

Removal of Impediments to the Paranormal

GARDNER MURPHY

Introduction

In the October, 1943, issue of this JOURNAL¹ we sketched out a tentative hypothesis regarding the role of human needs in the focusing of the individual upon events not accessible to the organs of sense. We seemed to find that those motives which we all recognize as of compelling value—motives such as love, self-justification, material gain—operate to keep the deeper levels of individuality organized or aimed towards those persons and events most intimately related to these needs.

We encountered, however, considerable evidence that paranormal perception cannot spring directly from the need to make contact. There are barriers, or impediments, the removal of which is the primary task of the experimenter, just as it is a primary function of dream and trance states, whether intentionally or unintentionally induced. Psychical research has always known that there are barriers within the individual personality which prevent the ordinary conscious self from liberating those unconscious forces upon which many of our creative powers depend. Myers, for example, saw the restraining or restricting influence of conscious selfhood upon unconscious activity; he may even appear today to have been extravagantly devoted to the world of the "subliminal" which he helped to discover.²

Just as we noted in our last study that the motives of normal psychology and those appearing in paranormal experience seem to be the same, so we may postulate that the barriers discovered in normal psychology are identical with those which block the expression of paranormal processes. At any rate, we shall try in this article to analyze the everyday, normal, universal barriers and attempt to see if anything can be done to weaken or remove them in the service of psychical research.

¹ Murphy, G., "Psychical Phenomena and Human Needs."
² Myers, F. W. H., *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, Vol. I, Chapter III, "Genius."

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The Unconscious and the Paranormal

Our first step would appear to be the demonstration that paranormal impressions do actually develop at an unconscious level rather than at the conscious level. The evidence supporting this view is of several types:

(1) Drowsy and dream states, states of delirium, deep hypnosis, and trance appear to be richer in paranormal production than are the fullfledged conscious states.³

(2) Very little, as a rule, can be done to direct or control the paranormal processes. To be sure, one can set oneself the task of seeing a distant event or guessing a prepared symbol, but one can only *make ready*; one cannot "will" the desired object into the field of observation. What happens spontaneously and easily at an unconscious level generally fails to happen at the conscious level even under tremendous volition. Granted, there may sometimes be an apparent correlation between effort and success in the paranormal task. Ossowiecki could apparently succeed by concentrating,⁴ and Pearce, one of Rhine's major subjects, could, through effort, "see" more clearly.⁵ But, as we pointed out in the January, 1943, issue of this JOURNAL,⁶ it is not clear that the "concentration" or the "will" produces the result; it seems more likely that it only *sets free* the necessary unconscious processes. What is needed is the *removal of interference*, which is exactly the problem we are here attempting to clarify.

(3) One can sometimes directly observe a paranormal impression welling up, surging forward, from a deeper level into the world of personal consciousness, or into motor expression (e.g., automatic writing).⁷

³ Warcollier, R., *Experimental Telepathy*, B.S.P.R., 1938. Cf. Table III, "Influence of States of Consciousness," p. 13.

⁴ Besterman, T., "An Experiment in 'Clairvoyance' with M. Stefan Ossowiecki," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XLI (1932-33), pp. 345-351.

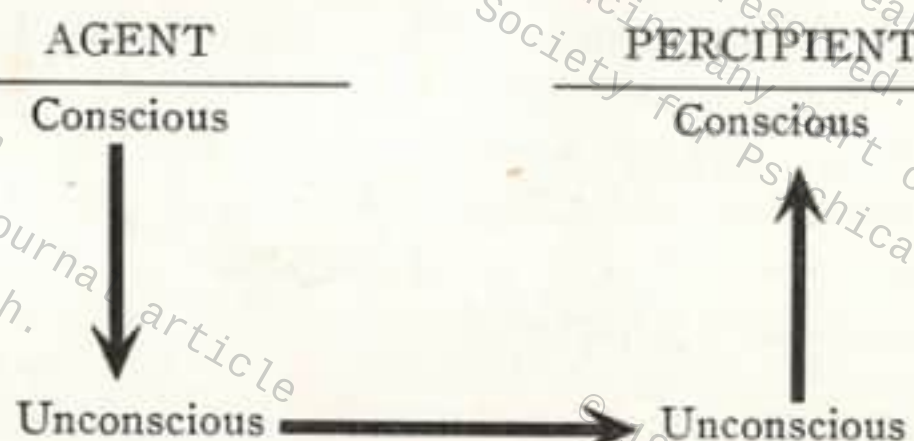
⁵ Rhine, J. B., *New Frontiers of the Mind*, Farrar and Rinehart, 1937, pp. 94-95.

⁶ Murphy, G., and Dale, L. A., "Concentration Versus Relaxation in Relation to Telepathy."

⁷ Sidgwick, Mrs. Henry, "On Hindrances and Complications in Telepathic Communication," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXXIV (1924), pp. 28-69.

If, then, it is true that a deep level of the personality carries out the paranormal activity, is it not possible, as has often been suggested, that we perceive paranormally all the time, the unconscious being constantly preoccupied with events belonging to other realms of time and space? It is not possible to give a final answer to this question, at least in our present state of knowledge, since it is only what reaches consciousness in some form that can lend itself to analysis. But since there is often complete fulfillment of human needs *without* using the paranormal, i.e., since many of our needs are adequately cared for by our sensory equipment, a theory postulating the constant utilization of our paranormal abilities would seem biologically improbable and philosophically extravagant. Rather, we should set up our hypothesis this way: there is always some *readiness* for paranormal perception, in the sense that the miller is always ready to awaken when his mill stops, or the mother to rouse when her sleeping child breathes uneasily.

The classical conception of the manner in which conscious and unconscious levels participate in paranormal perception is that of Myers, aptly reformulated by Grasset and by Warcollier: it may be visualized in the following schema (*cf.* Warcollier, *op. cit.*, p. 145):



The impulse arising consciously in the mind of the agent reaches down to his unconscious. Then, following the arrow, contact is made with an unconscious stratum of the percipient's mind. Finally, there is a welling-up of the impression from the percipient's unconscious to his con-

scious. Disturbances of the telepathic function, when there is motivation that would be expected to lead to telepathy, may be due to an obstruction between conscious and unconscious levels of the agent's mind, or between the unconscious levels of the two individuals, or between the unconscious and the conscious levels of the percipient's mind. It is to the third of these types of obstruction that most of our data point.

So important an hypothesis demands the marshalling of evidence. Do we know anything definite about the welling-up of impressions from the unconscious to the conscious? It should be pointed out that our question relates to a *universal psychological phenomenon*; it is not only in the case of the paranormal, but in the normal functioning of all minds, that the problem arises. Actually, we do have considerable evidence that this welling-up process is a reality.

First, we have evidence from the dream, notably those instances in which sounds and pressures, acting on the sleeping individual, set going unconscious processes which finally reach consciousness in a somewhat transformed guise. A personal dream related by Henri Bergson illustrates the point.⁸ He dreamed that he was making a political speech before an assembly. From all parts of the auditorium, timed to a uniform rhythm, came cries, "Out! Out!" Then Bergson awakened to find that a dog was baying in the garden, and with each "Bow-wow" came one of the cries of "Out! Out!" Experimental evidence relating to the dream may also be referred to. Thus, when D. B. Klein found that humming sounds were frequently interpreted as motors by his sleeping subjects, he sounded a tuning fork as he pressed a bit of *cold* metal upon the forehead of a dreamer; the latter "heard" an airplane motor, as he seemed to stand by a hangar in bitter *winter* weather.⁹

Second, evidence is found in the phenomena of posthyp-

⁸ Bergson, H., *Dreams*, B. W. Huebsch, 1914, pp. 45-46.

⁹ Klein, D. B., "The Experimental Production of Dreams During Hypnosis," Austin, University of Texas, *Bulletin* No. 3009.

notic suggestion, in which an impression earlier planted by the hypnotist wells up minutes or hours later, in the subject's conscious impulsion to complete the assigned task. A plethora of examples similar to the following can be found in the literature. Moll says to his subject in hypnosis: "An hour after you wake you will hear a polka played; you will believe you are at a ball, and will begin to dance."¹⁰ The subject awakes and remembers nothing of the command. An hour later, however, he seems to hear strains of music, to which he begins to dance.

Third, we may find evidence in experimental studies of the learning processes, in which forgotten material leaps back to mind—the "spontaneous recovery" or "reminiscence" of half-formed impressions.

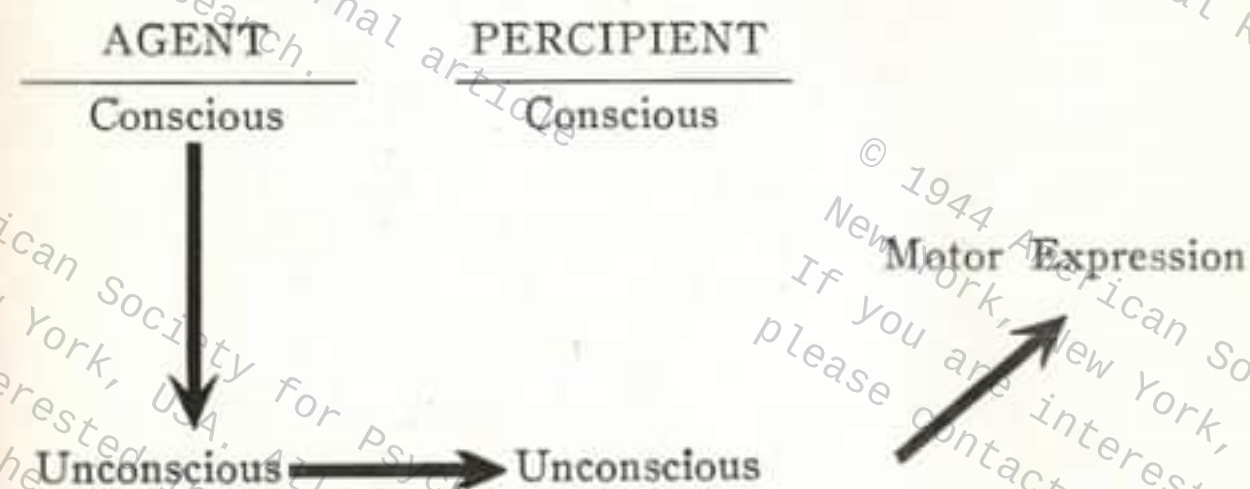
We are justified in saying, then, that the right-hand half of the little schema or diagram represents not just a theory, but a well-established general principle. Impressions do "well up" from an unconscious to a conscious level, sometimes making their way without obstruction, sometimes being modified or compromised on the way, in a manner which reminds us of Freud's dream censorship or the older theory of "associative interference."

This process of emergence, moreover, may sometimes take *time*, and it is through the fact that time is involved that delayed telepathic impressions are frequently to be explained. As one turns from a preoccupied state to a relaxed state, one may sometimes watch the impression slowly making its way to consciousness; when paranormal impressions have once been *received*, their emergence into consciousness differs not a whit from that of normal impressions.

But questions now assert themselves: Is there not always and necessarily some blockage in approaching the conscious level? How can consciousness be completely blank, thus affording the impression easy entrance? Only in the rarest instances, with the most gifted trance medium or the telepathic subject at his best, can any such complete

¹⁰ Moll, Albert, *Hypnotism*, Scribner's Sons, 1894, p. 141.

emptying of the mind be accomplished. We are, of course, ordinarily dealing only with a relative, not an absolute, emptying of consciousness. In practice, by far the most important thing is not the actual emptying or blotting out of consciousness, but the development of devices for keeping *attentive effort* out of the picture. We need to develop, as it were, a "clear space" within which the emerging impressions can move, so as to be quietly observed by introspection. Or, we may develop a method of expression in which consciousness is not involved at all. The first method, that of freeing the channels while still retaining some consciousness of what is emerging, is the cultivation of *sensory automatism* (Myers); the second, making use of automatic writing or other involuntary motor outlets, is *motor automatism*. This latter method might be indicated by an arrow drawn obliquely, thus:



In the case of both sensory and motor automatism, it becomes clear that there has been a *splitting of the mind*; a "dissociation" or separation of functions which would ordinarily be closely knit together. As a rule, the conscious states which we observe are so intimately bound up with the very act of observing them that we cannot "let go," permitting the occurrence of conscious processes which are outside the scope of the ordinary conscious self. This gift of "letting go" is unusual. When Mrs. Sinclair¹¹ tells us that the impressions which are projected upon an inward mental screen are separate and distinct from the ordinary world of her imagination, it is something which

¹¹ Prince, W. F., "The Sinclair Experiments Demonstrating Telepathy," *Bulletin XVI, B.S.P.R.*, April, 1932.

we dimly grasp but cannot easily develop in ourselves. When the automatic writer tells us that we ordinary folk could do automatic writing if we wished (because we unwittingly doodle and scribble as we listen to a boring lecture), we are not quite convinced. We feel that these restless motor activities of ours are not really out of voluntary control, i.e., are not truly dissociated as are those of the genuine automatic writer.

It is dissociation, the splitting of the mind, which is our real clue. It is only through such splitting that either sensory or motor automatism, freeing the channel of communication from the unconscious to the conscious, becomes possible. It is upon dissociation itself, therefore, that we must focus our analysis.

Types of Dissociation

There are several types of dissociation. Remembering that the term always refers to the cleavage or separation of mental connections, we may say that intense concentration, the "brown study," absentmindedness, is the commonest and least fully developed form. Much that we do while in such intense concentration never reaches consciousness and fails to be recalled. We all know that established habits run their course, sometimes with amusing consequences.

A second type of dissociation is the forgetting of things which we know well enough. Names and dates for which we have need fail to come at our bidding. Sometimes the effort to recall produces a full blockage or jamming, but if we relax, the name, as Emerson said, comes "sauntering in" as if it had never been called for.

A third type is exemplified by the daydream or ordinary nocturnal dream, similar to our first type in involving separation of mental activity from contact with the outer world, and similar to the second type in that there is a blotting out of much that the dreamer knows to be real; the grotesque and nonsensical character of the dream arises largely from the exclusion of messages from the sense-

organs and from the unavailability of memory material upon which normal judgment relies.

A fourth type is that of organized motor expression, as through the planchette, in which a meaningful pattern of words is developed of which consciousness is unaware until the finished product is seen.

It is often asked, very reasonably, whether the individual exhibiting sensory or motor automatism is not deceiving himself, pretending not to see or not to control what is developing within him. We do not know of any *absolute* answer; but the question is a common-sense one, and can be answered in common-sense terms. A number of examples of what is meant by automatism will be given later in this paper, and I will leave the reader to decide for himself as to whether the subject is self-deceived.

Within the framework of our question, I should like to refer first to the recent experimental work of Dr. W. R. Wells,¹² and also to that of Dr. Margaret Brenman,¹³ who, using highly developed hypnotic techniques, have reopened the old question whether hypnotized persons may do things contrary to their basic personality tendencies. In a series of ingenious experiments, both of these investigators have shown that normal, morally well-organized individuals may, in spite of conscious intention, commit criminal acts for reasons of which they are completely unaware, such reasons being in fact the hypnotic instructions earlier given them. I have also personally seen many of Dr. Wells's subjects do things over which they had no conscious control; indeed, they laughed at themselves when they discovered that "the will" was not the only basis for their actions.

It may be useful to give also a brief account of a highly developed sensory automatism. Over a period of some weeks a man wrestled with a mathematical problem, attempting to find an algebraic solution; but after encountering one obstacle after another he gave up in despair

¹² Wells, W. R., "Experiments in the Hypnotic Production of Crime," *Journal of Psychology*, 1941, 11, pp. 63-102.

¹³ Brenman, M., "Experiments in the Hypnotic Production of Anti-Social and Self-Injurious Behavior," *Psychiatry*, 1942, Vol. V, pp. 49-61.

and dismissed the matter from his mind. About a week after this, however, he awoke one morning and saw projected upon the wall across from his bed a complete geometrical figure which led to a solution of his problem. Almost certainly, the problem had worked itself out in deep sleep, and had achieved a solution which could be formulated and presented to the conscious mind as a gift the moment the waking self was restored.¹⁴

A striking example of motor automatism is found in the automatic spelling of words by Mrs. Hester Travers Smith. The little platform used in ouija-board experiments sometimes moved so rapidly, it is reported, that the services of a skilled shorthand writer were required to keep pace with it as it spelled out communications. Mrs. Travers Smith was unaware of the content of these messages, except as they were later read back to her by the observers.¹⁵

Throughout the four types of dissociation enumerated above, a common principle appears: activities which are ordinarily closely connected and interdependent may be to some degree disjoined. Memories usually accessible to us may fail to come at our bidding. Activity over which we ordinarily exert voluntary control remains refractory to the will.

Dissociation in this broad sense seems to be requisite to success in the exercise of the paranormal function. The reason for this may lie in the fact that we normally are concerned with making our adjustment to the immediate world of time and space, and unless part of the individual is freed from this preoccupation, and unless the concern with the "here and now" can be prevented from interfering with the deep and broad concerns which transcend the physical environment, these latter activities cannot be exercised. They are, as it were, imprisoned or suffocated by the dominant, practical, matter-of-fact interest in the immediate environment.

¹⁴ Myers, F. W. H., *op. cit.*, Appendix to the chapter on Sleep, pp. 373-374.

¹⁵ Barrett, Sir William, "Evidence of Supernormal Communications Through Motor Automatism," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXX (1918-19), pp. 230-250.

Physical and Psychological Barriers

So far, we have contented ourselves with a picture of dissociation in terms of barriers or blockages. We come now to the problem of specifying the nature of these barriers. For preliminary purposes, we may speak of "physical barriers" as being those involved in conditions of fatigue, circulatory changes in the brain, etc., which appear momentarily to interfere with free intercommunication between brain activities. It is thus possible to cause local blockages within the nervous system by means of narcotics. One of the common theories of the dream has been formulated in terms of the development in the sleeping brain of many local blockages. These blockages prevent the formation of normal waking associations, and bizarre connections of ideas result.

We may, on the other hand, describe the blockages in psychological terms, by defining the "resistances" of the individual. We may note, for example, that my failure to remember a name is due to my hatred or fear of the person whose name it is, just as my forgetting to turn up for an appointment may be due to my dislike of the individual or of the purpose which the appointment serves.¹⁶

It should, I think, be emphasized that this distinction between physical and psychological barriers is arbitrary, and not based upon any real separation, within the living organism, between "physical" and "mental." As far as we know, physical activity in the organism always entails psychological aspects, and psychological processes entail their physical aspects. Indeed, the organism appears to be not an amalgam of mind and body, but a unified whole, involving physiological and psychological aspects; the physiological and the psychological are merely ways of looking at the complete individual.

Nevertheless, for practical purposes, we may speak of the physical obstacles and the psychological obstacles as separate things if this helps us in developing ways of re-

¹⁶ Freud, S., *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (Translated by Brill), Macmillan, 1914.

moving them or of utilizing them. We may find, for some purposes, that the conditions of fatigue and drowsiness, or even of ill-health, give us exactly that mechanical basis for dissociation which we desire, and that when once the dissociation is fully developed, the motives of the dreamer, as described in my last paper, are free to direct unconscious activity into paranormal channels. A woman who has had a number of paranormal experiences illustrates this mechanism in a long and complicated case presented in the *Journal of the (English) S. P. R.*¹⁷ The percipient was a patient of Dr. W. H. C. Tenhaeff of Utrecht University, who first reported the incident in the Dutch publication, *Tijdschrift voor Parapsychologie*:

Mrs. O., the percipient, was a very simple woman, wife of a house-painter, and mother of three children. When she came to Dr. Tenhaeff she was in a "nervous condition." She was a good hypnotic subject, and had recently been operated on under hypnosis. She felt "extremely on edge and was anxious for some means of self-expression." On the evening of November 26, 1937, about a week after getting in touch with Dr. Tenhaeff, Mrs. O. had a striking precognitive dream relating to Prince Bernhart. In the dream she saw "a level-crossing and a long road and meadows. Behind the gate to the left stood a working lorry. A car came driving very quickly which was in a hurry to cross, but in the middle a tyre burst and the car drove full speed into the gate and into the lorry which was standing behind. Someone was killed on the spot. I saw him lying there, and it was Prince Bernhart." On November 29th Prince Bernhart did in fact meet with a motor accident, the details of which fulfilled almost every point in Mrs. O.'s dream. The Prince, however, was not killed, but only injured. He was said to have escaped with his life by a miracle.

We may find in other individuals that deep sleep serves the paranormal purpose poorly, and that the condition of *falling asleep* or of *waking up* gives sufficient dissociation, while permitting the individual to grasp more clearly, at the conscious level, the paranormal impression for which he has been reaching. A case referred to by G. N. M. Tyrrell¹⁸

¹⁷ *Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. XXXI, January, 1939, pp. 2-6.

¹⁸ Tyrrell, G. N. M., *Science and Psychical Phenomena*, Harpers, 1938. For the complete case, cf. *Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. XXVII, November, 1932, p. 326.

illustrates the point. A lady woke early one morning and saw lying on her pillow what appeared to be a half-sheet of note paper with words written on it, "M— was dying last night." She repeated the words to herself, then the whole thing vanished. There was only one person to whom the message could refer and it was subsequently learned that she had, in fact, died during the night.

In the records of spontaneous cases we find dozens of examples of very light sleep, or drowsiness, or transition states between waking and sleeping. The following case, in which the percipient was "resting," is a fair, run-of-the-mine example. The full account is to be found in the *Proceedings of the S. P. R.*¹⁹ It is of special interest to note that the percipient was only three years of age at the time of his impression.

March 12, 1918

My sister, Mrs. W—, has asked me to write you an account of the story she told you about my small boy.

Unfortunately I did not write it down at the time, so I am not sure as to the date, but it was after November 4th [1917], perhaps several days after, though before the news of my husband's death came to us on November 16th. I think it was most likely on November 8th or 9th, and my husband was killed on November 6th.

Dicky, the small boy, was resting on my bed after lunch and I was sitting by his side sewing, and we were not talking, when he sat up rather suddenly and said, "Daddy is dead." I said, "Oh no, dear, he's not and I expect he'll come back to us some day"; but Dicky looked very upset and became flushed and almost wept and said again, "No he won't, Dick knows he's dead." I just said, "No, dear, I don't think he is," but Dicky seemed so distressed and repeated, "No, no, Dick knows it" so emphatically that I thought best to leave the subject alone. He never referred to it again and had never said anything of the sort before. When we did say anything about his father it was always as to when he would come back and Dick's usual remark was that he would run and open the gate for him. It was so queer of Dick that I went almost at once and told my sister here of it, but I had no impression at all that my husband was

¹⁹ *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXXIII (1923), pp. 133-135.

dead, and only thought of it as odd of Dicky. Indeed we had got to look upon my husband's safety as a foregone conclusion, for he had been through Gallipoli, El Arish and the first battle of Gaza without a scratch.

[signed] Elizabeth D. Russell

In reply to questions Mrs. Russell writes on March 16, 1918:

(1) Dicky was born on August 3rd, 1914 [and was therefore aged 3¼ years at the date of his impression].

(2) I think "dead" does convey some meaning to him; he sees hedgehogs, worms, mice and such like animals dead, and always asks about them. "Why dead, Dick wants them alive again"—and he screws up his face into a half tearful state, much as he did when he made the remark about his father; only that time he got very flushed and was much distressed.

(3) No, I don't think it was a dream in the sense of a sleeping dream; he was quiet, but awake. It gave me the idea of an odd freak. I think he is a child with an acute imagination and sensitive; but he's essentially healthy and full of the joy of life, about the happiest child we have ever come across.

(4) Inclosed is my sister's account of the incident.

(5) I can't veraciously give an exact date; but we did go back on it after we heard of my husband's death and fixed it at somewhere between November 8th and 12th.

The account of Mrs. Russell's sister, Miss M. D. Holt, written from the same address and dated March 17, 1918 is as follows:

I clearly recollect my sister telling me the following incident: She had taken Dicky, her small son, upstairs for his after dinner rest—the child had been lying quietly on the bed while she was sewing when suddenly he sat up and said, "Daddy's dead." My sister said, "Oh no, he's not, some day he will come back again"; but Dicky repeated, "Daddy's dead, Dick knows it," and the child appeared very distressed, so much so that my sister thought it best to humour him and turn his thoughts to something else.

When he had finished his rest, she almost at once found me and told me about it, but even then it never occurred to us that the child's words were true.

My brother-in-law was killed on November 6th, 1917, and I feel almost sure that it was a few days after that date that this incident happened. Unfortunately neither of us made a note of the exact date at the time.

[signed] Mary D. Holt

The death of Captain Edward Stanley Russell on November 6th, 1917, was announced in the *Times* of November 20.

It will be observed that in this case evidence of any exact coincidence is wanting; but there is no doubt that the little boy's experience occurred some time before the news of his father's death was received, and it is almost if not quite certain that it did not occur before the death itself.

Having in mind the wide variations in dissociative conditions, we may seek to discover that degree of depth or lightness of sleep, and that precise type of dissociation, which helps the particular individual to perceive paranormally.

So far, we have approached dissociation from the physical angle. In other cases, it may be more fruitful to approach the matter from the purely psychological angle. We may study the nature of individual resistances to the paranormal, and try to find ways of freeing the deeper levels of the mind from the interference which these resistances entail. Let us consider, for example, the question of telepathy occurring in hypnosis, and see under what conditions hypnosis may be expected to be helpful. Some pertinent examples from the work of Dr. Carl Brück were discussed in the January, 1943, issue of this *JOURNAL*; many other cases of paranormal phenomena occurring in hypnosis are reported in the publications of the S.P.R. We might refer to an experiment carried out by Captain M— with a friend, Mr. N—, who was a good hypnotic subject. Mr. N— was asked to "travel" to the home of the experimenter and to report on what he saw and heard there. He gave many details which were later fully corroborated.²⁰

Should we be justified in assuming, on the basis of such cases, that hypnosis is a sure avenue to the paranormal? Not at all. Suppose that the hypnotist begins with a direct hammer-and-tongs approach, assuring his hypnotized subject that he can see an event going on at a distance, or that he can read the mind of a distant person. Will the experiment, simply by virtue of working at a deep level, necessarily succeed? By no means. In the

²⁰ *Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. XX, February, 1922, pp. 214-219.

first place, a deep, irrational fear of the paranormal may pervade not only the conscious, but also much of the unconscious personality. Secondly, the subject may resent being used in this way; he may fundamentally dislike being "sent on errands." Thirdly, the subject may hate or fear the hypnotist, or the relation which he feels to be developing between them. And lastly, he may fear the specific event or thought with which he is asked to make contact, so that though succeeding with certain selected materials, he fails with others.

In this last connection, it must be remembered that any event, object, or person may be, for the subject, a *symbol* operating unconsciously to remind him of something about which he would rather not know too much. Even commonplace objects like star, circle, waves, are in English poetry, for example, richly associated with many things which are full of sentiment, and, by the same token, full of emotional meanings against which a sensitive person may wish to defend himself. These are but a few of the many unconscious factors which may prevent the hypnotist from achieving success. Such considerations suggest that we are not dealing merely with watertight compartments of the conscious and unconscious, but rather with a *complicated system of potentially interconnected regions*. It is only when that region which receives an impression is connected with a *sensory or motor outlet* that we can ever record a paranormal impression.

The Circumvention of the Barriers

Fortunately, however, impressions received in one region may be of sufficient intensity to work their way indirectly, by roundabout routes, into sensory or motor expression. The impressions may, as it were, emerge by "climbing hand over hand" into a region permitting their expression. Ordinarily, while doing so, the impressions are reworked. They are colored or contaminated by those parts of the mind with which they make contact on their way to find an expressive outlet, so that the paranormal dream, for ex-

ample, exhibits a rearrangement of parts, and much material added by the dreamer's mind. As Mrs. Sidgwick pointed out years ago in her paper to which we have already referred, the hindrances and blockages to telepathic communications show themselves in the confusion or contamination of impressions; this seeming confusion, moreover, may often be characteristic of the individual mind which has received the telepathic impression. This point is exemplified in the coincidental dreams of two sisters, as reported in the *Journal of the S. P. R.*²¹ Miss A. Jones (pseudonym) dreamed of an immense globe which she knew to be Heaven. Making an effort to rouse herself, she opened her eyes and saw upon the mantelpiece a small white toy elephant which she had recently bought for a child of her acquaintance. At the same time her sister, Miss E. Jones, who was at a distance, dreamed that she saw Miss A. Jones walking up a slight incline and disappearing into a mound which she knew to be Heaven. She reappeared from the back of the mound, in the shape of three small white elephants.

It would be better, however, to speak of creative reorganization rather than of contamination. What is added by the dreamer's mind is seldom random error or dross. It seems rather to involve a vital rearrangement of the message in personal terms. The process is likely to resemble closely the creative processes of genius, in which an elemental idea which anyone might have is clothed in the peculiar imagery or peculiar patterns of meanings which characterize the poet's or dramatist's creative intelligence.

We may say, then, that a paranormal impulse, fitting into the needs of the individual, is assimilated to the individual mind, organized into a *total meaningful impression*, the paranormal elements of which can only be discovered when the object or event at which the individual aimed is described and the process of assimilating it to the rest of the mind is worked out.

²¹ *Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. XXI, December, 1924, pp. 350-352.

Multiple Personality

We have been using the term "dissociation" broadly to cover all functional barriers within the psychic system, and have avoided discussion of those more dramatic dissociation phenomena termed "dual" or "multiple" personality. In these latter cases, there is sometimes evidence not only of dissociation but of the existence of two completely independent selves, independent personalities, each of which has its own memories, purposes, and character. In some cases these personalities alternate in control of the organism; sometimes they are simultaneously present. Indeed, sometimes they wage war upon each other. The authentication of such fullfledged cases is more difficult than appears at first sight, and the number of examples of true double or multiple personality is probably very small. The whole question of multiple personality, however, is independent of the problem with which we are here dealing, except in one respect. In certain cases of multiple personality, the motivations and aims of one self may be sharply at variance with those of the other selves, one of the selves being paranormally gifted, the others, not at all.²²

In such instances, the gifted self may be able to exercise its powers more easily than if we were dealing with a normal, unitary personality. Perhaps the gifted self represents a stratum which is truly focused upon the paranormal. Indeed, the development of the cleavage responsible for the splitting of the personality may have been due to the struggle of a part of the individual to function at a paranormal level.

While dissociation proves frequently to be valuable in freeing those impulses to the paranormal which are already present, it should again be stressed that, as such, it is no guarantee of paranormal activity. The absentmindedness and the dreams of the normal person are seldom vehicles of telepathy or precognition, and many a lifelong hypnotic subject or trance "sensitive" functions in terms of subcon-

²² Prince, W. F., "The Doris Case of Multiple Personality," *Proc. A.S.P.R.*, Vol. IX, 1915 and Vol. X, 1916.

scious activity of a completely normal type. There must be a *readiness* to receive paranormally, this readiness consisting, first, of a deep need for paranormal contact and second, of freedom from all the conflicting desires, fears, and self-reproaches which serve to block the process. To this readiness to receive there must be added freedom from all interferences, so that there is an open channel of communication between the receiving level and the expressive level. The channel may be fortuitously cleared in a moment of relaxation, or indifference, when the mind is on "dead center" between two periods of preoccupation; or the channel may be forcibly cleared—dredged out by the active techniques of hypnosis, auto-suggestion, and the induction of trance. Or, the normal consciousness, remaining in control, a secondary outlet may be cleared through the cultivation of such motor automatisms as automatic writing. For all these reasons, it should once more be emphasized that it is not the dissociation *as such* which yields the paranormal result, any more than it is the open road which guarantees the advance of the army. Dissociation is simply a device for opening the road; the impulse to move forward is all-important. There are, nevertheless, many critical periods when everything depends upon the openness of the road, the freedom from blocking, the possibility that a coherent stream of communication can make its way through so as to reach articulate expression.

The Forceful Removal of Barriers

So far, we have proceeded as if paranormal impressions could come through to expression *only* when the way already has been prepared. We might, however, consider more closely our analogy of the open road. Let us assume that a huge dam is dynamited in the neighborhood of the valley through which the road runs. So tremendous may be the force of the rushing waters that they will clear the road in short order, carrying along the debris of erstwhile obstructions. So, when something of profound significance consumes the percipient, the impulse to paranormal

perception may be so tremendous that the channel is cleared, the obstruction thrown forcibly to one side, dissociation created, and the normal preoccupations of the waking mind blotted out; the uprush of the paranormal impression forces for itself a clear space even within the center of consciousness. Such a process seems to be what is involved in those spontaneous cases in which the field of normal vision is blotted out, the paranormal impression filling the whole stage, as in the following case from *Phantasms of the Living*:²³

When the percipient was about ten years of age, she was one day walking in a country lane at A., the place where her parents then resided. She was reading geometry as she walked along, a subject, as the percipient pointed out, little likely to produce fancies or morbid phenomena of any kind. Then, in a moment, she saw a bedroom known as the White Room in her home, and upon the floor lay her mother, to all appearance dead. The vision, the percipient said, must have remained some minutes, during which time her real surroundings appeared to pale and die out, but as the vision faded, actual surroundings came back, at first dimly, and then clearly. She could not doubt that what she had seen was real, so instead of going home, she went to the house of the family doctor and together they hurried directly to the White Room. There they found the percipient's mother actually lying as in the vision. She had been seized suddenly by a heart attack and would not have survived if it had not been for the doctor's timely advent. The percipient further stated: "The occasion I described was, I believe, the only one on which I saw a scene transported apparently into the actual field of vision, to the exclusion of objects and surroundings actually present. . . . I have had other visions in which I have seen events happening as they *really were*, in another place, but I have been also conscious of *real* surroundings." The sequence of events is fully corroborated by the percipient's mother and father, and by the family doctor.

In cases such as the one summarized above, where there is a blotting out of what would normally be seen, it is characteristic of the impression to appear suddenly, forcing its way in upon the percipient's attention, and then to disappear with equal suddenness when its work is done.

²³ Vol. I, pp. 194-195.

Shakespeare, profoundly observant in such matters, well knew these earmarks of the spontaneous hallucination. As Macbeth sits at meat with his honored guests he suddenly beholds the ghost of Banquo which, for the time, dwarfs all other impressions. He rails at it ("Hence, horrible shadow!"), heeding neither his wife's protests nor the consternation of his guests. Suddenly, as quickly as it came, the apparition disappears; Macbeth catches his breath, steadies himself, and remarks, "Why, so!—being gone, I am a man again."²⁴ The impression has come like an avalanche, cutting its way through, and then passes on. There is clearly dissociation. But in these cases dissociation is not a necessary precondition, but a consequence of the force of the impact.

Finally, there may be instances in which the dissociation is present in advance, waiting to be used, but *greatly increased* by the impact of the paranormal impression. There is, so to speak, a *partially* open road, partial freedom from interference. The force of the impression is sufficiently strong to permit some beginnings of registration, and as it works upon the receiving levels, fosters the development of more and more dissociation, just as any flaw or weak spot in a structure is widened and magnified by a force brought to bear upon it.

I suspect that in such cases the impression takes time to develop. Impressions as violent as those of Macbeth come even to persons who are at the time free of a predisposing dissociation; when, however, some dissociation is already present, it may be increased step by step by the pressure of a paranormal impulse, only gradually achieving full-fledged form.

Conclusions

In summarizing the preceding article and the present one, I have tried to show that paranormal experiences do not "just happen" to those specifically gifted to receive

²⁴ *Macbeth*, Act III, Scene IV.

them. They happen when motives are powerful, when the need for them is great, and when at the same time barriers to their reception are removed. If one is more concerned with the world of "here and now" than with the more remote aspects of the world separated from us in time and space, we shall not expect to find paranormal experiences. As the unconscious motivating forces of the individual become more and more preoccupied with things removed from the immediate world surrounding us, the greater is the disposition to make paranormal contact. For most of us, the matter-of-fact way of looking at life is of such uncompromising strength that it is only in the "unreal" world of the dream, or in moments of relaxation or indifference to our surroundings, that we can really believe in our own paranormal powers. Even then, it is difficult to achieve enough dissociation to free ourselves of our ordinary mental habits, which are based on a normal, rather than a paranormal, network of associations, and to steer clear of the interferences related to the symbolic meanings of the specific objects at which we aim.

These being the difficulties, how is it that the last half century has nevertheless witnessed some genuine progress in our understanding of the paranormal? The reply is, first, I think, that there are constitutional differences in capacity for dissociation, and that a few highly dissociated sensitives have worked for long and fruitful periods. Second, many of those who have occasional paranormal experiences in dissociated states have taken the trouble to record their impressions, so that we gradually see more and more clearly the factors involved, using these insights to guide us in setting up experiments on the dissociated states. Third, we may use our knowledge of normal psychology, especially in respect of motivation and dissociation, and the general psychology of perception, as in the work of Rhine, Warcollier, Bruck, and Thouless. We discover, now and then, more subtle ways of focusing the unconscious activity of the subject upon the specific material intended.

We may say that in achieving marksmanship three

things are essential: a desire to reach a high level of skill; freedom from fear, nervousness, and other inhibitions; and a precise knowledge of the psychology of the learning process. So it seems to be with paranormal marksmanship, or the capacity to direct one's aim. There must be (1) motivation to direct the process; that is, motivation towards the acquisition of paranormal skill in general and motivation to hit each specified objective; (2) there must be freedom from fears and other blocking factors; and (3) there must be a patient analysis of the individual's day-by-day progress. All three of the principles involved in the gradual achievement of success seem to be identical with principles found in everyday normal psychology. The paranormal powers are relatively weak, relatively easily blocked, and certainly very difficult to study as they run their course in the life history of the individual; but there is no reason for pessimism as to their ultimate analysis and application. They spring from known human motives; they are blocked by known human impediments; and they seem to be capable of *development* in some individuals, as are the other skills which human beings acquire.