactily viewing a sculpture made of soft clay. The effect

of a single viewing is relatively minor—slight loss of fine detail—but the combined effect of the multiple viewings by the many assembled project team members of the proposal presented was sufficient to degrade the associated thoughtform to the point where the information encoded in it was rendered unintelligible—the observer effect in spades!

The coordinator ended the session in order to confer with his advisors. Someone suggested that the problems they were encountering were the result of their attempt to take the methods of project management developed in the physical world and apply them with only minimal modification to the astral plane, an environment for which those methods weren't suited, analogous to taking a vehicle built to travel over land and attempting to modify it to travel across water by redesigning its tires.

The problem, it seemed, was coming up with a method of coordinating the efforts of those involved in the project that would be effective in the astral plane. One of the advisors recalled seeing an episode of the *Star Trek* series during the time he was in the physical world in which Spock used the Vulcan mind meld. What is science fiction in the physical world, he proposed, might be possible here, where telepathy is the norm. However, it would not be sufficient to link two minds; success depended on the ability to merge the minds of multiple individuals. Nevertheless, it was certainly worth a try.

As a test, two of the advisors attempted to form a mind meld. Since the contents of one's mind could be readily viewed by others, the privacy of one's thoughts was not a concern here. While the two were able to freely exchange their thoughts and ideas with each other, they remained two separate minds in communication rather than functioning as a single mind. The advisors recognized that telepathic communication by itself was not sufficient to enable the large project

team to coordinate its efforts; the team members had to operate as a single mind in order for there to be any possibility of success.

One member of the advisory group, who had been a physicist in his former life, recalled that if a cloud of atoms is cooled to near absolute zero, those atoms could be made to behave as a single particle—a Bose-Einstein condensate. He hypothesized that if the group members could reduce their mental “temperature” by quieting their minds, they might be able to operate as a single mind.

It was known that a reduction in mental activity is associated with the expansion of the astral body. The thinking went that if the astral bodies of the group members could be made to expand to the point where they overlapped each other, their minds could then “condense” into a unified state. To this end, they arranged themselves in a spherical configuration, the most compact shape possible, with the coordinator situated in the center of that sphere. The coordinator then led them in an exercise to quiet their minds.

As the astral bodies of the group members expanded, they became aware of each other’s thoughts. The coordinator advised them to clear their minds of all thoughts. There came a point where every individual was sharing the thoughts of every other individual; however, they were still functioning as individuals, not as a group mind. The coordinator then suggested that they cease thinking and just be and then followed his own advice.

The mental “temperature” of the group continued to decrease as their minds gradually emptied of all thoughts. Then it happened! As if clicking into place, the individual minds coalesced into a single mind.

The advisors had planned to form the group mind and have that mind prepare a project proposal as a test of its ability to function. If successful, the plan was to merge the minds of the entire project

team into a single mind having the knowledge and power to perform the astral renovation. What the advisory group had not anticipated was that this collective mind, once formed, would literally take on a life of its own, complete with a desire to survive.

The merging of the minds of the advisory team members was accompanied by a melding of their astral bodies into a single astral entity. Thus, it was not apparent to this group entity how it could disassemble itself back into its component individuals even if it wanted to, which, of course, it didn’t.

The group entity did retain the desire of the original group members to see the astral renewal project through to completion, so it prepared a project proposal as originally planned. Satisfied with its accomplishment, it then called the project group back into session and explained the situation to the surprised members of the project team. The group entity proposed to facilitate the merging of those members of the project team that chose to participate into a single astral entity with the power to accomplish the astral renewal project. Those who wished to participate in the merging were advised that they would lose their identity as individuals as they became part of the collective entity. Approximately half of the assembled group volunteered to be a part of the massive merger, while the other project members remained present to observe the process and assist if necessary.

The group entity directed the volunteers to gather close to it and advised the nonparticipants to maintain a safe distance. It then led the participants in an exercise to quiet their minds, while at the same time expanding its astral body to encompass the group. As the exercise continued, the astral bodies of the participants slowly expanded, until the astral body of every individual overlapped that of every other individual. Then, with a burst of energy, the merger clicked into place, resulting in a single large and powerful astral entity.

After getting its bearings, this newly-formed entity began the process of cleaning up the astral plane. It gathered all of the garbage thoughtforms that littered the astral plane into an enormous pile. It then compressed this heap of garbage into a glowing white ball. The astral material of which that ball was composed was then reformed into buildings, castles, and other structures envisioned by the collective entity. In addition to the “public” areas, a “residential” section was created and divided into units, analogous to parcels of land, on which individuals could “build” as they

chose. The collective entity became the de facto administrator of this new development.

Meanwhile, AstralLink, working with its counterparts in the astral plane, had managed to achieve two-way communication between the two realms. They were doing a thriving business of bringing the bereaved into contact with their departed loved ones as well as enabling scientists in both realms to exchange information. Ω

This and other stories by Stanley Korn can be found in the ebook *Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Beyond*, available at <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/915825>.

