



# Natural and Supernatural: A History of the Paranormal from the Earliest Times to 1914

*Brian Inglis*

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Did Moses turn rods into serpents? Does Uri Geller bend spoons? Did Socrates and Joan of Arc have spirit guides? Did Daniel Home levitate? The 1970's provided a striking revival of interest in the paranormal which has continued unabated into the twenty first century. Telepathy ESP, clairvoyance, premonitions, and psychokinesis - the action of mind upon matter - it was not long ago that orthodox opinion, both scientific and religious, rejected the possibility of such things out of hand. Today, their reality has been demonstrated and tested in laboratories all over the world and the results are published in serious scientific journals. Natural and Supernatural is the first full survey of the subject for over a century. With scrupulous thoroughness and a wealth of extraordinary detail, Brian Inglis presents his evidence, drawing on anthropological studies of primitive tribes and records of classical antiquity and taking his story to the outbreak of the First World War, when the first phase of scientific psychical research came to an end. He pays particular attention to the work of the mesmerists and of the early psychical researchers in the last century. He deals, too, with related aspects such as hauntings, poltergeist outbreaks, scrying and dowsing. Contrary to popular belief, the evidence for psychic phenomena and non-locality, and the mass of material available to researchers is huge. Inglis meticulously sifted the genuine from the false, singling out such episodes as may reasonably be identified as historical and allowing the reader to make up his own mind, on the basis of the fullest and soundest knowledge, whether to accept paranormal phenomena or not. If they are accepted - and informed opinion is more and more moving that way- then a real revolution in our way of thinking is due to follow. For if mind can communicate with mind at distance, or move objects without contact, not merely will there have to be extensive revision of science textbooks. History, too, will need to be re-written, to allow for the possibility that reports which have long been dismissed as myth or illusion may have been accurate after all. The implications of the subject are great, and Inglis does them full justice. Praise for Natural and Supernatural. 'I believe it to be an extraordinarily important and valuable work, sensational in what it contains and even more so in its implications. . . he has piled up a mountain of evidence, searchingly examined and scrupulously evaluated.' Bernard Levin, The Times 'It has the two basic qualities which make books on history endure: it is both scholarly and readable.' Arthur Koestler, the Guardian 'A tour de force. . . one of those works, like H. G. Wells Outline of History, that fires the imagination and leaves the reader feeling stunned, but excited.' Colin Wilson, Evening News 'Brian Inglis is eminently sensible and sane. In this massive survey, the evidence is presented in a sober and scholarly way. . . Natural and Supernatural is hard to fault.' the Economist Inglis bring to this book the same thoroughness and care that he shows in his other books... while I have not been converted, it has intensified mental conflict, and I admire and respect him for writing it.' Karl Sabbagh, New Scientist 'Cool, authoritative and highly readable - a service to science and society.' Ray Brown, Psychology Today

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