

the men who stare goats

the men who stare goats is a phrase that has captured the imagination of many, blending elements of military secrecy, psychological operations, and conspiracy theories. Originating from a 2004 book by journalist Jon Ronson, the phrase refers to a secret U.S. military program aimed at developing psychic and paranormal abilities for military use. Over the years, this topic has sparked widespread curiosity, debates about government transparency, and a fascination with the extraordinary capabilities that some believe might exist beyond conventional science. This article delves into the history, key players, documented programs, and cultural impact of "the men who stare goats," offering a comprehensive overview optimized for SEO to help readers understand this intriguing subject.

Origins of the Phrase and Theoretical Foundations

The Book That Inspired the Phrase

The phrase "the men who stare goats" originates from Jon Ronson's 2004 book titled *The Men Who Stare at Goats*. The book investigates the U.S. military's covert experiments in psychic phenomena, particularly focusing on efforts during the Cold War era to harness extrasensory perception (ESP), telekinesis, and other paranormal abilities for military advantage.

The Concept of Psychic Warfare

The idea behind psychic warfare involves using mental powers to influence or detect enemies, gather intelligence, or even cause physical harm without conventional weapons. Key concepts include:

- Remote Viewing: The ability to see distant or hidden objects or locations through extrasensory perception.

- Psychokinesis (PK): The purported ability to move or manipulate objects with the mind.
- Mind Control and Influence: Techniques aimed at controlling or influencing individuals' thoughts or actions covertly.

These concepts, while controversial and often dismissed by mainstream science, gained interest within certain military and intelligence circles during the Cold War, driven by fears of technological and psychic espionage advancements by adversaries.

The U.S. Military and the Development of Psychic Programs

Project Stargate

One of the most well-known programs linked to the "men who stare goats" is Project Stargate, a secret U.S. government initiative launched in the 1970s to explore psychic spying and remote viewing. Key points include:

- Funded by agencies like the CIA and the Department of Defense.
- Involved researchers such as Ingo Swann, Pat Price, and Joseph McMoneagle.
- Aimed to develop reliable methods for gathering intelligence through psychic means.
- Continued until the mid-1990s, when the government officially declassified and terminated the program.

Other Related Programs

Besides Stargate, several other covert projects aimed at exploring paranormal abilities include:

- Project Grill Flame: The precursor to Stargate, initiated in the early 1970s.
- MKUltra: Though primarily a mind control program involving drugs and psychological experiments, it also explored psychic phenomena.

- The Phoenix Program: Allegedly involved in using psychic techniques for military purposes.

Key Figures and Alleged Experiments

- Ingo Swann: A renowned psychic who claimed to have remote viewing abilities.
- Harold Puthoff and Russell Targ: Physicists who conducted experiments on remote viewing at Stanford Research Institute.
- Lieutenant Colonel Jim Channon: A military officer who developed the "First Earth Battalion," emphasizing unconventional warfare including psychic abilities.

Public Revelation and Cultural Impact

Media Coverage and Public Awareness

The disclosure of these programs through books, documentaries, and declassified documents has fueled public curiosity. Notable instances include:

- Jon Ronson's *The Men Who Stare at Goats* (2004) unveiling the secret projects.
- The 2009 film adaptation starring George Clooney and Ewan McGregor, which fictionalizes aspects of the program.
- Documentaries exploring government experiments with psychic phenomena.

Famous Alleged Experiments

Some documented or claimed experiments include:

- Attempting to kill goats by staring at them with the mind.
- Remote viewing of military targets and locations.
- Using psychic techniques to detect underground bunkers or hidden weapons.

Impact on Popular Culture

The concept of psychic military experiments has permeated popular culture, inspiring:

- Films and TV shows portraying covert psychic operations.
- Conspiracy theories suggesting that governments possess secret psychic warfare capabilities.
- A broader fascination with the potential of the mind and unexplained phenomena.

Debunking and Scientific Scrutiny

Criticism from the Scientific Community

Mainstream scientists largely dismiss the claims of psychic powers due to:

- Lack of reproducible experimental results.
- Absence of a plausible scientific mechanism.
- The tendency of positive findings to be statistical anomalies or artifacts.

Declassified Reports and Their Implications

In the 1990s, the U.S. government declassified many documents related to Project Stargate, which concluded that:

- Remote viewing had limited practical application.
- The programs did not produce actionable intelligence reliably.
- Funding was discontinued due to lack of evidence.

The Legacy of Skepticism and Continued Interest

Despite skepticism, the fascination persists, fueled by:

- Reports of unexplained sightings and experiences.
- The allure of hidden knowledge and government secrecy.
- Ongoing debates about the potential of the human mind.

The Modern Perspective and Ongoing Mysteries

Current Status of Psychic Research

Today, research into psychic phenomena continues in some circles, often within:

- Parapsychology institutes.
- Private organizations claiming to test psychic abilities.
- Alternative medicine and spiritual communities.

Government and Private Sector Involvement

While official programs like Stargate have been discontinued, some private entities and military contractors explore:

- Mind training techniques.
- Neurofeedback and brain stimulation technologies.
- Experimentation with consciousness and cognitive enhancement.

Popular Theories and Conspiracies

Numerous theories speculate about:

- Secret advancements in psychic warfare.
- Government cover-ups of successful psychic operations.
- Hidden technologies that could revolutionize warfare.

Conclusion: The Enduring Fascination with The Men Who Stare Goats

"The men who stare goats" remains a symbol of the strange, mysterious, and often controversial intersection between military ambition and paranormal phenomena. Whether viewed as a genuine pursuit of extraordinary capabilities or as a product of Cold War paranoia and imagination, the story continues to inspire curiosity and skepticism alike. As science advances and our understanding of the human mind deepens, the question persists: are these abilities real, or are they merely the products of myth and misinterpretation? Regardless of the answer, the legend of these psychic soldiers endures, captivating the imagination and prompting ongoing exploration into the limits of human potential.

Keywords for SEO Optimization:

- the men who stare goats
- psychic military programs
- remote viewing
- Project Stargate
- psychic warfare
- government experiments with paranormal
- military psychic research
- Cold War psychic experiments
- government secrecy and psychic research
- military paranormal capabilities

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'The Men Who Stare at Goats' about?

'The Men Who Stare at Goats' is a book and film that explores the U.S. military's secret program involving paranormal and psychic research, including attempts at mind control and other unconventional tactics during the Cold War era.

Is 'The Men Who Stare at Goats' based on real events?

Yes, both the book and the film are based on real programs and experiments conducted by the U.S. military, particularly focusing on the Army's exploration of psychic phenomena and unconventional warfare techniques.

Who is the author of the book 'The Men Who Stare at Goats'?

The book was written by Jon Ronson and was published in 2004. It investigates the secret military projects involving psychic research.

What are some of the key themes explored in 'The Men Who Stare at Goats'?

The core themes include military experimentation with paranormal abilities, the intersection of intelligence and unconventional warfare, government secrecy, and the absurdities of secret programs.

How does the film adaptation differ from the book?

While the film, released in 2009 and starring George Clooney, simplifies and dramatizes some aspects for entertainment, it stays largely faithful to the book's exploration of military experiments with the paranormal, often adding humor and fictionalized scenes.

Why did the U.S. military invest in psychic research programs like the one depicted in 'The Men Who Stare at Goats'?

The military believed that psychic and paranormal abilities could provide strategic advantages in warfare, such as remote viewing, mind control, and espionage, especially during the Cold War era when unconventional tactics were highly valued.

Has any of the psychic research from 'The Men Who Stare at Goats' yielded tangible military benefits?

There is no conclusive public evidence that these programs resulted in reliable or practical applications, and many consider them to have been experiments driven more by curiosity and Cold War paranoia than effective military strategy.

Additional Resources

The Men Who Stare Goats: Unveiling the Mysteries of Military Psychic Warfare

The men who stare goats — a phrase that evokes images of clandestine experiments, secret psychic soldiers, and covert military projects — have long captured public imagination. Rooted in a blend of espionage intrigue and the supernatural, this phrase gained prominence through investigative journalism and declassified documents that revealed a shadowy chapter of military history. At the heart of the story lies an ambitious attempt by the United States military to harness paranormal phenomena for strategic advantage, blending science fiction with Cold War paranoia. This article explores the origins, development, and implications of these secret endeavors, shedding light on a chapter of military experimentation that blurs the line between fact and myth.

The Origins of the Concept: From Cold War Fears to Psychic Warfare

The Cold War Context

During the Cold War era, both the United States and the Soviet Union poured significant resources into research on unconventional warfare, psychological operations, and mind control. The pervasive fear of nuclear annihilation and the desire for strategic superiority fueled investments in projects that sought to develop new forms of espionage and combat.

The U.S. military and intelligence agencies became increasingly interested in the potential of psychic phenomena—such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and remote viewing—as tools to gather intelligence or influence events from afar. This was partly driven by the belief that adversaries might be exploiting supernatural abilities, prompting a race to discover or develop similar capabilities.

The Birth of 'Staring' and Psychic Phenomena

The idea that individuals could influence others or access hidden information through focused mental effort was not entirely new. Throughout history, stories of hypnotism, meditation, and spiritual practices hinted at the possibility of mind-over-matter control. However, in the 20th century, scientific interest in these areas was reignited by reports of psychic spies and covert experiments.

One of the earliest documented attempts to explore these phenomena was the U.S. government's interest in remote viewing and psychic espionage. The most prominent among these initiatives was the Stargate Project, which operated from the 1970s through the 1990s, aiming to determine whether individuals could perceive distant locations or objects through extrasensory perception (ESP).

The Transition from Remote Viewing to 'Staring' Goats

While remote viewing centered on perceiving distant images or places, the concept of "staring" at goats—metaphorically or literally—involved the idea of influencing or controlling animals or humans through focused mental energy. This leap from perception to influence formed the basis of the phrase "the men who stare goats."

The phrase itself originated from a 1996 book by investigative journalist Jon Ronson, titled *The Men Who Stare Goats*. The book chronicled the U.S. military's experiments with psychic soldiers and covert operations that allegedly involved using mental powers to influence animals, manipulate perceptions, or even cause physical effects.

The U.S. Military and Psychic Warfare: A Deep Dive

Project Stargate and Its Origins

Project Stargate was perhaps the most well-known U.S. government program dedicated to researching psychic phenomena for intelligence purposes. Initiated during the Cold War, it aimed to explore whether individuals could utilize psychic abilities to gather strategic intelligence, locate hostages, or influence military outcomes.

Key points about Project Stargate include:

- **Establishment and Funding:** The project was initiated in the 1970s under the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and later managed by the CIA and other agencies.
- **Research Methods:** Psychics, or "remote viewers," were tasked with attempting to describe locations, objects, or events from a distance, often with limited information.
- **Successes and Limitations:** While some anecdotal reports suggested success, scientific evaluations concluded that the results lacked consistency and replicability, leading to the project's eventual termination in the 1990s.

Revelations and Declassified Documents

Declassified documents revealed that the U.S. government invested millions of dollars into exploring the potential of psychic espionage, with mixed results. The program's termination was partly due to skepticism about its efficacy and the high costs involved.

The 'Goats' and Animal Influence Experiments

Beyond remote viewing, some reports and anecdotal accounts suggest that military researchers experimented with influencing animals—specifically goats and other livestock—to gauge the extent of mental influence capabilities.

- Why Goats? Goats are often used in experiments because of their trainability and sensitivity to environmental stimuli.
- Experimental Goals: To determine whether mental focus could cause physical effects, such as affecting an animal's behavior, causing illness, or influencing movements.
- Methods: While concrete scientific details remain sparse, some accounts describe the use of focused concentration, meditation, or psychic techniques aimed at animals.

Controversies and Skepticism

Many critics argue that these experiments lacked scientific rigor and were driven more by Cold War paranoia than empirical evidence. Skeptics point out that anecdotal stories often lack controlled conditions, and that the effects reported are attributable to placebo or coincidence.

The Mythology and Cultural Impact

Popularization through Media and Literature

The phrase "the men who stare goats" entered popular culture largely through Jon Ronson's book, which was later adapted into a film starring George Clooney and Ewan McGregor. The story captivated audiences by blending genuine declassified documents with conspiracy theories, creating a mythos around psychic soldiers and secret government projects.

Key themes in the cultural portrayal include:

- Super Soldiers: Soldiers with psychic powers trained for covert missions.
- Mind Control: Using mental techniques to influence enemies or animals.
- Government Cover-Ups: Allegations that the military has suppressed or hidden the true extent of their psychic programs.

Public Skepticism and Conspiracy Theories

While some declassified documents confirm the existence of experiments exploring psychic phenomena, many details remain classified or speculative. The line between fact and fiction has blurred, leading to a proliferation of conspiracy theories suggesting that the government continues to develop psychic weapons and mind-control technologies.

Common themes include:

- Mind-Control Weapons: The idea that psychic technology could be weaponized.
- Animal Manipulation: Reports of animals being used for covert influence missions.
- Super Soldiers: The notion of humans trained to perform supernatural feats in military operations.

Scientific Perspectives and Criticisms

The Scientific Consensus

Mainstream science remains skeptical of claims that psychic phenomena are real or scientifically verifiable. The primary criticisms include:

- Lack of Replicability: Experiments often fail to produce consistent results under controlled conditions.
- Methodological Flaws: Many studies suffer from small sample sizes, bias, or lack of proper controls.
- Alternative Explanations: Effects attributed to psychic influence can often be explained by psychological factors, coincidence, or environmental variables.

The Role of Cognitive and Psychological Factors

Psychologists emphasize the importance of understanding human perception, suggestion, and expectation in experiments related to psychic phenomena. Techniques such as the placebo effect, confirmation bias, and the power of focused attention can produce seemingly extraordinary results without invoking supernatural abilities.

The Legacy and Modern Relevance

Lessons from the Past

The story of "the men who stare goats" serves as a cautionary tale about the allure of supernatural solutions to complex problems and the dangers of secretive military experiments driven by paranoia or ideological fears.

Key lessons include:

- The importance of scientific rigor and transparency.
- The risks of investing heavily in unproven technologies.
- The need to differentiate between credible research and sensationalism.

Contemporary Research and Public Interest

While official programs like Stargate have been shut down, public curiosity about psychic phenomena persists. Modern interest is fueled by:

- Debates on government transparency.
- The rise of alternative medicine and spiritual practices.
- Speculative discussions on potential future technologies like brain-computer interfaces.

Some researchers continue to explore the fringes of consciousness and perception, often emphasizing the importance of rigorous scientific validation.

Conclusion: Fact, Fiction, and the Human Fascination with the Unknown

The men who stare goats represent a fascinating intersection of military ambition, scientific curiosity, and human fascination with the supernatural. While much of the original experimentation remains shrouded in secrecy and skepticism, the stories continue to captivate imaginations worldwide. Whether viewed as misguided Cold War experiments, genuine attempts at harnessing extraordinary human abilities, or simply compelling stories fueled by paranoia and curiosity, these endeavors highlight our ongoing desire to explore the limits of human perception and influence.

As science advances and transparency improves, the mysteries surrounding psychic phenomena may gradually be unraveled or dismissed. Until then, the legend of the men who stare goats endures as a testament to both human ingenuity and the enduring allure of the unknown.

[The Men Who Stare Goats](#)

the men who stare goats: [The Men Who Stare At Goats](#) Jon Ronson, 2009-05-21
'Simultaneously frightening and hilarious' - The Times The Men Who Stare at Goats reveals the extraordinary - and completely nutty - national secrets at the core of Bush's government. Often funny, sometimes chilling and with first-hand access to the leading players, Jon Ronson's Sunday Times bestseller is a story so unbelievable it has to be true. In 1979, a secret unit was established by the most gifted minds within the US Army. Defying all known accepted military practice - and indeed, the laws of physics - they believed that a soldier could adopt a cloak of invisibility, pass cleanly through walls and, perhaps most chillingly, kill goats just by staring at them. Entrusted with defending America from all known adversaries, they were the First Earth Battalion. And they really weren't joking. What's more, in the early 2000s, they're back and fighting George W. Bush's War on Terror. But why are they blasting Iraqi prisoners-of-war with the theme tune to the Barney the Purple Dinosaur show? Why have one hundred de-bleated goats been secretly placed inside the Special Forces command centre at Fort Bragg, North Carolina? And how was the US military associated with the mysterious mass-suicide of a strange cult from San Diego? Now a feature film starring George Clooney and Ewan McGregor. Part of the Picador Collection, a series celebrating fifty years of Picador books and showcasing the best of modern literature.

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to pop culture to profiles of domestic breeds, *Extraordinary Goats* explores the many facets of the goat.

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the men who stare goats: *George Clooney* Kimberly Potts, 2011-09-01 (Applause Books). He's famous for twice being *People* magazine's Sexiest Man Alive, for his penchant for practical jokes and his vow never to remarry, as well as for his Oscar-winning and Emmy-nominated acting career. But George Clooney's reputation as a celebrity belies his essential seriousness, as a businessman, a humanitarian, and, of course, in his ascendancy to the Hollywood A-list. In this updated biography of one of Hollywood's most colorful leading men, pop culture expert Kimberly Potts traces Clooney's life from small-town boy to big-screen idol. Clooney slowly and deliberately built a resume that took him from TV stardom on *ER* to a winning film career as a serious actor, writer, producer and director. Along the way Potts fills us in on Clooney's early attempts to break into film (including his *Batman* flop), his many well-publicized romances, and his political and humanitarian efforts, including cofounding the antigenocide organization Not On Our Watch. Potts also discusses Clooney's shrewd strategy of alternating blockbuster movie roles with less lucrative passion projects such as *Syriana* and *Good Night, and Good Luck* that reflect his personal ethics. He won an Academy Award for the former and rave reviews for the latter, and has continued to earn accolades and Oscar nominations for smart dramas such as *Michael Clayton* and *Up in the Air*. Including fresh interviews, essential Clooney photographs, an updated filmography and timeline, and a list of his favorite 100 films, this is the book no Clooney fan will want to be without.

the men who stare goats: *Lost at Sea* Jon Ronson, 2012-10-30 The New York Times-bestselling author of *The Psychopath Test*, Jon Ronson writes about the dark, uncanny sides

of humanity with clarity and humor. *Lost at Sea* reveals how deep our collective craziness lies, even in the most mundane circumstances. Ronson investigates the strange things we're willing to believe in, from lifelike robots programmed with our loved ones' personalities to indigo children to hypersuccessful spiritual healers to the Insane Clown Posse's juggalo fans. He looks at ordinary lives that take on extraordinary perspectives, for instance a pop singer whose life's greatest passion is the coming alien invasion, and the scientist designated to greet those aliens when they arrive. Ronson throws himself into the stories—in a tour de force piece, he splits himself into multiple Ronsons (Happy, Paul, and Titch, among others) to get to the bottom of credit card companies' predatory tactics and the murky, fabulously wealthy companies behind those tactics. Amateur nuclear physicists, assisted-suicide practitioners, the town of North Pole, Alaska's Christmas-induced high school mass-murder plot: Ronson explores all these tales with a sense of higher purpose and universality, and suddenly, mid-read, they are stories not about the fringe of society or about people far removed from our own experience, but about all of us. Incisive and hilarious, poignant and maddening, revealing and disturbing—Ronson writes about our modern world, the foibles of contemporary culture, and the chaos that lies at the edge of our daily lives.

the men who stare goats: Invoking the Beyond: Paul D. Collins, Phillip D. Collins, 2020-11-22 The Gnostic revival of the Enlightenment witnessed the erection of what could be called the "Kantian Rift," an epistemological barrier between external reality and the mind of the percipient. Arbitrarily proclaimed by German philosopher Immanuel Kant, this barrier rendered the world as a terra incognita. Suddenly, the world "out there" was deemed imperceptible and unknowable. In addition to the outer world, the cherished metaphysical certainties of antiquity—the soul, a transcendent order, and God—swiftly evaporated. The way was paved for a new set of modern mythmakers who would populate the world "out there" with their own surrogates for the Divine. Collectively, these surrogates could be referred to as the Beyond because they epistemologically and ontologically overwhelm humanity. In recent years, the Beyond has been invoked by theoreticians, literary figures, intelligence circles, and deep state operatives who share some variant of a technocratic vision for the world. In turn, these mythmakers have either directly or indirectly served elitist interests that have been working toward the establishment of a global government and the creation of a New Man. Their hegemony has been legitimized through the invocation of a wrathful earth goddess, a technological Singularity, a superweapon, and extraterrestrial "gods." All of these are merely masks for the same counterfeit divinity... the Beyond.

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powerful new religions to emerge in the past century. To its detractors, L. Ron Hubbard's space-age mysticism is a moneymaking scam and sinister brainwashing cult. But to its adherents, it is humanity's brightest hope. Few religious movements have been subject to public scrutiny like Scientology, yet much of what is written about the church is sensationalist and inaccurate. Here for the first time is the story of Scientology's protracted and turbulent journey to recognition as a religion in the postwar American landscape. Hugh Urban tells the real story of Scientology from its cold war-era beginnings in the 1950s to its prominence today as the religion of Hollywood's celebrity elite. Urban paints a vivid portrait of Hubbard, the enigmatic founder who once commanded his own private fleet and an intelligence apparatus rivaling that of the U.S. government. One FBI agent described him as a mental case, but to his followers he is the man who solved the riddle of the human mind. Urban details Scientology's decades-long war with the IRS, which ended with the church winning tax-exempt status as a religion; the rancorous cult wars of the 1970s and 1980s; as well as the latest challenges confronting Scientology, from attacks by the Internet group Anonymous to the church's efforts to suppress the online dissemination of its esoteric teachings. The Church of Scientology demonstrates how Scientology has reflected the broader anxieties and obsessions of postwar America, and raises profound questions about how religion is defined and who gets to define it.

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as Spiritualism took the world by storm. People sought other realms of existence through mediums, séances, and other parapsychological means. While many of popular figures in the Spiritualist world were proven to be frauds, their practices have left their mark in entertainment, in popular culture, and on true believers. This comprehensive title dives into the spirit world to separate fact from fiction and get to the bottom of ESP and other forms of parapsychology.

the men who stare goats: *The Universal Adversary* Mark Neocleous, 2016-02-12 The history of bourgeois modernity is a history of the Enemy. This book is a radical exploration of an Enemy that has recently emerged from within security documents released by the US security state: the Universal Adversary. The Universal Adversary is now central to emergency planning in general and, more specifically, to security preparations for future attacks. But an attack from who, or what? This book – the first to appear on the topic – shows how the concept of the Universal Adversary draws on several key figures in the history of ideas, said to pose a threat to state power and capital accumulation. Within the Universal Adversary there lies the problem not just of the ‘terrorist’ but, more generally, of the ‘subversive’, and what the emergency planning documents refer to as the ‘disgruntled worker’. This reference reveals the conjoined power of the contemporary mobilisation of security and the defence of capital. But it also reveals much more. Taking the figure of the disgruntled worker as its starting point, the book introduces some of this worker’s close cousins – figures often regarded not simply as a threat to security and capital but as nothing less than the Enemy of all Mankind: the Zombie, the Devil and the Pirate. In situating these figures of enmity within debates about security and capital, the book engages an extraordinary variety of issues that now comprise a contemporary politics of security. From crowd control to contagion, from the witch-hunt to the apocalypse, from pigs to intellectual property, this book provides a compelling analysis of the ways in which security and capital are organized against nothing less than the ‘Enemies of all Mankind’.

the men who stare goats: *The Routledge Companion to Adaptation* Dennis Cutchins, Katja Krebs, Eckart Voigts, 2018-04-17 The Routledge Companion to Adaptation offers a broad range of scholarship from this growing, interdisciplinary field. With a basis in source-oriented studies, such as novel-to-stage and stage-to-film adaptations, this volume also seeks to highlight the new and innovative aspects of adaptation studies, ranging from theatre and dance to radio, television and new media. It is divided into five sections: Mapping, which presents a variety of perspectives on the scope and development of adaptation studies; Historiography, which investigates the ways in which adaptation engages with – and disrupts – history; Identity, which considers texts and practices in adaptation as sites of multiple and fluid identity formations; Reception, which examines the role played by an audience, considering the unpredictable relationships between adaptations and those who experience them; Technology, which focuses on the effects of ongoing technological advances and shifts on specific adaptations, and on the wider field of adaptation. An emphasis on adaptation-as-practice establishes methods of investigation that move beyond a purely comparative case study model. The Routledge Companion to Adaptation celebrates the complexity and diversity of adaptation studies, mapping the field across genres and disciplines.

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