

Proposed research

This research project will involve replicating relevant Backster Effect experiments, however, the stimulus trigger event will occur after the relevant measurements will be taken.

The research will also investigate whether information can be obtained about the future by setting up trigger responses that are measured prior to the event about which the information is relevant.

Both of these experiments are focussing on procedure for potential future use of plant monitoring for obtaining information otherwise inaccessible through normal means which will ultimately be judged on whether it is useful or not. The benefit would be in discovering another (for instance aside from ARV) readily replicable way of obtaining information from the future which could be used to investigate the philosophical and practical issues surrounding retrocausation. By using plants and an external measuring device it is hoped that the process might be made easier to investigate.

Experiment I

In the initial Backster experiment after discovering some interesting effects on measuring the plant with the polygraph after watering it he decided to see if the marks registered on the polygraph paper related were similar to those made when humans were being examined. He knew that humans reacted to threats and so started to think the thought 'I'm going to burn that leaf!'. To his surprise "the very moment the imagery of burning that leaf entered my mind, the polygraph recording pen moved rapidly to the top of the chart! No words were spoken, no touching the plant, no lighting of matches, just my clear intention to burn the leaf." (Backster, 2003, p. 24). To achieve some baseline readings and confirm that the Backster effect is replicable the first step of this experiment will be to replicate the initial Backster experiment.

If it is successful the experiment will then test for a retrocausal effect. This experiment will test if a plant responds to a person who will later deliberately think of harming the plant. To test for this a plant will be selected and will be attached to a polygraph. Two people will enter the room where the plant is at separate times. The reactions of the plant to the people will be monitored with a polygraph or similar instrument.

After a rest period, one of the two people is chosen (using a random selector) as the person who will be asked to think of burning a leaf on the plant. Each of them again independently enters the room. The order in which they enter is also chosen randomly. The one chosen to think of harming the plant does so. The one chosen not to interact with the plant as previously. The plant is monitored throughout.

A comparison will be made between the earlier readings and the later readings. If the readings show the same reaction to the person who the second time round is thinking thoughts of intent to harm the plant then this is an indication the plant is reacting to the future intent to harm event. This will be confirmed by comparing the readings with the control subject who interacted with the plant both times without intent to harm it and to the readings measured when intent to harm was recorded in the earlier experiments.

Experiment II

The second experiment will test to see if a plant registers a reaction on the polygraph to information that is primed in the future. The basis for this experiment is to replicate retrocausally an experiment involving a person attempting not to disclose a chosen a number from one to ten.

The initial experiment involved a subject, a plant linked to a polygraph machine and a psychologist. The subject was asked to select a number between one and ten. Then they were asked if the number they had selected was 1, 2, 3, etc. They were told to try as hard as they could not to reveal the number. The psychologist was unable to detect which number the person had selected. The plant, however, registered a significant event on the polygraph paper when the person was asked if the number was 5. It was revealed afterwards that this is the number the person had selected.

Experiment II will test to see if a similar effect can be obtained when the number that the subject is asked not to disclose is chosen in the future. It is anticipated that the number needs to have some emotional significance in the future in order for it to display a retrocausal effect so the number will be primed by attaching an emotion to it via the human subject. This will be done by positive reinforcement of a randomly selected number after the initial run through of numbers has taken place.

The initial measurements taken when the subject is asked to focus on each number will be used by an independent judge to try to pick correctly which number is ultimately chosen and primed. It is anticipated that there will need to be a few trials in order to work out how best to prime the number in the future.

Literature

This experiment was initially inspired by an event which found me re-reading *The Secret Life of Plants* earlier this year. In this book the authors discuss, amongst many other interesting plant-related anomalous phenomena, the Backster experiments.

My interest was piqued to find out if there had been any major developments in this field in the subsequent decades. I discovered that Cleve Backster was still producing books about his experiments so I ordered *Primary Perception, Biocommunication with plants, living foods and human cells* (published in 2003 and the latest book I could find by him). I also found a report called *Implications of the Backster Effect: nonlocal biocommunication for remote monitoring*.

Both books discussed developments from the initial experiments. Most significant was the development of experiments which took cells from humans (leukocytes) and monitored them when the subject was at a distance from the laboratory. It was possible to ascertain moments when the subject was experiencing significant emotions by comparing the monitoring of the cells with the activity of the subject. Initially this was undertaken using TV documentaries with significant themes for the subject (the depiction of war scenes for a veteran for example).

Both books also mentioned possible research avenues such as testing the reaction at greater distances (in space) and screening to try to find out how the information is obtained, but neither contained information about attempting retrocausal stimulus experiments.

A search of relevant databases and journal archives indicated that this had not been reported. The proposed experiments would therefore be a beneficial addition to the literature on human / plant nonlocal interaction.

Tomkins, P & Bird, C. 1974 *The Secret Life of Plants* (revised edition). Harper & Row, London.

Backster, C. 2003 *Primary Perception: Biocommunication with plants, living foods and human cells*. White Rose Millenium Press, California.

Valone, T. 2004 *Implications of the Backster Effect: nonlocal biocommunication for remote monitoring*. Integrity Research Institute, Maryland.