

# THETA

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**FRONT COVER:**

The Theta design by William G. Roll represents the first letter of thanatos (death) and theos (God), extinction and immortality. The symbol also reflects the yin yang, passive-active, and ESP-PK aspects of human nature.

Established in 1960, the Psychical Research Foundation is dedicated to the exploration of the possible continuation after death of personality and consciousness. PRF research and educational activities include studies of expanded states of consciousness, out-of-body experiences, mediumship, meditation, near death experiences, and poltergeist and haunting disturbances.

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# Psi and the Phenomenology of the Long Body

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**Christopher M. Aanstoos, Ph.D.**

*Chris Aanstoos received his doctorate from Duquesne University of the Holy Ghost. Currently he is Associate Professor of Psychology and a member of the graduate faculty at West Georgia College. He has edited two books, Exploring the Lived World and The World of the Infant and is the editor of the journal The Humanistic Psychologist.*

The title for this paper is inspired by a term once used by the Iroquois Indians: the notion of the "long body." For the Iroquois, the body extended beyond the skin. Indeed, it extended specifically to the other members of the tribe. They did not mean a merely symbolic contact with each other. Rather, they actually experienced each other in and through their own bodies (Lyons, 1976).

Obviously the Iroquois were not Cartesians! Not constrained by Descartes' dualistic conception of a subjective mind and an objective body, they were more openly present to the preobjective experience of their bodies as body-subjects. It will be my position that this preconceptual sense of the body, as it is lived, provides us with a more adequate basis with which to understand psi phenomena.

I'll develop that thesis as an extension of a more foundational comprehension of psi phenomena which has been explicated by Mike Arons (1985) and Bill Roll (1986), my two most trusted guides in the land of the paranormal. At last year's SERPA meeting, Mike emphasized that "psi is a dimension of the particular quality of a relationship." And, in his introductory remarks to open this conference, Bill also reminded us to consider psi as relationship. I would now like to follow up on that basic insight by proposing that it is the body, as it is lived preobjectively, that constitutes the primordial medium for this relationship.

The Iroquois, of course, are not the only non-Western people to grasp this experience of the preobjective, or lived, body. You may recall Castenada's (1968, 1974) anthropology of the Yaqui Indians of Mexico. He cited their descriptions of their bodies as including "luminous fibers" that extended toward whatever they were involved with. And then there are reports of South Sea islanders' experience of the other's pain is an exemplary case. For her husband beside her experiences such intense abdominal pain that he literally writhes on the ground. I can relate to those reports from my own experience of my wife's pregnancy. When Becca was pregnant, she felt extra tired, and had to take daily naps. I also felt much more fatigued than usual during those months, and also felt the need to nap.

In empathy with a loved other, the body extends itself, commingling itself with the other's orientation. The experience of the other's pain is an exemplary case. For instance, when my daughter Megan falls down onto the sidewalk, my first reaction is to wince. This wince is an unmediated contraction to pain, to the pain that I

experience directly through my own body. Though it is Megan who lands on the cement sidewalk, we both are struck by the pain of that fall. I've received enough similar reports from other parents to confirm that my experience is not merely idiographic. But it goes deeper even than that, in two ways. First, I've noticed that I've become similarly responsive to the hurts received by other small children in my presence. Through the empathic pathway opened from my relationship with my own daughter, my embodied connection with similar others has also been awakened, and deepened. Second, I've also noticed that, in the instant Megan is actually in the act of falling, I also experience a wave of dizziness, as I momentarily lose my own ground. By virtue of my situating myself with Megan, in her world, when her ground begins to turn upside down, I am also oriented to the world's sudden embodied upheaval. My point is that it is not in my mind that I am with Megan, it is through my body. I do not **imagine** her world turning upside down, I **feel** the turning bodily.

The essential structure of this experience remains the same across greater distances. I received a description from a colleague of her experience of awakening suddenly one night to the shock of feeling bodily assaulted. She found herself, instantly wide awake, gasping and contracting. At that same moment a dear friend of hers was being severely beaten several miles away. The proxemics of the lived body cannot be measured in feet and inches.

This lived bodily rapport with the other's orientation is especially vivid with those with whom we feel the closest — family and closest friends, for instance. With them we feel innumerable pricks and prods of many kinds. But it can also be discerned in more ordinary encounters as well. For example, several months ago I was standing in my friend Marc's kitchen, conversing with Marc and Phil. Phil was describing a recent event in his own life, which neither Marc nor I had witnessed. Phil described how he had opened up a long shut cast iron stove in his house, only to be surprised by a bat which suddenly flew out of it. As he told the story, we all three simultaneously recoiled involuntarily as the bat "emerged." But what did that recoil mean? For Phil, it might have been a memory of having actually recoiled before an actual bat that had actually surprised him. But Marc and I had not seen that bat. We were recoiling, along with Phil, in Marc's kitchen, not in Phil's house. Without thinking about what we were doing, we were also ducking to escape Phil's bat. But, in an objective sense, there was no bat in Marc's kitchen. No. We were bodily oriented to Phil's cast iron stove, there with him in his house as he opened the door

and the bat flew out. We had bodily occupied his position, we had taken up, indeed we were infected by the contagion of his orientation. Bodily, we were there with him, in his house, the night he found the bat in his stove. Objective time and space were no barrier.

Before elaborating the full significance of our capacity for such attunement with another person, I must first note that it is also lived between our body and things, in particular those things which have a special significance for us, with which we have a special relationship. Young children in particular demonstrate this connectiveness. For instance, Megan displays an unusual memory for the location where she last left her favorite objects. We can ask her where her "Nike shoes" are, days after she last wore them, and she'll immediately and confidently reply, as surely as if she were looking at them as she spoke. And she's right. Her manner is not that of a person trying to remember something no longer present, but rather of a person still in bodily contact with that being spoken about.

Children, of course, do so unself-consciously. The rest of us have been told for so long that such non-physical contact is impossible, that we only enact it at moments of such heightened involvement that we forget what we've been convinced to believe. For example, a golfer puts the ball toward a small hole twenty feet away. As the ball goes toward the right, away from the hole, the golfer leans her body to the left, to "pull" the ball more in that direction. This phenomenon (also prevalent in tennis, ping-pong, and many other sports) is so common it even has a name. It's known as putting "body English" on the ball (derived from the term to put "English" on the ball, which is to hit it so that it spins a certain way). Now of course from a Cartesian, dualistic, point of view such an action makes no sense at all. If the golfer is no longer in contact with the ball, then the bodily leaning is completely superfluous. My point though is that such apparently strict separateness between golfer and ball is not what is being lived at that moment by the golfer. She still experiences a trail of a connection between herself and the moving ball. I think this connection is fundamentally the same as that lived by athletes with their equipment. For example the truly talented baseball player, standing at the plate, preparing to hit the pitched ball, does not experience the bat in his hand as a separate object, but as an extension of his own body. He embodies the bat, so that it is **he** who hits the ball, he who bodily experiences the contact at the end of the bat where it meets the ball. In the same way, the skier embodies her skis, the fisher his lures, the tennis player her racket, the racer his car (LaFountain, 1984). The situation calls for us to take up a new bodily orientation, and we do so, as we grow into a habitual body through taking up the position that situation demands of us. Such a habitual body need not even involve highly skilled performance. For example, I received a description from someone who spent the summer dressed in a Bugs Bunny costume as her job at an amusement theme park. This costume included ears that extended another foot or so above her head, thereby necessitating her ducking to go through doorways. She discovered, to her surprise, that her

body came to extend itself so thoroughly in that costume that even when she was **not** wearing it, she still ducked when going through doorways.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) provides key examples of this corporeal schema. Specifically, he reflects upon the way that we live injuries to the body. In the case of a sudden loss of a limb, for instance, almost everyone will experience the phenomenon of a "phantom limb," that is, the continued presence of the arm that is **no** longer there. In contrast, after the loss of the **use** of a limb, many people eventually fail to recognize the very presence of the arm that **is** still there. These cases, of phantom limb and anosognosia, present us with strange mirror images of each other: the now absent arm still lived as present, the still present arm now lived as absent. Though strange to comprehend, they are really typical, from the realm of the everyday rather than the psychotic. Nor are injuries to body parts the only way to contact this phenomenon. Fundamentally, the way we embody any injury is revelatory. Hammond (1985), for example understands the lived meanings of asthma.

What can we learn from them about the phenomenology of the body—that is to say, the body as is lived, prior to any conceptualization or objectification of it? Merleau-Ponty's own conclusions were, first to note the fundamental distinction between the body as we live it and the body conceived as an object by mechanistic psychology. Second, he noted that the body, as lived, is the nexus of our involvements with our world. As such, its contours are most imprecisely defined by the skin of physiology. I may continue to live an involvement in a two armed world despite the loss of a limb. Or, over time, I may no longer live a two armed existence despite the continued presence of the dysfunctional arm. In each case what Merleau-Ponty is showing us is the primacy of the preobjective body, as a locus of meaning, as a project, an intentionality, a relationship—as our being-in-the-world. In other words, the body is already meaningfully engaged within our world of involvements. As such, this body is neither thing nor idea; neither nature nor consciousness; neither pure object nor pure subject. It cannot be reduced to either side of the Cartesian dualism. Rather, it is relational. It is through the fleshy incarnation of the body that we have intercourse with the world. It is through the perspectivity of the body that a world can take form for us. The body is our fundamental insertion into, openness onto, relationship with, our world (c.f., Levin, 1985; Shapiro, 1980; Tuedijo, 1985; Zaner, 1981).

This sense of the body as relationship helps clarify the structure of the preceding examples I'd sketched. Take, for instance, my feeling dizzy at the instant Megan was falling. It was through my embodied relationship that I was involved in her phenomenal field. My own wave of dizziness demonstrates that it was through my body that I was situated there.

This sense of the relational body situating the person can also be glimpsed in more mundane ways. For instance, consider the ordinary case in which you are seated in a train

stopped next to another, also motionless, train. When the other one starts to move you may be momentarily disoriented as to which is moving and which is stationary. How? If, at the time the other train begins moving, you are, say, reading a magazine, then you clearly sense that it is the other train that has begun moving while your own has remained stationary. However, if, at the moment the other train started forward, you were admiring an attractive woman in the other train, then you likely felt for a moment that it was your own train that had begun moving. The difference is your bodily orientation. With regards to relative rest and motion, we tend to take our own position as stationary. Thus, if we are in relationship with the train we are located on, the other one appears to move. But if we are in a relationship with the other one, then the one we are located on appears to move.

Perhaps you've not ridden enough trains to be familiar with this example. Consider the variation of being in a car, stopped behind a bus at a traffic light. The light changes, the bus driver begins to shift gears. If at that moment the bus begins rolling backward toward your car you would experience the bus moving if you had been involved within your car (say looking at the odometer). But, if you'd been reading an advertisement sign on the back of the bus, then, through your embodied relation, your orientation would be from the position of the bus, and you'd squeeze harder on your car's brakes, to stop the apparent forward roll of your car toward the bus. You may notice the essential structural similarity between this example and what is usually known as out of body experiences. In both cases, what we find is a discrepancy between the positional perspective of the person, and the location physically occupied by their body (Columbus, 1986). The key insight to be gleaned from this discrepancy is the realization that how we embody, or situate, ourselves need not correspond to the body's location as specified from an impersonal viewpoint. Rather, the impersonal viewpoint is simply an insufficient basis from which to grasp the body as it is lived within our world of involvements.

In summary, it is on the basis of the relations we are living through our bodily involvement in the world, that the world appears to us as it does. Or, as Merleau-Ponty (1961/1968) said, the body is our fundamental interrogation of the world, it serves prepersonally and preobjectively, as the anchor for our perceptual orientation. But it is not the body conceived as an object through which this relationship is lived. Rather it is the preobjective body of our intentions. This body does not merely occupy space, but carves out a primary spatiality of closeness and distance quite different than the Euclidean geometer's. As Brown (1966, pp. 156-157) describes this "postual body," it carves out "a magical field" in which there can be a "connection between the most distant things." Brown also sees in this sense of the body a potent foundation for comprehending the lived structure of ESP experiences. As he notes, "the question is not the existence of disembodied spirit, but the modalities of bodily action at a distance." For example, someone once described for me her experience of her grandmother's

death. She was studying at the time; her grandmother was in a hospital a thousand miles away. But suddenly she felt immediately present to her grandmother, after which she felt certain her grandmother had just died—which was exactly correct. The closeness and distance of our embodied relationships simply cannot be measured in feet and inches. They are matters of the embodied heart.

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# The Phenomenology of a Psi-Session

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**Doris Koob**

*Doris Koob, who received her MA at West Georgia College, was Research Assistant at the Psychical Research Foundation when this paper was written. She currently resides in West Germany.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This paper deviates from traditional format. Instead of featuring a sample of salient excerpts from sitting with a medium or sensitive, a dramatic, verbatim rendition of a nearly complete psi-session will be presented. The purpose of this approach is to convey a holistic view of psychical research, permitting observation of processes, techniques, and psychological dynamics usually lost in excerpted papers providing only a condensed overview.

Such full-bodied presentations permit the reader a richer, experiential grasp of the psi-session process, its dynamics, and mode of information exchange, than any abstract, theoretical rehash could provide.

In the process of our search for possible evidence of post-mortem survival, the Psychical Research Foundation has conducted participant-observation studies at mediumship development seminars taught at the Patricia Hayes School of Inner Sense Development in North Carolina. Among other parapsychologically interesting techniques, these training workshops feature psi-sessions, or "seances." PRF's Research Director William Roll and myself participated in several such sessions, which were audiotaped and later transcribed. The information and dynamics featured in these sessions were assessed. We stay in touch with the sitters for potentially interesting follow-up feedback.

Often it is very difficult to obtain a decent transcript due to the low-volume voice output and occasional voice changes during the altered state experience of the psi-session. Thus, only excerpts may be of scientific use, but in the process of extracting these segments, the Gestalt dynamics of the session as a whole are usually lost. However, there are some rare and fortunate exceptions. The psi-session presented here was of remarkably fine sound quality and flowed so extraordinarily well that it may be presented almost in its entirety. Only a few unintelligible segments, repetitions, and overelaborations have been omitted.

Following the transcript, a data summary and breakdown, as well as an assessment of the structure and psychological dynamics of the session will be furnished in the discussion section.

This psi-session was held on June 23, 1984, at Spring Lake. It was facilitated by Kelly Powers, an instructor in applied psi, and a medium of national reknown. The purpose of the session was to contact the discarnate entity of Desmond Smith, husband of sitter Audrey Smith. There

was a total of eight participants: Kelly Powers, Audrey, Jack, Bill Roll, Jivan, Clair, Margaret, and Marian. With the exception of Audrey, none of the participants had any prior knowledge of the life and personality of Desmond Smith.

Now, imagine yourself inside a cozy log cabin, comfortably seated in a dimly lit room. You are sitting in a small circle of friends, and you can feel the atmosphere of open-minded expectation and good will. You tune in to the words of group leader Kelly Powers, as he inducts you into this experience:

## **PSI-SESSION**

*KELLY:* So, now we are going to go ahead and begin. What I would like for everyone to do is to take hands, and I just want you to get yourselves in a physically comfortable position, and Audrey, what I want to have you do, is think about a very meaningful, joyful time between yourself and your husband, and think about that, while I talk to the rest of the group. Okay?

*AUDREY:* Okay.

*KELLY:* All right, everybody, what I would like for you to do is just relax and close your eyes. Now I want you to take all the scattered thoughts, all the tiredness of the day, all the lack of focus and concentration, and I want you to ball that up, like it was a gray wisp. Just pull all that out of your aura, and when you exhale, just send it right out the door. Do that a couple of times, until you feel the conscious mind turning away . . . And I want us all to take a nice, deep breath, and I want you to send out energy, as you continue to breathe slowly and deeply down your right arm and into the person on your right, so that you feel a real bond forming between you and that person on your right. Just merge your energy with them. And then, I want you to follow your energy all the way round the circle, until you feel the energy flowing through each and every person here . . . And breathe that energy in from your left. Send that energy all the way around the circle, until you can feel all peoples' energies in the circle focuses, balanced, and harmonized. When the energy feels balanced and positive to you all the way around the circle, I want you just to say "okay."

*GROUP:* Okay, Okay, Okay

*KELLY:* All right, Audrey, do you have that meaningful time in your mind?

*AUDREY:* Uhum.

*KELLY:* Okay, I would like for you to send your love energy to Audrey. Feel your love going to her. Feel her



surrounded in light and love. And I want us all to take in a nice, deep breath, and feel ourselves lifting lighter and freer, and freer and lighter. Feel yourselves slowly moving up into the mind. One more time. Take in a nice, deep breath, and lift ourselves higher and higher, clearer and clearer. Now, Audrey, I would like for you to say your husband's name out loud, slowly for us, three times.

AUDREY: Desmond Smith, Desmond Smith, Desmond Smith.

KELLY: Let's all begin to repeat the name of Desmond Smith in our mind. Send your love energy to him. Feel our love reaching out to him. Desmond Smith.—Just feel that energy, and just mentally ask him to draw close to our circle. And from this point on, anything that you see, or hear, or feel, I want you to describe. And Audrey will respond with either a "yes" or "no," or an "I don't know." Be sure to speak out loudly enough for us to record it. Desmond Smith, please draw close to us. We wish to share with you.—Desmond Smith, we are love. Come into our circle.—You can let go of hands at this point in time, and put them palms up in your lap. Desmond Smith, send out your love to him. Draw closer.—Audrey, was he a real thinker?

AUDREY: Oh yes.

KELLY: Had a very quick mind?

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: And also moved physically in a way that reflected that kind of quick, or somewhat abrupt movement, when he would get going and walking around?

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: Did he like mountain and sunsets?

AUDREY: Yes, he loved sunsets.

KELLY: Just "yes," or "no," or "I don't know." Just send your love to Desmond. We feel you. Draw closer. You are doing great. Just feel the energy.

MARGARET: I see him in a wooded area. Would he have liked that?

AUDREY: Yes.

MARIAN: Was he more heavy in the middle; a little bit top heavy?

JIVAN: Did he have auburn hair as a young man? Reddish auburn?

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: Just send that love energy out there.

MARGARET: Did he wear glasses?

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: Did he have a favorite old blue car?

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: He was a bit shy upon first entering a situation, but could warm up very quickly to the people he had an affinity with.

AUDREY: Yes.

MARIAN: Did he wear a big brimmed hat like the Canadian Mounties?

AUDREY: Yes. (at this point Audrey is getting very emotional)

KELLY: He says that he used to have a funny story or joke to tell about your smile. He used to make comments to you that were lighter, or humorous nature about your smile.

AUDREY: I can't think of it.

KELLY: Okay. Just "I don't know." Desmond, we feel you. You are doing great. Everybody send your love to him.

BILL: Was he a fisherman?

AUDREY: Yes.

BILL: I see troutfishing with flies.

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: He liked music a lot.

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: Sort of up-beat music. Not really a jig, but you know, real happy music.

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: Did he have a favorite jacket? It looks to me like a tweed jacket?

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: He'd wear it everywhere if he had the opportunity to do that.

#### UNINTELLIGABLE REMARKS

KELLY: A great deal of his work captured his interest. I feel related to this ability to communicate with people, and to share. Even though he did a lot of thinking on his own, and was independent in that sense, he loved a good conversation. Loved to be sitting down and discussing, having dialogues, and sharing with people.

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: Did he have a twinkle in his eye?

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: This was one of the first things you fell in love with about him the way he could make you laugh?

AUDREY: Yes.

MARGARET: I see a lot of books. Was he a reader?

AUDREY: Yes.

MARIAN: Was there a country store near your place where he used to go just to talk and hang out?

AUDREY: Yes.

MARIAN: Neighbors used to gather, so to speak.

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: Did he have a period in his life, before his transition, that was related to work, in which he had to do a lot of travelling?

Perhaps at one point in the midst of all that, had to travel to Europe? . . . I pick up a lot of travel around him, related to work.

AUDREY: Oh yes.

JACK: I pick up travelling down the back roads a lot. Country roads.

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: He is laughing about his sense of direction.

AUDREY: Yes. (laughs)

JACK: Did he have a mobile home?

AUDREY: Yes.

JIVAN: I see a house being built. Was there a house that you built together?

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: Very punctual about time. Time was important to him. Maybe, a nervous habit was to look at the watch, when he could not think of other things to do?

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: Stamps mean anything to him?

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: Did he know whether any of them are worthwhile, or of value?

AUDREY: I don't know.

KELLY: He says that there was an interesting relationship between yourself and his mother. That there was a bond there. And I am picking this up from quite a while back in the past. But it should be something very significant or unusual that stands out in your mind about your relationship to his mother. Either that she was there a great deal, or there is something about your relationship to his mother, not your mother.

AUDREY: Yes.

BILL: Is a heart of some significance? Candy box shaped like a heart? Or pillow shaped like a heart? Something with a heart between the two of you, that he gave you?

AUDREY: No.

JACK: Have you been looking for something that he might have left behind? Important paper, or something that could be of value?

AUDREY: Unintelligible response.

KELLY: Was there a question about a piece of paper? After his death? Something legal, or something associated with paper?

AUDREY: Yes.

BILL: Was he feeling meticulous about legal things, about his papers and things like that?

AUDREY: Very.

KELLY: He was not one to talk about his health, even at times when he was not feeling well. He'd keep that kind of thing rather quiet, did not like to admit health problems.

JIVAN: Was he taking college classes, part-time classes?

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: Did he have a dark green filing cabinet? Not metal maybe metal, but real dark green. Did he have one that you know of?

AUDREY: No.

KELLY: Desmond Smith—let's all take a nice, deep breath. You're doing great!  
He says that at times, he was such a loud thinker, that you could tell when things were going on.

AUDREY: Yes. (laughs)

KELLY: He was always a little bit amazed by that. Even though it was very obvious to you.

AUDREY: True.

KELLY: Now, by the way, he can do that with you.—Do you have a son?

AUDREY: No.

KELLY: Does the name Robert mean something to you right now?

AUDREY: No.

JACK: Does the name Alex mean something to you?

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: Is he an attorney?

AUDREY: No.

JACK: A businessman?

AUDREY: Yes.

JACK: Ever have dealings with him?

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: I keep seeing the face of a very young man. Medium-to-dark-colored hair. He is probably in his early twenties. And he seems to be related to you. So, if he is not a son, he may be a nephew. There is a young man that he would be concerned about, have on his mind, be interested in.

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: He is saying that there are some important decisions that this young man will be making in the next 6 months or so, and some have just recently been made, and that he feels very bright about his future. There are good things ahead for him. You should be supportive of him in what he is doing.

BILL: There is an ornament on the mantelpiece on the fireplace? Shaped somewhat like a bird with wings. A stuffed bird, perhaps, or something in the shape of a bird?

AUDREY: Yes.

KELLY: (Whispering) Desmond . . . Desmond . . . He says that your future is very bright. Things are well planned out. And he is impressed to see how well you do on your own. And wonders why you ever really needed him. He says that you are capable of standing on your own two feet



quite well, and he feels no great concern about that for you.

*BILL:* Is there something about a bird he shot? That there was some sort of conflict about?

*AUDREY:* Oh yes!

*BILL:* It may have been a bird that he shot, and did not feel happy about having shot.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*MARGARET:* I see an owl.

*JIVAN:* I see a hawk, something about a close relationship.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*KELLY:* He says, at times, you hold yourself back from involvement with some family members, or side of the family, and he is a bit concerned about that. He feels you could receive some additional support from them, emotionally and otherwise. It's as if you feel somewhat reticent about extending yourself to them. And he would like to encourage you to see that the times have changed.

*JACK:* Did he enjoy train travel when he was young?

*AUDREY:* I don't know.

*BILL:* Is there something about a dock or a boat: A dock that goes into a lake, and a loose plank, or something?

*AUDREY:* Don't know.

*BILL:* Something peculiar about the dock?

*KELLY:* Perhaps the boards were not even?

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*BILL:* Did he make something out of wood? Did he connect it to the house?

*AUDREY:* Oh yes.

*BILL:* The image of the dock was rather like that. Something he made.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*BILL:* Rather unusual or something?

*KELLY:* (Whispers) Desmond Smith, Desmond Smith, you are doing wonderfully. Please communicate with us slowly and clearly.—He is really fascinated by this. He finds it to be very interesting. And he is observing us, and this is a word I would use: KEENLY. Observing it keenly; and finds the whole thing all right. This is all right by him, and he wants you to know that. So you have his permission to be involved.

*AUDREY:* Thank you.

*MARGARET:* Did he cut his own wood?

*AUDREY:* No.

*MARGARET:* Did he have trouble with his wrist?

*AUDREY:* No, his wrists were very strong.

*KELLY:* He wants to know in a rather humorous sort of way if you are still happy that you made the choice that you made, to be with him?

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*KELLY:* Something he seemed to have kidded you about from time to time.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*KELLY:* Good sense of humor.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*JACK:* Did you ever take a special trip with him, maybe early in your life, to the western part of Canada?

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*JACK:* Was it near a lake?

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*JACK:* A big lake?

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*JACK:* He suggested you ought to go back there some time.

*AUDREY:* Okay.

*KELLY:* He says, at times you worry, and don't tell anybody that you're worried, and therefore, no one can help you. And it frustrates him because he wants to help. And he says that the way he can always tell when you're worried, is that you look off into the distance, and kind of let your eyes go out of focus, and think, perhaps over a cup of coffee, or something. And he wants you to know that he wants for you to always have someone to turn to when you have questions, and concerns, and fears, and he encourages you to seek those individuals out whom you trust, and allow them to support you, and help you, during times when you have concerns, or worries, or fears.

*AUDREY:* Okay.

*KELLY:* Difficult though that may be for you at times.—Desmond Smith (whisper). Send your love energy out to him. Keep that vibration light.—Is your mother also in spirit?

*AUDREY:* No.

*KELLY:* Is his mother in spirit?

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*KELLY:* All right, because they evidently got a good relationship now, and he wants you to know that.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*JACK:* I keep seeing this office with a big wooden desk piled with paper.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*JACK:* Maybe a drafting board nearby, and he is standing there, and he is saying "double check!" As clear as can be. He is concerned about you having everything that he wanted you to have.

*KELLY:* Did he at one time work for the Government?

*AUDREY:* I don't think so.

*BILL:* Are you thinking of moving?

*AUDREY:* No.

*KELLY:* I am seeing a lot of very beautiful flowers, almost like roses right now. And he says that should bring you a good feeling.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*MARIAN:* I keep seeing this yellow field of grain. Its sort of golden like wheat, and the sky almost reflects the same color. Does that mean anything to you?

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*KELLY:* He has a lot of love for you. A tremendous amount of love. He really cares and wants you to know that.

*AUDREY:* Okay.

*KELLY:* Are there any questions that you would like to ask him, or statements that you would like to make to him?

*AUDREY:* Is there anything I can do to help his sister?

*MARGARET:* Spend more time with her.

*JIVAN:* Is there a physical problem?

*JACK:* I see a bank in some large city. And you are discussing something with a man of importance in the office. It is possible that she has had financial problems, that she can't keep her books straight or something that has to do with banking? You might assist her, help her with the money, and a better type of savings account, or something.

*KELLY:* Audrey, do you have a feeling for that?

*AUDREY:* Her husband died.

*KELLY:* Ah, there we go. Thank you. Okay, Go ahead Jack.

*JACK:* Finances is the area where you can help her.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*KELLY:* Yes.

*BILL:* Is she thinking about moving to a new location?

*AUDREY:* I don't know.

*KELLY:* You have to extend yourself with her to help. And that will be a choice you'll have to make. He was respectful of the idea.

AT THIS POINT THE TAPE RAN OUT, AND A CONSIDERABLE SEGMENT WAS LOST UNTIL THE TAPE WAS FLIPPED.

*KELLY:* Greater activity! He would like to see you really pick up and get going. And that's just how he would say it. He would like to see you moving about, and having things to do, and places to go, and not that what you've done is not important or significant, but that for too long now you have maintained that low profile that you adopted after his death. And he says "Enough of that is enough!" Time to get going. And he is pleased to see you here, if for no other reason that its a good outing, and it gets you up and about, and you have things going on, and you said to him in your mind, at one point in time, in the last couple of days, "Oh Gosh, if you could just see what I am up to, and see where I am, what would you think of this?" And he heard you when you said that, because he was rather close by. And he wants you to know that, and he is just

giggling about that, and he says, "Its good to see you out and about!"

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*BILL:* I wonder whether these persistent images of a mobile home are sort of symbolic of that? You can move, and you're still home, and you're still with him.

*AUDREY:* Hm, yes.

*KELLY:* Yes, you can be a bit reluctant to go out, and open up into new area.

*JACK:* He says he would like you to do more of the talking sometimes. He'd really appreciate that.

*KELLY:* The heart was on a Valentine's Day card. Something to do with a very romantic, sentimental side of your relationship and one that should mean a great deal to you right now.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*KELLY:* Not only did he love you deeply, he greatly respected you as a human being. His admiration for you as an individual was great, very, very great. And that card symbolized all that deep love and that good feeling. All the talk set aside, he could move into a very feeling place. And be very, very gentle and tender. And he says he appreciates you putting up with all the talk. He is very happy.—Do you have any other questions or statements you would like to make to him?

*AUDREY:* No, just that I do feel him a lot at times. And I write automatically. My mother thinks that's wild.

*KELLY:* He laughs at that. I guess he finds that humorous. Very humorous. He has got a great sense of humor. And he says she probably enjoys it. Oh, he has got a very warm personality.

*UNCLEAR SOURCE:* (unintelligable statement) pertaining to doctoring a dog.

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*KELLY:* He nods his head. He'd watch you so that, trying to offer instructions you don't have to give the dog some pills, do you?

*AUDREY:* Yes.

*KELLY:* Because he is guiding you by the elbow, trying to show you how to do that. Because he thinks you're worried about that just a bit. Don't worry, he says. All right, let's all join hands again. Let's send Desmond Smith all our love. Thank him for being here, sharing with us, and sharing with Audrey. Thank him for being so patient, and sharing so much information, because he was a private person. We appreciate his sharing. And let's see him surrounded in a beautiful light, with a beautiful, radiant smile on his face, and let's see him returning to the spiritual world much brighter, much more fulfilled, and on a much higher level than before our session began. Offering him healing and wisdom, and caring. Thank you, Desmond, for being here.—Let's also thank all those beings of light and love who have helped to make this session possible, who have assisted

us in experiencing once more the reality of the eternalness of our consciousness, and how we are always embarking on a new journey, a new venture. Let's just send our love out to the universe itself, for the wonderful miracle of eternal consciousness, and this opportunity to experience that directly. Thank you, God.—Let's surround our circle in light, see each of us happy and whole, and when you are ready, you may open your eyes.

### Results

Although most impressions were formulated in terms of tentative questions, the striking majority of positive responses would indicate more substance than mere "fishing" or guess work could provide. Bearing in mind that Audrey's numerous affirmations in response to offered information may be partially attributed to politeness and the special receptivity implicit in the social situation, and assuming that her particular need for confirmation of the continued existence of her husband's conscious identity may have temporarily impaired objective judgment, objective references to such topics as the "favorite old blue car," "Desmond's business trip to Europe," "the unfortunate shooting incident involving a bird," as well as "Desmond's favorite tweed jacket." and "his auburn hair," cannot easily be dismissed. It is also noteworthy that Audrey demonstrated a sense of discrimination in that she said "no" to 15 recorded statements, and expressed uncertainty to 32 cases, while refraining from judgment in still others. She also elaborated on identifiable statements in ways that suggest recollection of real events rather than imaginary ones.

In analyzing and categorizing our data we find that of a total of 95 recorded statements, including unintelligible remarks which were clearly responded to, 68 were affirmed, 11 remained unclarified, and 11 were negated. A total of 31 of 46 question statements received affirmative responses, and 37 of 44 direct statements scored hits. Information was broken down into four categories: 52 trivia statements, 26 descriptive and personality-related statements, as well as some 11 alleged messages and bits of advice from "Desmond." There were also 3 intimate, personal statements concerning the sitter.

Regarding individual scores, Kelly Powers made 39 recorded statements, scoring 23 positive, 3 undecided, and 3 negative. Eleven statements involving alleged messages from the "other side," remain unverified. Kelly focused mostly on personality traits and mannerisms, such as punctuality, a habit of nervous watch checking, as well as quick, keen thinking, and fast, abrupt movement. He also mentioned talkativeness, a great sense of humor, as well as a bad sense of direction—(indeed, Desmond would be kidded about that)—and a tendency to downplay personal health problems. In terms of trivia, Kelly zeroed in on Desmond's favorite tweed jacket; on frequent travel, including a business trip to Europe, and on a fine relationship with his mother-in-law. Canine care, and the fact that Audrey had to give pills to her dog, also came up.

Jack made 23 statements, scoring 16 positive, 2 negative, and 5 unverified. Jack picked up on mountains and sunsets, and on Desmond's favorite old, blue car, which turned out to have been a blue vintage Buick. Jack also pinpointed Desmond's fondness for happy, up-beat music, and mentioned the fact that Audrey initially fell in love with Desmond because of the way he made her laugh. Jack intuited a lot of backroad travel, ownership of a mobile home, and dealing with a businessman named Alex. Especially impressive, next to the "old, blue car," was Jack's impression about a particular trip to Western Canada, near a big lake. This turned out to have been Calvary, near Lake Louise. There was also Desmond's office with its big, wooden desk full of papers, and the counsel that Audrey could help Desmond's sister with her financial affairs.

Bill Roll made 12 statements, scoring 9 positive, 2 negative, and one unknown. Bill picked up on Desmond's troutfishing with flies, on his meticulousness about papers, and on a bird-shaped ornament on the mantelpiece. His most striking comment involved the unfortunate shooting of a bird, which stands confirmed as the accidental killing of a Blue Heron. Bill also intuited Desmond's having built their dock, and something peculiar about that dock, perhaps loose planks. Indeed, the boards on the dock were uneven, and Desmond had tripped on the dock and fallen into the lake one morning.

Jivan made 6 statements, scoring 4 positive, 2 unclarified. She described Desmond's auburn hair, mentioned his having taken part-time college courses, and got the impression of the couple having built a house together. There was also a confirmed unintelligible comment about a hawk.

Margaret made 7 statements, and scored 3 positive, 3 negative, and one unclarified. She said that Desmond liked wooded areas, wore glasses, and was a reader. She also advised Audrey to spend more time with his sister.

Marian made 4 statements, scoring 3 positive, and one unclarified. Marian described Desmond's big-rimmed hat, mentioned the country store where he would hang out to chat, and described a golden wheat field under a similarly colored sky: a scene which had meaning to Audrey.

Clairy made no statements.

### DISCUSSION

Considering that this was a first mediumistic group attempt to contact the alleged discarnate entity, this psi-session yielded information striking enough to be regarded as better than mere coincidence. Referring to Ian Stevenson's analogy of a psychological interview, which shares common elements, with a psi-session, it is rare that a psychologist succeeds in eliciting significant intimate data from a client in the first session, even though the psychologist has the benefit of interacting with a flesh and blood person in plain sight and earshot, which enables him or her to utilize vocal inflection and body language to facilitate a clearer understanding of his or her client. Seen in this perspective, it is remarkable that any significant data

are gathered at all during a session with a disembodied personality, be this a hypothetical entity or a genuine one. In this context it is also noteworthy that participants kept their eyes closed while the session was in progress. Considering the circumstances, it seems unlikely that mere chance could account for these results.

It is possible that Audrey's tone of voice might have provided some subtle cues, since the session was not videotaped it cannot be ruled out that any participant may on occasion have received visual cues as well. Considering Audrey's emotional as well as cognitive engagement in the psi-session process, she may have acted as a strong telepathic "sender" facilitating pickup from her own activated memory record on the part of the psi-sensitive participants. Indeed, it remains very difficult to distinguish psi gamma from genuine psi-theta, the only clue being verbalized reference to the discarnate entity as the subjective source of information.

### ***Psychological Dynamics and Techniques***

Kelly's induction served to relax the participants. It relieved performance anxiety, fostered a sense of communion and sharing, while counteracting jarring tendencies or competition. The induction also served to induce an altered state of consciousness. Kelly insured and directed the smooth flow of the session without dominating it unduly. Whenever there were unintelligible remarks, negative responses, or obvious fishing, Kelly would alleviate anxiety, embarrassment, or self-consciousness by redirecting attention to the flow of the ambient energy, and to the alleged presence of the incorporeal entity, "Desmond." he would encourage and praise "Desmond," rather than the assembled participants. Undoubtedly, this practice had the effect of reducing performance anxiety, fear of failure, and self-criticism. Thus, mental blocks were minimized and spontaneous information transfer and relay of psi gamma and theta impressions were maximized. Responsibility for the information transfer was shifted from individual participants to the entity of Desmond Smith, and the group was reminded of their joint supportive function in facilitating the encounter and information relay. Group members were not to be independent agents of communication, but passive-receptive channels of information, dominated by a greater transpersonal purpose. Kelly forestalled any awkward payeses by verbally reinforcing the psychic link between the alleged discarnate entity and the group. This would encourage continued suspension of disbelief, direct consciousness away from ego involvement and speculation, and bridge the gap between informative statements. Kelly would help in other ways too. He skillfully picked up and elaborated on simple or insufficient statements by other group members, and thus facilitated clearer communications and more positive results. For example, Jack made the following remark: "Have you been looking for something of value, an important paper?"; and got an indefinite reply. Whereupon Kelly elaborated "There was a question about a piece of paper after his death. Something legal associated with

paper." Kelly's interpretation which could have been taken as a reference to Desmond's will, was much more likely to score a hit, that Jack's open-ended statement. In another instance, Bill queried whether there was "something about a dock, a loose plank, perhaps?", and got an indefinite response. At this point Kelly chimed in with: "Perhaps the boards were not even?", and got affirmative feedback.

Kelly would also relieve tension and alleviate emotional strain by injecting humor at critical moments. For instance, when Margaret got two negative responses in a row, Kelly came to the rescue in reporting the following message: He wants you to know in a rather humorous sort of way, if you are still happy that you made the choice to be with him." This shift instantly lifted sagging spirits and dispelled emergent doubt and negativity. And when Audrey responded with intense, barely contained emotionality to the statement about Desmond's big-brimmed hat, Kelly swiftly lightened the mood by interjecting the alleged message that Desmond wanted to remind her of a funny story or joke he would tell about her smile. That he would make comments to her that were lighter, or humorous in nature, concerning her smile. Although the response was "I can't think of it," the strategy worked, restoring emotional balance, and insuring the continued smooth flow of the session. Throughout the session Kelly kept touching base with emotional issues, facilitating rapport, warmth and affective gratification in the face of analytically interesting trivia. A generous dose of helpful counsel was also part of the holistic character of this psi session.

Overall, suspension of disbelief, and a positive, accepting and expectant mind-set, coupled with a spirit of helpful cooperation, and a consciously cultivated attitude of love, appeared to be key factors in the success of the psi session. The authenticity and scientific value of the session and of the information transmitted therein was greatly facilitated by the fact that Kelly Bowers instructed Audrey to restrict her responses to incoming information to "yes," "no," or "don't know." This reduced the chance of logical inferences and undue probing and prompting by the participants. The request to speak up loudly was also made by the group leader. The presence of parapsychologist Bill Roll at this session appears to have enhanced, rather than inhibited the process, as Bill operated in the role of active participant, rather than as objectively detached observer. This may have encouraged rather than intimidated the sensitives' performances.

### **Conclusion**

When questioned later as to whether the psi session had convinced her of the presence of her deceased husband, Audrey emphatically affirmed this. The description, as well as the "ambient energy vibration" conveyed Desmond's presence to her. However, to the observer it remains unclear whether we are dealing with an actual interpersonal communication phenomenon across dimensions or with a manifestation of multiple psi faculties. The "ambient energy vibration" might as well be the result of the extraordinary bond of communion established in the

circle of the group, which may be generating a group-Gestalt or psi-field. This group psi-field may be experienced as sufficiently unusual to be interpreted as an otherworldly "presence." Indeed, the perceived energy field generated by the group as a unit differs greatly from the ordinary state of individualistic consciousness, especially in an induced altered state. Concurrently, the interpersonal bond embodied by this group psi-field would facilitate enhanced ESP and psi receptivity via a synergistic working together of multiple minds, so to speak. The emotional force required for the triggering of superior psi perception would be provided by the love and longing, and by the human need for reassurance experienced by the sitter, whose memory is intently and vividly locked into recollections of the loved one, thus recreating the deceased person in thought and imagination. This vivid and emotionally charged image or "thought-form" may be picked up by attuned group members, who in turn pick up psi impressions from each other's energy fields. It appears, that for the time being, "Occam's Razor" leaves us with William Roll's (1964) psi-field hypothesis and Gardner Murphy's (1945) "third clue to the paranormal."

Murphy's "Third Clue" lies in relations between persons, not in the persons as such," and points to laws essentially different than those which apply to individuals. In this context, Murphy refers to the functions of an interpersonal field which would amount to a transpersonal Gestalt phenomenon. This stands corroborated by Bill Roll's psi-field hypothesis, which elaborates on psychic contagion and information transfer between subliminal fields of memory traces surrounding animate or inanimate objects and persons. In these two hypotheses appear to lie the most plausible explanation of what transpires during a psi session.

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# Psi and Psychoanalysis

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**Robert J. Masek**

*Robert J. Masek, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Psychology at West Georgia College. He has published and lectured widely in the area of clinical psychology, particularly with regards to a phenomenology of psychoanalytic theory and practice.*

The specific problem that I want to address is the question: why did psychoanalysis not affirm and integrate an understanding of many so-called occult phenomena and allow them to find a home in psychoanalytic metapsychology, established theory, and practice? History shows us that at the time of Freud's great discoveries many pre-Freudian expressions of psychological life became both comprehensible and capable of being integrated into the evolving paradigm of psychoanalysis as both a method of treatment and as a psychology of everyday life (Ellenberger, 1970). This was, however, not the case in Freud's professional relationship to psi phenomena and to societies of psychic research, at large. For, repeatedly, when faced with the seductive challenge to address these phenomena, and include their significance into psychoanalysis, Freud stopped short. It is as if psychoanalysis is one thing and psychic phenomena are another, for the nature of their mixture is like oil and water. But this is not the only side of the problem. For alongside Freud's professional dissociation from psi was his intense personal attraction to it, and this included its status as another great riddle to be mastered by his great mind, a riddle that teased his interest to the very end.

In what follows, I want to highlight this ambivalence to psi by Freud and psychoanalysis, explore some reasons for how it came to be, and close by suggesting that the scientific side of this dilemma is essentially a philosophical problem in the very meaning of science, a problem that continues to persist to this day. Let me start at the beginning, by first situating the emergence of psychoanalysis in some features of its late nineteenth-century scientific-cultural context.

## **Psychological Life in the Late Eighteen-Hundreds**

Within the latter half of the nineteenth-century, an inauguration of interest in the psychological dimensions of our existence surfaced and became collectively visible in the social reality at large (Ellenberger, 1970; Van den Berg, 1974). I want to briefly examine three such places where this occurred: scientific psychology, applied psychology, and psychic research.

In scientific psychology, this period of time was to embrace the very beginnings of psychology as an experimental science and to cast the mold for its philosophical outlook (Giorgi, 1970). For example, by 1860, Fechner had already proposed a scientific basis for experimental psychology through the publication of his *Psychophysics*. Some nineteen years later, Wundt had established the first institute for experimental psychology

in Leipzig. The year 1890 marks the year that the great William James published his comprehensive *Principles of Psychology*, which not only set forth the essential problems for that young science, but also became a source of inspiration for investigations in philosophy, theology, literature, and the arts.

Alongside these and other major developments in scientific psychology, applied psychology had already taken root and was strongly established in what Ellenberger (1970) calls "The Great French School of Clinical Psychology." Here, such people as Ribot, Binet, Charcot, Liebeault, Bernheim, and Pierre Janet had already begun a clarification of the psychological through theoretical writings, systematic psychological assessment and early forms of exploratory psychotherapy (Masek, 1980). Pierre Janet, alone, had already introduced the terms "subconscious" and "Psychasthenia," was doing psychotherapy, and had already published his book *Psychological Automotisms* by the year 1889—some four years before that first vague *Preliminary Communication* was to appear by Breuer and Freud (1893). Janet had already systematized his work into a school of thought called "Psychological Analysis" some fourteen years prior to Freud's own use of the term "psychoanalysis" to describe his own approach. Prior to this period, psychiatry had been largely confined to a descriptive classification of mental disorders, and answered questions of genesis by recourse to physical explanations involving the body. The assumption here was that if the organism was disordered, it must be physical. Let us remember that no coherent, popularly shared paradigmatic conception of the psychological really existed in psychiatry until Freud's great investigations became institutionalized into professional and popular thought.

The late eighteen-hundreds also became noteworthy through the attention given to research on such paranormal phenomena as divided consciousness, telepathy, levitation, precognition, communication with spirits, palmistry, astrology, automatic writing, and other issues (Ellenberger, 1970; Hilgard, 1977; Jones, 1957). All this was already being investigated during what some historians have called the "Daniel Home Period" around 1860. By the 1870s, parapsychological research showed its beginnings in England. For example, formal work was being conducted at Cambridge University on such topics as clairvoyance, precognition, and communication with the dead. Much of this work was professionally recognized through the founding of the Society of Psychical Research



in 1882 by William Barrett (a physicist), Stanton Moses (a clergyman), Henry Sidwick (a philosopher), and Frederick Myers, a young classical scholar who played a very influential role in the first twenty years of the Society's growth and development. In contrast to these scientific projects, a whole subculture of mediums and sensitives had emerged, claiming personal, intuitive powers, and practicing those beliefs. Men of science, however, devoted to the systematic study of psi phenomena, sharply distinguished their own efforts from this subculture, and sought to criticize and isolate these practitioners. Jones (1957) points out that these overall developments took place in an intellectual climate marked by the death of speculative Romanticism and a near reactionary commitment to the newly emerging positivism—illustrated most vividly through the scientific methods of the great physicists of that time.

Against this backdrop, the first psychoanalytic paper appears in 1893, co-authored by Breuer and Freud. From that seedling publication, psychoanalysis is to grow into both a specific approach to treatment and a general psychology which touches upon so many strands in the fabric of our psychological lives. In addition, it provides a paradigm, an approach, so broad that it proves capable of assimilating many pre-Freudian expressions of a divided existence (Ellenberger, 1970; Roustang, 1983). But **not** so called psychic phenomena. Did the latter exist as an anomaly incapable of being assimilated into the paradigm of psychoanalysis? Yes, I believe this is so, but the picture extends beyond these scientific grounds, and includes personal, professional, and political bases for this rejection. Let us turn to explore these now.

### **Freud's Personal Relationship to Psi**

In his personal life, Freud had always shown an interest in telepathy and precognition. To distinguish this interest from the telepathy of the mediums, he called it "thought-transference." He was not interested in communion with the dead, but with wordless communication between the living as that occurred spontaneously in clinical work and in his everyday life occurrences. This problem still exists in an unclarified state within contemporary clinical psychoanalysis. For example, Otto Kernberg (1984) reports having this fantasy in one analytic session with a woman of borderline style: At one point he suddenly fantasized himself dressed up in a Nazi SS uniform, and went on to puzzle about its relationship to the woman he was working with. At that time, the woman abruptly exclaimed that she sometimes experienced him as a Nazi in their work together! This kind of wordless communication often happens between people who are very close, people like family, friends, and loved ones in our everyday life. Further, occurrences like this, when they appear in the psychoanalyst's experience are often utilized to gain a deeper knowledge of the patient, but these experiences are more often than not reduced to some variation of countertransference (Searles, 1979). All this, however, was the stuff that drew Freud's interest—both personal and professional.

Earnest Jones' (1957) intimate, extensive biography of Freud reveals that he was regularly superstitious throughout most of his life, and that the occult held a near illicit fascination for him. Freud was constantly puzzling over the significance of numbers, including the date and place of his own death. For example, a month after becoming engaged he accidentally broke the engagement ring given to him by his fiancée Martha Berneys. He immediately noted the time and date of the happening, and wrote her asking if she had grown less fond of him at that time. Later, during the time he took leave to study with Charcot in Paris, he often had the experience of hearing her name calling him, when, in fact she was over one thousand miles away. Jones says that Freud always made exact notes of these happenings, and would write to determine what was happening with her at the time. During the Great War, with his son Martin in the Service, Freud had premonitions of his son's death at specific times. Always, again, Freud would write for information. Jones depicts Freud's overall enthusiasm to discuss these issues in private through the following glimpse:

In the years before the Great War, I had several talks with Freud on occultism and kindered topics. He was fond, especially after midnight, of regaling me with strange or uncanny experiences with patients, characteristically about misfortunes or deaths supervening many years after a wish or prediction. He had a peculiar relish for such stories, and was evidently impressed by their more mysterious aspects. When I would protest at some of the taller stories Freud was wont to reply with his favorite quotation: 'There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy' (Jones, Vol. III, p. 381).

When Jones had pressed Freud on his lack of skepticism, his reply was, "I don't like it at all myself, but there is some truth to it" (ibid).

After 1907, Freud came under the influence of both Jung and the Hungarian Sandor Ferenczi. Ferenczi's first psychoanalytic publication was on the occult; he claimed to have the powers of a true medium, and Freud allowed Ferenczi to bring a telepath to a meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society before World War I (Decker, 1980). In 1910, the *Minutes* of that Society reported "a long informal discussion about the phenomena of spiritism, occultism, and clairvoyance" (ibid, p. 107).

In the early part of 1911, Ferenczi sent Freud a letter describing an incident of psi at a train station (Jones, Vol. III, 1957). Ferenczi spotted a soldier in a tramcar, and made a private guess at his name. On disembarking from the train, Ferenczi walked up to the soldier and asked him: "Are you herr Kohn?" The man answered in the affirmative, and while Freud was impressed, he also argued that this was not telepathy. Ferenczi was both friend and colleague of Freud's, and along with Jung played the role of trickster in stretching Freud's scientific outlook and curiosity.

Jung was also a friend and colleague. They met in Vienna during March of 1907, following a year of correspondence. It is reported that they spoke for thirteen hours straight, and were utterly captivated by each other's presence (Decker, 1980). Their attraction to each other was marked by an

intensity and passion that could only be matched by its presence in their bitter termination of that relationship after seven years of friendship (McGuire, 1974). Jung was also interested in psi phenomena, though less so than Ferenczi. Freud was regularly impressed by Jung's astonishing stories and experiences. On one visit to Vienna on March 25, 1909, Jung demonstrated his powers as a poltergeist to Freud, by making several objects in Freud's study rattle (Jung, 1961). Freud was deeply impressed by this, and after Jung left tried to repeat the occurrence himself. In the process, he claimed to have discovered physical explanations for the incident, and sent off a letter cautioning Jung about being too open to interpretations outside scientific rationality (Jones, Vol. III, 1957). Nevertheless, Freud never tried to curtail these interests of Ferenczi and Jung. In a letter to Ferenczi, dated May 11, 1911, he wrote:

Jung writes to me that we must conquer the field of occultism and asks for my agreeing to his leading a crusade into the field of mysticism. I can see that you two are not to be held back. At least go forward in collaboration with each other; it is a dangerous expedition and I cannot accompany you (Jones, Vol. III, 1957, p. 387).

But still psi bothered Freud. A few years after the war, Freud confessed to Max Eitingon that two themes had always perplexed him: one was the Bacon Shakespeare controversy in literature and the other was occultism (ibid). During the same year Freud was to accept an invitation to become a Corresponding Member of the Society for Psychical Research in London; in 1915, to become an Honorary Fellow of the American Society for Psychical Research, and in 1923 to receive an equal honor from the Greek Society for Psychical Research. During the summer of 1921 he was invited to become co-editor for three separate periodicals dealing with the study of the occult. While he declined all three, he, nevertheless, wrote the following in his letter of reply: "If I had my life to live over again I should devote myself to psychical research rather than psychoanalysis" (ibid, p. 392). When some eight years later he was questioned by a colleague about this statement, Freud denied making it. Nevertheless, a photostatic copy of the letter was later recovered, and the passage was clearly there. Freud, says Jones (ibid), had evidently failed to remember the incident. I believe, however, this slip sums up Freud's overall ambivalence toward psi phenomena.

### **Freud's professional and political relationship to psi**

Professionally, Freud was first and foremost the scientist, the educated physician. He ministered to both the most public and private moments of subjectivity, and brilliantly transposed a dated, natural science outlook to comprehend their meaning (Binswanger, 1975). He held an unabiding commitment to the powers of reason (Rieff, 1966), and, perhaps, like phenomenology's Husserl invested too great a faith that the illuminating light of rational consciousness could penetrate ultimately to a pure clarity of truth. But it was this natural science commitment which ultimately led Freud to maintain the cautious eye of the skeptic. This is the scientific Freud. When prompted to lay bare the philosophy of psychoanalysis, he stated that it

needed no other worldview than a natural science one, for psychoanalysis was, he believed, a legitimate sector of natural science inquiry (Freud, 1933). When faced with his own personal interest in telepathy and the recognition that its study may cast doubt on the scientific credibility of psychoanalysis, he clearly came down on the side of science. At first, as early as in the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1984), he explains away telepathy by recourse to the dynamic viewpoint. Telepathy, here, represents the projection of one's inner, repressed thoughts, wishes, and fears onto the outer world. Note the Cartesian vernacular. The essay gives the impression that telepathy as popularly defined is incompatible with the scientific paradigm of psychoanalysis. Yes, this is on scientific grounds, which I will get to more fully later. But this is also the political Freud, the Freud whose first vocational ideal as a boy was to become a military general like Hannibal, leading groups through a precarious mission, (Jones). Psychoanalysis became that mission, and he was determined to protect its legitimate status. Here, scientific legitimacy prevailed over his own preferences, again and again.

I want to cite two instances to illustrate this. The first occurred the summer of 1921 when Freud read to the local Vienna Committee his paper "Psychoanalysis and Telepathy." Following the presentation, he stated his intention to read this sympathetic paper at an upcoming International Congress of Psychoanalysis in Berlin the following year. Both Ernest Jones and Max Eitingon, however, dissuaded him from it by pointing out how the paper might cast doubt on the scientific reputation of psychoanalysis. Freud appeared to take this to heart, and published a more cautious version of the paper under the title "Dreams and Telepathy" (1922). The second instance, also cited by Jones (1957, Vol. III) depicts a conversion that took hold of Freud after he had read an experiment on telepathy performed by a Professor Murray. The reports appeared in the *Minutes* of the proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. In a letter to Jones he says:

I am ready to give up my opposition to the existence of thought transference, although I naturally cannot make the least contribution to explaining it. I should even be prepared to lend the support of psychoanalysis to the matter of telepathy.

Freud adds that he "would not flinch from the scandal it would invariably invoke" (ibid, p. 392).

Now, on reading this, Jones fires back a letter informing Freud that a great part of the opposition to psychoanalysis in England stems from the view that psychoanalysis operates with agents, the psyche, which operate independently from the body. Jones says that "The prejudice against telepathy is so strong that any mixture of the two subjects could have only one effect, that of delaying the assimilation of psychoanalysis" (Jones, ibid, p. 393). The consequence of all this is that Freud, again, tempers his personal enthusiasm for telepathy, and strongly advises Ferenczi not to present his own paper on that subject at the next Homburg Conference of 1925. Freud adds that by presenting the paper, Ferenczi would be "throwing a bomb

into the psychoanalytical house which would be certain to explode" (ibid, p. 394).

Again, Freud comes down on the side of scientific credibility, but this is also to protect psychoanalysis politically from being contaminated with the prejudiced beliefs toward psi. Psychoanalysis is one thing and psi is another, and their mixture would be politically destructive to Freud's dream of a scientifically accepted psychoanalysis. In the end, Freud had this to say:

When anyone adduces my fall into sin, just answer him calmly that conversion to telepathy is my private affair like my Jewishness, my passion for smoking and many other things, and the theme of telepathy is in essence alien to psychoanalysis (ibid, pp. 395-396).

All this conveys, however briefly, the political perspective of why psychoanalysis never fully embraced psi phenomena nor affiliated itself directly with institutionalized societies of psychical research.

### ***Psi and the philosophical foundations of psychoanalysis as science***

But another perspective exists, one that I had promised to return to, for it has great relevance to us today. This concerns the philosophical meaning of science, which both grounds and silently animates psychoanalytic thought and practice by circumscribing the meaning of its phenomena. With Kuhn (1970) we would call this the operative paradigm, or with Giorgi (1970), the fundamental approach. Now if we stay with the concept of paradigm, Kuhn tells us that scientific revolutions occur when existing paradigms prove incapable of assimilating new phenomena. Novel phenomena, then, exist as anomalies, and the paradigm must either alter to accommodate them or be replaced by a new paradigm. Within physics, the change from a Ptolemaic to a Copernican universe is a case in point, while the move from Behavioral to Cognitive approaches illustrates a paradigm shift within psychology. Now I believe that this could have been the case with psychoanalysis and telepathy. That is, the faithful comprehension of telepathy on its **own terms**, as **lived** by those who have experienced it, would have tested the philosophical foundations of psychoanalysis to the breaking point. Perhaps Freud foresaw the changes that might have been required of psychoanalysis had it drew telepathy to its breast, changes in its historically accumulated work, its self understanding, and its interventions in concrete clinical work. On these grounds, it is understandable why Freud and those loyalists around him, would seek to distance psychoanalysis from an encounter with psi.

Consider this argument: Jones reports that the chief objective Freud maintained toward psi was its view that "thoughts or spiritual beliefs can exist in space with no ascertainable connection with a corporeal body" (Jones, Vol. III, pp. 376-377). Truly comprehending psi defied the psychoanalytic approach because the former appeared bizarre when referenced to the implicit conception of how subjectivity is related to the body, and of how we are related to the minds of other people through both varied and novel forms of expressive communication. Freud's science was

guided by Descartes' assumption of mind-matter dualism. As physician and scientist knowledge of another person according to Freud, is rooted in materially defined conditions, as the directly visible or audible expressions of a face to another person. This was true of any inferences that Freud made of the unconscious processes of his patients. Now psi was anomalous to this outlook, for it could not be contained within the foundational boundaries of psychoanalysis as science. I believe this philosophical basis for Freud's science is another occasion for the historical separation of psi and psychoanalysis. While Freud modified his attitude toward telepathy, in the end acknowledging its existence, he never included it as a known guest in the house of psychoanalysis.

All this has implications for our present situation. Many have shown that the crisis in Freud's science is still with us today. Psychology at large expresses Freud's dilemma on a grander scale; psychology loses fidelity to what things actually are and mean to us by virtue of its guiding philosophical vision of science (Giorgi, 1970; Masek, 1984; Romanyshyn, 1975). In consequence, our knowledge has an **alienated status** (Husserl, 1970) with respect to how we originally live these phenomena in our undivided mind-body-other person relations within the human world.

In contrast, phenomenological psychology historically arose as a corrective to this problem, for it devoted through a **human science** endeavor to clarify faithfully our psychological lives as we live them, apart from the equal dangers of ungrounded speculation and crystallized dogma. With respect to telepathy, Merleau-Ponty (1966) would tell us that this different starting point **is** needed—that if we flesh out the meaning of intentionality as richly descriptive of our existential relations, then the existence of other people's minds poses no real problem. I believe the first step counts most; all else would follow.

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# Sacred Places and Transcendental Experiences

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**Jim Swan**

*Dr. Swan is an environmental psychologist with a special interest in the psychology of power places. He is the founder/director of Life Systems Educational Foundation in Seattle.*

## **Abstract**

Mystical experiences are examined as a function of environmental factors, especially natural settings which may be called "sacred places" or "power places." Examples of case histories are presented and compared with existing models of mystical experiences for agreement and differences. It is suggested that some places may be capable of acting as "triggers" to mystical experiences. The question is raised as to just how significant such places are in facilitating creative, inspirational experiences in people. It is also suggested that the widespread use of humanistic psychologies which foster self-actualization may increase the chances of mystical experiences and the view that the earth may have some sacred places.

## **Introduction**

Harmony between nature and people has been a goal for humankind since the earliest of times. The necessity of achieving this has become increasingly clear in recent years with the pollution of the air, water, and soil and the public outcry against these problems. Observers from many quarters tell us that "spaceship earth" is in trouble and we must quickly learn to live within the limits of our resources if we are to survive.

While living in harmony with nature is not a new issue, the scientific study of human-environmental relations, especially the field of psychology as it applies to environmental matters, is really quite new. To date, most research in the field of environmental psychology has dealt with interior environments such as schools, hospitals, and working environments and their relationship to human behavior. In a recent review of the field of environmental psychology, Gebelein (1981) finds that only a small percentage of the research in environmental psychology pertains to natural environments, such as wilderness areas. Most of these studies also focus on questions of land use as it relates to recreation behavior. Very little is known about how natural environments affect human behavior, at least in a scientific vein. Volumes of songs, poems, and pictorial essays of course strongly attest to the value of natural environments. Such support for natural environments can be traced back to the very roots of human culture. John Michell (1975) relates:

The oldest and deepest element in any religion is the cult of the earth spirit in her many aspects . . . [To the early people] the earth was sacred, not because pious people chose to regard it so, but because it was in fact ruled by spirit, by the creative powers of the universe, manifest in all the phenomenon of nature, shaping the cycles of fertility, the lives of animals and men. In this secure

immortal world, the most assured reality was communication with the local gods, personifying aspects of the universal spirit of the earth.

Many cultures around the world regard the earth as alive. They see it as a living being. Among people who have such a cosmology a common concept is the idea that some places on the face of the earth are special or "sacred." Joseph Campbell remarks: "The idea of a sacred [place] where the walls and laws of the temporal world may dissolve to reveal wonder is apparently as old as the human race." There are many places around the world which are commonly referred to as being special or sacred: Mount Olympus in Greece; Harney Park in the Black Hills of South Dakota; Mount Arafat in Turkey; Mount Fuji in Japan; Mount Sinai in Isarel; the "Four Corners" area of the American Southwest, especially Mount Taylor; the caves of Lasceaux in France; Mount McKinley or "Denali" in Alaska; and the healing springs at Lourdes in France are just a few. Mircea Eliade (1959) calls such places "hierophonies" where "krakophonies" or acts of divine manifestation take place.

Following Eliade's denotation a truly sacred place would be one where visions might be seen as more likely than elsewhere, or unusual healings might occur such as at Lourdes. Modern religions of the Christian root tend primarily to focus their attention on consecrating space as sacred within buildings, although the early Christians had certain sects, such as the "Desert Fathers," who sought visions in the deserts of the Middle East. In recent times, so-called "primitive" cultures acknowledge special outdoor environments as sacred. These groups include the American Indian, Eskimo, Hawaiian, or the Druidic sects of Europe. Many of these people represent minorities within a primarily scientific modern culture, and hold unique belief systems. The question of Point Conception near Santa Barbara, California, is a good example. The Chumash Indians see Point Conception as holy. They see it as the "Western Gate"—the place where souls enter and exit from the world. The concept of such a place existing, let alone the idea of souls having an entry and exit point from the world, is alien to much of the modern world. The initial legal decision on the Chumash claims from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (1979) shows this bias, stating: "Most importantly, it must be kept in mind that the choice is between possible damage to some artifacts and the rejection of a much needed gas project to serve the needs of 22 million people in California." The decision to build a liquid natural gas repository at Point Conception is really one where energy needs are pitted against the sacred space



of a nearly extinct tribe. The discrepancy in values and world views is very clear when we take a closer look at how the Chumash view the world.

The Chumash see the material world as a manifestation of what happens first on a spiritual level. Therefore to destroy the existing landform would cut off what is seen as a gateway between the two worlds. This would hinder new life from coming into the world, cause malingerers to persist on the earth plane, and keep others from their natural transition. In describing a pool of water on the side one Chumash stated (Fox and Hughes, 1980): "Below a cliff lies a pool of water with footprints in the stone. There the spirits of the dead cleanse themselves . . ." In a visit to an Indian encampment in the area in protest of the proposed development, writers Fox and Hughes describe the "magic" of the place:

"This land is alive with the spirits of those who've come before," said Kote [(Kote Lotash, a Chumash medicine man), his eyes turning copper in the setting sun. 'Why the rocks you pick up here—people who lived here centuries ago touched them.'

Kote paused, 'Sometimes when everything's in perfect balance out here, when things are just right, you see lights rushing into the sunset. And after a storm, you see double rainbows arching out over the ocean, over the Western Gate. And night rainbows too!'

From this brief glimpse of the Chumash world view, it becomes clear that to them, spirits and spiritual forces are vitally important to life on earth. They also are concerned with their ancestors and they believe that unusual things sometimes happen at sacred places.

I am not a Chumash Indian but from having the chance to meet the Chumash elder Grandfather Sky Eagle, as well as having been to Santa Barbara, I am moved to want to ask what I could do as a scientist to help resolve this conflict over land use. There has been a recent upsurge in studies of life after death and reincarnation but only a few studies have been made linking such things to specific geographic locations. The concept of sacred places existing in other cultures of course can be documented through numerous anthropological studies. What is intriguing, however, is to ask if there might be any other parameters along which a certain place might be studied through other fields of inquiry. Here there is some hope.

While the concept of some places being "sacred" or special is a nearly universal one, it is not at all clear why such a designation is used. Some suggest that special places present physical objects which in a sense give life to a cultural mythology, making it real, alive, and present. A mountain like Mount Olympus in Greece is not just a beautiful hill, but also the residence of the gods and goddesses. A spring is not just a source of water, but a receptacle for spirit. Levy-Bruhl (1938) explains: "To these natives, a sacred spot never exists in isolation. It is part of a complex of things which include the plant or animal species which flourish there at various seasons, as well as

the mythical heroes who lived, roamed or created something there and who are embodied in the very soil, the ceremonies which take place there from time to time, and all the emotions aroused by the whole."

The nature of sacred places varies considerably. Some are majestic mountains like Mount Fuji in Japan. However, Tai-Shan in northern China has been the retreat for sages and kings for centuries and it is not the largest mountain in that area. The Ganges River of India is said to be holy as is the spring at Our Lady of Lourdes in France. Moses reported seeing the "burning bush" near Mount Sinai, thus marking that area as special. The Catholic shrines at Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico were erected to mark the reported sightings of extraordinary visions at these sites. Some places like Stonehenge in England, appear to be special places, but today we have little understanding of the reasons why or how they were used.

Some places are structures made by humans, like Macchu Piccu in Peru or the Pyramids in Egypt. Others have earthen mounds like the "Cern Giant" of England or the serpent mound of earth sculpture in southern Ohio. Others like Harney Peak in the Black Hills of South Dakota, have no physical structures but to certain people in certain cultures, are holy and deserving of recognition.

The belief in sacred places is not as strong in modern, scientific cultures, by and large. True, we have national parks and national forests and even wilderness areas, but the rationale for preservation generally does not include reference to a place as being sacred, unless it is seen as sacred to another culture like the American Indians. This is not to say that some people do not consider these places special.

Today there are many demands being placed upon natural areas for resources and for space to live. This leads to conflicts about development versus preservation. Some places, such as the Black Hills of South Dakota, which to many Indians is the most sacred place on earth, also happen to contain rich ores like uranium, tin, copper, lead, and zinc, not to mention coal or even oil. In the resultant battle, values are put on the line. For some people a place may be sacred because of religious significance or its purported healing values. Others may value a place because of its oil shale or uranium ore. Who is to say who has priority?

A question that has seldom been asked is, can any scientific data be presented to show that a "sacred place" is indeed unique. This really breaks down into two questions: Can any data be produced to show that a place is unique or significant in terms of geology, soil, water, or environmental fields? And, can any data be presented to support that what humans experience at a sacred place is indeed unique to that place? This article addresses these two points.

### ***The Natural History of Sacred Places***

There are many different kinds of sacred places—springs, mountains, deserts, groves, beaches, etc., and there is little or no data gathered in any scientific way. Field work



is almost non-existent, although there are numerous anthropological accounts of visits to sacred places. These, however, tend to focus on the culture and not so much on the physical site, especially in terms of natural sciences. Indeed, some writers have argued that there is nothing unique about the natural history of a place, but rather that its power is derived from belief and suggestion, as Jerome Frank (1978) suggests about the spring at Lourdes in France. Supporting Frank, Dr. Olga Worrall (1980) relates that her late husband Ambrose, a chemical engineer, sampled the water at Lourdes and could not find anything unique in it. Generalization, however, is seemingly not possible. Indian Hot Springs in West Texas near Big Bend National park has been used by native people for centuries for healing. Even though there are many springs in the general area, Indian Hot Springs has been singled out as special. A study of the water chemistry by Hoffer (1978) found that the waters of Indian Hot Springs are significantly high in lithium, which has medicinal uses. It seems that one would have to test the waters of all reputed healing springs before coming to any conclusions about the respective roles of water chemistry versus belief in healing waters.

Another theory is that the local environmental fields of a sacred place may be unique. Studying air ionization in the Four Corners area of the American Southwest, Joan Price (1980) found unusually high levels of negative ions in the atmosphere in the vicinity of sacred places like Mount Taylor. It has been shown by Soyka and Edmonds (1977) and others that an abundance of negative ions in the atmosphere has definite healing benefits and has led to the development of portable negative ion generators for various indoor environments. Negative ions appear in abundance around evergreen trees, waterfalls, mountain tops, and ocean beaches. Such features are common among sacred places. Price, however, feels that a unique air exchange between the upper atmosphere and mountain caverns, as well as other factors, enriches the air in the Four Corners area with negative ions.

There is a theory that local electromagnetic fields may be unusual at some places. The electromagnetic field of the earth has a field strength which averages about 0.5 Gauss with a range of approximately 0.2-0.7 Gauss. The frequencies vary considerably, with an overall range from 0.1 cycles per second (Hertz) to 100 Hertz in the vicinity of electrical storms. The normal value is toward the lower end of the scale and this is called the "Schumann Resonance." In some places a Schumann Resonance of 10 Hertz may be found. This is roughly the same frequency associated with relaxation in the "alpha" brainwave state.

When two fields exist in the same space there is a tendency for them to harmonize. In the case of environmental fields, the tendency is for internal human frequencies to harmonize with outer environmental ones. This process is called "biological entrainment." If a person were to go to a place where the Schumann Resonance was approximately 10 Hertz and remained there for some time, it seems likely that they would feel relaxed. Beal (1975) suggests that in such a place where the Schumann

Resonance would be in the "alpha frequency" and a high negative ion count also existed, people would be in a mind-set that might facilitate creative inspiration. High mountain peaks, such as are sometimes sought out for vision quests, could have such localized field conditions. Corliss (1977) reports many references in the literature to strong local fields that can be perceived physically and even visually. The "Andes lights" of South America are flickering lights sometimes reported over the tops of the mountains before thunderstorms. Such sights and local field conditions may be one explanation why many folk healers, such as members of the Cult of Maria Lionze in Venezuela, say that at their sacred places there are unusually strong energies. Much more work in the field needs to be done to substantiate this theory but if it proves true then it might be possible to scientifically study and perhaps even document the existence of some sacred places based upon local field conditions.

An indirect method of examining the possibility of unique local fields at special places is to look at wildlife behavior, as it is well-documented that certain animals and plants appear to orient their behavior in regard to the local electromagnetic fields. Reviewing the literature on magnetotaxis, I have found evidence supporting the theory that many species of birds and fish use a type of magnetic sensing process for migration (Swan, 1981). Field studies at four "vortex" areas—two in South Dakota, one in Oregon, and one in California—suggest that birds and mammals do not frequent these places. Before sound conclusions can be reached, much more work needs to be done to determine what, if any, are the unique local conditions at special places. If some can be found, it would have tremendous implications for land management issues, especially those pertaining to sacred places.

It is also important to note that we may not really know how to study a sacred place to demonstrate its uniqueness, assuming there is something special at all. Until we have the proper methods, scientific research simply will not yield significant results, even though the conditions may be unique.

### ***Transcendental Experiences at Sacred Places***

Parapsychologist Rhea White (1981) relates an experience she had in the Black Hills of South Dakota and recorded at the time in her journal as follows:

Back in 1957 I spent a day driving through the Black Hills. I remember writing in my journal that being in the Black Hills was like being recollected at a deep and high level of prayer and contemplation. Each leaf and blade of grass seemed to shine with a light not only of this world. It was a spiritually invigorating experience. I did not then know it was a power place.

Grof (1975), Weil (1972), and others have suggested that mystical or transcendental experiences have their origins both in the mental set of the person and in the environmental setting. In a recent study of ecstatic experiences, Marghanita Laski (1961) suggests that environmental factors which she calls "triggers" play an important role in ecstatic experiences, acting as a sort of releasing mechanism. Laski observes that "ecstasy almost

always takes place after contact with something regarded as beautiful or valuable, or both." Common environmental triggers include natural scenery, such as mountains and bodies of water (most frequently), or trees, flowers, scent, animals, wind, air, etc. Laski observes "The greatest religious leaders of the west all had mystical experiences on mountains. Moses spoke with God on Horeb (Sinai), 'the mountain of god' and later received the 10 Commandments there; Elijah too, spoke with God on Horeb." Jesus was often drawn to certain places for visions and insights of profound importance to him.

Laski (1962) identifies three kinds of ecstatic experiences: a "union ecstasy," where a person senses a connection with a higher purpose or truth; an "adamic ecstasy" which involves a loss of something, usually like guilt or fear, and the replacement with something new like a sense of being cleaned, etc.; and "knowledge ecstasies" which involve deep insight into the nature of the truth.

Union ecstasies are often reported in environmental settings, especially environments which for some reason at that time and place seem to elicit or trigger an inner sense of connection with much more of the world than is normally comprehended. The "adamic" or purification type of ecstatic experience is closely associated with many religious traditions. In India the Hindu fakirs and holy people will retreat to caves or wild places for rites of purification. Saint Anthony, Moses, and Saint John the Baptist, among others went into the desert to "walk in the spirit and . . . not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16).

In the adamic ecstasy people most often report that they lose something, such as guilt or fear, and then gain something like love, peace, joy, contentment, etc. Death and re-birth is a consistent theme. The third type of ecstasy, "knowledge or contact" ecstasy, involves gaining a sense of deep insight into something or oneself. Here the value is not in delight, but in a greater sense of mental organization. A connection with meaning and purpose, and an insight of clarity is a commonly reported experience. Forester Gifford Pinchot (1910), the person who coined the word "conservation" in its modern use concerning environmental quality, came upon this term while riding on horseback through Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C. Pondering the many problems of resource use in the Theodore Roosevelt administration, Pinchot took his problems to Rock Creek Park in a gloomy morning in February of 1907. Pinchot relates his thought process:

The forest and its relation to streams and navigation, to water power and flood control; to the soil and to erosion; to coal and oil and other minerals; to fish and game; and many other possible use or waste of natural resources — these questions would not let him be. What had all these to do with Forestry? And what had Forestry to do with Them?

Here were not isolated problems. My work had brought me in touch with all of them. But what was the basic link between them?

Suddenly the idea flashed through my head that there was a unity in this complication — that the relation of one resource to another was not the end of the story. Here there were no longer a lot of different, independent, and often antagonistic questions, each of its own separate island, as we had been in the habit of thinking. In

place of them, here was one question with many parts. Seen in this new light, all these separate questions fitted into and made up the one great central problem of the use of the earth for the good of man.

To me it was a good deal like coming out of a dark tunnel. I had been seeing one spot of light ahead. Here all of a sudden was a whole landscape. Or it was like lifting the curtain on a great new stage.

In these examples, the natural environment served as a trigger for evoking ecstatic experiences. It is not certain if such experiences would be possible in other settings. This would require research where experiences in differing environments would be conducted. I know of no such work, at least as it pertains to ecstatic experiences. Certainly many people feel that wild places are essential, although not many express their value in terms of their being a trigger for ecstatic experiences, at least in modern western culture. This is not the case for other cultures who hold a common belief in the sacredness of certain places partly because they play a role in evoking mystical experiences. In an attempt to gain greater understanding of the role of natural environments, especially those which may be considered sacred or special, in human nature, over the last five years I have been gathering information based upon interviews with people who report having had a mystical experience at or near a special place. The method of contacting respondents has been to make public presentations on this topic, and then ask if any in the audience had had such experiences. If so, they are then asked to share them in a personal interview. To date, nearly 100 such interviews have been conducted. Before examining the data, it is useful to clarify the concept of what is meant by a mystical, ecstatic, or transcendent experience.

Stace (1960) presents seven characteristics of mysticism, or what might be considered a "universal core" of mystical experience. These are: (1) a sense of unity or feeling of identity with all things; (2) a sense of timelessness and spacelessness; (3) a sense of having been in touch with some sort of objectivity or ultimate reality; (4) feelings of blessedness and joy; (5) a sense of the divine presence or the sacred; (6) the feeling of ineffability or of its not being capable of being related in words; and (7) a sense of paradox, or knowing the polarity of the opposites simultaneously as in "teeming desert," "dark lightness," etc. To these qualities William James (1902) added the concept of (8) surrender to a higher force; and (9) transiency—the notion that such experiences seldom last more than half an hour.

What these criteria describe are a set of experiences which have been related by sages, poets, and holy people from the early beginnings of time. In some earlier religions, or contemporary religions like that of the American Indian, it was commonplace for people to have mystical experiences. It was a common practice among at least some American Indian tribes, for example, that prior to an important hunt, battle, or rite of passage, people would retire into the wilderness to seek out a vision or mystical experience which would unite them with a higher purpose

and serve to guide them through the time ahead. Specific rituals were created to facilitate the seeking of visions and special places were said to be capable of helping visions take place because of their "power." Harney Peak in the Black Hills of South Dakota, which is considered to be the "heart of the earth mother" by the Lakota and many other tribes is such a place. Harney Peak was not often used for visions, according to the oral teachings, as it was too powerful for people unless they had the power of a Crazy Horse or a Sitting Bull.

Whereas modern western society seeks out truth in the laboratory or through mathematical equations, other cultures have sought out truth through the experience of ritual, ceremony, and ordeal. The form of the truth in the West is a "proof" or validation of a hypothesis. The form of truth to the non-Western mind is often a symbol, either of a dream or mentally-recorded phenomenon, or an external event. To some the behavior of birds of animals, clouds, or even the weather could be seen as a vision. The following represents an initial attempt to codify some of the types of experiences which have been reported to me.

### **Classification of Transcendental Experiences of Place**

**I. A linkage with nature, and/or a comprehension of being a part of everything.** — Here the concept of "unity," as expressed in Stace's typology fits well. People express finding themselves being totally lost in the moment at a place, often with no conscious planning. While in this mind set, they report feeling a sense of oneness with everything, a sense of everything being connected to everything else, as John Muir so often spoke. One person, a scientist, found himself in a tide pool along the Pacific Ocean for the first time in his life. On this day, it seemed that everything felt just right. He began to explore and time began to disappear. Each creature took on a special meaning, and shortly he became totally engrossed in the experience. During the time, he found himself developing a deep feeling that he was at one with everything, that everything was connected to everything else. He became so totally enraptured that friends had to drag him out of the pool before the oncoming tide. Following the experience he began to redirect his career toward conservation and natural areas preservation.

**II. The ability to communicate with nature in its many forms.** — Saint Francis is said to have talked with birds and animals. Boyd (1974) reports that Rolling Thunder, and American Indian medicine man, can relate to snakes, bees, and other animals in some mysterious form of communication. It is reported that during some vision quest-type experiences is that certain birds and animals seem to come much closer than usual and a sort of communication seems to take place. Vinson Brown (1974) relates that on the third day of a vision quest on Blue Buck Mountain in northern California he was literally surrounded by a cloud of birds.

On the third day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the most extraordinary thing of my whole vigil happened and one of the most spiritual significance. I was seated on my sleeping bag reading, my feet stretched down the hill, when I heard in the

distance the sounds of many birds. As they gradually came nearer . . . a circus-like concourse of small birds, hundreds and hundreds of them of a dozen different species appeared in the trees above my head, flitting from branch to branch, some coming down so low, as did the chickadees and wrens, to perch on twigs above me and talk to me queringly. I sat perfectly still not making a sound, but filled with amazement, for here was one big happy family of many races or winged folk moving together in perfect harmony. Slowly they passed above me in their hundreds, talking and talking . . . one chickadee came so close to me, and upside down, with bright and peering eye, that I could have reached out and touched it . . .

After they had gone, their voices fading like tiny tinkling bells in the distance, I continued to sit perfectly still, savoring the moments of their presence, feeling that I had somehow been blessed with a sight given to few humans. I knew that these tiny birds were saying to me something like: "so can you two-leggeds be also, all in unity and peace and love, as we are."

This experience of communication with non-human forms of life is purportedly very common in other cultures such as that of the American Indian. Neihardt (1932) describes how Black Elk, the great American Indian visionary, felt that immediately before his profound visionary experience small birds came to him, seemingly talking to him. Some religious rituals of the Northwest Coastal Indians, in fact, attempt to enhance the possibility of such experiences happening. "The Wild Man of the Coastal Indians, in fact, attempt to enhance the possibility of such experiences happening. "The Wild Man of the Woods" is a type of shaman who has spent time wandering alone in the woods communing with nature in ritual and fast. As a result of this ordeal, this person is said to be able to have an intimate rapport with wild creatures. They speak through the "Wild Man of the Woods" in song and dance, Tibetan anchorite and most seers and visionaries, nature's wilderness is the locus for the elicitation of the individual's inner wilderness, 'the great plain of the spirit,' and it is only here that the inner voices awaken into song."

**III. Waking visions of mythical beings or objects.** — In the vision quest experience, often the participant has vivid dreams of deep meaning and significance. For others, however, in waking consciousness they report "seeing" unusual people or events. One young man who had been alone in the woods for a time reported:

I was walking through this golden field. The colors seemed to be very bright and vivid in the sun. I was feeling very profoundly moved by the scene. Somehow it touched me deeply and I was almost moved to tears. Then, before me, the field seemed to open up. A hole seemed to appear and up from the earth appeared a giant ground hog. The ground hog approached me and I seemed to feel a little faint, and then it was gone.

This person reported that he had not been taking any drugs prior to the event, although he had been reading most of the books of Carlos Castaneda on his studies and experiences with Don Juan, the Yaqui sorcerer. Stace (1960) feels that such readings can sometimes be a trigger for experiences by giving the mind permission to experience other realms. In most of the cases of waking visions I have encountered, the person feels drawn to a place, sometimes by an animal, other times simply by an almost magnetic feeling. One young woman reported:

I had been going through some heavy personal changes and felt I had to get away for awhile. I packed my sleeping bag and got in the car and just drove. Somehow I felt "pulled" to this place. It was a campground. I got out and set up my tent and made a fire and this feeling of peacefulness came over me. I felt very relieved somehow. Then a small brown bird appeared in a tree. The bird flew down to the ground and began acting as if it wanted me to follow it down a trail. I did. The bird kept hopping down the trail, like it was guiding me. We must have gone for about 100 yards, when we came to a clearing. The bird flew up into a large evergreen tree. I felt a sense of peace and calm almost descend upon me and time seemed to stand still. Then I had this feeling that the forest around me was coming to life. The trees were singing to me. I felt as though they were people, all singing and welcoming me. The trees seemed to have faces. It lasted for a period of time and then seemed to fade away. The bird was gone and I walked back to my camp.

**IV. The ability to influence the weather.** — Boyd (1974) talks about the American Indian medicine man Rolling Thunder apparently being able to create rain storms. Rainmaking is one feat of power sometimes associated with shamanic healers and supposedly such powers are granted to individuals as part of the process of becoming a shaman, according to this writer's conversations with Chippewa medicine man Sun Bear.

**V. Dreams of an unusual nature.** — Dreams have always been linked with visionary experiences and numerous studies have been done on dreams and dream content. Carl Jung's work is most notable in the study of dreams of a mythological nature, and yet some of the dream material I've recorded from various people who have had visionary experiences at sacred places seems to be unique. One common experience is to have very vivid dreams, which almost seem like sitting in the front row of a 3-D movie. Pat Taylor (1981), who has spent a considerable amount of time studying healings at Indian Hot Springs in West Texas and the work of a remarkable healer, Mrs. Jewell Babb, has recorded a number of special dreams which people have had while staying at Indian Hot Springs. Many of the dreams have a similar theme—tall, dark-skinned, naked men and women and bands of wild horses. Mrs. Babb, who spent many years at the springs and studied the works of the local curanderas has reported some of her unusual experiences while at Indian Hot Springs.

And I saw something like a vision. I saw these little men with something like flashlights. . . . And ever time they was going to heal anybody, they then shined that light on that person. . . . I never see spirits, only the doctors. I can see their hands, how they hold them and massage ever place. . . . One of them was so little and such an ancient age, wrinkled all over. . . . But that's all I seen, just three doctors. Massaging and using their lights.

Mrs. Babb feels that such dreams have helped her learn to heal sick people by giving her a sort of special training.

Another common theme is for animals to turn into people in vivid dreams. These follow along the lines of the "transformers" of some American Indian tribes, who are people who supposedly can take on animal as well as human forms. Such dreams seem to be more common for people who have some pre-existing knowledge of American Indian culture, which perhaps may facilitate the experience. Among many tribes, the mountains have special places where people seek out visions. Chief John

Snow (1977) of the Stoney Indians of Southern Alberta relates in his book *These Mountains Are Our Sacred Places*:

We talked to the rocks, the streams, the trees, the plants, the herbs and all of nature's creatures. We called the animals our brothers. They understood our language; we too understood theirs. Sometimes they talked to us in dreams and visions. At times they revealed important events or visited us on our vision quests on mountain tops.

The close association with nature's many forms and forces has no doubt facilitated the ability of American Indians and other cultures who worship nature to give meaning to what in a scientific culture would be inanimate objects. An invocation for an American Indian healing prayer might contain requests for assistance from various natural forces along the following manner. "Oh Great Spirit and the people from the animal community, the people from the plant community, the people from the mineral community, our brothers and sisters with many legs, two legs, or none at all, come into the sacred circle." Such a world view gives a sense of everything being alive, and as such promotes the concept that the earth is alive. Taken at face value, the concept becomes admirable, but hard for us to grasp, simply because we lack experience.

It has been my good fortune over the past several years to have worked a good deal with Sun Bear, a medicine man from the Chippewa tribe who now lives in Eastern Washington. In 1980 this writer was the central organizer and coordinator for a special ceremony called "The Medicine Wheel Gathering," which was created out of a vision which Sun Bear had of a special ceremony for people of all cultures to come together to worship the earth. The working relationship with Sun Bear has lasted over the last several years and during the Medicine Wheel Gathering it was possible to experience some of the world of the American Indian medicine person, including some of the dream/vision experiences. For example, the location for the gathering came in a vivid dream of mine several weeks before the actual site was found.

**VI. A feeling of unusual energy in a place.** — Many people feel that they experience an unusually enriching local environmental energy field at sacred places. Jose Geller (1981), a psychiatrist in Venezuela who has been studying folk healing at Sorte Mountain, a sacred place some 300 kilometers from Caracas, Venezuela, reports that one reason Sorte is thought to be sacred is that local members of the Cult of Maria Lionza believe there is much more life energy there. Sun Bear says that "When I look at the ground, sometimes I can see a field of energy bubbling up from the Earth Mother. When the energy is right, I can absorb it and use this energy to heal someone heal themselves." These observations, if supported by field data, might be due to localized abnormal fields. It is also possible, of course, that what people say they experience is due to other factors, including suggestion, and inspiration due aesthetic scenery. It is commonly said that at a special place the energy is so powerful it feels like walking through water. At such places people say they feel uplifted and inspired. Some even report feeling more healthy. Others say that mystical experiences of all kinds are more likely to occur.



## Discussion

Newcom and Reichard (1975), discussing the importance of place in Navajo culture relate:

... locality is of the greatest importance to the Navajo. Names of people, of plants, of animals, of dangers, names of lightning and stones have power when known and used properly. Even the names of places may be charms. Just as the modern writer or dramatist gives his work a setting, so also does the Navajo myth. Whenever a protagonist meets someone who is more powerful the first question he must answer is 'where do you come from?'

Just what is the connection between a place and a person? Many earth-worshipping cultures talk about a "spirit of place." High in the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia, for example, lies Roger Pass. This treacherous pass has claimed the lives of many people who have sought to build railways or highways through it. The Indians would rarely go up into Rogers Pass. At a moment's notice, in almost any time of the year, a snow storm may swirl down into Roger's Pass and sweep away lives. They say that it is the home of "the snow spirit" who is very dangerous. Perhaps the term "snow spirit" is really just a way of giving an image to a place, endowing it with a sort of personality.

Today land-use planners evaluate land for development based upon a variety of criteria which usually boil down to economic values. When someone raises an issue about a place being sacred, this may be given consideration, but since this concept is not really accepted in modern western culture, how much value can it be given? Which is more important in the Black Hills, the uranium or the value of the place for religious experiences?

When Abraham Maslow studied self-actualizing people he noted that as self-actualization becomes more real, mystical or peak experiences become more commonplace, and that self-actualizing people tend to have a sense of reverence for nature. Many social observers such as Marilyn Ferguson (1980) suggest that a new social paradigm is emerging which calls for greater emphasis upon self-actualization. If this is the case, will our attitudes about nature change? If we allow ourselves to be more fully who and what we are will we develop different philosophies and new and different experiences? Clearly, it is my experience that people who engage in various human potential expansion experiences report new and different environmental perceptions (Swan, 1976). These perceptions about "energies" and "power places" seem to be much more in keeping with the views of American Indians and others who have long held that the earth is alive and has special places. To what extent these places may be able to facilitate peak experiences and especially those of a nature unique to that location is unknown. Consider this for a moment to be possible. If this is the case, then perhaps meaning for certain protests against destroying wilderness areas would come from a source beyond simple emotional sentiment. Perhaps some people do sense a "spirit of place" that speaks to them at a very basic level of being. That we don't have such a concept in modern western culture does not mean that such a relationship doesn't exist. It simply means that we do not acknowledge its existence.

It is clear that mystical or transcendental experiences are important in the lives of many people. At the very root of nearly all religions of the world is some type of mystical experience. So too is the inclination for religious leaders to seek out the wild places for recreation, solitude, and inspiration. At this time when so many pressures for natural resource exploitation are manifesting, it seems critical that the issue of the value of wild places to people be given serious attention. What can be destroyed overnight would take centuries to be recreated. It seems to be generally recognized that environmental "triggers" do facilitate mystical experiences. It is hoped that more work will be done to determine just how important natural environments are in this process.

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# The Astral Couch: Psychic Readers and Psychic Readings in Los Angeles

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**Geri-Ann Galanti**

*Geri-Ann Galanti obtained the Ph.D. in Anthropology in 1981 from UCLA. Her dissertation, on psychic readers in Los Angeles, compared them to both shamans and psychotherapists. She has been teaching anthropology for the past four years at colleges including Cal State Los Angeles, Cal State Northridge, Whittier College, Chapman College, and the Consortium of the Cal State University. She currently teaches Culture and Health Care to nurses in the BSN program of the Cal State Consortium. She is the founder and editor of the Newsletter of the Association for Transpersonal Anthropology and is one of the founders of the Association.*

California is unlike any other state. It has a reputation for openness, for being the place where new fads take root. Eugene Kennedy, a Loyola University historian, claims, "California is the line of least resistance. There's no winter to fight, you can eat off the trees, you can sleep on the beaches" (*Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1978). In the same article, John Kaplan, professor of law at Sanford University, stated, "It's a pluralistic, permissive, on the whole quite happy society, which happens to have a higher percentage of deviants than the rest of the country. We have more adherents to minority religion, more homosexuals here, more people who use unapproved drugs . . . I love California. Sometimes you get the feeling you're living in an insane asylum."

This is the setting in which the phenomenon to be described has flourished. The phenomenon to which I refer is the use of psychic readers by highly educated, white middle, and upper middle class men and women.

When most people think of psychic readers, the first image which usually comes to mind is that of the gypsy fortuneteller — long black hair wrapped in a turban; dark, exotic eyes; bright, wild clothing; and large, heavy jewelry. This stereotype places the reader in a dark and musty room, where she reads tea leaves or a crystal ball. This stereotype may be accurate for some psychics, but it cannot be applied to all. One reason for the persistence of the stereotype is that there have been few serious studies of psychics. Most of the studies of fortunetellers (their popular name, but one which psychics do not themselves use) explain the methods they use to deceive the public into believing that they have supernatural or psychic powers (e.g., Hyman, 1977, 1980; Tatro and Boles, n.d.). These articles have been written primarily by psychologists and sociologists. The remainder of the literature on psychics focuses on laboratory tests of psychics' purported abilities (e.g., Joines, 1971; Morris, et al, 1972; Murphy, 1961; Rhine, 1947, 1953; Roll, et al, 1972; Targ Puthoff, 1977), written chiefly by parapsychologists. Noticeably absent is a serious inquiry into psychics by anthropologists.

It is the intent of this article to at least partially remedy this situation by briefly describing some psychic readers and their work. The article is based on a study of 20 psychic readers and 20 clients in Los Angeles, California from 1978–1980. A major focus will be to examine the question of why

clients patronize psychic readers. (For an in-depth examination, see Galanti, 1981).

The term "psychic reader" is used to refer to individuals who claim to know things about other people through the use of powers beyond those of the five physical senses. Although these individuals may profess an ability to heal, using nonmedical techniques, their primary technique is in talking with clients about life situations. They use their alleged abilities professionally; that is, they charge for their services.

"Psychic reader" is a general term. It includes those who refer to themselves as clairvoyants, psychometrists, trance mediums, card readers, astrologers, palmists, and so forth. These terms refer to their primary mode of obtaining information. Clairvoyants claim to see images within their minds. Unlike the images produced by imagination, they claim that these images are stimulated by outside sources of which they claim to have no sensory knowledge. They may also "hear things" from similar sources. One psychic described the sensation as being similar to what it is like when you talk silently to yourself. Some clairvoyants also claim to experience emotional sensations "which are not their own," i.e., they are the emotional feelings which they say that the client either is experiencing in the present, experienced in the past, or will experience in the future.

Psychometrists claim to know things about others by holding objects that belong to those persons and which allegedly contain their "vibrations." A trance medium is someone who enters into an altered state of consciousness and allows what is purported to be the "spirit" of a deceased individual to speak through him or her. Card readers claim to obtain information about a client through the "reading" or interpreting of cards. These may be Tarot cards or ordinary playing cards. Astrologers apply what they feel is a scientific approach to the study of the influence of the sun, moon, and planets on individual behavior. Palmists claim to know about a person's past, present, and future from the shape of his hands and the lines in his palms. Although palmists, astrologers, card readers and the like claim to derive information from various material sources or devices, for the purposes of this study they are considered "psychic" readers, since they claim to utilize intuitive or psychic abilities in interpreting what such devices mean with respect to the individual client.

One aim of this article is to dispel the popular stereotype of psychics as presented earlier. What follows are some descriptions of psychic readers as seen through the eyes of their clients.

"There's a lot of misconception about psychics.

Most people who haven't been to psychics think it's gypsies, tea leaves, and that kind of thing. [It's not.] They generally work out of their homes. No candles or incense. They don't fit the gypsy image. They're usually just very middle class, not stereotypic" (Gilda<sup>1</sup>).

"They're middle-class, average people. They generally wore house-dresses, except one (who was also a psychologist), who had her hair done and wore a suit. All were middle-aged or over. The readings are always in their homes. No office. Nothing special. One had a desk. The religious psychics have a lot of religious pictures on the wall (Sue).

"[The psychic] didn't look at all like I'd expect a psychic to. She's your basic Jewish housewife. That's the way she looks; that's the way she acts. She's very vital. She's bouncing around the room all the time that she's greeting you and chattering away. [She lives] in a middle class suburban house. She read in her kitchen" (Cheryl).

Sarah said that none of the readers she saw fit the gypsy stereotype. "The most accurate [psychic] was a divorced housewife. Her kid kept interrupting, and you'd think you were sitting there with a housewife. In no instance did any of them have a mystique or aura about them. They were all quite ordinary."

Even a psychic who practices out of an occult center in Hollywood seemed ordinary, according to a client. "She was a large woman with a friendly face. She was not dressed in any particular costume and did not act "peculiar" at any time. Although the other people in the shop seemed to be from "another world," she did not. She was wearing pants and a blouse — something you'd wear around the house when you weren't expecting anyone" (Nan).

Just as psychics are described as ordinary-looking people by the clients interviewed, so are the settings of the readings. As described above, readings most commonly occur in the psychic's home, generally in a secluded room; often in the kitchen. Two clients described what appears to be a common setting and introduction to a psychic's home:

"She lived in the Valley<sup>2</sup>, in a middle class house. She gave me some Lipton tea when I walked in. We sat down at a formica table in her dining room. On the table was a little sign that said "No Smoking." There was a white lace plastic tablecloth. She didn't do anything to set up the atmosphere" (Renee).

"The readings were always done in their homes. Neat homes. Not ostentatious. All had special rooms to do the readings in. They would welcome you in their den or living room to relax you. Then they took you inside. Some burned incense, but stopped when I told them I didn't like it. There was no occult decor in the rooms where the readings were held" (Rosalie).

To illustrate the structure and tone of the psychic reading; one client described what was a fairly typical occurrence. The props (e.g., cards) may vary, but otherwise it is representative of many such readings:

She would start by telling you things. It's almost as though she didn't want you to ask questions before you started. She'd hand you the deck of cards, and in the meantime, she'd be chatting. The whole thing was structured as though you were having coffee with your grandmother or something. She'd chat while you shuffled until you felt comfortable with it and then pass the cards to her. Sometimes she would take them away from you. She'd be talking, but watching the cards. Then she'd lay out the cards. All the time it's like a conversation. Like you and I sitting and chatting. It's all so low-key that you don't realize that there's no way she could have known about some of the things she's been chatting with you about. I like to tape record the readings because this stuff can fly right by you. Because she doesn't present it with some kind of weighty indication that this is going to be a prediction or something. It's just like, "Oh, you're going to do this, that, and the other." It's very low-key in that sense, except that she herself has a lot of energy (Cheryl).

Why do people go to psychics, and what do they expect to get out of a reading? When asked, client responses fell into four major categories. A frequent response was that they were seeking clarification of their own thoughts and feelings.

"I would usually go when I was at a point when I didn't know what was happening in my life, when I was bored or worried about my next move and would like a little clarification as to what I was really thinking" (Alice).

Cheryle stated that she originally went out of curiosity, but continued because "it was like psychotherapy. (The psychic) would always be able to put her finger on the problem, even if I didn't know what it was."

Sarah's expectations are "to feel better! To have a better understanding of where I am presently, more than where I should be or where I will be. A greater level of self-acceptance and self-awareness."

Another common explanation for consulting a psychic is the need for direction or help in decision-making.

"I usually go when I'm faced with a lot of different options or I'm just generally confused and don't know which path to take" (Gilda).

When asked if and when she thought she might go to see another psychic, Renee replied, "(I would go) if I had some questions in my life. Confusion about big things, like a relationship, where you're living, what you're doing. Or if I had to make a decision about something I was unsure about." In a follow-up interview, Renee stated that she had indeed gone for another reading. She explained that she went because she was confused and indecisive about her current living situation and marriage. She felt she needed some direction in order to make a decision.

A related explanation for why clients patronize psychics is that they are **involved in a crisis situation and want to know what the outcome will be**. Rather than look for answers, they seek reassurance that the outcome will be favorable. Helen went during a time when her marriage was under great stress. She said she wanted to know what lay in store for her in the next six months.

Doris stated that she always went to see psychics during crises. She described herself during these times as being “in very deep water, very troubled. I wanted to get a hook on the future. The present was unbearable.”

Other explanations for seeking out psychics include searching for **answers to spiritual questions**, and a need to understand one’s own psychic abilities.

Edith stated that since her divorce, she has been in a search of “spiritual evolvment.” It was this, as well as curiosity, that first brought her to a psychic. “I’m the nosy type. I just don’t want to miss anything.” her expectations were “to find out about the big mysteries of life, whether it’s me holding myself back . . . or . . . I don’t think they’re going to take me by the hand and say, “OK. Here’s the magic path,” but very often they say, “Hey, this is the way you can do it.”

Fran hoped “to get some answers to what was going on in [her] life.” “I was especially interested in afterlife, because I came from a very religious background. I dropped that in my teens and needed something to fill that void.”

Joan’s first visit to a psychic followed a crisis situation concerning a man she was involved with at the time.

I had just been on a trip with a man I was involved with. The last week of the trip felt very heavy and bad. When we got back, it turned out that his son had broken his neck. It was a huge catastrophe. It just seemed so extreme. I was thinking, maybe there’s some reason in his son’s life (why this happened). Before that he had been kind of a juvenile delinquent, and now he was stopped. My upstairs neighbor who knew my boyfriend told me about a psychic — I don’t remember whether it was before or after the trip — so I thought I’d go see her.

The impetus for both Alland and Rosalie’s (who are related as nephew and maternal aunt) involvement with psychic readers was their **need for validation of their own psychic abilities**. Allan stated that he went because

I’ve had psychic things happen to me ever since I was a child, and to see — I knew the psychic I was going to see would know about me — and I always thought I was an abnormal child who was unusual — gifted in some sort of way. But other people wouldn’t believe me when I told them that things were going to happen. I wanted to know why I have all these coincidences in life, and could she see what I see in me?

Basically, Allan stated that he was seeking validation of what he thought were his abilities and confirmation that he “wasn’t nuts.”

Rosalie said that she had been to many psychiatrists following her nervous breakdown. Part of her problem, as she explained it was that she felt she was psychic. She was very fearful of it, however, because she did not really understand it. She felt that her abilities increased when she was pregnant and when her children were sick. Her psychiatrists refused to discuss this with her. In general, she was dissatisfied with psychiatrists and sought some other avenue of help. She said that she tried religion, but “that didn’t do it (because) I really had to talk.” The solution she arrived at was to see a psychic. Concerning what she saw as her psychic ability she stated, “I had a lot of fear of it. I wanted to be told that it was a gift.”

When questioned about the amount of stress they were under during the times they went to see psychics, nearly all clients who had been more than once (thus excluding the first-time entertainment/curiosity seekers) reported that they were under moderate to high stress. They expected the psychics to provide some sort of relief, either by clarifying their own feelings, helping them make important decisions, giving them direction, or reassuring them that things will be resolved favorably.

The reasons listed above are those which might also be given for going to see a psychotherapist. Nearly all clients interviewed had had some experience with psychotherapy, ranging from only one session with a psychologist to a few years in psychoanalysis. Why did they seek out a psychic for help, rather than a more traditional psychotherapist?

I feel the answer lies both in the nature of the kind of help they were seeking and in their belief systems. In most cases, clients were seeking help that could best be obtained by having some knowledge of the future. Most often, they were involved in stressful or crisis situations, and needed reassurance that things would be resolved. They needed a peek at the future, which is the exclusive province of the psychic.

The other important factor is their world view, one which tends to overlap more with that of psychics that it does with the mainstream Western scientific world view.<sup>3</sup> A series of world-view statements were abstracted from the comments of the first 10 psychics interviewed. These statements were then presented to 10 other psychics, and to the clients, in order to ascertain how well these statements matched their own ethos. They were given a choice of the following responses: Agree strongly, Agree somewhat, Possible, but not sure, Disagree. These statements are presented below, together with comments by clients. It should be noted that most clients did not elaborate, but simply responded to the fixed-choice questions.

**#1 Belief in the concept of Oneness — that all things are inter-related, connected aspects of an infinite whole.** “Everything is interconnected in some way, shape or form” (Jaime).

**#2 Time is nonlinear. It is possible for the past, present, and future to co-exist.** “Psychics operate in an undefined time space. That’s why when they predict, they’re totally off on time. Because there’s no time in present, past or future in whatever they’re picking up” (Sue).

**#3 All things, including thoughts, are composed of energy. Thoughts have the power to affect change in the world, both positively and negatively.** One client discussed his belief that he could affect the weather with his thoughts and wishes. For example, he said he thought he could make it rain.

**#4 There is a “spiritual” body as well as a physical body, and it is this body that contains our essence. Consciousness exists separate from the brain.** “I had an aunt and grandmother that passed away on my

mother's side of the family. Sometimes I have the feeling that they're near me. They're probably not. But I feel like somebody close to me is watching over me. I don't think protecting me, but just close to me" (Betty).

**#5 Belief in reincarnation and karma.** Reincarnation:

We evolve toward some end point. That's why it would be really neat to know what we're supposed to be here for. I think, to be a truly evolved human being, we don't have to come back here and struggle around here anymore. We're on a different level. Moses or Christ were highly evolved people who understood what the whole thing is about. They're not scrambling around. They can just see what was happening. And I think they're sent every now and then to help us realize that it's possible to be fully evolved. You don't have a body anymore. You go back to being in the Universal Mind. You're an integral part of it (Edith).

"I believe reincarnation is possible, though I have nothing to base it on. In southern California it seems natural. It fits in. I feel like a follower, and people I respect talk about it all the time. It makes it seem like an ordinary view of the world" (Sarah).

Karma: "I realize that we live in this body on earth, and we're destined to have things happen. If we're going to have these negative things happen, there's a reason for it. It's like, if you keep having all this bad luck, it's like maybe you did something wrong in another life and you're paying for it now" (Allan).

**#6 We are in control of our destiny. We all have purposes, which are predetermined, but how we fulfill them, and whether or not we do, is up to our free-will.**

I think astrology, numerology, palmistry, etc. are all the same thing. It's all the game plan you set up for yourself before you've got your body. You have this general outline that you set up for yourself. As you're born, it shows up in the stars, in your palm, in your numerology — they're all the same. The neat thing is the creativity to change whatever it is you've set up for yourself if you don't like it now that you're here. I've had psychics tell me that I've changed my destiny. . . I think it's total free-will as long as you understand that that's it. You're a slave to fate to the degree that you allow yourself to be a slave to fate. It's up to the person to realize that they create every minute (Alice).

I think that before we come into this life we know a plan, which we forget when we're here. But I think we know a plan. What I know I'm striving for and what I think most people in this kind of a search are trying to find is what they came here to work out. The thing is trying to find exactly the right thing to work out in life. I think that you have chosen a particular path, but I don't think there's somebody saying you've got to do so and so. It seems to me that you have chosen a way to behave, a way to think or do to be with people that you have worked out before you can here. And if you're smart, you stay open enough and work it out. **We** create our own fate (Edith).

**#7 There is meaning in the universe. Everything happens for a reason. Chance is not an important factor.**

"I used to get real frustrated if something didn't turn out the way I wanted it to. But now it doesn't bother me so much. Things happen for a reason" (Sarah). (Also recall Allan's statement with reference to karma, cited on page 12).

**Clients**

#1 Belief in Oneness	70% Agree strongly 10% Agree somewhat 10% Possible, not sure 10% Disagree	100% Agree strongly
#2 Non-linear concept of time	60% Agree strongly 0% Agree somewhat 0% Agree somewhat 0% Agree somewhat 30% Possible, not sure 10% Disagree	80% Agree strongly 20% Agree 20% Agree 20% Agree somewhat
#3 Thoughts as energy, with power to affect change	80% Agree strongly 10% Agree somewhat 10% Possible, not sure 0% Disagree	100% Agree strongly
#4 Existence of a spirit body	80% Agree strongly 20% Agree somewhat 0% Possible, not sure 0% Disagree	100% Agree strongly
#5 Reincarnation	55% Agree strongly 0% Agree somewhat 35% Possible, not sure 10% Disagree	100% Agree strongly
#5a Karma	45% Agree strongly 0% Agree somewhat 40% Possible, not sure 15% Disagree	100% Agree strongly
#6 Fate versus free will	60% Agree strongly 30% Agree somewhat 10% Possible, not sure 0% Disagree	70% Agree strongly 20% Agree somewhat 10% Possible, not sure
#7 Meaningful universe	60% Agree strongly 30% Agree somewhat 10% Possible, not sure 0% Disagree	60% Agree strongly 40% Agree somewhat

**Psychics**

As can be seen from the chart, there is some variability in the strength of the clients' beliefs. The figures provided above represent the clients as a group, rather than as individuals. When their responses were examined individually, however, certain correlations were suggested.

There was a strong positive correlation between the number of visits to a psychic and the degree to which psychics' beliefs are shared by clients. Those who had been to psychics five or more times responded "Agree strongly" to all world-view statements posed. Helen, a client who had been only once, "Agreed strongly" with only one statement — that about belief in Oneness, "agreed somewhat" to a

meaningful universe and the relationship between fate and free-will, and thought the other statements were "possible, but she was not sure." Another client, Kevin, who had seen three psychics on the spur of the moment<sup>4</sup>, "agreed strongly" only with the concept of thought as energy. He "agreed somewhat" to the ideas of a meaningful universe, a spirit body, and the relationship between fate and free-will; the rest he thought were "possible, but he was not sure."

There also appears to be a positive correlation between acceptance of the beliefs described and their own experience with the paranormal and altered states of consciousness (e.g., meditation and out-of-body experiences). All those who "agreed strongly" with every statement also reported their belief that they had psychic abilities and/or had had several paranormal experiences, and/or had regularly experienced altered states of consciousness. Those with the strongest beliefs tended to report experiencing all the above. The client who said that she did not believe she had any psychic abilities, had no paranormal experiences, nor had ever experienced an altered state of consciousness was Helen, the same client who had the fewest visits and the weakest concordance of beliefs with psychics. There was also a positive correlation between their personal experience with the paranormal and the degree to which they elaborated on the statements made. Not surprisingly, those who had the greatest experience with nonordinary reality communicated their thoughts most eloquently.

When asked what kinds of things they thought influenced their beliefs, clients reported books such as the "Seth" books by Jane Roberts, *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg* by Joseph Pearce, *Cosmic Consciousness* by Richard M. Bucke, and books by Carlos Castaneda, Brugh Joy, Jeane Dixon, and Catherine Marshall. One client (Alice) felt that her beliefs were strongly influenced by her experience in Scientology.

Other clients reported being influenced by their own experiences with paranormal phenomena and altered states of consciousness. For example, Jerome traced his beliefs to the time he was hypnotized in the ninth or tenth grade. He said that he could not pick up a chair when hypnotically given that suggestion. He stated that "this showed me the existence of a whole different order of reality." He also said that he has had experiences, such as *deja vu*, that have not been explained to his satisfaction. Those who reported having strong psychic abilities stated that their beliefs were influenced by them.

Another influential factor mentioned by a few of the clients was California culture. Earlier, Sarah's statement regarding the effect of her friends' belief in reincarnation on her own beliefs was reported. Helen stated that her beliefs have changed a great deal in the last few years. She said that five years ago she would have disagreed with every statement presented about belief systems. She says that she is changing due to

the culture in California. There are people — compared to the culture I come from in England — people of my age, well, people of my background don't go to see a psychiatrist, they don't go to

psychics, they don't go to guided imagery therapists. [These are all things she has done since coming to California.] I mean, that's all part of crazy America to them and crazy California. I think I still have that feeling about California. It's a little weird. But at the same time, I'm appreciating it more and understanding it more.

Although Alice does not see California as a source of influence affecting her beliefs, it has had an effect. "When I was little, I always had an interest in this kind of stuff. I saw angels in church, had [psychic] dreams, etc. I shut them down when I was a kid because no one else would talk about it or could relate to it. Now it's surfaced because it's OK in California to do that kind of stuff."

In summary, psychics and their clients share to a great extent a world view which is different from that of mainstream society. Those clients who have had the greatest number of psychic readings are those who share the psychics' beliefs to the greatest extent<sup>5</sup>, supporting Frank's (1974) and Torrey's (1972) contention that a shared belief system is an important aspect of all forms of psychotherapy. In fact, one client stated that her preference for psychics over traditional psychotherapists had to do with the fact that the therapist's "world view is very likely to be non-spiritual. In which case they would be interpreting everything from things I don't believe in" (Joan). There was also a strong positive correlation between perceived experience with the paranormal and altered states of consciousness, and the degree to which the views presented were believed.

### Conclusions

There are two primary aims of this paper. The first is to dispel the common stereotype of the psychic as the mysterious and exotic gypsy fortuneteller. As noted, many of the psychic readers living in Los Angeles are otherwise ordinary housewives, who happen to work within the paranormal. An important point, which is only implied in this article, is that they tend to see what they do as very ordinary and natural. They do not see psi as something magical or occult, but as a natural ability and potential that we all have.

A second goal is to examine the question of why people go to psychic readers, beyond the explanation of mere entertainment. As described, most people who repeatedly go to psychics do so because they have a problem which they feel can best be dealt with by having some knowledge of the future. Their own personal experiences with paranormal phenomena and altered states of consciousness are linked with their belief that a psychic will be able to help them. In many cases, their concerns are of a spiritual nature, and their resolution must take into account the spiritual nature of human beings, in a world in which such things as spirit bodies, reincarnation, and Oneness exist. In our society at this time, psychics are among the leading proponents of this ethos.

While it is not completely clear whether or not the psychics actually possess the abilities they lay claim to, this issue is not relevant. What **is** relevant is the client's belief in the psychic's abilities. It is this belief, which includes a belief in a world different from that described by traditional

Western science, that makes the psychic reader the most logical choice for help and guidance.

One final point, which will bring us back to the opening: It is perhaps no accident that the phenomena just described are taking place in Los Angeles, California. Psychic readings are a big business here. There are over a hundred psychics listed in various psychic directories. There are psychic fairs in which 10 to 20 psychics will gather in one location and give brief mini-readings for approximately \$5 to \$7 every weekend. California has a reputation for openness. People who share this trait are likely to be attracted to the state. In addition, "New Age" ideas are readily available. As some clients mentioned earlier, they feel comfortable holding such beliefs here — they seem commonplace and do not meet in more conservative parts of the country. To repeat one client's statement — about reincarnation, but applicable to other "New Age" or psychic beliefs as well. "In southern California it seems natural. It fits in . . . People I respect talk about it all the time. It makes it seem like an ordinary view of the world."

<sup>1</sup>All names of clients and psychics used in this article are pseudonyms.

<sup>2</sup>The San Fernando Valley is an almost stereotypically middle class suburban area of Los Angeles. Since housing prices are generally lower than in other west side "white" middle class areas, it has traditionally been a popular place for young couples with children to live. Most of the homes are tract homes.

<sup>3</sup>Tart (1975) outlines some of the basic assumptions underlying Western thought. These include: (1) "The universe is dead; Life is only an infinitesimal, insignificant part of the universe;" (2) "What is real is what can be perceived by the senses or by a physical instrument, and what can be perceived by the senses can be detected by a physical instrument;" (3) "Only the present moment exists;" (4) "Man has no function in a purposeless universe;" (5) "The universe is a harsh, uncaring, unresponsive place;" (6) "The physical body is the only body we have."

<sup>4</sup>He happened upon them at places like fairs and restaurants and impulsively decided to have a reading.

<sup>5</sup>The cause and effect relationship is not clear; however, it is likely that a feedback relationship is involved. That is, the more times a client sees a psychic, the more his/her belief system will be influenced by the psychic, and the more the client's beliefs overlap with the psychic's, the more likely he/she is to return for further readings.

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# Mediumistic Controls: Unconscious Personalities, or What?

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**Alan Vaughan**

*Alan Vaughan is the author of five books on parapsychology, including The Edge of Tomorrow on precognition applications. He formerly edited Reincarnation Report and Psychic magazine and has published 150 articles and reviews on psychic phenomena. As a researcher turned psychic, he works as a consultant to the Mobius Society. His recent paper on psi applications was published in Analog.*

The exotic control personalities exhibited by trance mediums have provoked great consternation among scientists who have studied mediumistic or channeling phenomena. Although the information provided by the mediums' controls often proved valid and accurate, the trance personalities themselves seemed to be a mixture of the absurd and the obvious. Perhaps a mediumistic control is really a fragment of the medium's own personality manifested in much the same way as the pathological phenomenon of multiple personality.

## **Multiple Personality**

A recent case of a multiple personality disorder evidenced perplexing phenomena similar to those of the mediumistic channeling experience. *The Minds of Billy Milligan* (1982) by Daniel Keyes describes the twenty-four personalities that inhabit the mind and body of Billy Milligan, a young man who came into notoriety in 1977 when he was tried for rape in Columbus, Ohio, and found not guilty by reason of insanity. Author-reporter Keyes interviewed a fused personality, who called himself The Teacher and who had memory of what the other 23 personalities had done. Billy insisted that they be called *people* — since to him they were members of a family, who took turns "taking the spot" or controlling Billy.

The person who acts much like a medium's "gatekeeper" personality is named Arthur; he studies physics and medicine and speaks with an upper-class British accent. Arthur's job is to keep the "undesirables" from "taking the spot" and letting the more helpful personalities manifest. Ragen is called forth when Billy is in danger. He speaks with a Slavic accent, is a master of karate, and is expert with firearms. If Billy needs to escape from somewhere, Tommy manifests to take off handcuffs, squirm out of straitjackets, and even rig up telephone bugging systems. Several of the persons are skilled at painting, each having a different specialty.

Keyes' book ends with a provocative note: He received a postcard from Ragen written in Croatian.

I telephoned Keyes in Columbus to inquire if any normal explanation could account for the postcard. Keyes explained that after the book was written he was able to interview the Teacher again and ask that very question. The Teacher said that Billy had been sent to Florida for a while as a boy and had learned Croatian from some Gypsies there —whence Ragen's knowledge. Keyes added that a

mysterious postcard from Arthur—written in Arabic—was now explained by Arthur taking up the study of Arabic.

Although there is no clear evidence that Billy's personalities exhibit any "paranormal" knowledge, they do manifest extraordinary levels of skill attainment and creativity that seem beyond the known capacities of Billy.

Multiple personality disorder has been used by modern skeptics such as Ian Wilson (1982) to explain channeled personalities. That explanation fails on two counts: (1) The mediums are perfectly sane; and (2) Psychiatry has no explanation for multiple personality, and therefore cannot use it to explain something else.

Yet compelling similarities between multiple personality and mediumship suggest a similar kind of brain-mind functioning but with radically different outcomes. The mediums are usually in control of the personality who comes through and when. The victim of multiple personality has no conscious control over his or her condition. Could it be that the mind has a natural capacity for channeling, which malfunctions in the case of multiple personality disorder? If we regard channeling and multiple personality as positive and negative aspects of the same enigma of mind, we may come closer to finding an answer.

An important question about the multiple personality condition that may have import for mediumistic channeling is: Do the different personalities have different physiologies?

Keyes states that analysis of the separate personalities of Billy showed different brainwave patterns. A formal study by Frank W. Putnam, a psychiatrist at the National Institute of Mental Health, showed that the splitoff personalities of ten patients diagnosed as having multiple personality disorder did in fact exhibit different brainwave patterns. A control study with ten "normals," who were asked to invent splitoffs, showed no distinctions. A similar study by Collin Pitblado also found distinctive differences in four splitoff personalities from the host personality.

Keyes told me of recent research with Billy in which galvanic skin responses differed markedly between personalities — even showing a dramatic difference in a test session in which Billy changed from one personality to another. So, if physiology is the measure of independence of personality, splinter personalities do indeed have the right to be called "people." Are these "people" created by some

clever, subtle process of the unconscious? Are they manifestations of an independent consciousness that is channeled? Or something in between?

### **Mediumistic Controls**

Toward the end of her life, Eileen Garrett, reflecting on fifty years of mediumship and research into the nature of her trance controls, made this ambiguous statement: "I prefer to think of the controls as principals of the subconscious. . . . But whether these entities do contain a consciousness of their own is a question that, I will, I am sure, find an answer, although not in my lifetime" (Garrett, 1968, p. 92).

Research with Garrett's two principle controls, Uvani and Abdul Latif, began in the 1920s in London when she worked as a medium at the British College of Psychic Science. Trained in deep trance by Hewatt McKenzie, founder of the College, Garrett expressed ambiguous attitudes toward her controls. For one thing, she never met them or talked to them. She was always in deep trance when they came through. McKenzie taught Uvani how to speak English better and to properly conduct himself as a "gatekeeper" to bring through good evidence of "spirits."

Extensive medical research into healing by Dr. R. H. Saunders worked mainly with the Abdul Latif personality, which resulted in the book *Health* (1928). The control gave his full name as Abdul Latif ibn Yusuf, born in Baghdad in 1162 and died in 1231 at the age of 69. He claimed to be a physician in the court of Saladin. Baron Silvestre de Lacy has transcribed into French the references to Abdul Latif in Arabic literature. A manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, of Abdul Latif's travels in Egypt in 1200 was known to Dr. Saunders; it was published in English, with accompanying Arabic text, in 1967 by Allen & Unwin, under the title *The Eastern Key*.

Uvani told Dr. Saunders that his name meant "The Son of Happiness," but that his real name was Yusuf ben Hafik ben Ali, whose family in Basrah exported fruit a hundred years ago. Uvani said he was a soldier and that he died fighting the Turks when he was 48.

An investigation into the possibility that these controls had independent consciousness was undertaken in the 1930s by Mrs. A. M. Kaulback, whom I interviewed extensively in 1967. An account of her researches, *What Lies Beyond?*, was published in a small wartime edition by Rider and has apparently escaped much notice. Her account tells of her learning to do automatic (or "inspired") writing in which Uvani and Abdul Latif were among the regular communicators. She had first met Uvani in a sitting with Garrett. For several years the two controls conducted what we now call remote-viewing experiments. The controls described pictures of what her two sons, Bill and Ron, were doing in India and Tibet. The boys kept diaries and commented later on the accuracy of the psychic descriptions, which was impressive.

Important to the question of the controls, both Uvani and Abdul Latif wrote through Mrs. Kaulback when they would come through other mediums to give her evidence of their

independence. When Garrett returned to London in 1936 after two years in the United States, Kaulback arranged two sittings with her. In the first setting, Uvani acknowledged the work he has been doing through Kaulback and suggested that "the American doctor" be invited to witness another sitting. The American doctor, Dr. Jacob Lindsay, was present then when Uvani came through Garrett and named the other mediums through whom he had spoken to Kaulback. These cross-correspondences tallied with the notes taken by Kaulback at sittings with the named mediums.

Mrs. Garrett apparently dismissed this investigation. For one thing, Mrs. Kaulback was a spiritualist — and Garrett did not believe spiritualists could conduct scientific research. Yet I have met few researchers in mediumship whose integrity and concern about the accuracy of evidence equal that of Mrs. Kaulback. Of course I got to know her far better than Garrett did.

The next chapter in the research of Eileen Garrett's controls must be the most confusing experimental work ever done in parapsychology. To add to the confusion, the two major researchers had the same name — but spelled differently: Whately Carrington (W.C.) and Hereward Carrington (H.C.). Initial research in Britain by W. C. with the trance medium Mrs. Leonard and her child control "Feda" showed that word-association tests gave different reaction times between medium and control, which should have established his hypothesis that they were different people. But the reaction times turned out to mirror each other — "they were related more or less like the irregularities on the two halves of a broken biscuit" — which convinced W. C. (C-1, 1946, p. 205) that "Feda" was only a secondary personality of Mrs. Leonard" (Carrington, 1946, p. 205).

The same kind of "counter-similarity" was found by W. C. in research with Garrett and Uvani, whose reaction times mirrored each other.

Research in the United States by H. C. with association word lists showed very different kinds of reactions to the words. When H. C. said *strand*, Garrett replied "London" and "Piccadilly;" while Uvani replied "dark hair" and "darkness." When H. C. said *money*, Garrett replied "clothes;" while Uvani said, "flocks," apparently meaning flocks of sheep that were worth money. It went on like that. H. C.'s initial report supported the independent agency hypothesis. Criticism by W. C. induced H. C. to backtrack and concede that the control was probably a secondary personality—exhibiting "psychic polarization" from the medium. Yet H. C. maintained that, considering also the "third party" entities who communicated through Garrett, his experimental evidence was at least *indicative* of survival. After all, those reaction words were so very different, and so were galvanic skin response measurements.

H. C. then quotes the final conclusion from W. C., now tempered with "third party" entity evidence, in a masterly display of eloquent evasion that at least put the question into scientific perspective:

"If nothing more important than a few million pounds or the fate of a couple of nations were involved, I should feel disposed to declare

flatly that the operation of some extraneous influence had been established, and leave it at that. But since the admission of such a conclusion, arrived at for the first time in history by the use of exact quantitative methods, would open up prospects beside which the achievements of relativity-theory would be of no more than parochial interest, I prefer to make precaution doubly cautious and not to commit myself . . . (Cited in Carrington, 1957, p. 128).

The research by Carrington and Carrington scarcely resolved Mrs. Garrett's own confusion about her controls. In the early 1960s she, as President of the Parapsychology Foundation, commissioned Jungian analyst Ira Progoff to do a formal depth-psychology study of her controls. The result, *Image of an Oracle* (Progoff, 1964), gives readers a better idea of how the controls would perform as teachers rather than getting to the bottom of it all. In addition to Uvani (whose name Progoff changes to "Ouvani" for some unknown reason) and Abdul Latif, two additional controls manifested: Tahoteh, giver of the word, and Ramah, the principle of life. Uvani and Abdul Latif could not be shaken from their stories that they had lived and died as men. But Tahoteh and Ramah claimed that they were not spirits but were divine principles who had manifested from time to time throughout history. Progoff identified them all as "dynatypes" — a special kind of archetype drawn from Mrs. Garrett's own subconscious.

In the late 1960s psychologist Lawrence LeShan (1976) had a number of sittings with Garrett and formed the opinion that the controls were created for the occasions of mediumistic sittings and had no independent existence. Once when LeShan asked Uvani what he had been doing since they had last talked, the usually composed Uvani stuttered and could not answer. To LeShan that meant that Uvani did not exist between sessions. Though one might well ask it a consciousness exists in another dimension outside of time, why should the concept of time have any real meaning?

In an interview in *Psychic* magazine shortly before her death in 1970, Garrett maintained that she still didn't know what the controls were. She mentioned that Carl Jung told her that she "somehow had access to the far reaches of my own subconsciousness as well as the collective unconscious."

"Yet, on a practical level, Garrett treated her controls as real beings. She often joked about Abdul Latif being the "traveling salesman" of the Spirit World — since he came through so many other mediums. Yet she was never firmly convinced that these other appearances of Abdul Latif were really him and not just imitations.

The late Laura Dale, editor of the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, told me an anecdote that suggested that Garret really believed in Abdul Latif when the chips were down. Encountering Mrs. Garrett on the street in New York some years ago, Mrs. Dale poured out her anxieties about her prize boxer dog that was in a vet hospital with an incurable disease. The vet had told her that no dog had ever recovered from this disease. Garrett replied, "Don't worry. I'll send Abdul Latif."

The next day Dale received a call from the vet. The dog

had miraculously recovered. The vet wrote up the case for a medical journal as the first dog's recovery from that disease. He did not mention any possible intervention by Abdul Latif. But certainly Dale and Garrett regarded the reality of the control as a most helpful working hypothesis.

A more provocative dimension of evidence came to light in 1967 when British medium Douglas Johnson was attending the Parapsychology Foundation's conference on LSD and ESP in the South of France. Johnson told a number of those attending, including myself, how he had ended his own skeptical ambiguity about his Chinese control "Chiang."

While on a lecture tour in South Africa in 1963, Johnson was invited to a materialization seance held by a private group whose medium, Alec Harris, had migrated from Wales. The seance room was lit with a red light. A number of entities materialized, including Chiang, who was under five feet tall. Chiang walked around the circle and struck up a conversation with a woman who, on Johnson's visit to South Africa five years before, had had a trance sitting with him. Now Chiang continued the conversation begun five years before.

Chiang then went up to Johnson and held his hand, with one of his little hands above and one below; he had extremely long fingernails. Chiang and Johnson conversed for a few minutes — enough to convince Johnson that Chiang was absolutely real and independent from Johnson.

Johnson regretted that the experience could not be repeated, since Alec Harris was no longer living.

Yet that experience suggests an experimental protocol. A number of mediums in California claim to channel the same entity, "Dr. Peebles." If a sitter has a conversation with Peebles through one medium and is able to continue it, with cross-correspondences through another medium who channels Dr. Peebles, such evidence might at least establish that the independent existence of Peebles is the simplest explanation.

Of course such experiments were done by Mrs. Kaulback years ago but they were not done under laboratory conditions. Proponents of the Super-ESP theory would doubtless be ready to explain away any positive results; yet until the Super-ESP theory becomes more than an after-the-fact universal solvent for any survival evidence, it has no scientific value — it makes no predictions whatever.

What kind of research could resolve the question of mediumistic controls? If EEG studies and further galvanic skin response tests could definitely establish that controls show different patterns from mediums, we could at least simplify the problem — they would be as different as splitoffs are from the host personality of multiple personality disorder victims. Of course neither can explain the other, but, together, they may clarify the question of how (and indeed why?) channeling phenomena occur.

So far only two hypotheses have been investigated: (1) Controls are spirits from another dimension; and (2) Controls are unconscious fabrications.

A more profitable hypothesis for investigation is suggested by a statement made by Uvani to Hereward Carrington, when Uvani was asked how he controlled the medium. He replied that he worked on a "split of the underconsciousness" and said that he could make the "underconscious" into a "figment" not only for his ideas but for other entities. That seems to mean that the medium is splitting off part of the unconscious into a separate entity, which in turn is manipulated by an outside agency.

Uvani's explanation might reconcile the paradoxes of the research by Carington and Carrington: the medium's splitoff has a relationship to the medium but is also capable of being a telepathic receptacle for outside entities. The resultant communicating entity would thus represent a blend from the medium and the entity channeled. Gracia-Fay Ellwood's analysis of the classic Soal-Cooper-Davis case suggests such a blend was happening there — even when the communicating "entity" was still alive. Abdul Latif's statements made to Kaulback about his experience of coming through different mediums compared it to what one might experience in talking to different people — taking on their mood and adjusting oneself to their distinctive personality.

If Uvani's explanation is true, it would mean that the process of channeling is rarely clearcut — seldom amounts to "possession" by the control — but is more appropriately viewed as a process of *blending*.

Yet, if a control can be shown to come through more than one medium and give evidence of what it has said through another medium, we could fairly conclude that the control exhibits independence of consciousness, regardless of what percentage of the entity's consciousness comes from the medium and what percentage comes from an outside agency.

If the secondary personalities of multiple personality disorder victims are akin to mediumistic controls and are capable of manifesting independently — even if they were created by the victim's unconscious — an excellent experiment might be to attempt to have a medium channel such a splitoff personality and ask it to provide evidence of cross-correspondence. For instance, if Billy Milligan's "Arthur" can manifest through medium X and write in Arabic what he wrote to Daniel Keyes, we might have a case forraying that both mediums and victims of multiple personality disorder share a common experience — channeling consciousness that exhibits independence of the channel.

If we can establish that, then the next question — just what is it that is being channeled? — can be argued with more precision.

Until then, we may have little to say that updates this argument of F. W. H. Myers from *Human Personality* (1903, vol. 2, p. 191):

The theory of possession actually supplies us with a powerful method of co-ordinating and explaining many earlier groups of phenomena, if only we will consent to explain them in a way which at first sight seemed extreme in its assumptions — seemed unduly prodigal of the marvelous. Yet as to that difficulty we have learnt by this time that no explanation of psychological phenomena is really simple. . . .

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## Reviews

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### THE PSYCHIC THREAD: PARANORMAL AND TRANS— PERSONAL ASPECTS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY.

by Elizabeth E. Mintz, Ph.D.

in consultation with Gertrude R. Schmeidler,  
Ph.D. New York, NY: Human Sciences Press, 1983.  
Pp. 232. No price given (cloth). LC 82-15716.

*Reviewed by Jule Eisenbud*

*Dr. Eisenbud is an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Colorado Health Science Center.*

This book is a valuable compendium of various aspects of psi as they conceivably turn up in different kinds of psychotherapy. The author, Dr. Elizabeth E. Mintz, while thoroughly trained in the techniques of classical Freudian psychoanalysis, has had a wide experience in other types of psychotherapy, including Jungian and gestalt therapy, bioenergetics, and encounter groups. She has conducted teaching seminars in these areas for many years.

The opening chapter, on *The Nature of Psi*, provides a summary overview of some of the phenomenology of psychic experience, with the emphasis throughout on unconscious motivation and human needs. As far as the therapeutic situation goes, the author has little interest in psi for psi's sake and is not too concerned with questions of validation. She feels that the decision as to whether or not to invoke the psi hypothesis, or to bring it into discussion with the patient, should depend solely on therapeutic considerations: Will its application in a given context be helpful to a particular patient at a given time?

In examples drawn from her own experience, as well as from the experience of therapists whose work she has supervised, Dr. Mintz tries to demonstrate where the application of the psi hypothesis might be warranted and where, for one reason or another, it may not be. Some patients, for example, have only poorly developed powers of reality testing and the notion of telepathic communication should be introduced into discussion with them only after careful consideration. Indeed, "If the patient has paranoid tendencies, the therapist should be especially careful not to support a fear that others can read his thoughts, or that his suspicions — for instance, that someone is trying to poison him — may be supernatural messages" (p. 52).

Aware, however, that therapists too may be somewhat

deficient in reality testing, Mintz warns (p. 78, fn.) against the "dangers of yielding uncritically to spontaneous impulses" to take shots in the dark. On the other hand, she is just as wary of the risks of "theoretical formulations attained entirely through the intellect" (p. 88) and does not hesitate, therefore, to invoke the psi hypothesis intuitively where therapeutic advantage may be gained from its application. Data about the therapist that may conceivably have been paranormally obtained, for example, "may be of importance to the therapeutic situation . . . and should not be ignored" (p. 68). Since "paranormal communication may be a two-way process," moreover, and "may involve the needs of the therapist as well as those of the patient, any indication of its occurrence should impel the therapist to take a closer look at his own feelings" (p. 68).

In accord with her classical psychoanalytical leanings, Mintz shows herself to be consistently sensitive to the subtle transference and countertransference currents in which the psi experience may be embedded. These may show up particularly in dreams, which, typically manifesting the Freudian mechanisms of distortion, are often "shaped by the patient's feelings toward the therapist, both realistic and transference, which may be either unconscious or which have not been adequately dealt with in the course of therapy" (p. 59). Similarly, somatic symptoms — a pain, headache, chill — experienced by either patient or therapist, as well as seemingly inappropriate remarks or gestures (e.g., the therapist getting up and going to the window for no particular reason) may be paranormally mediated expressions of conscious or unconscious transference or countertransference needs or fantasies.

Equally complex currents may be seen to operate in group sessions of one sort or another, especially in several-day so-called marathon sessions where role-playing techniques are often utilized. Occasionally, uncanny choices of role-playing partners may be made, as when a man who dreamed of being attacked by a vampire was asked to play the vampire's role and to select a woman in the group to be his victim. He selected a woman whom he pretended to attack in proper vampire fashion only to learn later that she alone in the group suffered from vampire nightmares.

In a chapter on *Transpersonal Experiences in Groups: Myth, Ritual, Symbol*, episodes of fantasied acting out of communication with the dead to release dormant, unexpressed grief and guilt are presented quite movingly. Again, uncannily apt selections can sometimes be made when choosing someone in the circle to represent the deceased person, and at times it is almost as if the person selected picks up mannerisms and phrases of the deceased in a way transcending normal means of information



transfer. On occasion, also, age-old myths (e.g., the Oedipus) are acted out in these encounters, with the principal participants and the group itself seemingly caught up in the mysterious power of something that, as if in conformance to Jung's concepts of archetypes and the collective unconscious, appears to reside in the depths of every personality. Mintz nevertheless expresses certain reservations about facile interpretations of what is transpiring in such episodes and again emphasizes that the question of possible paranormality is, in any case, secondary to therapeutic considerations.

In a chapter on *Mysticism and Madness* a scholarly attempt is made to assess the many different viewpoints about mystical and mystical-seeming manifestations often seen in acute psychotic episodes, from the absurdly reductionistic (e.g., that such manifestations are *ipso facto* diagnostic of schizophrenia) to what this reviewer feels to be the egregiously misinformed contention that all schizophrenia is simply the misinterpretation of attempts at spiritual self-healing that have merely gone off the tracks. It would be gratifying if the "Old joke" printed at the head of this chapter — that if you talk to God that's prayer, while if you talk to God and he answers back, that's schizophrenia — were diagnostically accurate or even useful, but unfortunately things are not this simple.

In the next to the last of her ten chapters, *Therapeutic Pathways Toward the Transpersonal*, Mintz — apparently in an effort to cover all bases — gets into areas of questionable relevance to accepted notions in parapsychology (as she herself seems to indicate at various points en route). Some of the material and clinical examples presented — the use of suggested symbolic fantasies to gain access to hidden parts of the self, guided imagery, meditation, and other techniques for achieving altered states of consciousness — while well described and conceivably useful in psychotherapy, have little of the conventionally considered "psychic" about them and could as well be interpreted as pathways to the unconscious. Of one of these, the Fischer-Hoffman "Quadrinity Method," which claims guidance by discarnate entities, Mintz writes (p. 192): "The alternative explanation, which is less spectacular, is perhaps equally awesome: that Hoffman's unconscious mind synthesized the Process from his reading and observation." She is just as cautious with Silva Mind Control, which claims to elicit latent telepathic powers, although she acknowledges that it may be "helpful for some people" (p. 194). She also casts a wary eye at self-proclaimed Eastern mystic gurus, preferring instead what can be achieved via the peak experiences described by Jung and Maslow.

The final three pages of Chapter Nine are devoted to psychic healing. While acknowledging that this might play a part in effective psychotherapy, Mintz nevertheless finds it "dismaying that many psychics who consider themselves healers offer services as paid psychotherapists without theoretical or technical training" (p. 198). In evaluating the uses of transpersonal techniques, she writes (p. 199): "For some patients, they may help bring about a joyous

widening of horizons; others may use preoccupation with mystical experiences as a dreamy way of avoiding the world of taxes, automobiles and alarm clocks in which we must all function."

In her final chapter, *Death, Mourning, and the Psychotherapist*, Mintz expresses herself positively about the value of therapy with persons facing imminent death but she inveighs against therapists trying to encourage beliefs, such as in the existence of an afterlife, that they themselves may not hold. Recognizing, however, that the way one interprets NDE's and other possible indications of survival after death is clearly a matter of one's own philosophy and values, she concludes that "Luckily, the practicing clinician is not required to make such a decision but need only regard the feelings and beliefs of his patient with open-mindedness and respect" (p. 211).

Superb clinical sense comes through on every page of *The Psychic Thread*, whose insights and sound judgements could provide valuable guidance to psychotherapists of every persuasion, whether or not strongly inclined toward the validity of the psi hypothesis. Except for a somewhat distracting plethora of footnotes, the book flows along in clear, highly readable style and is graced by a good index and bibliography.

## THE STRANGE CASE OF RUDI SCHNEIDER

by Anita Gregory

(Metuchen, NJ, & London: Scarecrow Press, 1985. 444 Pp. \$29.50. Cloth)

Reviewed by Carlos S. Alvarado

Since the beginnings of organized psychical research in the nineteenth century there have been numerous reports of observations and investigations with so-called physical mediums. Examples are well-known individuals such as D. D. Home, Franek Kluski, William Stainton Moses, Eusapia Palladino, Stella C., and Willy and Rudi Schneider. The book reviewed here deals with the last mentioned individuals, who is considered by the author to be "one of the most fully documented and most exhaustively researched claimants to physical paranormality of all times" (p. xvii).

The author, who unfortunately died before this book was published, is said to have written a long book on the Schneider mediumship in 1966, of which the present publication is "a revised and reduced version."

Gregory became convinced of the reality of Schneider's phenomena during her research, and this is evident from her discussion of the subject matter of the book. However, she states that she has tried "to disentangle the truth," rather than assume the role of "an apologist making a case" (p. xvi) for the phenomena. The mediumship, as stated in the introduction, is considered important because: (1) it



stands "at the intersection of traditional psychical research and modern parapsychology," and (2) there is "a great wealth of papers and letters that shed important light on social and psychological factors that affected [Schneider's] investigation" (p. xvii).

The first two chapters present information on Schneider's early years. Born in Branau, Austria on July 27, 1908, Schneider was the youngest of six surviving male children of Josef and Elise Schneider. Interesting information on the beginnings of the family's involvement in mediumistic activities in 1919 is presented, although I wish more attention would have been given to personal aspects of Schneider. Little is said about his early (or later) life as an individual, separate from his activities as a medium.

Several examples of the phenomena and the persons involved in their investigation are mentioned. Some of the latter are Eric J. Dingwall, Karl Gruber, Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, and Hans Thirring. Among the interesting aspects of the early research into Schneider's mediumship are the doubts of Dingwall, who is described as "alternating between the hypotheses of fraud and genuineness" (p. 48), and Thirring's "rejection of Schrenck-Notzing as an experimenter" (p. 46). These were some of the first of several interpersonal conflicts and differences of opinion that characterized research on this mediumship case.

The chapter also includes mention of journals of seance proceedings kept by the medium's father, and of Schrenck-Notzing's "laboratory" studies of Schneider's physical phenomena. Schrenck-Notzing used an adaptation of Karl Krall's (known for his publications on the Elberfeld horses) system of electrical control of the medium. However, Gregory does not give a reference to Schrenck-Notzing's writings about this method of control, or mention that the use of electrical controls of mediums had some precedent.<sup>2</sup> The concept of laboratory studies of mediumistic phenomena has a long history in psychical research,<sup>3</sup> but these and later developments in the Schneider mediumship are not put in the context of such tradition.

In the third chapter Gregory discusses several criticisms of Schneider's mediumship, including those of Walter Franklin Prince and Malcolm Bird. The author's detailed negative reviews of the criticisms seem generally convincing. An objection is the lack of background information on important individuals such as Bird and Prince, both of whom had plenty of experience in mediumistic investigations before sitting with Schneider. It seems that Gregory did not consider it important to give information on the career in psychical research of these men. Bird is of particular interest, because it is now known that both before and after his sitting with Schneider he studied the American medium Margery and suppressed information about fraud on her part.<sup>4</sup>

The chapter includes a most interesting discussion of sexual aspects of Schneider's mediumship. Some observations suggested that a discharge of semen

occurred during the seances. But, as Gregory writes, the statement "that this occurred *invariably* during positive sittings went beyond the evidence, since Rudi's underwear was not, so far as we have any information, systematically examined afterwards" (p. 124).<sup>5</sup>

In the next two chapters Gregory chronicles research on Schneider conducted in London and Paris. Key figures here were Harry Price and Eugene Osty, though, again, little background information is offered on their previous experiences with mediums or ideas related to psychical research. The fifth chapter is particularly important since it is the best (and perhaps the first) extended discussion and summary in English of the studies of Frenchmen Eugene and Marcel Osty. They used infrared rays to surround objects to be affected by telekinesis. Interruption of the rays activated cameras so that movements could be recorded automatically on photographic plates. Initially, several magnesium flashes occurred but the target object was not moved and the developed photographs did not show anything abnormal. The apparatus were checked and retested but no evidence of malfunctioning was obtained. As Gregory writes:

At this point was born what I believe to be the most important scientific hypothesis that was ever formulated in connection with physical phenomena: that Rudi, in his efforts to move objects by paranormal means, emitted an invisible force or energy or material substance, too subtle or ephemeral to be registered photographically, but capable of occulting infrared radiation and thus releasing a magnesium flash (p. 182).

Further descriptions of this research, such as the correlations between the medium's breathing rate and infrared ray occultations, are fascinating reading and represent an important chapter of experimental and instrumental research on alleged paranormal physical phenomena. Gregory's above-quoted statement seems to imply that the idea of the exteriorization of a force from the human body to explain physical phenomena was first proposed in relation to the Ostys' research with Schneider. However, there are considerable precedents in concepts of "psychic forces," "fluids," or "human radiations" to explain telekinesis and other phenomena.<sup>6</sup> Eugene Osty was aware of at least some of these ideas, as seen in his mention, years before his work with Schneider, of the action of the medium's thoughts on his or her own exteriorized substance.<sup>7</sup> The point to be made here is that Osty's "important scientific hypothesis" did not develop in a vacuum, but should be seen as part of a long tradition of concepts of force in psychical research and spiritualism, and not only in the limited setting of the observations regarding infrared ray occultations.

In the sixth chapter, most of which has been published elsewhere,<sup>8</sup> Gregory discusses the way Harry Price used Schneider's mediumship and a photograph that supposedly proved that the medium had cheated during a test seance to further his best interests. Price's lies, distortions of statements, and half truths are well-documented by a wealth of archival material unearthed by Gregory. She speculates that the photograph was faked by Price to cast doubts on other investigators' researches with

Schneider, and to present himself as the most capable person involved in the study of the mediumship. The point of the faking of the photograph may be debated,<sup>9</sup> but the evidence of Price's unethical and paranoid behavior — involving persons such as William Brown, Charles Hope, and Eugene Osty — seems consistent with such an idea. As Gregory writes: "On no interpretation can Price's conduct be vindicated" (p. 329). The chapter is an excellent study of the effect of rivalry between organizations and interpersonal problems between segments of European (especially British) psychical research on mediumistic investigations in the 1930s.

In chapters seven, eight, and nine, Gregory discusses several further studies of Schneider's phenomena, as well as the medium's last years of life.

In the tenth chapter the author offers some "final reflections" on the Schneider's mediumship and its investigation. Gregory is aware of the limitations of the historical method to determine the reality or validity of the phenomena and investigations discussed in the book. Nonetheless, she is convinced that the evidence supports the reality of the phenomena. Historians will be particularly interested in Gregory's speculations on the importance of social aspects (e.g., interpersonal conflicts, professionalization issues) to scientific research in unorthodox fields.

The presentation of the material on Schneider's mediumship could have been improved if the topic had been discussed considering in more detail the context or background of concepts and individuals relevant to this historical study, and if additional non-British reactions to some of the work discussed here had been included, since the study of the reception of ideas and research is an important aspect of historical research.<sup>10</sup> Another point is that occasionally there are documentation problems in the book such as lack of references (e.g., Besterman's opinion of Schrenck-Notzing's laboratory, p. 46; Krall's book, p. 49; *Daily Mail's* attack on Price, p. 153), and incomplete references (e.g., p. 162, note 23; p. 331, note 18; p. 332, notes 49-51). However, it is possible that these problems may be due to the author's health problems during her last months of life before the book was published. Nonetheless, Gregory's work is successful in what seems to have been her original purpose, a description of the phenomena, the personalities, the research techniques, and the problems involved with the investigation of Rudi Schneider's mediumship.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>I. Grattan-Guinness, "Anita Gregory - An Appreciation," *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 53 (1985): 62

<sup>2</sup>On the electrical control see [A. von] Schrenck-Notzing, "Dispositif électrique pour Contrôle des Mediums," *Revue métaphysique* No. 1 (1927): 9-13. Examples of electrical controls of physical mediums published by William Crookes and Cromwell Varley in the 1870s have been reprinted by R. G. Medhurst and K. M. Goldney, "William Crookes and the Physical Phenomena of Mediumship," *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 54 (1964): 95-100; and C. J. Stephenson, "Further comments on Cromwell's Varley's Electrical Test on Florence Cook," *Ibid* 54 (1966): 366-371.

<sup>3</sup>Hereward Carrington, *Laboratory Investigations into Psychic Phenomena* (Philadelphia: David McKay, n.d. [1939]).

<sup>4</sup>Bird's suppression of information has been discussed by Thomas R. Tietze, *Margery* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 129-131, 136-143.

<sup>5</sup>Gregory's main source of information on the matter of the medium's sexual reactions, Prof. E. R. Dodds, has published some comments on this matter in his *Missing Persons: An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 102. No mention is made of previous speculations on sex and physical phenomena, such as those of Hereward Carrington, "Psychical and Psycho-physiological Research on Mediumship," in C. Vett, *Compte rendu officiel du Première Congrès International de Recherches Psychiques à Copenhague* (Copenhague, 1922), p. 129.

<sup>6</sup>For some examples see the publications of William Crookes *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (London: J. Burns, 1874), pp. 41, 100-102; Gustave Geley, "Vitalisme et Métapsychique," *Revue métapsychique* No. 1 (1924): 32-44; and Karl Gruber, "The problem of Materialization and Its Significance," *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 20 (1926): 279-289, 342-351. A more general perspective is presented by Raoul Montandon, *Les radiations humaines* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1927).

<sup>7</sup>E. Osty, "Le Medium J. Gusik à l'Institut Métapsychique de Paris (Avril-Mai 1926)," *Revue métapsychique* No. 6 (1926): 447.

<sup>8</sup>Anita Gregory, "Anatomy of a Fraud: Harry Price and the Medium Rudi Schneider," *Annals of Science* 34 (1977): 449-549.

<sup>9</sup>See Alan Gauld's critique of Gregory's paper in note eight, *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 49 (1978): 828-835.

<sup>10</sup>For comments on the Ostys' research and Price's "exposure" of Schneider see, respectively, Frederick Bligh Bond, "Editorial Notes: The Unknown Powers of Mind Over Matter," *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 26 (1932): 333-334; Daniel Day Walton, "Exposing the Exposers: Something New in Psychical Research," *Ibid* 160-161.

## THE MIND RACE: UNDERSTANDING AND USING PSYCHIC ABILITIES

Russell Targ and Keith Harary

(New York, N.Y.: Villard Books, 1984. 294 pp.  
\$16.95. Cloth)

Reviewed by Martin Ebon

Mr. Ebon was formerly the Administrative Secretary of the Parapsychology Foundation. He has served as editor of *Tomorrow*, the *International Journal of Parapsychology*, and *Spiritual Frontiers*. He has written and/or edited many books, several on parapsychology, and is well informed on parapsychology in Communist countries.

Martin Ebon, who served as Administrative Secretary of the Parapsychology Foundation for twelve years, has written or anthologized more than 60 books, the most recent being *The Andropov File* and *Psychic Warfare: Threat or Illusion?*

The authors have divided this book into three sections. The first deals with psi research in the United States and the Soviet Union at government level or in government-supported projects. The second, roughly speaking, covers efforts at developing psychic abilities. The third section, "Psi in Everyday Life," falls into the How-To category.

Targ and Harary were engaged in psi experiments at SRI International in Menlo Park, California, and the first section is based on the work at this well-known research center. They have now left SRI and presumably reported only on data regarded there as "unclassified." Some of this material retraces ground covered earlier by Dr. Harold Puthoff and Targ in *Mind Reach* (1977), here, updated in chapters with such titles as "Psi in the United States: An Inside View" and "Precognition at Home and Abroad: It's About Time."

As these chapter titles suggest, the authors manage to sound informal and breezy even when discussing intricate points of research techniques. This approach works at times, but it can also seem artificial — depending, I suppose, on each reader's taste in style and vocabulary.

Although SRI work in remote viewing is now widely known among parapsychologists and even to the general public, the sections dealing with apparent successes and novel approaches are engrossing. Targ's visit to the Soviet Union, in October 1983, is described in a chatty "Author's Note," an afterword in which he reports conversations in Leningrad and at the First Moscow Medical Institute. The Moscow research center explores nondrug treatment of mental patients, among them the experimental use of low-frequency electric and magnetic fields. These experiments include tests in "rat telepathy."

In Yerevan, capital of Soviet Armenia, the Targ group met Prof. Rubin Aguzumtsian, whose Remote Viewing experiments follow the pattern established by Puthoff and Targ published in 1976. Targ feels that "it is important and very desirable to arrange future cooperative meetings with the Soviet scientists to further explore the details of psychic functioning" (p. 264). He hopes to arrange remote viewing tests between California and Soviet Armenia.

Teaching people how to practice psychic activities, including remote viewing, is a delicate task. The authors display a good deal of daring when they propose such things as "psychic sit-ups." It is their contention that everyone has the potential to function on a psychic level, although SRI has settled down to work with a select group of experienced practitioners.

Targ and Harary find that "many of the people who have been successful in laboratory remote-viewing experiments have strong artistic and creative backgrounds — painters, photographers, musicians, designers, poets, and writers" (p. 186). They conclude that such people are preconditioned for psychic tasks, because "they are experienced at forming objective substance out of their subjective experiences" and are able to "express their personal impressions creatively" (p. ).

The book's most popular appeal would seem to come from its "remote viewing exercises," which are detailed enough for any patient do-it-yourselfer. If it all seems, occasionally, a bit too pat, it would be hard to find two researchers (one of whom has a good deal of practice as a subject) who are more experienced than Targ and Harary. Inevitably, there are sentences such as these:

There is a part of you that seems to understand psychic information very well. It can provide you with incredibly detailed impressions and images about remote targets when you take your time and learn how to listen to your own thoughts and feelings. (p. 208)

A particularly useful feature of *Mind Race* is an epilogue, "Psi Research in the Soviet Union: Are They Ahead of Us?" by Larissa Vilenskaya, the well-known former Moscow parapsychologist who now edits the unique *Psi Research* quarterly in San Francisco. She writes that Soviet scientists are interested in using psi primarily to develop "extended means for mental influence at a distance;" she is "disturbed" by evidence of "such a negative purpose for most officially sponsored psi studies in the Soviet Union" (p. 260).

Vilenskaya thus differs from Targ's rather bland treatment of Soviet studies; but then, Vilenskaya left the USSR partly because she "did not want to participate in the kinds of inhumane experiments" (p. 260) undertaken by some Soviet researchers, while Targ clearly wants to keep his lines to Russian colleagues undisturbed.

The Targ-Harary book was published at a time when there was something of a flurry of nation-wide interest, created largely by the near-simultaneous publication of their book, Ron McRae's *Mind Wars*, and my *Psychic Warfare: Threat or Illusion?* Television and radio interviews with all of us contributed to the impression that the public had suddenly discovered the potential of modern parapsychology. But the media's attention span is short, and the flurry ended within a few weeks.

The book has a bibliography of forty-one studies in Remote Viewing during the 1973-1982 period.

Targ and Harary have founded a company, Delphi Associates, which puts psychic ability at the service of the business community for such purposes as the use of recognition in commodity trading. If successful over a period of time, Targ and Harary will capture the media's attention once again.

## ADVANCES IN PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH 4

Edited by Stanley Krippner

(Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1984. 254 pp. \$29.95. Cloth.)

Reviewed by Douglas M. Stokes

Dr. Stokes has worked as a researcher at the FRNM Institute for Parapsychology, a mathematics teacher, a clinical psychologist and an applied mathematician in the area of business consulting.

This volume is the fourth in a series of roughly biennial reviews of progress in parapsychological research edited by Stanley Krippner. Like its predecessors, it contains reviews of research in specific areas, such as mental

healing and Ganzfeld research, conceptual essays, and a bibliographic summary of recent literature.

Perhaps the essay that will prove to be the most controversial is Charles Akers' "Methodological Criticisms of Parapsychology." Akers provides his own assessment of the validity of recently published methodological critiques of parapsychology by conducting his own analysis of 54 parapsychological experiments. Akers constructed his 54-experiment sample using the criteria that each experiment should have reported significant evidence of psi, have involved a sample of at least five "more or less" unselected subjects, and be from lines of relatively "repeatable" research (such as those investigating psi-conductive conditions e.g., the Ganzfeld, or the effects of certain personality or attitudinal variables, e.g., the sheep-goat dimension). Akers analyzes each study with respect to various methodological flaws and winds up citing 46 of the 54 studies in the sample for at least one methodological flaw (and he discusses minor flaws in the remaining eight studies).

The first type of flaw Akers discusses is the improper randomization of targets. He notes that the randomization was informally done (such as by the hand-shuffling of cards) or inadequately described in approximately half of the experiments in his sample. He observes that randomness tests were not conducted on the apparatus used in 10 out of a sample of 27 psychokinesis experiments. He notes that "control" runs, in which no agent is consciously attempting to influence the apparatus, are infrequently used in PK experiments, and he calls for the increased use of control runs, as well as for randomness checks on the equipment during the experiment, conducted within the actual experimental environment. Some of Akers' citations for randomization flaws seem somewhat debatable; for instance, he cites a study by Braud and Braud because the targets were prepared from random number tables by "untrained agents."

Akers assigns flaws to nine of the studies in his sample for nonblind measurement of personality variables. (As an example of this sort of flaw, an experimenter who is classifying subjects into "sheep" and "goats" may be influenced by her knowledge of the subjects' ESP scores if she is not blind to them.) Akers also observes that the recorders of the ESP targets were not blind as to knowledge of the subject's calls (or the recorder of the calls to knowledge of the targets) in somewhere between seven and fourteen of the experiments in his sample, allowing for the possibility of directional errors. He also cites 22 studies in his sample as possibly providing sensory cues as to the target's identity to either the subjects or the judges (in free-response experiments), and he cites twelve experiments for allowing the possibility of subject fraud.

Akers next considers the problem of improper statistical analysis. He observes that some authors, most notably Spencer Brown, have argued against the legitimacy of comparing parapsychological data to any theoretical statistical distribution, but contends that the existence of

experimenter effects constitutes evidence against any explanation of psi results purely in terms of flaws in statistical theory. He does note that many improper statistical procedures have been used in parapsychological research. Many statistical procedures have been used in research. Many statistical tests have been inappropriately applied due to violations of the assumption of the statistical independence of trials when multiple calls are made of a single target or when a "closed deck" is used with trial-by-trial feedback to subjects. He notes that data selection may have contributed to the statistical significance of four of his 54 studies (in two cases, this data selection may have arisen through the dropping out of unsuccessful subjects before completing the entire experimental procedure). With regard to the problem of multiple analysis, Akers argues against Hyman's claim that 39 out of 42 Ganzfeld studies suffer from multiple analysis problems, based on the fact that which analysis should be regarded as the primary analysis in the study could often be inferred from the author's previous practices. In fact, Akers cites only two studies in his sample for flaws involving multiple analysis.

Akers cites six experiments in his sample for inadequate reporting of experimental procedures. He notes that the replication of experiments is one means of safeguarding against methodological flaws which may not be apparent in the written reports of experimental procedures, and he notes that critics are right to insist on high reporting standards if the repeatability rate of a line of experimental research is low. Akers notes that some critics, such as Crumbaugh, have called for virtually total repeatability (repeatability by all investigators), but Akers concurs with Robert Morris that only a sufficient degree of repeatability to guarantee that the collective results of a line of experimental research are statistically significant is important. This may neglect the critics' concern that results which are due to only a small number of investigators may, although statistically significant (and hence not due to *chance*), be the result of experimenter fraud or incompetence. Akers does implicitly acknowledge this point later, when he concedes that the low replication rate of parapsychological experiments renders the fraud hypothesis more viable. Akers believes that experimenter fraud may be controlled for by using procedures developed by Schmidt and Johnson, in which a skeptical observer is intimately involved in the safeguarding of the data, but it is of course always possible to extend a conspiracy theory to include the skeptical observer. (Note: Soal was once regarded as a skeptic.) Akers concludes by calling for the increased elimination of methodological flaws from parapsychological experiments.

Jerry Solfvin contributes a chapter on "Mental Healing." He begins by summarizing recent efforts to incorporate "alternative" healing practices into Western medical practice. He provides a good, comprehensive review of the literature relating to mental healing, including many studies that will be unfamiliar even to regular followers of the parapsychological literature. Solfvin delves deeply into problems arising from inadequate documentation of



healing effects (and preexisting diseases) as well as from various types of experimental artifact. In particular, he laments the general lack of follow-up studies which might provide one possible safeguard against methodological artifacts and experimenter effects, in the literature relating to mental healing. In his review of that literature, Solfvin relates healing research to investigations into possible psychokinetic effects on living targets and general PK effects by psychic healers (on random event generators, etc.).

Solfvin cites a survey by Haraldsson and Olafsson suggesting that prior belief in the efficacy of mental healing did not correlate with perceived benefit from a mental-healing procedure, as might be expected under explanations of mental healing effects in terms of suggestion or placebo effects. In discussing research on the placebo effect, Solfvin questions the efficacy of double blind research in comparing the effects of active drugs to those of placebos, as the physician may guess which patient is receiving the active drug (for instance, by observing side effects). Solfvin reviews the literature on experimenter effects in drug-evaluation research, and he discusses the possibility of experimenter effects in psychic-healing experiments, cautioning that a perceived "healing" effect might in fact be due to a "harming" of the control group. He warns of the existence of possible artifacts arising from the nonblind measurement of healing effects, although he observes that nonblindness ("sensory leakage") may help facilitate the healing process. Thus, nonblind studies may offer valuable data, but need to be followed up with studies employing appropriate blindness procedures. Solfvin outlines one of his own studies, in which a group of veterinary students cared for and observed a group of mice. The students were told that half of the mice in their care had received a heavy dose and half had received a light dose and that half of the mice in each condition were being treated by a psychic healer of a malarial parasite. The students were nonblind as to the dose of the parasite given to each mouse but were blind as to which mice had been assigned to the psychic healing condition. In fact, the students were the subjects in the experiment, as no healer was involved in the study and all mice received the same dose of the parasite. By using this design, Solfvin hoped to partition out the effects of sensory leakage from other psi effects. Both conditions ("parasite dosage" and "healer") considered separately showed significant evidence of a healing effect (i.e., more healing in "experimental" than in "control" groups). There was also a correlation between the healing effect in the sensory (parasite dosage) and nonsensory (healer) conditions.

Leonard George and Stanley Krippner review the literature relating psi phenomena to mental imagery. They begin by observing that mental imagery is frequently involved in spontaneous cases of psi and that facility with mental imagery as measured by personality tests is often positively correlated with the reporting of spontaneous experiences. They provide an excellent review of the experimental parapsychological literature relating to (a) imagery scales such as the Betts scale and the Gordon test,

(b) the effects of imagery instruction and practice, (c) the possible facilitation of psi through the use of imagery-conducive situations (e.g., crystal balls, ganzfeld stimulation), and (d) characteristics of targets possibly related to imagery processes. They offer several insightful methodological suggestions for future research. They point to the need to determine whether or not imagery practice techniques do in fact have their presumed effects on imagery processes, noting that such experimental measurement of the effectiveness of imagery instruction and practice has generally been lacking in investigations of the effects of imaginal processes on psi success. They also point to other possible sources of experimental artifacts, such as the occasional practice of changing the nature of the targets at the same time that the instructional strategy is changed.

A review of recent ganzfeld research is provided by Rex Stanford. Stanford notes that this research has been characterized by an increased emphasis on "process-oriented" studies and that the proportion of ganzfeld experiments achieving statistical significance does not appear to have declined in the face of the methodological tightening of experimental protocols in recent years. He reviews the well-known Honorton-Hyman controversy regarding replication rates in ganzfeld research. Stanford provides his own assessment of the replication rate of recent ganzfeld research by restricting his attention to studies involving "powerful" statistical procedures (parametric or sum-of-ranks tests) and employing one-tailed tests of significance. (Here one might easily be skeptical that Stanford's selection of criteria might be post hoc, as Stanford could hardly be considered to be blind to the outcomes of the studies. Stanford asserts that he selected one-tailed tests on the basis of the literature preceding that under review, and he also notes that very few studies were excluded because they failed to meet his criteria, thus minimizing the data selection problem.) Stanford argues that ganzfeld research continues to be replicable because the overall results of the experiments in his sample are significant under a meta-analysis employing a binomial test. As noted above in the discussion of Akers' chapter, however, the mere fact that the results taken as a whole are statistically significant may not address the critics' concern that the results, while significant, might be due to fraud or methodological error. Perhaps a high replication rate based on a high proportion of investigators (rather than studies) who achieve significant results might answer this latter concern.

Stanford provides a very good review of recent ganzfeld literature, covering such areas as individual differences and the effects of (a) psychological reactions to ganzfeld stimulation (e.g., time contraction, shift in psychological state), (b) ganzfeld duration, (c) various types of auditory stimulation during the ganzfeld, (d) the type of target employed, and (e) the nature of the judge used. With regard to individual differences, Stanford discusses the generally positive correlation between ganzfeld success and extraversion in recent studies reported by Sargent, and he

cautions that experiments investigating the effects of previous experience in the ganzfeld may be contaminated by self-selection on the part of experienced subjects. He notes that there is only a slight suggestion of an effect of expectancy of success (the "sheep-goat" effect) in the experiments covered in this review.

Gertrude Schmeidler reviews research on psychokinesis (the third such review in the *Advances* series). She begins by relating the problem of psychokinesis to the problems of volition and mind-brain interaction. She then discusses methods for investigating spontaneous PK occurrences, poltergeists, and physical mediums, as well as experimental methods for investigating PK. Although the investigative techniques she recommends are sound from a methodological standpoint (such as the practice of sealing target objects in a container when investigating physical mediums), she does not sufficiently emphasize the fact that such rigorous techniques are far from standard practice in present-day parapsychology. Schmeidler provides a good summary of recent findings in the area of PK, although she is perhaps a little too uncritically accepting of research in the areas of metal-bending, "phone calls from the dead," and the "minilab" research of Cox and Richards. She provides little in the way of cautions regarding possible fraud in such research, and in general her descriptions of experimental procedures and results are too brief to enable the reader to evaluate them critically.

In a more conceptually-oriented essay, Irvin Child considers the implications of parapsychological findings for the study of psychology in general. Child sees no need for psychology to abandon the philosophical position of materialistic monism, noting that the area of metaphysics is largely independent of that of science and that science can be pursued in the absence of a specific metaphysical position. He considers the mind-body problem and concludes that, if parapsychological findings forced psychologists to adopt a position of dualism, present inhibitions against investigating psychological phenomena for which corresponding brain processes are difficult to imagine might be removed (revealing an influence of metaphysical positions on the practice of science after all!).

Child next considers the implications of specific parapsychological findings for psychological research. In particular, he does not expect psi-mediated experimenter effects to be a major source of error in psychology in view of the general weakness of psi effects. He also considers the possible implications of Stevenson's reincarnation research for personality theory (although Child remains skeptical regarding the idea of reincarnation).

Rhea White provides a select bibliography of parapsychological books published during the years 1974-1982, the third such bibliography by White to appear in the *Advances* series. The bibliography covers both popular and scholarly books, with those books most likely to be of interest to the professional parapsychologist marked with an asterisk. Certain features of the books, such as the presence of a glossary or an index, are noted as well. White has divided the books into twenty-one categories, and she

provides introductory remarks describing the books in each category. The number of categories used represents a considerable increase over the numbers used in White's previous bibliographies (fourteen and eleven, respectively). White sees this increase in the number of categories as reflecting the increasingly cross-disciplinary approach to psi (e.g., such categories as "Consciousness Studies," "Physics," and "Unorthodox and Holistic Healing"). She also notes the increasing efforts of scholars in other fields to incorporate results involving psi into their own work.

The book also contains an introduction by Evan Harris Walker, as well as a Foreword by Arthur Berger. Berger's Foreword contains a tribute to Robert Thouless, to whom the book is dedicated.

The present volume continues the valuable service provided by the previous volumes of the *Advances in Parapsychological Research* series of presenting comprehensive and critical reviews of areas of parapsychological research, which can be of value to both the lay reader not wishing to pore through endless primary reports, as well as to the practicing parapsychologist seeking an overview and synthesis of certain lines of research.

## IMAGERY: CURRENT THEORY, RESEARCH, AND APPLICATION

edited by Anees A. Sheikh

(New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983. 582 pp. \$45.00. Hardcover.)

*Reviewed by Wilma L. Anderson*

*Ms. Anderson is a psychiatric social worker at Eastern State Hospital in Vinita, Oklahoma. She is co-author, with Rodger I. Anderson, of "Psychopathic and veridical hallucinations: A Comparison of types," which appeared in Parapsychology Review in 1982.*

In this, the first "state of the art" collection to appear on imagery in recent years, the reader will find a rich sampling of current thinking on the imaging properties of the mind. The seventeen chapters that make up the book, all written by acknowledged experts in the field, include important discussions of the relationship of imagery in consciousness, memory, language, and creativity; the role of imagery in cognition generally; and a review of past as well as current research on this fundamental human gift. The book is, in short, a storehouse of information on what has been described as "one of the hottest topics in cognitive science" (p. xi).

From the viewpoint of parapsychology, the most interesting chapter in the book is an article by S. C. Wilson and T. X. Barber entitled, "The Fantasy prone personality: Implications for understanding imagery, hypnosis, and parapsychological phenomena." In this paper of nearly fifty



pages the authors describe and discuss the results of in-depth interviews with twenty-seven women whom they rated as excellent hypnotic subjects and a comparison group of twenty-five women whom they rated as non-excellent. These interviews concentrated on childhood and adult memories, fantasies, and alleged paranormal experiences. Of the subjects rated excellent, all but one exhibited what the authors regard as a profound fantasy life, including the ability to voluntarily hallucinate in all or nearly all sense modalities. Possessed since early childhood, this ability to fantasize at hallucinatory intensities had continued unabated into adult years, so that most of the subjects spend more than 50% of their waking time engaged in some sort of hallucinatory activity. Despite this high involvement in fantasy, each of the subjects tested well within the average range of normal adjustment.

While Wilson and Barber may be justly praised for delineating an interesting psychological type that constitutes, they estimate, possibly 4% of the general population, their paper leaves unanswered a number of questions that are of first importance to psychical research. By way of illustration, though 92% of the fantasy-prone group regard themselves as especially disposed to psychic experiences (compared to 16% of the comparison group), the authors apparently made no effort to verify these claims. We are thus left with a collection of asseverations without substantiation, the value of which is reduced still further by the fact that the subjects sometimes confused remembered hallucinations with remembered realities. In view of this, and in lieu of any positive evidence to the contrary, it is perhaps not impertinent to suggest that the subjects may have "fantasized" their psychic successes.

Another questionable application of Wilson and Barber's discovery concerns their suggestion that persons exhibiting the fantasy-prone syndrome may have been overrepresented among famous mediums, psychics, and visionaries. Without denying that such an attribution may possibly be true in some instances (e.g., Gladys Osborne Leonard, Eileen Garrett), its applicability in other cases is open to grave question. Certainly many *reputed* sensitives have been what might be called fantasy-prone personalities (e.g., Joseph Smith, Madame Blavatsky, Helene Smith), but in these instances the individual exhibited little if any unambiguous evidence of psychic skill. Others such as Emanuel Swedenborg seem to have had some genuine psychic talent without being clearly a fantasy-prone personality, at least in Wilson and Barber's sense, while still others (e.g., Minnie Soule, Leonore Piper) only imperfectly match the syndrome yet succeeded repeatedly in controlled psychic studies. Others like Geraldine Cummins fail to fit the mold at all but do not appear to have been any less favorably endowed with paranormal gifts. *Prima facie* at least, it would appear not unreasonable to expect fantasy-proneness to function as a perfect hotbed for the growth of ESP, but it remains to be determined whether successful mediums are part of the same psychological population as Wilson and Barber's subjects.

While one may argue with the authors over these and other points raised in their paper, the general relevance of their work to parapsychology is beyond dispute. As one area of immediate concern, a number of the psychic successes claimed by the fantasy-prone subjects would, if confirmed, offer excellent evidence of paranormal cognition and even possible communication with the dead, such as when one subject claimed to have recovered a missing will by following the directions of her deceased grandmother. In addition to such case-work material, Wilson and Barber's study also provides much information that may prove useful in achieving a deeper understanding of the psychology of psi, especially as this may relate to out-of-the-body and near-death experiences, the seeing of apparitions, automatic writing, and religious visions. Moreover, if intense involvement in fantasy should prove to be a psi-conducive state, Wilson and Barber's research provides us with a fairly simple way of determining who may or may not be a good experimental subject, depending upon how well the person does in tests intended to measure creativity and suggestibility. Some of these subjects, if agreeable, could then be "developed" for a variety of specific testing situations, from elementary guessing experiments to such sophisticated forms of extrasensory communication as the cross-correspondences. The opportunity remains only to be taken.