

What are the Wild Human Waves Saying?

These waves are the electrical ones which flow ceaselessly from the brain centers of man, woman or child.

They are probably the wildest of all waves, in diversity of shape, sizes and speeds.

Now that millions of them have been studied by scientists, in what is a new field of diagnosing human beings, some of their meanings are beginning to become clear.

They are used by surgeons, physicians, or even the family doctor may have them taken to explain why juniors act that way.

These waves are as common as fingerprints. A couple of electrical pickups pasted to the scalp will record them any time, for any person.

They are electrical pulsations of a few millionths of a volt each. They cannot ever be felt. But an amplifying set writes them on a moving strip of paper, like an endless chain of waves drawn by a careless penman.

For most people, most of the time, when awake, they look like a string of script letter M's written end to end. But with moods, emotions, alcohol, illness, misbehavior sometimes, and mental troubles often, they change. Each wave represents some sort of action within the brain.

Reading their meanings is like standing on the shore of New York Harbor in a blackout when nothing can be seen but the waves coming ashore at your feet. If a large liner went past in the darkness, its presence could be guessed by the regularity and size of its rollers.

The human alcoholic brain wave sometimes has musical beauty. It may assume the form of a spire studded with gracefully curved ornaments.

This alcoholic symmetry, however, is never a sign that the intoxicated person is about to burst into song. Its variations, so far, have no indexed meanings.

Waves Roll at Ten a Second

The human waves roll usually at the rate of ten a second. But speeds may be much slower or faster. Speeds alone are often significant of trouble although not always. Thus, sleep slows the waves. So do some forms of serious mental trouble.

Emotions are likely to form waves irregular in timing or size, or both.

But if there is a wave to identify intelligence, it has not yet been found. Dunce and genius, in normal health, are likely to have waves too similar to be distinguished. The waves are slow in children, up to about 8, and after that take on the adult pattern.

The best identified wave is an occasional spike appearing among the normal m's as a sign of epilepsy. Occasionally epilepsy is found by this wave before any other sign appears.

Insanity, mental troubles and psychoses present a confusion of wave forms like mixing all the earth's storms simultaneously over one small area.

Yet even here some of the signals are beginning to become clear. Years of watching have culminated in finding two kinds of waves to separate manic depressive insanity into two classes.

Some maniacs have slow waves. Others have the fast type. The latter show the wave speed even when they are at rest.

The greatest present puzzle is that among perfectly normal persons there are just about all the types of waves which mark the insane.

Not everyone has the insane waves. But the overlap is wide. As the signs are better understood it may be possible to label every personality with its true name.

Fundamental in Personality

For these wild waves are fundamental in personality. Each individual's pattern usually remains the same no matter how many times repeated. It seems a safe guess that the wave pattern remains constant throughout life. Finally, no two are exactly alike.

Howard K. Blakeslee in The Washington Post

Inner Culture for Self-Realization