

“Quantum Entanglement”

# the STARFISH TELEGRAPH

by  
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During the summer of 1920, I went on a vacation on an island up the British Columbia coast named Aristazabal and while there I moored my boat at a place locally known as Borrowman Bay.

As I gathered a bucket of pilchards, I noticed a starfish that had one ray broken off close to its body. It lay in two parts. About two weeks later I walked along that part of the beach in search of clams. I was amazed to find a change had undergone the two parts of the starfish. The part that contained four rays had started to grow a fifth ray. But what really amazed me was that the single ray had a small central body and four miniature rays attached and growing on it.

I had a friend by the name of Barney who had a shack in the vicinity and from him I obtained some wire netting and fashioned a fence around the area where the starfish lay. In about seven weeks the two starfish were hardly distinguishable from each other.

One day I noticed one had its rays curled around a piece of fish, while the other also had its rays curled under in a feeding position. I gently straightened the rays out and to my surprise the other starfish straightened its rays out in a time lapse of thirty seconds. Then I took the tip of the ray of one and gently bent it slightly and the corresponding tip of the ray of the other responded in a like manner. The impact of this strange phenomenon on my mind was staggering. Here were two bodies that seemed to have an invisible nervous system in common.

Following this discovery I constructed two pegboards by which I could fix (outlining with pegs) the rays of one starfish. Barney's shack was about two hundred yards distance from my boat and I would outline one starfish on a pegboard while Barney at his shack would lay the other starfish on a pegboard and do the same. Then we would compare the two. Invariably the two starfish would be in an identical position. Late in the fall, we devised means for communication by various combinations of bending the rays of one starfish on the pegboard. The other starfish always assumed the same position on the other pegboard. Later we were able to communicate this way for a distance of about five miles.

It was at Kettle Inlet in October, 1920, that fate ended the study. After no response from Barney for twenty-four hours, my starfish spelled, "Help bloo." I hoisted the anchor and arrived at Barney's to find him collapsed and hemorrhaging. I took him in my boat to the nearest settlement, leaving the two starfish in a bucket of sea water in the shack. Barney later died in the Prince Rupert hospital.

When I got back to Kettle Inlet, the starfish were dead. The water should have been changed every twenty-four hours or oftener.

The years have passed and I've never related this story for fear that I might become a candidate for the funny house. Quite recently I read an article similar in regard to plants which gave me the courage to contribute my story at this time.

Doane, C. H. "The Starfish Telegraph," *Raincoast Chronicles SIX/TEN: Collector's Edition II*. Ed. Howard White, Harbour Publishing, Maderia Park, 1983,1994:237.