

Eureka!

*By Pete Clark*

How perceptions are interpreted creates reality. I believe John Locke was correct in his thesis that the mind begins as a blank slate and a person is the sum total of his or her experiences. What one perceives becomes the world where one lives, so my world will never be the same as your world. What happens if one of your sensory organs is miswired in the brain? I can provide at least a partial answer to that question.

I enrolled in Freshman Chemistry at the University of Wyoming and did very well in the lecture course, but the laboratory assignments were a much different story. As careful as I was setting up the experiments, I could seldom get them to work. Most of the time, I had to ask a patient Lab Assistant to assist me in finishing my task. It was both frustrating and embarrassing. At the end of the Second Semester, Doc Ryan, who had worked on the atomic bomb at Hanford, Washington, asked me to come back in the fall to take his course in nuclear chemistry, but I figured my problems in the lab would get in the way, so I did not enroll in the course.

Once I had to rebuild a small piece of equipment that had lost the nut from the end of its shaft. There were not many parts in the item, but it was spring loaded and I had to use a vice to have a hand free to compress the spring. The job should have taken a couple of minutes to complete. It took twenty minutes. I would carefully slide the parts onto the shaft and when I would finish, the parts would be aligned in the wrong order. I had to make several attempts before the job was successfully completed.

A few years ago I went into a book store looking for a book on the paranormal, written by an expert in a particular field. I quickly found the rack where the book should have been on display, but I was unable to locate it. I asked a clerk for assistance in locating the volume.

Her face turned to a display of disgust as she walked to the rack and pulled off the book. She silently handed me the book and stomped away. It was right there a couple of feet from me, but I did not see the thing until the clerk took it from the rack. I look for things in closets and fail to find them even if they are hanging or sitting in plain sight.

A week or so ago, I was sitting in my chair playing with Harry, when after almost sixty years, I realized why I couldn't get the lab experiments to work. When the experiments did not work, it was because I did not see exactly what I was doing and at that dawning moment I was not awestruck, but I should have cried, Eureka!