

Whilst both philosophy and style are idiosyncratic, the book does cover most of the major and many of the less major branches of dowsing. There is an emphasis on practice and the necessity for precise questioning. Your reviewer enjoyed the book and his dowsing knowledge and thinking has been extended by it. He would not necessarily disagree with its philosophy. The case is non-proven and it is perhaps as good as any other. He would however have difficulty in recommending the book to a beginner. It has in the past been possible to develop as a competent dowser without a background in magic, the Tarot, the I Ching and Sufi thought. Whilst the BSD is no longer dominated by retired military gentlemen who did admirable work locating water in the former colonies, that focus is still not without merit. In spite of what he says, Mr. Graves' philosophy is so much at variance with that essentially pragmatic approach that it would be likely to find acceptance with only a relatively modest proportion of BSD members.

K. L. Gardner.

EARTH RADIATION
The Startling Discoveries of a Dowser
by Käthe Bachler

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Available from the Society's bookshop by post, cost £8 to include p&p

Käthe Bachler's book is an exposition of her views on earth 'energies' or 'radiation' and their effect on health and it contains a large number of case histories. Although the text is somewhat disjointed the message is nevertheless clear. Like von Pohl¹ before her Bachler believes that exposure for long periods to earth radiation, in her case in the form of water lines and/or the Curry grid, and particularly crossing points of these lines, stresses individuals to such an extent that their resistance to disease is lowered. Being a teacher she has been particularly concerned with children and she would appear to have had a great degree of success in ameliorating their problems. Bachler does not attempt to 'correct' these energies as many dowsers do, but prefers to get the patients to move their beds, chairs or desks away from the noxious zones.

As with von Pohl's book I am a little perturbed at the remarkable degree to which her theory is confirmed in practice. Herein lies a major problem. In most cases Bachler dowsed a site knowing that a sick or disturbed person was associated with it. Also I suspect she was expecting to find water and Curry grid lines. The problem with the Curry grid is that on finding a line which is believed to be part of the grid the rest may be subconsciously conceived and no doubt found. The distance between the grid lines is between 2.75-5 metres, depending on the latitude, with a width of about 75cm. Most rooms will, therefore, have some intersections of the Curry grid and if water lines are also present there will be, as Murray Laver points out in a recent article², few locations of any size free from dowsing reactions and pathological influence. Reading the book reminded me of the Chinese proverb: "If you invite a geomancer to inspect your house, you might as well start packing to move now".

There can be no doubt that Bachler is detecting what is known as "earth energies" or perhaps properly "dowsable 'energy' lines" in association with her sick patients. However, other dowsers, who are also successful in their treatments, do not always find the same patterns that Bachler does. Indeed, Chinese geomancers practising Feng Shui have a completely different system of operating with 'Dragon currents' and yet to a similar end. My own experience is similar to that of R. J. Pope who wrote³: "English dowsers will find black energies or ley lines depending on their experience and personal viewpoint. They do not find Curry grids or Hartmann grids. Continental dowsers do not find these energies at all. They find Curry grids and Hartmann grids. Different dowsers will find different grids".

If different dowsers find different lines depending on the model with which they are working do these lines actually physically exist and are they indeed lines of 'energy' in the conventional sense at all, or rather do they exist on a psychical level? Bachler quotes many scientists to support her theory that these dowsable lines have a physical existence but unfortunately so little information is given that a critical assessment of the work cannot be made. This is made more difficult by the fact that most of the work is available only in German. If they exist on a psychical level their exact manifestation to the dowser will depend on what he expects. In my own case I have found dowsable energy lines, and even energy spots and columns, not only associated with the environment but also sometimes localised lines which appear to have been generated by sick patients. In this case the geopathic stress line is an effect rather than the cause of the problem. Finding these lines tells me a lot about the problem in hand. In fact I sense that during the act of dowsing for earth energies one is tuning into a complex pattern generated at a level higher than the physical. This pattern may be a result of the interaction of 'energies' generated by both man and the earth. The exact patterns detected will depend

on the individual dowser. A good dowser will understand better the problem by the nature of his interaction. When I dowse for earth energies every case is different. The work is full of constant surprises and I feel uncomfortable that Käthe Bachler sees the field of earth energies as cut and dried, neatly organized.

Bachler deals with noxious zones by getting patients to move but other dowsers attempt to correct problems. Most 'deraying' techniques involve the critical intervention of the dowser and may well work on the plane of psychical energies and, as Michael Guest has proposed⁴, the devices chosen by the dowser to deal with noxious earth energies will simply represent the physical channels through which the psychic and spiritual forces of the dowser are brought to bear on the problem. For some even the devices are redundant, an expression of intent being enough^{4,5} but in most cases the patient or client will expect some device or ritual to be used. In Käthe Bachler's case the act of dowsing followed by the act by the patient of moving his position may well be the means by which healing is accomplished.

Such suggestions will, I am sure, be hotly challenged but if Bachler's book is considered in the wider context of other dowsers' experiences, particularly where treatments are often done at a distance or merely involve almost mystical rituals, or the noxious zones map dowsed, then a simple physical explanation begins to look rather unlikely. All hypotheses need to be tested but as Laver points out² there is no point at all in using tests which yield more evidence of the kind we used when constructing our theory. This is a problem with Bachler's book where large numbers of case histories were accumulated to support a theory which was based on the evidence of case histories in the first place. It is interesting that von Pohl did much the same but his theory involved only water lines and not Curry grids but, to be fair, it could be argued that the superimposition of Curry grids on his patterns of water lines could fine tune the location of noxious zones. Still, it is odd that he did not find the Curry grid. Instead, let a group of dowsers independently dowse a green field site on which a small new town is to be built, before building is done, after building is completed but before people have moved in to see the effect of the building on any dowsable lines, and let the health of the residents be monitored for a period before finally dowsing the site again at the end of the trial. Each dowser should keep all his findings confidential and should also make predictions before people take up residence on the future health of the town. With a physical hypothesis the lines should change little and the disease pattern should be predictable beforehand. If a psychical hypothesis is true I would predict a change in energy patterns in line with the development of disease.

In conclusion, "Earth Radiation" is an account of Käthe Bachler's success as a healer and the mechanisms by which she believes disease is precipitated and the means by which these debilitating factors can

be avoided. Whether these explanations are well founded or simply represent a rationalization of the interaction of man with more subtle forces is, I believe, debatable. But for those helped by her and other land energy dowers such academic debate is, thankfully, of little concern.

References

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