

"...It was but the breath of a whisper overheard. It was the hour when night visions breed disquiet, as men lie chained in sleep; fear took hold of me, a fit of trembling that filled my whole frame, and made every hair bristle. All at once, a spirit came beside me and stopped; there it stood, no face I knew, yet could see the form of it, and catch its voice, light as a rustling breeze." - Anonymous member of The Legacy, written circe 6th Century B.C.

THE SHOW

In the tradition of film and television's most successful science fiction and horror franchises, POLTERGEIST: THE LEGACY reveals the existence of a secret society whose members delve into the mysteries of human experience and often find themselves protecting humanity from the true evils of this world.

"The Legacy"

What the bastion of the CDC (Center for Disease Control) is to the hard science of biology and epidemiology, so The Legacy is to the identification, study and containment of paranormal incidents and the supernatural. ^aFrom poltergeists (both good and bad) to demons and even vampires, werewolves and witches, The Legacy must rise to the fore when all other means of conventional understanding and protection have failed. They have become humanity's last line of defense.

The History

A secret society whose origins are so old as to be unrecorded, older even than the Freemasons, The Legacy is rumored to have begun in Greece in the 5th century BC as a radical off-shoot of Socratic empiricism -^aone of modern man's first attempts at quantifying and categorizing our world in scientific rather than religious terms. What began as a simple study of the unknown eventually led the early members of The Legacy to the study of all things in nature which science could not define. It found itself often focused on supernatural and paranormal behavior of poltergeists, believed to be ghosts which manifest themselves by noises, rappings and the creating of overwhelming disorder.

Past members have included Bram Stoker, H.P. Lovecraft, Robert Louis Stevenson - whose reporting of their actual Legacy experiences have been taken as works of fiction. Members have been present at the Salem witch trials, as defenders of the innocent accused women, and have investigated many phenomena through the years, including: disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle, the unexplained murders attributed to Jack the Ripper, werewolves in Central Park, whole villages being possessed in China, vengeful demons in the Amazon.

The Organization

Under the guise of the Luna Foundation, a broad-based philanthropic organization devoted to "The betterment of the human condition" and raising money for the Arts and Sciences, The Legacy has spread its influence into every layer of society, both financial and political. Though the "outside" world may know of the Luna

Foundation only as a charitable organization, their true function as paranormal investigators in The Legacy is kept secret and known by only a handful.

This ancient and elite society has become extremely powerful and wealthy through a closely held network of "houses." The efforts and activities of the member Houses are coordinated by the main Ruling House. Located in San Francisco, this Ruling House is the home base of our series, though we shall be able to bring in members from other Houses when needed. [The ruling house was not set in San Francisco, it was changed to London.] This network of Houses provides The Legacy with an extraordinarily comprehensive view of supernatural phenomena throughout the world. More conventional sources of information - mass media, police reports, and the recommendations of police and the FBI - also brings new cases to the group's attention. Though not directly affiliated with the University, as a private organization,^aand benefactor of the school, The Legacy, under the guise of the Luna Foundation, also has ready access to the University's resources (both physical and intellectual.)

There is no hierarchy among the members, save for the elected leader of the group, the Precept. Though many of the group's decisions are made by democratic vote, the Precept can, and does, overrule them^ashould he find the need.

As with any diverse investigative/informational organization, the day at The Legacy usually begins with a run-down of relevant events occurring around the world. Using their map and information screens, the Precept and the members review all supernatural activity being reported and determine which events require their personal and immediate attention. Similarly, as leader of the Ruling House, the Precept will delegate many of the less urgent reports to local member Houses around the world.

The Membership

Membership in The Legacy is determined not by social standing, but by a more spiritual, mystical means. Members come from all walks of life, but share one thing in common - a belief and a recognition of a world beyond that^aseen by our normal senses, and a pressing desire to explore that world.

In addition to common goals and interests, a handful of the members also share a power, similar to a sixth sense or ESP, which they call "The Sight." Though unpredictable and hard to control, The Sight, allows those possessing it to sense supernatural events, and even at times communicated with ghosts and other beings.

Some members have an overriding family lineage in The Legacy which stretches countless generations, others are newcomers who have been recognized as either possessing The Sight or having a legitimate ability to help The Legacy. All share a desire to explore the supernatural boundaries of our physical world - uncovering both the exquisite and wondrous, as well as the dangerous and evil. It is these darker elements of their work that sometime lead members astray. In fact, though not often discussed by our group, there have been whole "Houses" who have been

turned to the powerful and evil elements of the supernatural. Their vengeful havoc will become the occasional focus of episodes.

The Location

Perched at the top of Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, The Legacy and its "cover" organization, the Luna Foundation, is housed in a massive castle-like building. Accenting its grand exterior, the interior of the mansion combines old Craftsman-style woodwork with dark rich mahogany walls and ornate sitting rooms. With panoramic views of the San Francisco skyline and nearby Alcatraz Island, the rooms have an old-world grandeur which belies the organization's true purpose.

A large, two-story library containing a massive oak table (rumored to be as old as The Legacy itself) provides The Legacy members with a forum for discussion and reflection. The library contains something even more vital. A painting in the library wall is actually a hidden doorway, a hologram. Walking through it, one enters the more vital and secret tactical rooms of The Legacy. High-tech monitors and equipment populate a control room from which our group operates. Prominent in the room is a map of the world with red flares of light, each representing supernatural activity (as earthquake and volcanic activity from the "ring of fire" is often represented on seismic maps of the world.) Powerful Cray computers hum with the compilation and correlation of the countless pieces of information constantly flowing into the center by day and night. [The Legacy must have one HELL of an IT staff, eh?]ª Adjacent to the control room is a medical/scientific lab, outfitted with everything from an electron microscope to bottles of strange occult potions and specimens. Also adjacent to the control room is Derek Rayne's office. Used as both a place of reflection and of decision-making, the room is richly appointed with dark mahogany walls, a large Biedermeyer desk, and a sweeping view of the Golden Gate bridge.

In addition to a common library and secret tactical rooms, the Legacy mansion has a large open foyer with a double staircase which leads into a paneled living room. Charity functions (dinners, parties, dances) are held occasionally, both to sustain the group's public persona as a philanthropic organization, and to actually support the causes they believe in. The building also contains a number of simple but comfortable bedrooms. A few of our members currently live in the building,ªwith residence at The Legacy being a voluntary matter.

A full complement of support staff, both technical and housekeeping, also work and/or reside in the mansion. As with any sub-secret organization, these workers are hired carefully and under a strict code of silence. In many cases, employment with The Legacy is something handed down through generations. Since the workers are well-paid and respected by their employer, breaches in security from The Legacy's support staff is unheard of.

The Legacy's Beliefs and Battles

Religion was formed as an attempt to explain the unknown. "Gods" were given powers for that which man could not understand. It was a simple way of explaining and justifying, but as time went on we lost those crutches, and we realized other forces were at play. The Legacy found footing at the time when those crutches were taken away. There were and are still those things about evil and the human experience that science still cannot explain. The Legacy battles those forces.

Where religion goes awry is the treatment of disbelievers. If you^adon't follow these rules the darkside is going to find you. This is part of the church rules vs. alternative ways to justify evil.

What is the underlying scientific/spiritual belief of The Legacy?

The Bicameral mind - Two hemispheres in the brain. It was said that one side listened to God and communicated with the unseen, unspoken, but as time went on humans lost touch with this ability.^aLike the earlier societies, The Legacy connects with and cultivates this side of the mind. They tap into the part of the brain that has been ignored. Their conflict is with the perversion of these forces. The mysteries they solve, and the conflicts that arise are perversions of those forces which bring people into the light.

"Faith has need of the whole truth," the motto of The Legacy, is that information is critical, that the truth is as much information as you can gather, and it allows us to be stronger. Blind faith is harmful. The Bicameral mind is part of that truth. Understanding these forces, the Bicameral mind, the shining, the truth, gives us a^asense of peace and allows us to grow as a higher life force.

Why secrecy of the group?

The Legacy is a secret society for several reasons:

1. In order to protect themselves from a unified force of evil. Evil is trying to find them and they must protect themselves.
2. Like any small group that has experienced persecution in the past, our group has probably experienced, at one time or another, slaughter and persecution.
3. Like the Priesthood has to keep it's secrets, things that can't be broadcast to the masses, our group also needs secrecy for inner sanctum.

THE CHARACTERS

Our characters come from all walks of life and are connected by their ability and desire to explore the paranormal and supernatural. A few also share a psychic ability, the Sight. Because of the demanding and secret nature of their work, and its unpredictable hours, the members find it extremely difficult to maintain normal lives outside the group. It is a source of tension among them and the cause of some attrition among their ranks.

Dr. Derek Rayne, PhD.
Philip Callahan
Nick Boyle
Rachel Corrigan (and Katherine)
Alexandra Moreau

The Legacy

Dr. Derek Rayne, PhD.

Refined, but with an iron will. Derek is the leader, or Precept, of the group. Affiliated with a nearby University, and one of the older members of The Legacy, Dr. Rayne, 48, is a polished and dignified member of the "old guard." He is towering in stature, razor sharp in his wit, but gentle in matters of the heart. When he was fifteen, Derek witnessed his father's death. A member of The Legacy, Derek's father, Winston, was pursuing a rare artifact and died at the hands of a terrible demon. The event changed the course of Derek's life.

Aware of Winston's affiliation with The Legacy (he was its Precept), Derek rejected the group, blaming them for his father's death. Though he rejected The Legacy, Derek found himself inexorably drawn to his father's death, he dedicated himself to the study of ancient civilizations and religions, hoping to make sense of his loss. Despite gaining a Ph.D. at 24, and being considered at the top of his field at 26, Derek was still adrift, becoming ever more reckless in the field, taking chances which bordered on suicidal. His death wish might have been ultimately fulfilled had not his mother, Emily [she was named Barbara and she was very much alive in season two], been unexpectedly attacked by a strange entity, result of an artifact Derek himself had uncovered. Wracked with guilt and fear of losing his remaining parent, Derek was forced to work with The Legacy to overcome his mother's attacker. In the process, Derek made peace with the organization he held in contempt for so long.

This ability brought him to the notice of The Legacy. He holds PhD's in Biological Anthropology and Theology (which draws him into debates with another character, Philip.) Though he once was a full professor at the University, Dr. Rayne is now an Adjunct Scholar.

Not only does Derek represent the long history of The Legacy, he is our best resource for information - someone who can help explain the more complicated aspects of our episodes. His alliance with the University also comes in handy for

picking up new paranormal cases, both through the University hospital/psychiatric clinic and through its vast research wings in all areas of science, philosophy and theology.

Additional notes:

1. Let's make him a strong, complex, character. Think Joseph Campbell and his hero's journey. As a young boy, Derek spent little time with his father and then witnessed his death. Derek must feel anger, resentment and guilt about this.

2. [Pilot episode] Derek hasn't told his colleagues about the boxes hidden in the basement, but when he does tell them, they are shocked. Internally, he knows his father's death wasn't an accident. His father became obsessed and got himself killed, and now Derek himself has shared this obsession. His premonitions about the fifth sepulcher and retrieving it will give him a sense of closure in his relationship with his father. But in trying to find that closure, he has made an error, and by bringing the boxes back to the mansion, he has put The Legacy in jeopardy.

3. Derek's relationship with his father has left him scarred. He has always feared commitment. He should have many love relationships but no long lasting love. He's the football coach who send the team out to the field of battle. Just like Patton or Clint Eastwood in IN THE LINE OF FIRE, he's dealing with emotional baggage that has hardened him.

4. Derek has never been married and he has no children. Get Derek romantically involved in the odd episode and start building up a bevy of female relationships.

Philip Callahan [also spelled Callaghan]

In his early thirties, Philip has the brooding good looks of the "black Irish", ruddy skin, dark eyes and black hair. All of which belie the fact that Philip is a devout Catholic priest. Growing up in the harsh streets of Belfast, Philip was never one to back down from a fight, but he found a moral center and deeper purpose in the Church. Despite the derision of his peers, Philip joined the priesthood in his twenties. The heart and moral center of the group, Philip's faith is driven by a deep and abiding belief in a world beyond that which we can see and hear. This belief in the mystical is what drove him to be a priest, and it is what ultimately brought him to The Legacy. It also often causes Philip to find an ally, whether he likes it or not, in Alexandra, in contrast to the pragmatic skepticism of Rachel and Nick.

Philip was introduced to The Legacy by his father, the current head of the "Dublin House." [that tidbit was never revealed to the viewers] He felt a strong yearning to be part of a larger universe of experience, ultimately abandoning his father's plans for him and seeking out Derek Rayne and the San Francisco faction. His acute insight into human nature, and an ability to judge someone's true character makes Philip perfectly suited for his job and a powerful ally to the team as they contend with both supernatural and the more ordinary aspects of their missions.

When we meet Philip in our Premiere episode, he has left The Legacy after confronting a deeply tragic personal issue.

The future: Philip will save a young girl, Emma, and develop a fatherly relationship with her, only to have her severely injured at the hands of a demon in a later episode [reminds me a little bit of Dark Angel in season two] . The tragedy will again shake Philip's faith, and since it will indirectly result from Nick's cavalier attitude, it will also cause a rift in the two men.

Nick Boyle

A risk-taker and an adrenaline junkie, he is in this as much for the thrills and chills, as for the philanthropic good he might do.

A man with serious attention-deficit-disorder [this was never revealed to the viewer], Nick managed to stay in long enough to graduate high school, but that's it. He is, however, far from ignorant. A voracious reader, Nick is a walking encyclopedia of trivia, statistics, quotes and other eclectic information. Hi speech is peppered with references from the obscure to the mundane - quoting Sartre and "The Brady Bunch" with equal aplomb.

Nick's father [if R.B.L. had given father Boyle a name in this bible, the John-Bob naming issue never would have happened!] was a member of The Legacy and worked with Derek. His father was often absent from Nick's life during birthdays and summer vacations, but even worse than the neglect was the secret that Nick and his mother kept for years. While outsiders looked at Nick's father as a noble and decent man, only Nick and his mother knew the truth. Nick's father had a violent temper which often times resulted in physical abuse towards Nick and his mother.

When Nick reached his teens and started to rebel against his father, he was sent away to an elite prep school on the east coast. Nick resented being dismissed by his father and had a hard time fitting in with other kids at school, who he found superficial and naive. Turned off by the whole "prep school" experience, Nick tries to hide the fact that he had a superior education, and plays off his own sense of street smarts.

Once he graduated, Nick still plagued by anger and resentment at his father and desperately wanting structure and consistency in his life, ran from his family troubles to join the Navy SEALs. In the military, Nick found a clear sense of order and structure. The military told him when, where and what to do and he had to do it. There was a sense of purpose and belonging that Nick had never experienced before. In the military, he always knew he would have a "Navy" issued birthday cake on his birthday, and a "family" to support him and help him reach his goals.

When his father died, Nick was asked to join the group as the son of a prominent Legacy member. His military training and past experiences made him an obvious asset to the group. Nick decided to reconcile his feelings toward his father and move on with his life.

The Legacy provides him with the structure and security he needs. Nick knows the rules yet still has his own style. He's a man of action, not one to sit around and "discuss." While Rachel and Derek may argue about the way to approach a case, Nick is already out the door with a map in hand ready to face the obstacle ahead.

With his extensive curiosity, Nick is constantly tinkering on various devices and inventions which will at times either get our group out of a jam, or inadvertently get them deeper into it. Whereas Derek Rayne gives us "theoreticals" and history of phenomena, Nick puts those theories into practice. Some typical inventions: A "soul catcher" designed to hold and preserve a person's departing spirit [he should have joined the Ghostbusters! <G>] ; a "ghost gun" designed to blow apart the energy of evil spirits; a variety of spectral energy detectors and motion sensors (as were generated in the original "Poltergeist" motion picture.)

Beyond his technical capability, however, Nick's obvious talent for planning and grappling with the physical requirements of the missions makes Nick an asset to the group. His gung-ho attitude often rescues them from disaster, but it can also plunge them into even deeper trouble. It is this extraordinary lust for danger which will often tempt Nick to succumb to the more evil and powerful elements of the supernatural. He may even be recruited to join a "turned House."

The future: In "Town Without Pity", Derek doesn't want Nick to go looking for the town - he doesn't think there is anything there. Nick decides to go against Derek's wishes. Nick does find the town and Derek is proven wrong. Derek realizes that Nick made the right choice and apologizes to Nick.

Rachel Corrigan

An accomplished psychiatrist from a prestigious "old money" family in Marin, Rachel is a new member of The Legacy. The mother of an eight-year-old girl, Katherine, Rachel pulls triple-duty as a mother, a psychiatrist and a member of The Legacy.

Having recently lost her husband, Patrick, and son, Connor, to a tragic car accident, Rachel had found herself pulling away from her work as an attending psychiatrist at a hospital in San Francisco. Seeing that her drifting concentration was detrimental to her patients, Rachel took a sabbatical from work and traveled to Ireland to visit the graves of her husband and son. After inadvertently falling victim to a demon, Rachel became involved with The Legacy. Returning to San Francisco, the group, with Rachel's help, eventually conquer the entity. In doing so, Rachel's strength of will, and her obvious asset as a psychological and medical expert became clear to The Legacy. They asked her to join them.

Though initially resistant to the idea, Rachel soon realized that working with The Legacy was the kind of change, and challenge, she needed in her life. Something which could utilize her talents as a psychiatrist and doctor, but would also take her into other unexplored and unproved realms as well. Her new work with them proves to be a constant balancing act, however, and she is ever aware of the fact that she is now a single parent for her daughter. [Rachel's mother is dead and we

never met or heard of her brother] This heavy responsibility is assuaged a bit by Rachel's mother, Esther, who, as a widow herself, has helped her daughter through her grief. Esther has also recognized the new sense of purpose in Rachel and encourages it. She helps watch over her granddaughter, Katherine. Rachel's brother, Andrew, is less understanding, however, of what he's seen of Rachel's new "job." Andrew is a cardio-surgeon in Seattle (Rachel and Andrew followed their father into the medical field), and disapproves of her being away from Katherine and traveling the world. Though we see little (if any) of Andrew, his criticism feeds into Rachel's own sense of guilt and is a source of conflict for her.

Rachel is a valuable asset to The Legacy, both because of her psychiatric expertise, and because she provides a critical, "layman's" perspective on the phenomenon the group encounters. Rachel is not as quick to accept the supernatural events that The Legacy grapples with, an attitude which frequently makes her an inadvertent ally with Nick.

The Future: In the course of helping a mysterious man uncover his true identity, Rachel finds herself falling in love. Forced to confront feelings of guilt and loss over her husband, she ultimately comes to terms with her unresolved emotions.

Additional Notes:

1. Right now, Rachel doesn't have enough of a history or tie to the group. Rachel has a troubled past. She was promiscuous, a drug addict, and an alcoholic. Her husband had changed her life. He got her to clean up her act and put her through college. Now he's gone and she is having a hard time coping. We need a sense of conflict: what is she fighting with Derek about or what is she trying to cope with internally? In her past, she's had radically different experiences from the rest of the group, which gives her the opportunity to take a contrary stance, based on who she is as a woman and a mother.
2. Rachel knows that Katherine is different, that she has the Sight, and this creates all types of emotions. Each day she is realizing more and more that what happened in Ireland wasn't an accident. She has a special child and things are going to happen to her that she can't control, things that are meant to happen. In "Doppleganger," we learn that Kat is having problems getting along with other children. She is lonely, struggling with her gift, and that helps drive Rachel's quest to understand what her daughter is going through. But what she learns is that it is not just about her daughter, it's about Rachel too.
3. Something in Rachel's past has brought her to The Legacy. Maybe the Sight is hereditary. If Derek and his father had it then maybe Rachel has it too, but she doesn't realize it is a part of her. There should be something buried in her past that comes up, some type of memory she has repressed.
4. Let's give Rachel a lineage that can tie her into the group. Perhaps we tie her to The Legacy's nemesis, the Dark Side.

5. As a child, Rachel witnessed horrifying events or circumstances, maybe even a sacrifice. Perhaps her mother had the Sight as Katherine does and used it for dark purposes. Like "Rosemary's Baby," Rachel would come home to find strange people in her home doing satanic rituals. Maybe her mother wanted to save Rachel from the Dark Side and swore they would not allow her to suffer, so they tried to rid her of her abilities. Or perhaps Rachel, afraid of the Dark Side and her power (The Sight), tried to get away from the evil heritage. Maybe it was no accident that her husband and son died. Maybe they were being pursued by the Dark Side. Rachel is slowly realizing things about her family, and now has a feverish quest to uncover the truth.

6. One of the conflicts for Rachel is that she will be tempted to resume drinking or taking drugs, essentially risking a fall into the Dark Side.

7. Why does Rachel join The Legacy?

In the first few episodes of our series we will have Rachel distraught, and soul searching as she tries to understand what is happening to her. This conflict will play itself out in the following way:

*Rachel finds it impossible to pick up her normal life after her experience in the two-hour premiere.

*Rachel confronts Derek, demanding to know what his purpose is. Why her? What are Derek and his group really doing? As Derek tries to comfort her, she recoils. And we begin to see flashes of repressed images from her childhood.

*Ultimately, Rachel realizes that there is an undeniable force binding her to the group. Derek asks Rachel to join The Legacy.

Potential conflicts between Derek and Rachel:

Rachel discovers/uncovers female past members of The Legacy. We make Derek totally patriarchal about The Legacy and rigid to any other history.

Rachel is driven to understand her past and The Legacy and as we realize who her mother was, Derek realizes that he actually battled Rachel's mother and is distraught that he let the Dark Side into The Legacy. We learn that Rachel is not part of the Dark Side. Maybe Derek killed Rachel's mother? [Almost, Winston did!] Rachel plays her own mother in an episode.

Alexandra Moreau

An ambitious, intelligent black woman who's strong sensitivity (The Sight) and extensive knowledge of the occult makes her a formidable ally to The Legacy. Like Philip, Alex has a strong belief in the unseen and a naturally superstitious nature, despite her education.

From a large Creole family in the Louisiana Bayou, Alex was raised by her grandmother who instilled in her a great sense of pride and a desire to achieve, as well as a belief in voodoo, witchcraft and the power of white and black magic.

Her grandmother, Rose, always encouraged Alex to be strong-willed and independent, and when Alex wanted to travel across the country to go to college, Rose, though concerned, raised the money to send her. Alexandra went to San Francisco and attended the University [Loyola] where she became a student of Derek's. The "Sight" is very strong in Alex and even before joining The Legacy, she had been helping Derek w with his cases. After graduating as valedictorian, her work with Derek brought her to the attention of The Legacy. Knowing that she had the Sight, and seeing her fierce determination and great knowledge of the occult as an invaluable asset, Derek recruited Alex to join them.

The Future: A demon that Alexandra thwarts in an episode, returns to exact its revenge on Alex' family, attacking not just her grandmother, but her sisters as well. Alex and the team have to return to Louisiana to stop the demon. [Sounds like the seed of the idea behind "Spirit Thief"]

Special characters featured in the double-length premiere:

Julia Walker

Intelligent and highly trained in computer research and information retrieval, Julia comes from one of the most prominent and politically active families in San Francisco, but hates to be categorized as High Society. Though she dies in the premiere, because of her strong affinity with Nick, it's possible that Julia may return in later episodes, either in memory flashbacks or as a spirit.

She broke away from rigid family ties during college while attending Duke University's prestigious artificial intelligence laboratory.

She remained a rebel when joining The Legacy, having been brought to the attention of the San Francisco House by her mother, an associate of Derek Rayne. The hope was that she would find fulfillment in The Legacy's true cause and this was finally beginning to happen when our premiere episode begins.

Additional Characters:

Katherine Corrigan

Rachel's daughter, 8, she has the Sight. Though Katherine is not a regular member of The Legacy, it is inevitable that she will participate in certain cases, particularly those which involve her mother or children in jeopardy.

Rose Moreau - "Grandma Rose"

Alexandra's grandmother and a source of information and strength for her. We may never see Rose, but she is very much a part of Alex' life. [Rose appeared in two episodes]

Alice Rayne [this character was never incorporated into the series]

Derek's daughter. She moved out to the Northeast to attend college. She resents her father for never being a real part of her life.

Emma Scott [this character, as written below, was never a part of the series]

Orphaned from birth, Emma, 16, has been living a life on the edge, precariously close to homelessness. It has made her a bit hard nosed, tough and suspicious of people, particularly those who want to "help" her.

The members intentions, however, are honorable. Philip understandably finds himself taking a paternal interest in the young girl's well-being. Nick also, because of the similarity of their situations, connects with Emma - though on a more romantic level.

Guest Stars:

We need to create characters that we can meet each week with memorable, unusual, off-beat, personalities. Similar to Zelda Rubenstein in the original POLTERGEIST, Linda Hunt in THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY, Larry Drake in LA LAW, Anthony Hopkins in SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, the spirit who rides the subways in GHOST, or the blind woman who sees it all in DON'T LOOK NOW, we should constantly be pushing the envelope for memorable characters.

Ideally some of these characters will be rivals of the Legacy like Hitchcock in THE TWELFTH CAVE, or Malkovich in IN THE LINE OF FIRE. Malkovich knows Clint Eastwood's character's past, he knows his secrets as Hitchcock knows Derek's. These "Moriarty" type roles can be ongoing characters that are trying to destroy The Legacy.

THE FORMAT

Story Requirements

An overview human purpose that guides the episode. Like a parable, the emotions, value systems, failures and successes of human nature are the tools. Greed is always rewarded with a downfall, the smallest person can have the most courage, a bigot can be taught to see the other man's point of view.

Each story should put that main figure through a change...The purpose of each story, no matter how great its fantasy premise, is to show us how human beings react! And to thereby, hopefully, give out viewer a bit of insight into themselves. If the central character is unchanged by their experience in the show, we have failed.

The plot must be clear and simple to follow. The horror elements of each show should be imaginative, extraordinary, even bizarre and fantastic, but they need to be grounded on some level of reality. Ultimately, there needs to be a reason, explanation, or theory which the audience can accept behind the phenomena. The fantasy that we create must feel real.

Our characters will resist the fantastic. They will not just go "Oh yes, that's a Ghost." Part of their denial and search for rational explanations to a phenomena becomes our audience's way of buying into the fantasy.

Similarly, our characters should be relate-able, people who could be our neighbors.

This energy should continue through the hour, with regular, energy jolts every couple of pages. These jolts can be laughs, scares, plot twists, high emotions in the characters, even fake energy bursts that are there to keep the audience's attention....Even in a plain dialogue scene, we must seek ways to move the characters through dynamics. People should argue ideas, not agree, there should always be a sense of tension or momentum.

The ending of each episode should be the most powerful moment in the show. We must have plot twists that surprise and complete the story.

The Legacy Writing Tenets

1. Legacy members should be in direct jeopardy - Because many of our stories originate outside The Legacy, with characters who have no initial connection to the group, care must be taken to construct a story in which our members are intricately involved. They must never seem peripheral. They are integral in discovering and resolving the problems at hand, and should be put in direct jeopardy themselves.

2. Legacy members have an emotional involvement - As an adjunct to the above, the phenomena that our group deals with should have an emotional resonance with at least one of our members. Again, the more we can connect our supernatural stories to The Legacy members, the better.

3. The Legacy doesn't know it all - Though they've existed as an organization for thousands of years, and have an extensive archive of information and artifacts, our group is not omniscient. They don't have all of the answers for the phenomena they encounter. While they can certainly bring past experience to bear in solving problems, each case they encounter will have its own unique characteristics and elements that the group has never dealt with before.

4. Use the Legacy history - As noted above, this is an old organization. Our stories should incorporate this extensive anecdotal history. Part of the fun should be in suggesting that actual historical figures and events were involved with The Legacy. For example, in researching a case, one of the members might pull out a journal hand-written by Edgar Allen Poe - a Legacy member ("You thought his stories were fiction?").

5. The Legacy should make mistakes - In command and extremely competent, the group is always cautious in their approach to new phenomena. But despite that expertise, the group is destined to make mistakes. As mentioned above, they don't have all the answers. They need to be presented with reversals and conflict. And we should see the emotional aftermath of those conflicts.

6. Supernatural "jolts" are a necessity - Though we always want a strong emotional "throughline" to our stories, this should not preclude scary, gothic jolts. If possible, there should be at least one in each act. Similarly, each act (there are five, plus the teaser) should end with either a supernatural scare, or an informational or emotional revelation.

7. Teasers should be short and sweet - No more than five pages please (preferably three.) The teaser should take place in the course of one scene at one location and end with a scary supernatural jolt or powerful character revelation.

8. Not all members have to be in the show - We are structuring shows around one or two of our Legacy members, provided that the remaining members are serviced in brief but significant beats throughout the episode.

9. B-plots involving our members' lives are encouraged - Information involving our Legacy members and their lives, as well as information regarding past history of The Legacy or its current operation, is encouraged. There is an emotional and historical fabric to our group which should be woven through the different stories we wish to tell.

10. Use the Legacy mansion - Our members work out of an elaborate and luxurious mansion which we would like to use in our episodes if possible. You have the following standing sets at your disposal:

An expansive foyer with a large working fireplace and double staircases leading to a second floor

A parlor directly off the foyer with another fireplace and a large bay window with views of San Francisco

Two bedrooms

A two-story library with a large central table (used for Legacy meetings), an alcove with working fireplace and a spiral staircase leading up to a book-lined mezzanine balcony

A secret suite of rooms containing a control room with screens and monitors, Derek's mahogany-paneled office and a white-tiled lab. All three secret rooms are accessed through a painting in the library which looks real, but is actually a hologram.

The Taboos

We are studying the supernatural, but always with a rational support.

Satires and Sermons. Hopefully our stories will be entertaining and will honor our creativity, but we will never moralize at the audience. Nor, will we laugh at them. The reality of our characters and the moral should be deftly woven into the story.

Ghosts and Demons

We should always expose our supernatural characters to the audience in a way to get the most value to the story. Although cutting edge CGI and special effects will be utilized, still, "less is more." Let's tease an audience with obscured shots of shadowy images, extreme close-ups, etc. before revealing our whole ghost.

The Production Realities

The writer must consider the production realities and turn them to an advantage. At our budget level and schedule our stories have to be contained. Lots of powerful dialogue and a limited number of sets and locations. We must push hard for credible performances highlighted by magical lighting, wonderful close-ups of eyes and words. We can realistically build only one big prop, effect or creature per show... it's up to our own creativity how we use it. Therefore we can do a story like "Carrie", "Amityville Horror", "The Shining", or "The Exorcist"... but not "Alien" or "Jaws."

Standards and Practices

Technically, since this is airing on cable, we are not limited by normal Standards and Practices. We are free to use profanity, nudity, and violence within the limits of our own, and our audience's, sense of good taste. However, though we should use this "freedom" to augment and support the feeling of realism of the show, it should never be gratuitously exploited. Especially considering that there is a life for our episodes beyond cable TV, which will force us to eventually cut our episodes to conform to network standards.

THE EPISODES

Man in the Mist

When a man materializes out of the mist in period wardrobe, it triggers a strange supernatural event which in turn summons The Legacy. In the process of investigating the phenomenon, Rachel finds herself becoming more and more attracted to this strange, unearthly man, forcing her to confront her feelings toward the loss of her husband. Ultimately, with Rachel's help, the man discovers his true past as the captain of a ship that was lost at sea, and realizes that he must return to the other side.

Sins of the Father

When his young son is attacked at home, a friend of Derek's is brought up on child abuse charges. Ultimately, the group discovers that the boy is being attacked by the spirit of another young boy, the illegitimate and abandoned son of Derek's friend.

The Twelfth Cave

An ancient scroll is found in a cave on the Dead Sea. One more of the Dead Sea scrolls, this one turns out to be the original confession of Cain. The finder of the scroll bequeaths it to Derek at The Legacy, deliberately transferring the Scroll's hidden power - it turns its possessor into a paranoid psychotic. As Derek loses control of The Legacy, the members must find out a way to stop the curse.

The Tenement

Alexandra helps condemn a young slumlord to the confines of one of his tenements, only to discover that an evil spirit inhabits the building, and wants the young man's soul. Alex moves into the building to help the man and stop the spirit, only to find herself enmeshed in the strange evil of the building and fighting for her own life.

Do Not Go Gently **

When one of Nick's friends falls into a coma, Nick discovers that the hospital his friend is staying in has an above-average incidence of coma patients. Ultimately, the group discovers that a surgeon at the hospital has made a pact with a demon to put patients into comas in return for strength and vitality. When Alex falls victim to the surgeon and falls into a coma, Nick must enter the spirit world to confront the demon and free the souls of the patients.

The Substitute *

When some disgruntled teenagers summon a spirit to help them with their problems, they inadvertently raise an evil demon who proceeds to take apart their lives, and plunges them on a path of no return, until The Legacy steps in.

Town Without Pity **

One of Rachel's friends disappears while hiking in the woods and Alex goes to investigate. She discovers a mysterious idyllic town deep in the woods. The people of the town have a timeless, otherworldly quality, and seem friendly to a fault. While searching for her friend, Rachel becomes close with one of the townspeople. Soon thereafter, she discovers that the town is cursed, doomed to appear for three days every one hundred years. The townspeople have that amount of time to find innocent victims to "transfer" with, exchanging places. Rachel finds that she has become a part of the town, trapped by its strange curse, and due to disappear in less than 48 hours unless The Legacy can free her.

Open Wounds ***

A graduate student begins to have progressively more horrible dreams, haunted by strange visions of open graves and corpses. Fearing for his sanity, he takes part in a sleep lab, coming to the attention of The Legacy. Ultimately the group determines that the ghosts are spirits of concentration camp victims. The young man's grandfather had been a Camp guard who tried to hide among the prisoners during liberation. The outraged prisoners had set upon the guard, killing him, and his body was inadvertently buried with camp prisoners. The souls want the young man to acknowledge who his grandfather really was (something his family kept secret from him), and to atone for his grandfather, allowing them to rest.

Dark Spring ***

An ancient well is uncovered in a small idyllic town, releasing an evil curse which affects whoever drinks the water. When Philip inadvertently drinks from the well, The Legacy must find a way to stop the curse, before Philip succumbs to it.

Epiphany ***

Philip and Nick fly to a small town which has reported the appearance of the Virgin Mary on the wall of a barn. They soon realize that this is no ordinary "visitation" when an actual spirit appears, commanding the citizens of the town to follow her. Nick, the skeptic, begins to believe that this truly is the Mother of God. Philip, the Catholic priest, has doubts. Things come to a head when the Virgin commands her followers to imprison the "heretics", the nonbelievers, and Philip suddenly finds himself condemned to death. Ultimately, The Legacy discover that the "Virgin" is actually an evil spirit, bending religion to manipulate the township.

Grave's End ***

A man raises his wife from the dead, only to slowly realize that he has raised the spirit of a long-dead witch instead. As The Legacy investigates they suddenly become one of the witch's targets.

The Crystal Skarab

A man obtains a strange crystal talisman in the shape of a skarab and uses it to help save his dying daughter. Unfortunately, though the talisman works, it requires souls, and the man must begin killing people to "feed" it. In their investigation, The Legacy narrowly escape falling prey to the man, and in the final confrontation, the man's daughter, realizing what her father has done, crushes the crystal - sacrificing her life.

Ghost in the Road *

Returning from a ski trip, Nick picks up a beautiful girl, hitchhiking on the road. Returning her to her house the next day, he discovers that she's been dead for ten years. When Nick finally communicates with the ghost, he realizes that she has appeared to track down her killer, something Nick joins her in doing.

Doppelganger

Rachel's daughter, Katherine, begins a strange relationship with a darkly sinister "imaginary friend", Callie. As ominous and unexplainable things begin to happen to The Legacy members, it soon becomes clear that Katherine's new friend is somehow connected. The group realizes that Callie is the spirit of an Egyptian princess who was buried without the proper ceremony. The group must perform the burial ceremony and return Callie to her proper resting place, before she attacks Katherine.

Before Their Time ***

The Legacy explore an elderly man's claim that members of his nursing home are being killed before their time by an evil spirit. The group discover that a poltergeist is using the guise of "death by old age" to kill healthy people, and steal their spirits.

Other Available Stories

Dark Angel *** (not the same storyline as the Dark Angel that was made)

Emma, a 15-year old orphan, comes to Philip's attention because she's become a problem at the Catholic school where Philip consults. Philip tries to help her and discovers that she has the Sight. Emma ultimately confesses that she has been having terrible nightmares and stays with The Legacy who try to figure out her dreams. As strange forces begin to attack The Legacy members, Emma comes clean. A demon follows Emma around, destroying everything and everybody she comes in contact with. All conventional attempts at stopping it seem futile. Philip, under attack by the creature, seems in danger of losing his life. Ultimately they discover that the demon doesn't truly exist. It is a manifestation of Emma's subconscious. The victim of abuse, Emma's subconscious mind destroys anyone who gets close to her, trying to protect her.

The Shadow People ***

A scientist well-known to The Legacy is found dead in his lab with no apparent cause of death. When his research tapes are reviewed, we realize he was literally scared to death.

Don't Look Now ***

A woman is pursued by small, demon-like creatures who have access to her house through the furnace. No one believes her until the woman disappears - The Legacy have to fight the creatures and get the woman back.

The People of the Pit ***

Schoolchildren dare each other to spend a night in a haunted house - everything seems fine until one of them goes into the basement and disappears. The Legacy must venture down the same path to rescue the child.

Potential Adaptations of Classic Ghost Stories

Aunt Jezebel's House - Joan Aiken

A lonely business woman traveling on her commuter train into the city meets a small frail looking little boy who boards the train alone each day. He dreamily looks out the window of the train, waiting patiently until he disembarks at an abandoned stop. The Legacy learns that ten years ago a small boy of similar description was killed by the train while walking the tracks home from school. The woman is the boy's guilt-ridden mother whom the boy is trying to release from her anguish.

The Music of Erich Zaan - H. P. Lovecraft

A man living in a boarding house is drawn to the room above him where a strange old German mute plays a haunting and horrific melody on his violin. When he notifies the owners, they claim no one's lived in that room for years. But the haunting tune persists, and as the music becomes more frantic, the man realizes the mute is trying to communicate with him to reveal a horror so terrifying he is unable to speak it...

The Dreams on the Witch-House - H. P. Lovecraft

A graduate student rents a room in a boarding house which, centuries ago, belonged to an infamous witch who was said to have escaped her incarceration by her ability to travel to a fourth dimension. When the young student becomes haunted by strange dreams of the evil witch trying to seduce him into the next dimension with her, The Legacy tries to help save him from a fate worse than death.

The Others by Joyce Carol Oats

Taking a different route home one day, Spence sees a man whom he recognizes as his cousin who had died twenty years before. He comments on this to his wife who is nonplused. Later he runs into his old elementary school teacher who he knew had been long since dead. People begin to show up that are all familiar, and all dead. Spence fears that he may be going crazy, but he finds this vaguely comforting. As he walks through a maze of underground tunnels he finds that everyone is old and moving like a long river of death, they too seem familiar as he decides to follow the crowd...into eternity.

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY: Chapter I - Basic Terms and Definitions

Age of Aquarius

A 2000 year long era of enlightenment, joy, accomplishment, intellect, brotherly peace, and closeness to God. Supposed period is 1904-2160. The preceding age is Age of Pisces, an age characterized by disillusionment and skepticism.

Akasha

In Hinduism and Buddhism, the all-pervasive space of universe. The akasha permeates everything in the universe and is the vehicle for all life and sound; it is considered the "breath of life." It forms the anima mundi (the world soul which allows divine thought to manifest in matter) and constitutes the soul of humankind. It produces mesmeric, magnetic operations of nature. Other interpretations are "sidereal light" of the Rosicrucians, the "astral light" of French occultist Eliphas Levi, the "Odic force" of German physicist Baron Karl von Reichenbach, and the Hebrew "ruah" of wind, breath, air in motion, and spirit.

Akashic Records

In Theosophy, the master records of everything that has ever occurred since the beginning of the universe. Said to exist as impressions in the astral plane, they provide a dossier of sorts for souls who wish to examine their spiritual progress through many lifetimes.

Some psychics say they consult the Records either through clairvoyance or out-of-body travel to receive information about past history or lives, described as tuning into an astral television set, or tuning into a radio broadcast, or visiting an enormous library and looking up information on books.

Alchemy

An ancient art of transition and the precursor of modern chemistry and metallurgy. Symbolically, a mythical art for the transformation of consciousness.

As a mystical art, it draws on various spiritual traditions, including the Hermetica, Gnosticism, Islam, the Kabbalah, Taoism, and yoga. The belief is that all things can be reduced to matter through dissolving and combining, and transmitting to something more desirable (joining of opposites.) A common tool is the philosopher's stone which served as the "elixir of life", a means to immortality.

Jung believed in using alchemy to transform the soul. He saw alchemy as a spiritual process of redemption involving the union and transformation of Lumen Dei, the light of the Godhead, and Lumen naturae, the light of nature.

Altered States of Consciousness

Any of a variety of states characterized by a radical shift in the pattern of consciousness from one's "normal" waking state. The term was coined by parapsychologist Charles T Tart.

States of consciousness - ordinary and altered - take place in four levels of brain-wave activity: 1) beta = waking consciousness; 2) alpha = material from subconscious is accessible, usually during meditation, hypnosis; 3) theta = light sleep, state of unconsciousness in which one is unaware of what is going on around oneself; 4) delta = deep sleep.

Amulet

Object, inscription, drawing, or symbol believed to be imbued with a supernormal or magical power to protect against disease, evil spirits, the evil eye, bewitchment, infertility, impotence, bad luck and a host of other calamities and misfortunes.

Amulets are usually natural objects that have an eye-catching color, an unusual shape, etc. and is used as a means of defense. They are worn on the body, especially around the neck, in the form of jewelry or a charm, which is a magical phrase, rhyme, prayer inscribed on paper, parchment or an object. Common are the Eye of Horus of ancient Egypt, which guarded health and protected against evil spirits, garlic to ward off vampires, and Chinese peach wood and iron to ward off demons.

Animal Psi

The apparent ability of animals to experience clairvoyance, precognition, telepathy, and psychokinesis (PK.)

Five basic types of animal psi are: 1) the ability to sense impending danger (oftentimes animals accompany psychics to haunted houses, etc.); 2) the ability to sense at a distance the death of, or harm to, a beloved human or fellow animal; 3) the ability to sense the impending return of a master; 4) the ability to find the way home; 4) the ability to "psi trail."

Applied Psi

An offshoot of parapsychology that assumes the existence of psychic abilities and seeks ways to apply them to mainstream life. 1980s American parapsychologist Jeffrey Mishlove borrowed the term from science fiction literature. Layman's terms equate to intuition, hunches, and gut instinct.

Ashram

A Sanskrit term for retreat or center of spiritual study. A Spartan daily discipline is usually followed, which may include yoga, a vegetarian diet, meditation, etc.

Aura

An envelope of vital energy, which apparently radiates from everything in nature: minerals, plants, animals, and humans. The aura is not visible to normal vision, but may be seen by clairvoyance as a halo of light. Then it often appears as a multi-colored mist that fades off into space with no definite boundary, leaving sparks, rays, and streamers.

The body does have a magnetic field - a biofield, as it is called - but it is far too weak to account for the light-emitting aura. It's been theorized that the aura might actually be a form of light vibrating at frequencies beyond the normal range of

vision, caused by some yet-to-be-discovered light-emitting diodes embedded in living organisms. Shortly before WWI, Dr. Walter J. Kilner, who was in charge of electrotherapy at St. Thomas' Hospital in London, discovered that an apparent human aura could be made visible if viewed through an apparatus containing a coal-tar dye called dicyanin, which made ultraviolet light visible. Kilner also noticed that weak, depleted auras suck off the auric energy of healthy, vigorous auras around them.

The aura can be divided into three parts: 1) the etheric double, a transparent dark space, narrow and often obliterated by the second bad; 2) the inner aura, fairly constant in size and the densest portion; and 3) the outer aura, inconstant in size, which often appears blended into the inner aura. Clairvoyants see the aura as a psychic screen for the projection of information concerning the past, present, and future.

Avatar Program

Stems from the Hindu belief of a human incarnation of the Divine who functions as a mediator between people and God. The western program was conceived around 1986 by Harry Palmer of New York, a Scientologist who had become disillusioned with Scientology's teachings. Palmer built the training around the concept that people experience and are what they believe. The program is intended to be an experiential re-engineering of consciousness to free people from their own self-imposed limitations.

Bird

A universal symbol of messengers to the gods and carriers of souls to heaven. The ancient Egyptians equated the hawk with the soul of Horus and the pharaoh. The Hindus associate birds with higher states of being. The Aztecs believed that the dead were reborn as colibris, the birds of their patron god, Huitzilopchtli. In trance, shamans assume the shape of birds in order to leave the body and soar through the universe. Among some Native Americans, birds personify the wind and rain.

Caduceus

A wand entwined by two snakes and topped by wings or a winged helmet which symbolizes spiritual enlightenment and higher wisdom. In ancient mythology, Hermes carries this magical wand as he escorts souls to the underworld.

Chakras

Vortices that penetrate the body and the body's aura, Chakras are believed to play a vital role in physical, mental, and emotional health and in spiritual development. They are invisible to ordinary sight but may be perceived clairvoyantly.

The universal life force is said to enter the aura through the Chakra at the top of the head, and is filtered down to the other Chakras, each of which transforms the energy into usable form for the functions it governs.

Chantways

Curing ceremonies of Native Americans of the Southwest, especially the Navajo, who practice the art in its highest form. Chantways last from one to nine days and invoke supernatural powers to cure the physical and psychical ailments.

Clairvoyance

The perception of current objects, events or people that may not be discerned through the normal senses. The seeing may manifest in internal or external visions, or a sense of images.

This phenomenon is experienced in different ways and degrees. In its simplest form, clairvoyance is the internal seeing of symbolic images, which must be interpreted according to a person's own system of meanings. In its highest form, clairvoyance is the viewing of nonphysical planes, the astral, etheric, and spiritual worlds and the beings that inhabit them, and the auric fields surrounding all things in nature. Most clairvoyant experiences fall between the two.

Various forms include: X-Ray clairvoyance (ability to see through opaque objects); medical (see disease in beings); traveling (see current events, people and objects that are not nearby); spatial (vision that transcends time and space such as in archaeology and crime detection); dream (dreaming of an event that is happening simultaneously); astral (perception of the astral and etheric planes, and the elementals, demons, devas, and other beings that inhabit them); spiritual (see higher planes and angelic beings.)

Collective Unconscious

Concept of psychiatrist Carl G. Jung that refers to the memories of mental patterns that are experienced and shared by a large number, if not all, humans. Likewise, most members of a single culture may have a more specific collective unconscious, while sharing also in the more universal patterns. This term is synonymous with "universal unconscious."

Cryptomnesia

The unconscious memory of information learned through normal channels. It is one explanation for memories of past lives and communication with the dead.

ESP (ExtraSensory Perception)

A so-called "sixth sense", in which sensory information is perceived through means beyond the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. ESP brings a person information about the present, past, or future. It seems to originate in a second or alternate reality.

Research in quantum physics points to the existence of a second, non-material universe, forcing many to accept the possibility that an extrasensory force exists in another reality which intersects and integrates with the physical world.

Evil Eye

An ancient and nearly universal belief that certain individuals possess the supernatural power to wreak disaster, calamity, illness, and even death with a glance or lingering look.

The oldest records of the evil eye date back to about 3000 BC in the cuneiform texts of the Sumerians and Assyrians. The Babylonians believed in it, as did the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans.

Eye of Horus

One of the most common amulets of ancient Egypt. The highly stylized eye of the falcon-headed solar and sky god Horus (Latin version of Hor) is associated with regeneration, health and prosperity.

As an amulet, the Eye has three versions: a left eye, a right eye, and two eyes. The eye is constructed in fractional parts, with 1/64 missing, a piece Thoth added by magic. The symbol of modern pharmacies and prescriptions is derived from three pieces of the Eye. (Looks like a combined Rx) A variation of the Eye is the all-seeing eye or the mystical eye in the Great Seal of the United States, most commonly seen on the dollar bill.

Feng Shui

An ancient and complex Chinese art that combines mysticism, science, and superstition to determine health, luck, and prosperity according to natural landscapes and the placement of dwellings, buildings and graves. It is still actively practiced in various forms in China and other Pacific countries such as Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines.

The term translates as "wind" and "water." Its fundamental concept is that in order to be healthy and prosper, one must be in harmony with the earth and receive the benefit of ch'i, the universal principle, which exists in all things and flows through the earth and nature. The flow of ch'i and the yin-yang balance are often affected by contours of the landscape, the presence or absence of water and vegetations, the weather conditions, and the sitings and shapes of buildings and the placement of furnishings in them.

Crucial to good feng shui is the presence of protective mountains of certain shapes, especially those evocative of dragons; the proximity of life-giving water (also associated with money), especially streams or rivers that flow neither too fast nor too slow; and the presence of rich, green trees and vegetation. The Chinese believe that the best ch'i winds and meanders along natural contours, thus there is an aversion to straight roads in modern construction. Ideally, houses, palaces, and tombs should face South and be located near yang energies of strength, and be protected at the rear by yin energies. Associations with the cardinal points are: north=business; east=good family life; south=fame; west=children's fame.

Gaia Hypothesis

A theory first put forward in the early 1970s by British biologist James E. Lovelock, that states the Earth is a self-regulating mechanism whereby: 1) the amount of

methane and oxygen in the earth's atmosphere has remained nearly constant for hundreds of millions of years, despite the fact that methane and oxygen interact to destroy each other; 2) the oceans have contained approximately 3.4 percent salt and 3) the planet has sustained a fairly constant surface temperature, despite the fact that the sun is now radiating 25 percent more heat than it did 3.5 billion years ago when life on the planet first appeared. A homeostasis seemed to be at work.

Grail, The

Spiritual mystery that is a pagan story which became Christianized and merged with Arthurian legend, but retained much of its pagan imagery and symbolism. The Grail is a gateway to Paradise, a point of contact with a supernatural and spiritual realm. It possesses unlimited healing power and makes possible a direct apprehension of the Divine.

The Grail quest is a search for truth and the real Self, and may be seen as a paradigm of the modern spiritual journey to restore the Waste Land and become whole again.

Harmonic Convergence

The supposed end of the materialistic world, which occurred on August 16 and 17th, 1987 according to interpretations of astrological configurations, Native American myth, and Mesoamerican calendars and prophecies. The Convergence was largely the idea of Jose Arguelles, an American art historian who, in 1983, connected astrological configurations to chronological forecasts and to his research of Mayan cosmology and calendar.

Haunting

The manifestation of inexplicable phenomena attributed to the presence of ghosts or spirits.

Researchers employ three basic techniques to investigate a haunting: description, experimentation, and detection. Description involves taking eyewitness accounts. Experimentation involves bringing a psychic to the site to corroborate the eyewitness accounts or provide new information. Psychic readings are unreliable, as telepathy and ESP can't be ruled out, and often information is given which cannot be historically verified. Detection involves the observation or recording of phenomena.

In 1929, English psychical researcher Harry Price put together a ghost hunter's kit that included felt overshoes, steel tape measurers, a thermometer, a still camera, a remote-control movie camera, fingerprinting equipment, a telescope, and a portable telephone. Equipment used today resemble those first used by Price.

Kali Yuga

In Hinduism, the present age lasting 432,000 years and characterized by degeneration, violence, ignorance, sorrow, materialism, waning religion, chaos and evil.

Lemniscate

A powerful occult symbol that looks like a figure eight lying on its side. It signifies eternity, infinity, regeneration, the Holy Spirit, infinite wisdom, and higher consciousness. Its serpentine shape has no beginning and no end, and represents the endless spiraling and balancing of opposing forces in the universe.

Magic

The ability to affect change in accordance with one's will and by invoking the supernatural. It has three functions and three elements. The functions are to produce, protect and destroy. The elements are spells or incantations; rites or procedures; and the consciousness of the practitioner, who undergoes a purification process that alters his or her state of consciousness.

Merlin

Legendary Arthurian wizard who has been interpreted in modern times as a Celtic mystic and shaman, and as an archetype of the Trickster and the Magician. In the Western mystery tradition, he and his consort Viviane (the Lady of the Lake) represent Jachin and Boaz, the male and female principles of the cosmos, force and form.

Miracle

An occurrence that is perceptible to the senses, transcends the natural course of events and takes place within a religious context.

In the twentieth century, Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity and the uncertainty principle of Werner Heisenberg, a founder of the quantum theory, has led to a less rigidly deterministic scientific model of the universe: If science must acknowledge randomness on the part of the smallest particles or waves of matter, it seems less improbable that other actions also transcend the laws of matter and energy. In addition, psychology seems to indicate that the mind - even the unconscious mind - has greater control of the body than mechanistic theories allows.

Mystery Cults

The Eleusian mysteries, the most popular and influential of the Greek cults, centered on the rape, abduction, and marriage or death of Kore (Persephone) and her reunion/resurrection with her mother Demeter, the grain goddess. The rites were intimately linked to the cycle of fertility of the Earth.

The Dionysian mysteries, the second most important Hellenistic cult, centered on Dionysus (Bacchus), the Thracian bull-god and ruler of the dead and souls who became the god of the vine and vegetation. The Villa of Mysteries, discovered in the ruins of Pompeii in 1910, includes a room called the Initiation Chamber, which is painted with Dionysian scenes and features Dionysus and his beloved, Ariadne. According to one interpretation of the mysteries, the rites represented the individuation process of the Self, in the transformation of both Dionysus and Ariadne through their sacred marriage.

In the mysteries of Isis and Osiris, the Egyptians observed a mystery play of succession, the death of a pharaoh and the succession of another, with a funeral ritual of mummification and burial in which the dead would be mystically joined in the underworld by Osiris. This mystery centered on the death of Osiris and his rebirth in the underworld with the help of Isis, and the birth of Isis' divine son, Horus, whom she held on her lap.

New Age

Thought which emphasizes creating one's own reality, that divinity exists within, and that there is a need for renewed recognition of the "feminine" traits such as intuition.

Parapsychology

The scientific study of psi and related subjects. Para means "beyond" in Greek, and parapsychology focuses attention on the borders of psychology, essentially the mind-body connection and on the relationship between consciousness and the objects of its awareness.

Shamanism

Magico-spiritual systems in which an adept enters an altered state of consciousness and travels to non-worldly realities in order to heal, divine, communicate with the spirits of the dead, and perform other supernatural feats. They are concerned with protecting the soul and preventing it from eternal wandering.

Shamanism has been described as the "world's oldest profession"; archaeological evidence suggests shamanic techniques are at least 20,000 years old. They were probably the first storytellers, healers, priests, magicians, dramatists, and so on, who explained the world and related it to the cosmos.

Shroud of Turin

A yellow strip of linen bearing bloodstains and the brownish image of the body of a bearded man which, for centuries, was believed to be the shroud in which Jesus was buried.

Soul Mate

A soul's ideal counterpart, which must be found for true happiness and fulfillment. The search for the counterpart may consume multiple reincarnations.

Telepathy

The mind-to-mind communication of thoughts, ideas, feelings, sensations, and mental images. The ancient Greek philosopher Democritus advanced wave and corpuscle theories. William Crookes, a 19th century British chemist and physicist, believed telepathy rides on radio-like brain waves. Later in the 20th century, Russian scientist L.L. Vasiliev proposed an electromagnetic theory.

The information comes in different ways: as fragments of thoughts that "something is wrong"; in dreams, visions, hallucinations, and mental images; in clairaudience; and in words that pop into the mind.

Theosophy

A philosophical system that teaches that one can gain knowledge of a transcendent reality through revelation or through practice of the occult tradition. It claims that all religions stem from the same roots of ancient wisdom, repeating myths and symbols, and that study of these secrets will lead to truth and spiritual oneness.

Universal Life Force

A vital force or energy that transcends time and space; permeates all things in the universe, and upon which all things depend for health and life. The Hindus call it prana, the Polynesians and Hawaiians mana, the Chinese qi, and the Japanese ki. Hippocrates called it the Vis Medicatrix Naturae, and Galen called it the Pneuma. In various systems it can be controlled and manipulated for improved health, longevity, healing or supernatural physical feats.

Vodoun (Voodoo)

Syncretic religion based on ancient African rites and Catholicism. Vodoun has 50 million followers worldwide.

The term "Vodoun" derives from vodu, meaning spirit or deity in the Fon language of Dahomey, now part of Nigeria. It is a product of the slave trade, principally in the Spanish and French colonies in the Caribbean such as Jamaica, Santo Domingo, and Haiti. Although vodoun beliefs concentrate on the positive aspects of religion (healing, growth, good will), it is most known for its darker aspect of black magic and sorcery, two elements that are practiced by many worshippers.