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## Lifestyle

### Experiments prove plants have feelings

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THE CURRENT controversy over the removal by the Metro Manila Development Authority of old trees along Katipunan Street in Quezon City to ease traffic congestion has focused public attention on the importance of trees to human life on earth.

It is now common knowledge that plants and trees serve living creatures in multifarious ways. They prevent floods and soil erosion, give off oxygen, provide food and shelter for both animals and man and a source of medicine to fight all kinds of diseases. But neither the environmentalists nor the average modern individual is aware of the hidden life of plants or of their extra sensory powers.

It was the American polygraph expert, Cleve Backster, who first brought up the incredible idea that plants are aware of their environment and have rudimentary emotions or feelings. Subsequently, he proved that hypothesis beyond doubt. He discovered that plants reacted to the death of other living creatures even though the doomed victims were not in the same room.

His original experiment consisted of attaching polygraph electrodes on the leaves of philodendron plants. In another room, Backster set up a machine that would dump live brine shrimp at random into boiling water. As a control the machine occasionally would dump water without shrimp to see if the plants in the other room simply reacted to the mechanical process rather than to the death of the shrimp.

To ensure that there is no human intervention, the experiment was conducted without any researcher in the laboratory. Everything was done automatically. One polygraph was not attached to any plant as a control to see if its readings would be different from the three polygraphs attached to the plants. Once the machines began to operate, experimenters left the building, only to return later to verify the results.

And what were these results? "The plants in separate rooms connected to separate polygraphs," reported John Whitman in "The Psychic Power of Plants" (published by New American Library, New York, 1974), "responded to the death of the brine shrimp by showing acute stress curves similar to those shown by humans under intense pressure—either mental or physical."

Furthermore, according to Backster, "The plants gave no response to the dumping of water which contained no shrimp at all." It shows the shrimp somehow was able to communicate to the plants in the other room its "death signals," much like a person involved in a fatal accident is able to communicate telepathically his death to loved one miles away from the scene of the accident.

#### Plant identifies killer

In another fascinating and rather incredible experiment, Backster was able to identify a plant killer through his polygraph machine. The plants pointed to the real killer by reacting wildly to him.

Here is how Whitman described that classic experiment in the book mentioned earlier: "One of six students was chosen to kill a plant in a room with only one plant present. Neither Backster nor the five other students knew who the killer would be. The chosen student sneaked into the room with two plants and destroyed one of them. Backster later asked the students to come into the room one at a time.

"Each of the innocent students came into the room and the plant showed no reaction to any of them. But when the guilty student came into the room, the plant seemed to go into a frenzy which showed up as wild activity on the polygraph tracings."

Other experiments conducted by different researchers showed that plants responded positively to classical music and very badly to rock or heavy metal music. They also responded well to words of encouragement and positive emotions from people around them. Maybe that's why the fig tree withered and died when Christ cursed it for not bearing fruits, as related in the New Testament.

City dwellers have not given much importance to plants. Maybe it's because they are not aware of their importance and sensitivity. As the above scientific experiments have shown, plants and trees have emotions and even psychic powers. Maybe we should tell MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando and his over-enthusiastic agents that plants are "human," too!

### **Note**

Several readers have written me asking where in the Philippines to find the "Nag Hammadi Library" edited by James M. Robinson. I did not expect that this book would generate so much interest.

Unfortunately I do not know where this book can be bought. My copy was given to me as a gift from a friend a long time ago. All I know is that it is published in 1990 by Harper San Francisco, a division of Harper Collins Publishers whose address is 10 East 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 1022, USA.

The other book I've read on the same topic is "The Gnostic Gospels" by Dr. Elaine Pagels, published in 1979 by Random House in New York. I don't have the exact address.

Please write directly to the above publishers for more info on these books.

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