

Christine Hardy, using semantic field theory, looks at the importance of consciousness in determining mind/matter theories. She points to the influence of quantum mechanics and that psi points to a whole new dimension not defined by the laws of Newtonian physics. She goes on to look at the hard problem, the difficulty in explaining with our current understanding, the mind/matter gap, and she goes on to see consciousness as a product of emergent self-organisation. It is nice to see a quotation from Sheldrake's work on pets and the anthropological perspective of telepathic communication between animals and animals, and animals and man. She links this into self development and concludes her chapter with the idea that in the future when telepathic phenomena are accepted and we start to practice our telepathic capacity in a more formal and constructed sense, that this will feed back on our sense of honesty and make more transparent our personal relationships with each other.

It is not possible to name every author or every article in the book. Needless to say, chapters by Krippner rub shoulders with those of Thalbourne and Neppe. This book is useful for the ideas about the future evolution of our current ideas about parapsychology. It should be on the bookshelves of all those interested in parapsychology and will be helpful both as a fertile ground for producing stimulating ideas and for the very wide list of references included at the end of each chapter.

Perhaps I can end this review by quoting again from Dean Radin's chapter. "*By the end of the 2050s I suspect that parapsychology will no longer exist, at least not as it has existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. I believe that the course of science and society are heading precisely in the direction that will accommodate psi . . . as normal and expected.*"

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**Supernormal Faculties in Man** by Eugene Osty, translated from French by Stanley De Brath. Dutton, New York, 1923.

In the course of a session with Mlle. de Berly, one of the psychics tested by Osty, she exclaimed, "Oh! Peril of death after a while . . . perhaps an accident . . . but you will be saved, your life continues." Two years later, in March, 1911, she said, "Take care, you will soon have a serious accident . . . I hear a violent shock . . . a loud noise . . . you will be very near death . . . what luck! You will take no hurt! I see a man bleeding on the ground; he is moaning, and all around him some things are strewn, I can't say what." On August 15, Osty was driving along with a friend when a horse-driven baker's cart going at a great speed came

alongside. The baker pulled the wrong rein, and the cart crashed into Osty's car. The shafts of the cart were splintered against the frame of the front window and a wheel mounted the hood, crushing it in. This did not stop the car or injure the occupants. When Osty turned around, he saw the horse galloping off, the cart in the ditch, wheels uppermost, and the baker stretched moaning and bleeding in the middle of the road with loaves scattered around (p. 175).

Osty was 37. He was a psychiatrist and a major contributor to experimental and theoretical work in psi (Pleasant, 1964). In 1924, he became director of the Institut Métapsychique International, Paris, a post he held until his death in 1938. His work covers ESP and PK. Osty's PK tests will be found in another important book, *Les Pouvoirs Inconnus de l'Esprit sur la Matière* ("The unknown powers of mind over matter").

The present volume is about his ESP studies of metagnomic subjects, Osty's term for psychics. Meta is a Greek prefix that means beyond and gnosis is knowledge. I use ESP because it's brief. The book is about ESP of remote human targets.

### Normal Explanations

The first question the reader may ask is whether Osty's subjects could have used fraud or sensory cues. Both possibilities are unlikely because the psychics did not know about the target before the session. Osty also kept himself ignorant except when he acquired some facts about the person so that he might know whether the psychic was on the right track. In a case involving a man who had wandered from home and was missing, Osty only knew that he had been gone 16 days, that he was 82 and walked with a stoop. It must have seemed probable that the man had died and possible that the psychic had gleaned this from Osty's demeanor but sensory cues could hardly have told the psychic about the precise route the man had taken, the place where he was found, the position of the body, and the clothes he was wearing.

In precognition, such as the case introducing this review, the events were unknown to anyone and could not have been leaked. Could the apparent successes be due to Osty's selection of his better cases for the book? This seems unlikely because of the specificity of the statements by the psychics. Alan Gauld (1982) said, "It would take an immense mass of erroneous material to outweigh Osty's more remarkable cases, and a great deal of misrecording and misverification to undermine them" (p. 134).

Osty goes into detail about three aspects of psi performance, the means by which psychics connect with their human target, the psychics' response to the target, and the aspects of the target they perceive.

### The Human Target

Osty pictures a person as having three selves or minds: the familiar conscious self; the personal unconscious, which was coming into prominence at the time;

and a transcending mind that is also unconscious. It was the transcending minds of individuals, chosen by Osty, which were the targets for his subjects (target does not appear in the text—I use the term in place of longer phrases). The transcending mind is a “complex of persons and things” (p. 74) in a person’s past, present and future life.

### **The Psychic Response**

The responses of Osty’s psychics consisted of mental images. This part of the process used “resources stored in the brain” (p. 55), in other words, memory. Like other psychics and ESP subjects in general (Roll, 1966), his subjects apparently used memory images for their responses. It is interesting that Osty found his psychics to have exceptional memories. One of them, M. de Fleurière, said he had a clear memory of what he had said during a session, the words returning to him in the form of large printed letters. As a demonstration he offered to write down his memory of the day’s session. The next day Osty, who as usual had made a verbatim record of the session, compared this with de Fleurière’s recollection and found that the two “corresponded exactly word for word.” (p. 78)

Different psychics used different methods to facilitate the formation of mental images, some did so in a hypnotic state while others only diverted their attention to the target but remained awake. One of his subjects saw images in a glass of water where she had poured an egg-white.

The perception of targets also differed between psychics. For the most part, they were specialists, some perceiving bodily changes, others emotional or intellectual states, and still others social events.

### **Connection Between Percipient and Target**

An important aspect of Osty’s work is the light it throws on the connection between ESP percipient and target. In the precognition about Osty’s car accident, the link was his physical presence at the session. Several of his studies involved precognition where the target was present at the test but where sensory cues from the person were ruled out because the events had not happened. In place of the physical presence of the target Osty would hand the psychic an object that was connected to the target but said nothing relevant about the person. The principal of a college had sent him a letter and, in a separate envelope, a photo of a person with the request that Osty ask one of his psychics about the person. Without looking at the picture Osty placed it face-down in the hands of Morel, first having hypnotized her. She described a man surrounded by hundreds of boys, which told Osty that she had homed in on the principal. He asked her not to talk about the person who had sent the photo but about the individual shown. “Then I go back to the time when the photograph was taken,” (p. 99) Morel said, and described a young man with chestnut hair, lively and with a quick mind. “Later on I see him ill. I see his head affected and one limb.”

The image faded and was replaced by an inanimate body. Osty asked her to discern the cause of death. "I feel fever in the brain . . . a sudden fever . . . a quick transition from full life to death." (p. 99) The principal said that the man's brain had been affected, that for a while one of his limbs was paralyzed, and that he died of an acute brain disease at age 38.

In the case of the missing man mentioned before, Osty was given a neck-wrapper from the man's closet. To enable Osty to tell whether the psychic was on the right track, he asked for a few facts about the man. He learned that he was 82 years old and that he walked with a stoop. Osty placed the neckerchief in the hands of Morel, requesting that she look for the owner. She first described Osty himself, then the person who had brought him the neckerchief, then a woman who might have been a relative of the man, and finally the man himself. Morel saw him dead on the ground on his right side, one leg bent under, and wearing a two-color flannel shirt and a long coat. She saw large stones, large trees and water. When asked about the route he had taken, Morel saw him entering a wood and described the path. This was of no help, there were large trees in the area and several ponds. A second session added more details to the route but was still insufficient. During a third session Morel gave further details about the location of the body, and this resulted in its discovery. It was found less than half-a-mile from the house in an area that had already been searched.

In considering the source of Morel's information, Osty ruled out telepathy from people in the area because no one knew the place his body was found or its position on the ground. The man himself was already dead so he could not have been a telepathic agent. Morel could also not have gleaned her information from some type of memory stored in the neckerchief itself because the man was not wearing it when he wandered off. There was also no indication that this was a post-mortem communication from the man's spirit. It seemed that Morel had tuned into a memory-like structure where she could trace the man's route the same way it had appeared to him. In other words, she tapped into his transcendental mind, using his neckerchief as a link. We might now refer to this as remote viewing, but remote viewing of a string of events in the past.

### Precognition and Time

Osty quotes Charles Richet as saying that precognition is "paradoxical, strange, absurd and real" (p. 110). Richet (Pleasants, 1964) was a Nobel prize winner in physiology and medicine and an important psi researcher. It was Richet who proposed *métapsychique* as the French equivalent of psychical research.

Osty was no more able to explain precognition than Richet, but he discovered several characteristics of the ability. In the study with de Berly previously described, Osty noted that the closer in time to the event foreseen, the more accurate and detailed was de Berly's description. "Projected on the future her faculty is like a lantern carried on a dark road, revealing all that is immediately near" (p. 75). In later sessions, she would see new events, and the things formerly

foreseen would now be assigned to the past. The same was true for his other psychics.

There was a limit to precognition not only in terms of distance in time but also about the nature of the event. Although France was a major combatant in World War I, the psychics never made general statements about the outbreak or progress of the War, only about specific events that touched or would touch on the lives of the targets. In January 1914, de Berly, speaking about the younger brother of the target, said, "His life will be short . . . he will die a violent death . . . let him be cautious in the shooting-field . . . He will die by gunshot" (p. 180). The war broke out in July. In December, the young man was killed by a bullet to the head.

The easiest precognition for psychics is death, according to Osty, and the one where they made the fewest errors except for dates, where mistakes were frequent.

ESP is commonly differentiated according to whether the event perceived is in the past, present, or future. ESP of the future is precognition, of the past is post-cognition, and of the present is clairvoyance (or remote perception and similar terms). According to Osty, such distinctions do not reflect the underlying process. His subjects were endowed with a faculty whereby a human life appeared "as an integration of states cognized independently of our notions of Time" (p. 73). They did differentiate between past, present and future but their visions were arranged according to a category where time was combined with space. M. de Fleurière pictured events on a semicircular screen where the present was at the center, the past to the left and the future to the right, distance in time being indicated by distance from the center. Morel would know that an event was in the past if she "saw" the event behind her, while a present event was at her side and a future event was in front. During the 12 years Osty worked with her, he said that she never placed an event in the wrong mode of time. Other sensitives were less reliable. In May, 1912, one of them, thinking she was stating Osty's professional employment at the time, actually described events that took place two to four years later.

### **Psychic Diagnosis**

Osty found his psychics adept at untangling the mental problems of the targets. He says, "I commend to my fellow-practitioners in psychiatry the utilization of metagomic subjects . . . as more reliable and speedy methods of psycho-analysis than the tedious procedure recommended by Freud" (footnote, p. 218). The psychics were also good at describing bodily problems but they lacked the medical vocabulary to make specific diagnoses. He suggested that the best procedure would be for a physician to work in tandem with a psychic. The doctor would provide an initial diagnosis and the patient would see the psychic for further diagnosis and prognosis.

### Limits of Psychic Awareness

The psychics had no more access to their own transcendent mind than non-psychics had of theirs. "They are, for the most part, as ignorant of their own future as any one of us" (p. 186). This reminds me of a story about Peter Hurkos, the Dutch psychic, who took the precaution before going on a plane trip of surreptitiously giving another passenger a reading to see if the person would be involved in a crash. Like the subjects of Osty, Hurkos could not foretell his own future, nor a general event such as the fate of the plane but only how a specific passenger would fare.

Psychics are also limited by their predisposition. Events open to one percipient are not grasped by another. "One percipient who in a single sitting can outline an entire life is unable to foretell a theft, an accident or an illness" (p. 74). Another perceives a life as a succession of small details. An individual who visits several psychics the same day will be told of different episodes in the life of the target. Osty says, "This illogical faculty must be left to follow its fancies" (p. 75).

If the psychic is in good health the faculty is always ready. This consistency is unknown for non-psychics who participate in ESP tests.

### Survival of Personality After Death

Psychic perception of living people deals with two factors that vary: the sensitive who changes between sessions in the quality and extent of perception and the person cognized who changes with the events of life. But when the target is deceased, "the second factor has become invariant" (p. 199); the life is completed and unchangeable.

Except for its invariance, the psychics dealt with the life of a deceased person the same way they dealt with a living one. "The information they receive and express are of the same kind and refer to the same matters" (p. 199). Their faculty is activated the same way as when the target is distant in space, that is, by an intermediary physical object or by the presence of someone who represents the person to be cognized.

Addressing the issue whether human personality may persist after death, Osty found this unlikely because personality is "so unstable that it is incessantly modified, so little homogenous that strong emotion, intoxication or suggestion can dissociate it, so little constructed to endure that it may even die before the death of the body." He found it difficult to believe that such an unstable structure could persist and communicate after death.

Osty noted that person, as used in personality, comes from persona, Latin for actor's mask. It is "the story of a particular life" (p. 203). But this story persists somewhere since it may be perceived by a sensitive.

Osty spoke about "a vast . . . memory" (p. 199) where past lives persist. The understanding of this memory is to be sought "by facts, by experiment, by study of the living, in biology pure and simple in its paranormal section" (p. 204)." In

other words, psychic research is about the biological "complex of persons and things" (p. 74) that make up transcendental individuality.

### Sources of Error

Osty looked on error in psychic functioning as a means to understand this better. In the same way that a malfunctioning organ may help the physician comprehend its normal working, knowing the source of psychic error may aid understanding of this "compartment of human biology" (p. 205).

An unfavorable relationship between psychic and target may cause the psychic's ability to remain inert. If one or two more tests with the same subject-target pair are also barren, it is best to try another configuration. A reading may also be complete confabulation: The unconscious of the psychic, receiving no stimulus from the target, constructs a romance of its own.

A mixture of correct information and romance may also occur and can be difficult to untangle as shown in the following case. On March 8, 1916, Lois M. received a letter from an army chaplain that his son, Jean, had been shot in the head. "The Germans having occupied the ground, we could not bury his body, but death is, unhappily, certain" (p. 213). On March 14, M. went for a reading with de Fleurière. He said, "I see one of your two sons seriously wounded in the . . . forehead . . . I do not see death, perhaps he may be a prisoner?" Hopeful that Jean was alive, M. went to Morel, placing a letter from Jean in her hands. She described his appearance and said, "He has been wounded in the head . . . He will recover completely and will come back next summer" (p. 216).

On April 2nd M. received official notice of his son's death but kept hoping because the body had not been found. April 14, he gave a friend an object belonging to the son and asked him to use it for a session with Morel. She described a young man who matched Jean's appearance and said that he had been wounded in the head, but "he will recover and will write" (p. 216). May 4, M. paid another visit to Morel. She said, "I see him walking . . . His brain will recover." Osty himself then went to Mme. Fr., handing her a letter from Jean and asking her to state the future of the writer. She said, "There is no future for this person, he is dead."

Osty could not bring himself to repeat this to M. When M. later saw Mme. Fr., she found the young man in good health. "You will go to meet him," she told M. (p. 217). When M. visited de Berley, she said, "He will recover completely . . . the witnesses who thought him dead have hardly seen him." Other sessions followed reaching a total of more than 80. The sessions were conducted by 10 individuals, involved 11 psychics, and went on for six years. According to everyone, Jean was alive.

Osty believed that the father's fervent hope that his son was alive had caused the psychics to deflect from the facts. Except for this crucial error, their readings were accurate.

Errors may also arise if the psychics misinterpret their mental images. This can easily happen because the images represent the mentation of the psychic and are not reflections of reality. In addition, they are often transient or symbolic.

### Conclusion

Osty's work is not only about psychics and psychic ability but also about the transcendental mind of ordinary people. In some respects, the transcendental mind is similar to the subliminal mind Frederic Myers (1903) spoke about. Myers played a central role in the formulation of psi research in Great Britain and the US. There is an important difference between the ideas of the two men. Osty's transcendental mind can be accessed by objects that are connected to it. Myers touched on the role of objects in reaching distant events but the issue was not central to his thinking. However, mediums (Roll, 2004), who were the principal subjects for the English investigators, relied extensively on objects from the target that the medium would hold. The presence of a person who had known the target would have served the same function but would have compromised the test because the medium might pick up sensory cues from the person.

The principal difference between the English and French research was that the former was pursued within a spiritualistic framework: The mediums or their spirit guides were thought of as bridges between the living and the spirits of the dead. The idea of spirits did not arise in the French work.

Physical objects that serve as links to human targets have also been explored by Gustav Pagenstecher (Pagenstecher, 1922; Prince, 1921, 1922; Roll, 1967, 1978), a German physician with a practice in Mexico and by Angelos Tanagras (Pleasant, 1964), a retired Greek admiral who played a major role in European parapsychology. In more recent times, the topic has been explored by John Björkhem (1951) in Sweden, by B.C. Kirby (1959), and by Karlis Osis (1966) and by me (Roll, 1966b,c) in the USA. Noreen Renier (2005), who was a subject for the Psychical Research Foundation at Duke, has helped the police find missing persons and solve crimes, using objects from the people. But none of the work has been as extensive and rich in implication as Osty's.

"I can imagine a time," Osty said, "when the days of mysticism and absurd scepticism are past," and when good psychics will be trained to explore "the transcendental basis of human beings and perhaps of all that lives" (p. 98). These words were written more than 80 years ago and still have not come to pass. During this period, parapsychologists veered from psychics, choosing instead to look for evidence of ESP in people with no special skill. This left a lacuna that has not and probably cannot be filled by non-psychics.

At the same time, studies of people with no special ability have led to important discoveries, some of which could not have been made by the earlier approach. For instance, the discovery of psi-missing, where subjects score below



chance expectancy, could not have been made by free-response tests of the kind Osty did with psychics. In other respects the two approaches are consistent. Contemporary tests indicate that ESP may be a biological response, as Osty thought. The evidence for this (e.g., Braud, 2003; Radin, 2006) comes from tests where the electrodermal response and other physiological reactions to the target are used as ESP indicators.

There was an issue that Osty left untouched: the question of precognition. Of all psi phenomena the evidence for precognition has been hardest to explain: How can something that does not exist affect something that exists?

Human life is based on the belief that time has an arrow that points from past to future, not the other way. The changing position of the hands of the clock and the added lines in the face in the mirror are examples. Change has an arrow also in the larger picture. Each of us has experienced growing from a child, and we are told that our species has evolved from primitive organisms to its present stage of evolution. The physical universe itself is expanding from the Big Bang. Precognition nevertheless seems to be real, and if real, must have an explanation.

The concept of the long body (Roll, 2005), which is equivalent to the transcendental mind, may provide a solution to the apparent paradox of precognition. This solution is based on an examination of the relation between time and change and between change and place. The experience of time arises from the perception of change, and change occurs in a place. Places are made up of objects and objects change, whether they are animate or inanimate. The forms of Plato are eternal but actual objects do not remain the same forever.

Something else must be kept in mind: Place is personal or relative, that is, we experience things from the place that is occupied by our body. Since two bodies cannot occupy exactly the same place and since time goes with place, two people may also have different experiences of time. These are usually too small to notice but they can be substantial. A person looking out from the top of a skyscraper can see farther than a person on the ground. By seeing farther in space, the person on top may see things approach that are in the future for the person on the ground, and when the latter has lost sight of something that was previously present but now seems past, it may still be in the present for the person on top.

If we suppose that the person on top of the skyscraper is equivalent to the transcendental mind or long body, and if the person on the ground is the same as the little mind and body, what appears as precognition to the little mind may be awareness of the present to the transcendental mind. The same applies to perception of the past as in postcognition and to affecting things that have already taken place or have not yet occurred according to ordinary awareness. M. de Fleurière, if may be recalled, saw things in the present as straight ahead while past events were on his left, and future events on his right. To him, distance in time was equivalent to distance in space, near events being easier to discern than distant events. This can be stated in terms of testable hypotheses.

As William Braud (email communication, 31/iii/05) has noted, the long body

perspective would provide “a more far-reaching and more nonlocal view and grasp.” The same is true for Osty’s transcendental mind.

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