

## Thought transference

from Nasht (2005). *The Last Explorer: Hubert Wilkins, Hero of the Great Age of Polar Exploration*. Pp. 264 – 269.

On August 12, 1937, the Soviet aviator Sigismund Levanevsky and five crewmates left Moscow headed for New York City. The next day, Levanevsky's plane disappeared, leaving behind only a faint radio message that indicated engine trouble. On August 16, Sir Hubert Wilkins, an explorer and pilot, was contacted by the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C. Would he be prepared to lead a search for the missing men from the American side of the Arctic? Within a week, Wilkins was in the air headed for Alaska.

Between September 1937 and March 1938, Wilkins flew over 40,000 miles under what he described as "heartbreaking conditions of almost continuously bad weather." Despite the Herculean efforts of Sir Hubert and his men, no sign of the Russians was ever found. But the search for Levanevsky was notable for another reason: it marked the beginning of Wilkins' experiments with the paranormal. He had long been intrigued by the possibility of what today we would call extra sensory perception. As a boy among Aboriginal people, he had noticed that they seemed capable "of knowing of some event which was taking place miles beyond their range of sight and hearing." So when an acquaintance in New York, the writer Harold Sherman, approached him with the idea of conducting a controlled experiment on thought transfer he was intrigued.

As Wilkins prepared for the Arctic search flights, Sherman proposed that he try an experiment in transmitting his thoughts back to New York by means of telepathy. Sherman would record the flyer's impressions as he received them, seal them, and send them to an independent party for later comparison with Wilkins' diary.

Three nights a week, between the hours of 11:30 and midnight New York time, "I would, wherever I might be, attempt to project thought impressions of what was happening to me," wrote Wilkins. Sherman in New York sat in the darkened study of his apartment on Riverside Drive and wrote down his "readings."

“It soon became apparent that Sherman, in some manner not understood by us, was picking up quite a number of thought forms—strong thoughts emitted by me,” Wilkins later wrote. For instance, on Armistice Day, 1937, Wilkins attended a formal ball in Saskatchewan after being forced to land in Canada by bad weather. Always fastidious in his dress, Wilkins was troubled about the borrowed dress suit he had to wear, for the waistcoat did not quite meet his trousers. Those at the ball included army men, Mounties, and provincial leaders and their wives. That night, Sherman recorded the following message, “You in company with men in military attire—some women—evening dress—social occasion—important people present—much conversation—you appear to be in evening dress yourself.”

The experiment continued for many months, and various psychic investigators came to watch the proceedings, among them Dr. Alexander Edmund Ronald Strath-Gordon, a scholar, soldier, doctor, diplomat, linguist, and Egyptologist. In a statutory declaration submitted as part of the evidence of the experiment, he wrote:

In many years of study and research all over the world, in the field of mental and psychic phenomena, I have never observed such continued clarity and exactness of telepathic vision as demonstrated by Harold Sherman. To witness his receiving and recording thoughts or thought forms, is to give one the feeling that Mr. Sherman is taking what amounts to dictation from some invisible intelligence.

The full results of this fascinating experiment were published in 1942 in a book jointly authored by Wilkins and Sherman, *Thoughts through Space: A Remarkable Adventure in the Realm of the Mind*. Largely because of the war, it went unnoticed at the time. Since then, however, it has become something of a cult classic. The authors claim to have achieved more than 60 percent similarity in their accounts of the expedition.

Make this premise 4 in the induction by confirmation: **[P<sub>4</sub>]** The data match the prediction.