

An Outline of Survival Evidence

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Introduction

With the steady accumulation of more and more material bearing on the problem of survival, and with the development from year to year of new methods of research and new types of survival evidence, the time may be ripe for an attempt to survey the present-day situation, noting how far this evidence carries us. In the present article an effort will be made to define the various types of survival evidence, and to arrange them in the general order of their chronological appearance in the history of psychical research. In the next issue of this JOURNAL an attempt will be made to show the difficulties which are still encountered; to show respects in which the evidence falls short of the ideal, and the resulting necessity for still more cogent types of material. Neither of these articles is offered as a complete statement, or a "debating case." For convenience, however, the main lines of evidence are marshaled in the present paper and certain critical questions raised in the later paper. Both the evidence and the objections are offered in a tentative and exploratory spirit, inviting criticisms and seeking to avoid dogma.

Phantasms of the Living and of the Dead

1. *Ordinary death coincidences*:—The first large mass of survival evidence confronting the inquirer into psychical research is the mass of data (from all over the world and from all historical epochs) indicating the rather frequent appearance of apparitions or phantasms of those who are at the time dying or who have just died. By means of statistical techniques based on the known death rate, it was possible in 1894 for Professor Henry Sidgwick's Committee to show that apparitions (of those not known to be ill or in danger) appear with extraordinary frequency in relation

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to the fact of death.¹ They concluded that "the number of death-coincidences² in our collection . . . is not due to chance" (pp. 247-248). Gurney had already pointed out in *Phantasms of the Living*³ that nearly three quarters of the cases recorded there are death-cases, "in the sense that the percipient's experience either coincided with or very shortly followed the agent's death. . . ." (Vol. II, p. 26). The fact that it is *death*, rather than any other kind of event, which gives rise to the greatest number of apparitions seems to suggest that something within the individual which is not bound up with the ordinary tasks of living makes contact, at or near the time of dissolution, with those who are linked in some way with him; it is, therefore, *indirect evidence of survival*.

A well-corroborated example of a fully externalized apparition coinciding with the sudden death of a distant agent is given by Mrs. Sidgwick in the *Proceedings* of the (English) Society for Psychical Research.⁴ The original report is long and detailed, but it may be summarized here:

The percipient was Lieut. J. J. Larkin, of the R.A.F., and the apparition was that of one of Lieut. Larkin's fellow officers, Lieut. David M'Connel, killed in an airplane crash on December 7, 1919. Lieut. Larkin reported that he spent the afternoon of December 7th in his room at the barracks. He sat in front of the fire reading and writing, and was wide awake all the time. At about 3:30 P.M. he heard someone walking up the passage. "The door opened with the usual noise and clatter which David always made; I heard his 'Hello boy!' and I turned half round in my chair and saw him standing in the doorway, half in and half out of the room, holding the door knob in his hand. He was dressed in his full flying clothes but wearing his naval cap, there being nothing unusual in his appearance . . . In reply to his 'Hello boy!' I remarked, 'Hello! back already?' He replied, 'Yes. Got there all right, had a good trip.' . . . I was looking at him the whole time he was speaking. He said, 'Well, cheero!'

¹ "Report on the Census of Hallucinations," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. X (1894), pp. 245-251.

² An apparition or phantasm was arbitrarily considered "coincidental" when it occurred within twelve hours either before or after the death of the apparent agent.

³ *Phantasms of the Living*, by E. Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, and F. Podmore, Trübner and Co., London, 1886.

⁴ Vol. XXXIII (1923), pp. 151-160.

closed the door noisily and went out." Shortly after this a friend dropped in to see Lieut. Larkin, and Larkin told him that he had just seen and talked with Lieut. M'Connel. (This friend sent a corroborative statement to the S.P.R.) Later on that day it was learned that Lieut. M'Connel had been instantly killed in a flying accident which occurred at about 3:25 P.M. Mistaken identity seems to be ruled out, since the light was very good in the room where the apparition appeared. Moreover, there was no other man in the barracks at the time who in any way resembled Lieut. M'Connel. It was also found that M'Connel was wearing his naval cap when he was killed—apparently an unusual circumstance. Agent and percipient had been "very good friends though not intimate friends in the true sense of the word."

2. *Apparitions seen long after death*:—The easiest way to dispose of the foregoing class of cases as survival evidence, while still accepting the fact of their paranormality, is to argue that the emotional crisis simply makes the dying individual a more powerful "transmitter" or agent. Yet on this point it is possible to marshal considerable evidence that such apparitions may occur long after death, though the death be still unknown to those perceiving the apparition. If the time between death and phantasm is only a few hours, or even a day or two, one might well argue that the impression was received at the time of death, but only slowly welled up into consciousness ("latency," or "deferred impression"). It is, however, difficult to refer to latency when the interval is in terms of months or years. Myers⁵ quotes such a case in *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, Vol. II, p. 371. The apparition was perceived two and a half months after the death, this death being unknown to the percipient:

Mrs. Clark stated that a young gentleman, Mr. Akhurst, had been much attached to her and had wanted to marry her. She became engaged to Mr. Clark, however, and later married him. After she had been married to Mr. Clark for about two years, Mr. Akhurst came to visit them in their home in Newcastle-on-Tyne. It appeared that at this time he was still interested in her. Mr. Akhurst then went to Yorkshire and Mrs. Clark never heard from him again.

⁵*Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, by F. W. H. Myers, Longmans, Green, and Co., New York and London, 1903.

Three months passed, and her baby was born. At the end of September, 1880, very early one morning as she was feeding her baby, "I felt a cold waft of air through the room and a feeling as though someone touched my shoulder . . . Raising my eyes to the door (which faced me), I saw Akhurst standing in his shirt and trousers looking at me, when he seemed to pass through the door. In the morning I mentioned it to my husband." Mr. Clark wrote in corroboration, "Shortly after my wife had been confined of my second daughter, about the end of September, 1880, my wife one morning informed me she had seen Akhurst about one o'clock that morning. I of course told her it was nonsense, but she persisted, and said he appeared to her with only his trousers and a shirt on . . ." Upon inquiry, it was learned that Mr. Akhurst had died (as a result of an overdose of chloral) on July 12, 1880. A friend said that Akhurst was found dressed in only shirt and trousers. The interval between death and apparition is thus seen to be about ten weeks.

3. *Apparitions conveying veridical information unknown to the percipient*:—Up to this point we have been concerned with apparitions whose appearance is similar to their lifetime appearance as described by those who knew them. Especially interesting evidence is presented, however, by instances in which the apparition appears in a form which characterized him during a period of life in which he was not in contact with the percipient; when, for example, he wears a beard or clothing unfamiliar to the percipient, yet actually characteristic of him at some period. As a surviving entity, it would presumably be natural for him to appear in any guise which characterized his living appearance, while it might be strange to assume that a living percipient would portray the deceased in unfamiliar form.

An interesting sub-type under this heading is the presentation of evidence by the apparition relating to some post-mortem situation; the apparition acts as if it were a surviving intelligence which knows what has happened to its body or to its loved ones since the time of its departure. The often-quoted case of the commercial traveler who sees his sister's apparition with a red scratch on its cheek may be referred to here. When the young man mentioned his experience to his mother she explained that she had accidentally made just such a scratch on her daughter's cheek

while preparing the body for burial, but that she had carefully obliterated it with powder and had never told a living soul of the incident. It is interesting to note that the girl had been dead for nine years when her apparition was perceived. The full case may be read in Myers' *Human Personality*.⁶

4. *Apparitions of those not known to the percipient:*—

As we proceed to the less naive interpretations, and look for evidence which may meet more and more trenchant criticisms, we come to the question whether cases exist in which the apparition could hardly be interpreted as an instance of telepathy between those who are somehow linked together psychologically, because the apparition is at the time *unrecognized and unknown*, yet sharp and clear enough to lead to subsequent identification beyond reasonable doubt. There are a number of such cases in the literature, a typical one being found in Gurney's paper (completed by Myers), "On Apparitions Occurring soon after Death."

In January or February of 1885 the percipient, Mr. Husbands, was sleeping in a hotel in Madeira. It was a bright moonlight night; his windows were open and the blinds up. "I felt some one was in my room," Mr. Husbands wrote. "On opening my eyes I saw a young fellow about 25, dressed in flannels, standing at the side of my bed and pointing with the first finger of his right hand to the place I was lying. I lay for some seconds to convince myself of some one being really there. I then sat up and looked at him. I saw his features so plainly that I recognized them in a photograph which was shown me some days after . . . As I was going to spring out of bed he slowly vanished through the door, which was shut, keeping his eyes upon me all the time." Another resident in the hotel, Miss Falkner, wrote: "The figure that Mr. Husbands saw while in Madeira was that of a young fellow who died unexpectedly months previously (in January, 1884), in the room which Mr. Husbands was occupying. Curiously enough, Mr. H. had never heard of him or his death. He told me the story the morning after he had seen the figure, and I recognized the young fellow from the description." Mr. Husbands also correctly described a costume, a cricket or tennis suit, which the dead man often wore.

⁶Vol. II, pp. 27-30.

⁷Proc. S.P.R., Vol. V (1888-1889), pp. 416-417.

5. *Activity and initiative on the part of apparitions:*—

Up to this point the apparition could be regarded as an "experience in the mind of the percipient," traceable in part to his own needs and interests. We might, for example, dispose of all these cases as survival evidence by presuming that the living, exercising their supernormal powers, cast about for information, discovering the catastrophes happening to their loved ones, and attributing to the apparitions of the deceased a knowledge of post-mortem events which actually they, the living, supernormally acquire. The whole argument shifts, however, when we turn to cases in which the apparition cannot plausibly be regarded as an expression of the spontaneous activity of the percipient. To be sure, we know rather little regarding the *limits* of supernormal capacities; but when we are dealing with probabilities rather than certainties, it is well to call a halt when a function is assigned to the living which transcends any power of which we are reasonably sure. We *do* have evidence that the living may actively seek to discover what is occurring at a distance, but we *do not* have evidence that the living, going about their ordinary affairs, are able to concoct urgent veridical messages, as if from the deceased, to be delivered to themselves in the form of practical advice or urgent warnings. Premonitions of catastrophe which do not offer any evidence of spirit intervention do of course occur; but the case is quite different when promptings or monitions are given by apparitions in a form appropriate to the presumed intention of the discarnate personalities involved. There are not many well-authenticated examples of monitions of this type, but there are a few, and they are important.

The Chaffin Will Case⁸ is a modern example, and it should be read in full. In a series of vivid dreams, Mr. James L. Chaffin appeared to one of his sons. Information was conveyed as to the whereabouts of a second will benefiting the percipient. The existence of this second will was not known to any living person. It was found, however,

⁸Proc. S.P.R., Vol. XXXVI (1926-1928), pp. 517-524.

and was accepted as valid in the state of North Carolina, where the Chaffin family lived. Mr. Chaffin had been dead for about four years when his son's series of dreams began. A somewhat similar case, in which an apparition revealed the presence of money sewed into a coat, is quoted by Myers in *Human Personality*, Vol. II, pp. 37-40.

6. "*Peak in Darien*" cases:—We come finally to instances in which there appears to be spontaneous activity on the part of two entities—one near the point of death, but on the side of the living, the other on the side of the deceased. These are called "*Peak in Darien*" cases.⁹ Their common feature is the perception by a dying person of a phantasm of a deceased individual who is not normally known by the dying percipient to be deceased. Sir William Barrett, in his little book *Death-Bed Visions*,¹⁰ gives a number of cases of this kind. One of the best of these cases concerns a young girl dying of tuberculosis. "She had lain for some days in a prostrate condition taking no notice of anything, when she opened her eyes, and . . . said 'Susan—and Jane—and Ellen,' as if recognizing the presence of her three sisters, who had previously died of the same disease. Then . . . she continued, 'and Edward too!'—naming a brother then supposed to be alive and well in India—as if surprised at seeing him in the company. She said no more, and sank shortly afterwards. In the course of the post, letters came from India announcing the death of Edward, from an accident a week or two previous to the death of his sister . . ." (pp. 24-25). It is particularly difficult to evaluate the small group of cases of this type as straightforward evidence for survival. Like many of the simplest death-coincidence apparitions, they convey the feeling that there is something about death which sensitizes paranormal activity. But it is difficult at present to translate this feeling or intuition into sober terms of scientific probability.

Looking back over these six classes of evidence from

⁹ From the book of this title by Miss Frances P. Cobbe.

¹⁰ *Death-Bed Visions*, by Sir William Barrett, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1926.

apparitions, it will be noted that they all involve some suggestion of activity on the part of the apparition, as well as on the part of the living percipient. Indeed, as a conclusion to this brief summary of evidence for survival afforded by apparitions, I would beg to remind the reader that Myers, having a great deal of material at his command, interpreted it chiefly not in terms of passive perceptual processes which sensitize the living to the phantasms of the dead, but in terms of a genuine invasion by the deceased, an actual breaking through into the experience, the "life space," of the living.¹¹ There is little to invalidate and much to support Myers' view of the matter. In Mr. Tyrrell's recent survey of apparitions¹² and their unconscious dynamic foundations, we find a proper stress upon the unconscious impulses both of the deceased and of the living percipient. The several types of evidence just surveyed, however, and notably the monitions cases (together with the many cases in which the apparition comes most unexpectedly and behaves in most unexpected fashion), suggest that the degree of spontaneity and activity on the part of the discarnate entities is even greater than Mr. Tyrrell allows.

Mediumship

1. *Communication of facts not known to the medium, but known to the sitter*:—In many civilizations certain individuals have purported to act as intermediaries between the deceased and the living; and with modern spiritualism mediumship has offered great quantities of material for scientific analysis in terms of survival evidence. Here again we may begin with the simplest type of evidence—the evidence that is afforded by the communication of facts not known to the medium, but known to the sitter. There are so many examples of this type to be found in the literature

¹¹ *Phantasms of the Living*. "Note, by Mr. Myers, on a Suggested Mode of Psychical Interaction," Vol. II, pp. 277-316.

¹² *Apparitions: being the seventh Frederic W. H. Myers Memorial Lecture*, by G. N. M. Tyrrell, Society for Psychical Research, London, 1942.

that it seems hardly necessary to quote specific cases.¹³ Such material, as is well known, makes up a large proportion of all veridical mediumistic communications, and the evidence for survival is thought to lie in the fact that the material is not conceivably within the range of knowledge of the medium. To be sure, the question of the *origin* of facts of this type given by the medium remains obscure. We do have reason to believe that the trance consciousness can at times directly "extract" facts from the sitter's mind (there being no question at all of the sitter's deceased friends being involved), as when Mrs. Piper's control "Dr. Phinuit" commented on the "tickets with the figures stamped in red" about which the sitter, Mr. Clarke, had been preoccupied, but had consciously forgotten.¹⁴ (It does not follow from this, however, that *all* evidential items known to the sitter do in fact come from the sitter's mind.)

2. *Communication of facts not known to the sitter:*—

From the very beginning, the critic has not hesitated to point out that if telepathy is a fact, the trance consciousness might, as we have just pointed out, obtain from the sitter information of value regarding the deceased. Then, through the histrionic pose which oracles, soothsayers, and mediums have always exhibited, such information might be elaborated and a soi-disant "discarnate entity" created out of the whole cloth. To meet this objection, emphasis was early given to cases involving verifiable information which was not and never had been known either to medium or to sitter. In the very early Piper sittings, for example, Professor and Mrs. William James received such communications, among them communications purporting to come from a deceased aunt. Professor James wrote: "The aunt who purported to 'take control' . . . spoke . . . of the condition of health of two members of the family in New York, of which we knew

¹³ In this connection, the reader is referred to the many papers on Mrs. Piper in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., especially those appearing between 1889 and 1898. See also "On a Series of Sittings with Mrs. Osborne Leonard," by Miss Radclyffe-Hall and (Una) Lady Troubridge, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXX (1918-1919), pp. 339-554.

¹⁴ "A Record of Observations of Certain Phenomena of Trance: Part II," by Walter Leaf, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. VI (1889-1890), p. 572.

nothing at the time, and which was afterwards corroborated by letter."¹⁵

Miss Radclyffe-Hall and Lady Troubridge also report instances in their early Leonard sittings where their regular communicator, A. V. B., refers to matters at the time unknown to them. In one such instance, A. V. B. describes the home of a friend she had known well during her lifetime, this home being unknown to the sitters.¹⁶

After describing the house, A. V. B., through Feda (Mrs. Leonard's control) refers to some things hanging on the walls of a room, "which things are long in shape, though not all long in shape; they are, however, nothing to do with pictures, and one of them is said to have been *dried*." Feda then speaks of one or two portfolios containing designs and drawings; and of a collection of books pertaining to semi-civilized peoples, and of a "very old chest." Through correspondence with the owner of the home, the investigators learn that he had hanging on the walls of his vestibule "weapons and stuffs from the Soudan and elsewhere, many of them long in shape. Also a *dried* crocodile from the Nile." He had also a portfolio containing drawings and sketches for the alteration and decoration of the vestibule where the dried crocodile hung. In his library he had a collection of books on Central Africa, the Soudan, etc. Finally, he had "a very old chest"—an old Italian Cassone. Further inquiry elicited the fact that A. V. B. in her lifetime had been interested in all the items referred to; she had, for example, seen the sketches for remodeling the vestibule and had discussed them with her friend.

3. *Communication of a group of facts to which no single living person has access:*—To meet the objection that communications can be accounted for in terms of telepathy between the living, it would clearly be well if one could find cases in which the communicated material is not only unknown to the sitter, but unknown to any *one* living person. We do have to recognize that mediums may quite literally dip into, or fish about in, the minds of sitters, as already noted; and, as we shall see in a moment, they may fish about in the minds of distant living persons; so we must see whether we can find survival evidence which is not

¹⁵ "A Record of Observations of Certain Phenomena of Trance: Part III," by Professor William James, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. VI (1889-1890), p. 656.

¹⁶ Miss Radclyffe-Hall and (Una) Lady Troubridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 506-521.

weakened by this possibility. It will be relevant to quote here from a case reported by Richard Hodgson¹⁷ in one of his papers on the Piper phenomena, simply to show the nature of the difficulty which must be circumvented:

It occurred to Hodgson to ask George Pelham, one of the regular personal communicators through Mrs. Piper, to visit the Howards (friends of G. P.'s) during a sitting, and to bring back a report before the end of the sitting as to what they had been doing. In preparation for this experiment, Hodgson sent a letter to the Howards asking them to do "various fantastic things" at the time of the sitting. At the beginning of a sitting, on April 28, 1892, Hodgson sent G. P. away to watch the Howards. Toward the end of the sitting Phinuit was interrupted by the return of G. P., who claimed to have been watching Mrs. Howard. He reported: "She's writing, and taken some violets and put them in a book. It looks as if she's writing to my mother . . . Who's Tyson?" Then Phinuit took over: "Took a little book, opened it, wrote letter he thinks to his mother. Saw her take a little bag and put some things in it belonging to him, placed the photograph beside her on the desk . . . sent a letter to TASON, TYSON." Mrs. Howard, upon reading the script, wrote to Hodgson: "I did *none* of these things today (i.e., at the time of the sitting), but *all* of them yesterday afternoon and the evening before!" This included writing a letter to a Mrs. Tyson, declining an invitation.

We have, then, suggestive evidence that the minds of distant persons are not sealed to the actively searching trance personalities, whatever they prove to be. But we could make the telepathic hypothesis difficult to maintain if we could find cases in which no *single* distant source would suffice. For if the telepathic hypothesis is to be used at all, it is then faced with the necessity of assuming that the trance consciousness not only filches appropriate information from two or more living minds, but appropriately pieces the information together in order to complete the histrionic pose. And, indeed, cases in which no single distant living mind possesses all the information are to be found, although they are rare. One such is the "Case of Daisy's Second Father," as reported by Miss Radclyffe-Hall and Lady Troubridge in their paper already referred to (pp. 521-546):

¹⁷ "A Further Record of Observations of Certain Phenomena of Trance," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XIII (1897-1898), pp. 304-307.

Miss Radclyffe-Hall had a friend, Daisy Armstrong (pseudonym), who had lost her husband during the First World War. Daisy wrote from the Near East to ask Miss Radclyffe-Hall (M. R. H.) if she would try to obtain for her through Mrs. Leonard some evidence from her husband. M. R. H. wrote back that she "would await a favorable opportunity before mentioning her wishes to the purporting communicator, A. V. B." During her lifetime A. V. B. had known and liked Daisy. Soon after, at a sitting with Mrs. Leonard held on February 14, 1917, M. R. H. asked A. V. B. if she "remembers an old friend of mine called Daisy." Feda, purporting to relay messages from A. V. B., says that she does remember Daisy, that she is living, and correctly gives her surname. She then indicates that there are two men present who wish to communicate with Daisy, and that A. V. B. herself had known one of these men during her lifetime, but not the other. Nothing more of importance in connection with Daisy occurred at this sitting, but at later sittings it becomes clear that the two men referred to purport to be Daisy's husband and father. A. V. B. had in fact known the husband, but not the father.

At the first sitting nothing was given which was not within the knowledge of the sitter, but at a sitting held on February 21st numerous veridical details concerning Daisy's father were given, most of them unknown to the sitter. For instance, an "old hat" was accurately described. Although Daisy had a faint memory of such a hat, it was her sister who remembered that Mr. Armstrong had a favorite hat that "went by the name of 'the old hat,' and that he was in the habit of remarking: 'You will spoil my afternoon if you won't let me wear the old hat.'" After many other references to past events and interests, subsequently verified by either Daisy or her sister, the communicator purporting to be the father says: "There were two of us that stood in the same relation to Daisy . . . two of us *did* stand in the same relation to Daisy, with a slight difference . . . Do you follow me?" Feda has referred just before this to a man "writing in jerks!" and has described at length a machine in this man's room. "It's nearly all made of some dark-coloured metal . . . a big thing on a stand . . . like a roly thing or rod running through the middle, two narrower rods as well, and above the rods something seems to rise up, something that looks curved." All of this Daisy, in the Near East, recognized as applying perfectly to her adopted father, the Rev. Bertrand Wilson, whom she believed to be alive, in England. But it is subsequently learned that he had died three days before this sitting had taken place. The adopted father was a composer and sat all day at his table writing music. In the next room he had a printing press. The investigators

wrote: "An inspection of the Excelsior and Model Hand-Printing Machines has revealed that Feda's description of the machine . . . was very near the mark indeed." Neither of the investigators knew that Daisy had an adopted father (M. R. H. had seen little of her for many years and Lady Troubridge had never met her), nor did they know that such a person as the Rev. Mr. Wilson existed. A perfect stranger to the entire group concerned had to be approached in order to ascertain the date of the adopted father's death. Although it is not explicitly stated, one gathers from the report that Daisy's sister was also unaware, at the time of the sitting, that the Rev. Mr. Wilson was dead.

4. *Communication of facts not known to any living person*:—Recognizing that even stronger evidence is needed in order to clinch their case, advocates of the survival hypothesis have always preferred to emphasize incidents where they can state simply and boldly that the information offered as survival evidence is *known to no living person whatever*. Cases of this sort are inevitably rare, since verification of facts is usually made by reference to the statements of living persons; but occasionally corroboration may be obtained from documents the contents of which are unknown to all living persons, and under circumstances where neither the medium nor anyone else could be supposed to be clairvoyantly searching for such material. An especially suitable case under this heading is offered by Mrs. Sidgwick in her paper "An Examination of Book Tests obtained in Sitzings with Mrs. Leonard."¹⁸ The sitter was Mrs. Hugh Talbot and the purported communicator was her husband. Mrs. Talbot reported (in part) as follows:

"Suddenly Feda (Mrs. Leonard's control) began a tiresome description of a book, she said it was leather and dark, and tried to show me the size. Mrs. Leonard showed a length of eight to ten inches long with her hands, and four or five inches wide. She (Feda) said 'It is not exactly a book, it is not printed . . . it has writing in.' . . . 'there are two books, you will know the one he means by a diagram of languages in the front.' . . . 'Indo-European, Aryan, Semitic languages.' . . . 'A table of Arabian languages, Semitic languages.' It sounded absolute rubbish to me. I had never heard of a diagram of languages and all these Eastern names jumbled

¹⁸ *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXXI (1920-1921), pp. 253-260.

together sounded like nothing at all, and she kept on repeating them and saying this is how I was to know the book, and kept on and on 'Will you look at page twelve or thirteen. If it is there, it would interest him so much after this conversation. [In the earlier part of the sitting the communicator had repeatedly asked the sitter to believe that life continued after death and that he did not feel changed at all.] . . ." Mrs. Talbot reported that the next day she found two old notebooks which had belonged to her husband and which she had never cared to open. A shabby black leather one corresponded in size to Feda's description. "To my utter astonishment, my eyes fell on the words, 'Table of Semitic or Syro-Arabian Languages,' and pulling out the leaf, which was a long folded piece of paper pasted in, I saw on the other side 'General table of the Aryan and Indo-European languages.'" On page thirteen of this notebook was an extract from an anonymous work entitled *Post Mortem*. It describes the sensations of a person who realizes that he is dead, and of his meeting with his deceased relatives.¹⁹

Some of the other book tests through Mrs. Leonard offer an interesting variation on this type of evidence. In such tests the communicator, through Feda, attempts to specify the exact whereabouts of a book, and of a page in that book, which the sitter will find in his home. References are made to specific material to be found on the page (which is usually designated by number), and it is often found that this material is highly appropriate as a description of the life and interests of the communicator when he was in the flesh. In some of the more striking cases, when the particular volume indicated has never been read by the sitter nor by anyone else concerned with the experiment, it seems possible to rule out telepathy from the living as an explanation. Most important, in these cases no living person knows that *material relevant to the deceased* appears on the page designated. As the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas observes, "two streams of knowledge are united in the experiment in a way that excludes the familiar suggestion of telepathic action between human minds."²⁰ There must in some sense

¹⁹ For other cases in which information is given, ostensibly by a dead person, concerning facts known to the deceased but unknown to any living person, see *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 181-182, Vol. XXXV, pp. 511 ff., and Vol. XXXVI, pp. 303-305.

²⁰ *Some New Evidence for Human Survival*, by C. D. Thomas, W. Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., Glasgow, 1922.

be clairvoyance, either exercised directly by the medium, or by the deceased; but the medium, to accomplish the feat, would presumably have to have information both regarding the traits of the deceased and regarding the way in which the content of the specified passage dovetailed with these traits.

A further variation on this theme is to be found in the so-called newspaper tests, but here we have the added interest of a precognitive element. In these tests, the communicator refers to items, often quite specifically, which will appear in the *next day's* newspaper. Again, in the best examples the communicator's memories and interests are found to be interwoven with the items referred to. Mr. Thomas' book *Some New Evidence for Human Survival* contains a chapter on such tests.

5. *Sudden intrusion of an unexpected communicator:*—When considering apparitions, we stressed the spontaneous activity, the tendency to "invasion," which they sometimes manifest. The same sort of thing appears in mediumship. The purporting communicators are by no means always those who have been desired and expected by the sitters; indeed, the sitters may be astonished to note that the voice or hand which acts as vehicle of communication breaks away from the familiar themes, often being characterized by a petulant demand to be heard and by characteristics of tempo or emphasis which are unlike those of the usual communicators; and a message may be given which comprises not only facts but names unknown to all present, defining the circumstances and date of decease of the entity which has broken through. In the early Russian collection of cases by Aksakof, a very striking incident of this sort is given.²¹ During a séance at the home of a family living in Tambof, Russia, communications were received from a personality that claimed to be one Anastasie Péréliguine. She said she had died the day before at a hospital and that she had poisoned herself with matches. She said she had

²¹ Quoted by Myers in *Human Personality*, Vol. II, pp. 471-473.

been a housemaid and that she was seventeen years old. Everyone present at the home-circle certified that they had no previous knowledge of the existence or the death of the girl. But subsequent inquiries brought to light the fact that a servant girl named Anastasie Péréliguine, aged seventeen, had died the day before in the hospital. In a depressed state, she had poisoned herself with phosphorus.

A much more recent case under this heading is presented in the *Journal of the S.P.R.*²² During a sitting with a Dutch trance medium a strange entity presented itself. It claimed to be the surviving personality of a young man who had been killed in a motor accident. He gave his full name and address, and also referred by name to his surviving sister and brother. The address and names were later verified. He begged that a message be sent to his mother. Other veridical material of a personal nature was also given. A few points were incorrect. The Dutch researchers who reported the case felt sure, after protracted investigation, that neither medium nor sitters could have had normal knowledge of most of the material given by the communicating entity. Such cases as these, if taken at their face value, would strongly support the survival hypothesis; but one can never be absolutely sure that the medium has not gleaned information, consciously or unconsciously, normally or parapsychically, from newspapers or other sources. Certainly each case involving the intrusion of an unknown communicator should be very carefully analyzed with this difficulty in view.

6. *Cross references:*—Finally, to keep the record complete, I would include the class of cases called by Dr. James H. Hyslop "cross references."²³ In these cases the same communicator makes himself known through various sensitivities by using the same phrase or symbol, or by repeating the same brief message. The telepathic interpretation must assume either that the living are unconsciously engineering

²² *Journal S.P.R.*, January-February, 1940, pp. 142-152.

²³ *Contact with the Other World*, by J. H. Hyslop, The Century Company, New York, 1920. Cf. especially pp. 166 et seq.

these several appearances, or that some one of the sensitives is acting as master of ceremonies, the others passively receiving and repeating the same message.

In conclusion, it should be noted that statistical methods²⁴ have been devised to measure the degree to which mediumistic communications transcend chance expectation. In one method, the material given by the medium is tested to see to what extent it fits sitters for whom it was *not* intended. Using this technique, J. G. Pratt clearly showed, in his research with Mrs. Garrett, that such *chance* hits are significantly fewer than the *actual* hits. A somewhat similar technique was used by J. F. Thomas in evaluating his proxy sittings with Mrs. Leonard; but this will be referred to later under the appropriate heading of Proxy Sittings.

Cross Correspondences

After the death of Henry Sidgwick and F. W. H. Myers at the turn of the century, there was naturally a general feeling that an era had come to an end and that new directions must be taken. And there began to occur in the automatic script of several English women, as well as in the trance communications of Mrs. Piper in America, various messages which suggested that a new kind of evidence was at hand. It became evident to Miss Alice Johnson²⁵ that in the various automatic scripts of Mrs. Verrall, Miss Verrall, and Mrs. Holland many evidences of classical scholarship were at hand, highly appropriate as expressions of the personality of Myers, and much more complex than the "cross references." For example, a bit of Greek or Latin poetry may be given through one automatist, and a supplementary bit, not simply an echo of the first, is given to another automatist. Thus, as Mrs. Verrall automatically gives a description of a painting which represents Pope Leo I at

²⁴ "A Method of Estimating the Supernormal Content of Mediumistic Communications," by H. F. Saltmarsh and S. G. Soal, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXXIX (1930-1931), pp. 266-271; and "Towards a Method of Evaluating Mediumistic Material," by J. G. Pratt, *Bulletin B.S.P.R.*, No. XXIII, March, 1936.

²⁵ "On the Automatic Writing of Mrs. Holland," by Alice Johnson, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXI (1907-1909), pp. 166-391.

the gates of Rome, pleading with Attila not to sack the city, another message is given to Mrs. Holland, five thousand miles away in India, in the words: "*Ave Roma Immortalis. How could I make it any clearer without giving her the clue?*" In "cross correspondences," as these messages came to be called, it is not repetition of motifs, but the development of complementary and related associations, that points to a common psychological origin for the many automatisms.

The distinction between cross references and cross correspondences is, to be sure, not altogether sharp. In one of the most beautiful of all the cross correspondences, the "Hope, Star and Browning" case,²⁶ we find elements of cross reference. Among the automatic scripts of Mrs. and Miss Verrall appear not only the specific words "star" and "hope" (cross references), but Browning quotations highly reminiscent of Myers, and fitting well with the star and hope references. And through Mrs. Piper, in America, the Myers personality indicates that he has successfully concluded a cross correspondence, and writes "Browning, Hope, Star." These references provide the clue through which the whole complex plan is finally understood.

One of the most cogent and satisfying of the many dozens of reported cross correspondences has to do with a specific test question which was asked of the Myers personality through Mrs. Piper²⁷ in the United States, in 1908, and later asked by Sir Oliver Lodge of the Myers personality communicating through Mrs. Willett²⁸ in England. Mr. George B. Dorr presented to the Myers personality communicating through Mrs. Piper the question, "What does the word *Lethe* suggest to you?" He obtained later in the sitting some fragmentary classical allusions the meaning of which he

²⁶ "A Series of Concordant Automatisms," by J. G. Piddington, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXII (1908), pp. 59-77.

²⁷ "Further Experiments with Mrs. Piper in 1908: II. Three Incidents from the Sittings: *Lethe*; the *Sibyl*; the *Horace Ode Question*," by J. G. Piddington, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIV (1910), pp. 86-144.

²⁸ "Evidence of Classical Scholarship and of Cross Correspondence in some New Automatic Writings," by Sir Oliver Lodge, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXV (1911), pp. 114-175.

did not grasp. In subsequent sittings a larger and larger amount of classical material was received which Mr. Dorr failed to understand, and which the British S.P.R. group of scholars likewise failed at first to understand. Nevertheless, the entire mass of material included specific references to the obscure story of Ceyx and Alcyone, and the sending of the goddess Iris to the underworld, as the story is told towards the end of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in conjunction with the river *Lethe*. The answer is perfectly Myers-like. When the same question about *Lethe* was later presented to Mrs. Willett, in a letter from Sir Oliver Lodge, reference was made to the fact that the same question had been asked elsewhere. With many signs of effort the name DORR was spelled out in capital letters. Over a period of weeks the Myers personality gave a series of references to the sixth book of Vergil's *Aeneid*, appropriate to the question "What does the word *Lethe* suggest to you?"; appropriate, that is, for Myers, who had been a student of Virgil, but hardly so for Mrs. Willett, or for you and me. And finally, indicating his awareness of the whole large scheme, the Myers personality writes through Mrs. Willett: "That I have different scribes means that I must show different aspects of thoughts underlying which Unity is to be found and I know what Lodge wants. He wants me to prove that I have access to knowledge shown elsewhere."

One problem which has concerned investigators working with such material has been the question whether some one living person might telepathically have supplied all the material used, or whether in fact two or more persons among the scholars concerned might not have had "leaky" minds. And, whatever we may believe to be the ultimate interpretation, one celebrated case which indicates exactly such a "leaky" mind is at hand. It is the "Sevens" case.²⁹ Mr. Piddington had intended to make use of the technique of the "posthumous letter," a letter privately written, sealed,

²⁹"Second Report on Mrs. Holland's Script," by Alice Johnson, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIV (1910), pp. 243-258.

and stowed away, the contents of which would be communicated after death. In such a letter, Piddington described his tendency to play constantly with the number seven, to count railroad cars in groups of seven, to walk in a rhythm of seven steps, to ring the changes on all sorts of sevens in literature, etc. He referred to such a habit as a "tic." Three years later the group of automatists (six in all, including Mrs. and Miss Verrall, Mrs. Piper, and Mrs. Holland) began to give so many "sevens" that the cross correspondence became evident to all working with the material. The sevens occurred strikingly through Mrs. Piper, in connection with her references to "We are Seven," and to the clock on the stairs with its "tick, tick." Finally Piddington, who had religiously kept silence regarding his private posthumous letter, was forced to put an end to his well-intentioned experiment, and to make known the contents of what should have been, but under the circumstances could not be, kept private. As long as such apparent telepathic leaks occur, the cross-correspondence method encounters difficulties as grave as most of our other methods.

By this summary of the "Sevens" case I do not mean to imply that we know *how* the telepathic leak occurred. It is quite possible that a genuine surviving Myers was in telepathic contact with Piddington's mind, and that he was intrigued to see what Piddington was planning. Indeed, at the very hour when Piddington, at the rooms of the S.P.R., wrote his letter, the purporting Myers personality wrote through Mrs. Verrall: "Note the hour—in London half the message has come . . . surely Piddington will see that this is enough and should be acted upon." And when the cross correspondence had been completed (but before Mrs. Verrall knew of Piddington's letter) the Myers communicator wrote through Mrs. Verrall: "Has Piddington found the bits of his sentence scattered among you all?" The truth seems to be, however, that if such leaks occur the living can never be excluded as the sources of purporting survival evidence; the only safe way is to get material which *could not* have had its source in living minds.

Cooperation Between Communicators

Perhaps if the use of cooperating sensitives encounters these difficulties, a better result may be achieved if the cooperation occurs between the communicators themselves. If they are, as they purport to be, free agents capable of planning the form and content of their own communications, they can take thought together, and cooperatively develop a group of messages which are characteristic of each personality, and indeed of the particular relationship of the two personalities to one another. The whole thing can be planned in advance, and then suddenly "sprung" on the unsuspecting sitter. If this can be successfully achieved, the consistent upholders of the telepathic hypothesis must assume that at some level the mind of a living person contrives a message which has this high degree of pertinence to two communicators. This would require that he intimately know the communicators, what they have in common, and their relationship to one another; and furthermore, that he find a message appropriate to this complex purpose. The message must come, completely unexpected, to the sitter; it must be something requiring to be deciphered, the appropriate elements in the message being traceable to a natural setting in the minds of the communicators.

This is exactly what was done in the celebrated "Ear of Dionysius" case—the series of communications through Mrs. Willett as reported by Gerald Balfour.³⁰ The message dramatically makes the demand that "one ear be added to one eye"; throughout several sittings, numerous bits of classical poetry are given, linked with references to a "one-eyed monster" and a "one-eared" place. After a rather mysterious lapse of over a year, the story resumed and more and more details were given. Finally hints were supplied through which the investigators were able to discover the organic unity of the entire original thought. The "one-eyed monster" referred not only to the renowned Cyclops,

³⁰ "The Ear of Dionysius: Further Scripts affording Evidence of Personal Survival," by the Right Hon. Gerald W. Balfour, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIX, (1916-1918), pp. 197-286.

Polyphemus, but also to a tyrant of Syracuse; and the "one-eared place" was the stone quarry near Syracuse, famed as a whispering gallery, the "ear of Dionysius," in which the tyrant had imprisoned his slaves. The whole story is replete with classical elements utterly familiar to A. W. Verrall, one of the purported communicators—many of them, in fact, available in a book on Greek poetry which Dr. Verrall was known to have read in his lifetime. All the facts were normally unknown to Mrs. Willett, who had no special knowledge of the classics, and even Mrs. Verrall and the other scholars studying the scripts had failed to understand the allusions until the final clue was given.

Interwoven with the Verrall items there appeared appropriate references to Aristotle's *Art of Poetry*, and to other Aristotelian associations characteristic of Professor Henry Butcher. Verrall and Butcher are represented in the communications as symbolically walking arm in arm, and as contriving this integrated series of messages as a joint expression of their continuing personalities. To devise a more adequate or a more beautiful instance of cooperative thinking on the problem of survival evidence would be difficult indeed. Here the question is whether it is as reasonable to attribute such cooperation to the unconscious minds of the living, who are utterly puzzled by the material at the time it is given, as to attribute it to the two surviving personalities from whom it purports to come.

Proxy Sittings

The effort to render completely untenable the hypothesis of telepathy from the living as an explanation of veridical communications has led in the last two decades to more and more emphasis upon proxy sittings. In such sittings the sitter physically present acts merely to receive or record material intended for a "distant sitter." In all such studies it is important to remember that the fundamental problem of the relation of sitter to medium and to communicator is not essentially changed; the true sitter is simply at a distance from the communicating vehicle. The person who

"takes" the proxy sitting is merely an assistant who helps with the physical routines; he is in no sense a substitute sitter. There may, of course, be remarks addressed to him, or even evidence offered which is intended for him. But this is merely to say that he may at times serve a double function; we are here concerned solely with the material appropriate for a *distant living sitter* who is represented by a proxy in the actual sitting.

1. *The simplest type of proxy sitting*:—In the simple, or ordinary, type of proxy sitting, the distant sitter is represented in the presence of the medium by someone who knows him and who knows enough about him to be able to judge rather well whether the communications are, in general, reasonable and appropriate. The fact that the communicating intelligence knows what distant person is represented by the physically present person constitutes, as a rule, nothing supernatural; for the communicating intelligence is often informed as to the person who desires communications. Much of the specific information, moreover, which is offered as appropriate to the distant sitter may well be within the knowledge of the person who acts as proxy. The critical question, however, relates to the amount and nature of the information given which is appropriate to the deceased and to his relations with the distant sitter, yet out of range of any possible knowledge on the part of the medium, and of the person acting as proxy. A great deal of material of this type has been reported by the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas in the course of his Leonard sittings,³¹ and Miss Nea Walker in her sittings with the same medium and with Mrs. Garrett.³² Dr. J. F. Thomas, Superintendent of Schools in Detroit, published an impressive report³³ of proxy sittings with Mrs. Leonard and with other mediums, which contained abundant evidential material purporting to come from his wife. Dr. Thomas submitted large samples

³¹ "A Consideration of a Series of Proxy Sittings," by the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XLI (1932-1933), pp. 139-185.

³² "The Tony Burman Case," by Nea Walker, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXXIX (1930-1931), pp. 1-46.

³³ *Beyond Normal Cognition*, by John F. Thomas, B.S.P.R., Boston, 1937.

of this material to a statistical treatment which demonstrated convincingly that the material so tested could in no way reasonably be attributed to chance.

It may be of interest to quote here at some length a summary of a topic referred to in one of Dr. Thomas' absent sittings with Mrs. Leonard. The record was taken, in England, by a secretary who had only a slight acquaintance with Dr. Thomas. (Although Dr. Thomas had taken two personal sittings with Mrs. Leonard in the spring of 1927, study of the published records of these sittings shows nothing that would provide a normal explanation for the episode of the "sticks of different length" which is to follow.) It should be kept in mind, however, that one topic taken out of context is scarcely likely to carry much weight; it is the sweep of the material *as a whole* which carries conviction. In the middle of a sitting taken in November, 1929, Feda refers to some memories of E. L. T. (the communicator purporting to be Mrs. Thomas):

(1) E. L. T. is described in rather primitive, unconventional costume. (2) While in that costume she used a long stick. (3) She walked about with this stick (4) She made a noise with it, "Pump! Pump!" after raising up the stick. (5) This was something that she, especially, did. (6) She used a short stick and also a much longer stick. (7) "The moon was so beautiful at this particular place" where she used the sticks. (8) I (Dr. Thomas) used to speak of a forest at this place. (9) I used to have to be very careful about the oil. Oil was much talked of there. (10) There was a place we (Dr. and Mrs. Thomas) were fond of, part of the name of which was "Ville." (11) We went back and forth between the "Ville" place and the place "where the oil and the stick and things were."

Dr. Thomas annotates the eleven points as correct. He says (pp. 235-236): "In the statement just preceding (1), Feda is quite obviously talking about a sleeping costume. In this and what follows, Feda means to indicate that E. L. T. sometimes rose after retiring and measured the oil in the tanks, connected with our heating system. (2) In only one of the about twenty homes in which we lived was there an oil burner . . . and E. L. T. used a long stick for measuring the amount of oil in the tanks. (3) It was necessary to go down basement steps, of course, to measure the oil and to walk across the basement floor to the oil room (4) The 'pump—pump' noise is when

the stick strikes the bottom of the tank. (5) This was our first oil burner and E. L. T. was considerably concerned lest the oil supply unexpectedly might fail. (6) She did use two sticks in this measuring procedure, and they were both still in the oil room after nearly seven years. The short stick was used when there was considerable oil in the tanks. (7) The home where this oil tank is located is in a division of the city called Russell Woods and is surrounded by many trees, a considerable number of which are original forest trees. The moon through these trees at this place was always a subject of comment by E. L. T. when living. (8) The number and size of the trees here is such that I often said that it was just like living in a forest. (9) Oil is the key word needed. (10) We often went from our town place to a point called 'Rawsonville' for the purpose of holding family picnics. (11) Note that the oil and the stick are definitely tied together in this statement."

2. *Instances in which the proxy sitter is totally unacquainted with the bereaved:*—Following our attempt to arrange the types of evidence in order of their increasing cogency, we should next cite the class of proxy cases in which there is no connection between the bereaved person who desires communications and those who physically attend the sitting. The advantage of this second group of cases lies in the increasing difficulty of applying a hypothesis of telepathy from the living. It might be argued that in the simple type of proxy cases some contact is made by the trance mind not only with the sitter physically present but *through him* with the distant sitter. We know a good deal about telepathy between those who are emotionally close to one another, and we have some good instances occurring between those who are slightly acquainted; but we have very meager evidence indeed regarding telepathy between those who are totally unacquainted with each other. There is, therefore, much value in gathering cases in which the distant living person arranges to have some person with whom he is unacquainted act as proxy for him.

Just such a case was reported in 1939 by C. Drayton Thomas.³⁴ Professor E. R. Dodds suggested to Mr. Thomas

³⁴ "A Proxy Experiment of Significant Success," by the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XLV (1938-1939), pp. 257-306.

that he attempt at his Leonard sittings to receive communications from a Mr. F. W. Macaulay, on behalf of Mr. Macaulay's daughter, Mrs. Lewis. Mr. Thomas had never known or heard of either Mr. Macaulay or Mrs. Lewis, and throughout the experiment, which extended over a number of sittings, Mr. Thomas' correspondence was with Professor Dodds. It is important to note that no mention was made of the proposed experiment either to Mrs. Leonard in her normal state, nor to her control Feda. Mr. Thomas used a technique which he had previously found effective: while in his own home he mentally appealed to the desired communicator to appear at his next sitting. And at this sitting "Feda introduced a new communicator without any leading on my part" (p. 259). In this sitting, and in the following ones, a large mass of veridical material was given, as annotated by Mrs. Lewis in relation to her father. Among other items, two family jokes seem to be referred to, one of them involving the use of some unusual names. Feda said, "Riss—it might be Reece but sounds like Riss," and then went on to speak of past times when the communicator and his family had all been happy together in their home. Mrs. Lewis annotated: "This carries me back to a family joke of these pre-war days . . . probably the happiest time of my father's life." Her elder brother had conceived a grand admiration for an older school mate, and in writing home always drew attention to the fact that this boy's name was spelt "Rees," not "Reece." During holidays Mrs. Lewis and her sister used to tease their brother by singing "Not Reece but Riss," until their father stopped them, "explaining how sensitive a matter a young boy's hero-worship was."

The statistical problem in the case of proxy material is not essentially different from that which is presented by mediumship in general; the sitter must annotate the transcript of the sitting, indicating which items are correct, and these correct items must be compared (in quality, number, or both) with those which are obtained under "control conditions," that is, when the material is annotated by a sitter for whom it is *not* intended. This, essentially, was the

technique used by Dr. Thomas to evaluate samples of his proxy material. There are times, however, when the margin of success is so huge that, from the common sense point of view, the use of refined statistics becomes unnecessary. The Macaulay case is of this latter type.

3. *Instances in which neither the proxy sitter nor the bereaved knows all the facts:*—In the cases cited it could be complained that the distant sitter is in possession of the facts which are given. Indeed, it is because the facts are recognized that they carry intuitive or emotional conviction to the average sitter. It would be desirable, therefore, to consider cases in which not only the person serving as proxy, but the distant sitter himself, is unaware, at the time of the sitting, of the truth or falsity of the statements made, the evidentiality of the record being discovered only through subsequent inquiry.

A current example under this heading is to be found in a report by C. Drayton Thomas, the "Bobby Newlove Case."³⁵ Mr. Thomas took a series of eleven sittings with Mrs. Leonard in behalf of a family named Newlove. They hoped to receive communications from their deceased child, Bobby. Mr. Thomas had never met any member of the family, and he knew next to nothing about them. In the course of the communications, many statements were made which were highly appropriate and characteristic for the supposed communicator, Bobby, and containing specific facts not conceivably within the normal knowledge of either Mrs. Leonard or Mr. Thomas. But more important, references were made to certain matters which, though subsequently proving to be correct, were at the time of the sittings outside the knowledge of all members of the Newlove family. Specific statements were made about a place near some "pipes" where Bobby and a little friend were said to have played, and directions were given as to where these pipes would be found. It was said that the child's health had

³⁵ "A Proxy Case Extending over eleven Sittings with Mrs. Osborn Leonard," by C. Drayton Thomas, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XLIII (1935), pp. 439-519.

been undermined by his playing with contaminated water which flowed from these pipes.

When the Newlove family read the scripts, they were utterly puzzled by these references; following up on clues given in the sittings, however, the pipes were found. At Mr. Thomas' request, a medical officer examined the water flowing from them. He testified that the water was contaminated and that an acute infection might result from drinking it. Still following up on clues provided by the communicator, Bobby's friend, Jack, was questioned. Jack admitted that he and Bobby had played with the water. The circumstances relating to playing with the water, though known to Jack, would probably be very remote from the trance consciousness (Jack not knowing, of course, of Mrs. Leonard's existence, or of the fact that sittings were being taken); and the Newlove family were not in possession of any information at all regarding these pipes or their possible relation to Bobby's illness and death. We have to face here the same type of difficulty for the telepathic hypothesis which we have already mentioned above in the case of simple mediumship (pp. 11-14): the difficulty of assuming that the trance consciousness pieces together fragmentary bits of information, gathered from disparate sources, in order to make more convincing a histrionic pose representing a continuing personality.

For purposes of completeness and symmetry in devising a theory to account for proxy phenomena, it would be very desirable to find a case in which the information given as survival evidence is categorically unknown to *any living person*—a case in which it is impossible to resort to the notion of the medium's mind piecing together fragments of relevant information obtained from various distant persons. I have not encountered a case of this type, and should be grateful indeed if any reader would call one to my attention. It is also quite likely, in view of the continued progress in this field, that Mrs. Leonard's subsequent work will offer a case of this type.

4. *Instances in which the proxy sitter does not know who the bereaved are:*—Even in the absence of cases in which no living source of the material exists, we do find one type of proxy case which is in some respects even more cogent. There are instances in which the very existence of the distant sitter is completely unknown at the time of the sitting both to the medium and to the person who takes the sitting; the communicator takes the initiative, as it were, and gives hints as to the identity of the person for whom the messages are intended. Such a case was reported to the S.P.R. by C. Drayton Thomas.³⁶ The series of events was as follows:

At a Leonard sitting on the 28th of October, 1938, Mr. Thomas' regular communicators, who purport to be his father and sister, told him that he was to expect a letter from a father about his son. The father was said to be middle-aged, and to have at one time lived in a place where Mr. Thomas lived—Morton or a name sounding like that. The son, so the communicators said, had been killed outright—an accident case connected with a motor car. Mr. Thomas agreed to await developments. In less than two weeks after this sitting, he received a letter from a Mr. A., of whose existence he had hitherto been unaware. Mr. A. wrote that about a month earlier he had heard Mr. Thomas give a lecture and that he had planned at that time to write him a congratulatory letter. But he had procrastinated and had not actually written until then—November 8th. Mr. A. continued in this letter to say that he had recently lost a young son, and he asked for advice on taking sittings with mediums. Entering into correspondence with Mr. A., Mr. Thomas learned that the son had been killed outright in an accident case (an airplane accident, however, not an automobile accident), and that he had been born and lived with his family for twelve years in the village of Norton, which was only a mile and a half away from a town where Mr. Thomas had once lived. The young A. communicator appeared in two subsequent sittings which Mr. Thomas took with Mrs. Leonard. Striking veridical material was given which was unknown to Mr. A., but which was verified by his surviving son, the brother of the supposed communicator. Feda reported that the young man wished to refer to a friend of his who had passed over, a young man whose name began with the letters BR. As evidence of BR's identity, an

³⁶ *Journal S.P.R.*, October, 1939, pp. 103-104, and November-December, 1939, pp. 120-123.

elaborate description of a model ship was given. Mr. A. was unable to make sense out of these references, but his living son reported that he and his brother had a friend named Br—, who had been killed about a year after the A. communicator. He had worked for a firm which made *model ships*.

Here the devotee of the telepathic hypothesis, as ordinarily conceived, would be somewhat bewildered to devise a simple explanation. Mr. A., the father, had heard Mr. Thomas lecture on psychical research, but he had been a member of a large audience and had not made himself known to Mr. Thomas. He had simply decided, after the lecture, that he would write to Mr. Thomas asking for advice in getting in touch with his boy. Procrastinating, he had not actually written for some weeks, and not until after the first sitting had occurred. If one accepts the survival hypothesis, it is fairly reasonable to believe that the boy may have known his father's intentions; but it is a considerable wrench to any ordinary telepathic hypothesis to assume that Mr. Thomas made sufficient telepathic rapport with members of his audience to set going in the medium's mind a histrionic representation of a son desiring to communicate with his father.

Bringing now to a close our summary of the various types of survival data, it should be stressed again that the proper term to use is "evidence," not "proof." These evidences have been arranged, so far as may be, in logical fashion, as seen from the point of view of one who wishes to stretch simpler hypotheses to account for more and more complex phenomena, and who therefore finds himself in difficulties as the stretching process goes more and more beyond the ordinary plausibilities. We are in part dealing with the "faggot" procedure, the evidence being stronger because there are *many types* of evidence, and within each type many individual cases. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assign real cogency only to those classes of evidence in which the telepathic hypothesis is clearly stretched beyond the limits to which we can properly assign it relevance. My own view, then, is that the evidences vary greatly in

cogency: that some of the earlier and simpler phenomena are of doubtful value in supporting the survival hypothesis; but that the more recent and more complex types of evidence—particularly those from the cross correspondences, those involving “cooperation of communicators,” and those from the proxy sittings—have a force which is lacking in the traditional types of survival evidence.

6. *The implications of paranormal processes for the theory of personality.*—The burden of the foregoing has been empirical, not theoretical. We have sought to marshal direct evidence. There is, however, another approach, the value of which we are as yet unready to gauge: an approach in terms of the probable meaning of the paranormal processes themselves in reference to the question of the nature of personality, and hence to the question of its possible survival after bodily death. It has long been recognized that telepathy cannot reasonably be explained in terms of physics (as we now know it); for example, in terms of Sir William Crookes's “brain waves”—unless we are to neglect most of the facts of experimental and spontaneous telepathy. What is now known about radiant energy and the electromagnetic waves from living cells throws no light upon actual telepathic transmission, which neither observes the inverse square law³⁸ nor functions as if there were a physical code by virtue of which thoughts could be transmitted through space in some definite system of dots and dashes or similar physical symbols. It is indeed true that we hope in time to understand the unity of the universe and to find that telepathy is in a very broad sense a “form of energy”; but if we are to take physics for what it is actually worth, we shall have to recognize that the type of energy involved in telepathy is utterly dissimilar to all the types of physical energy with which we are now acquainted, and of which we make use in radio or other types of long-distance communication.

³⁷ “Presidential Address,” by Sir William Crookes, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XII (1896-1897), pp. 338-355.

³⁸ According to this law, the energy available would decline as the square of the distance between agent and percipient. In point of fact, distance appears to be of no importance in telepathy.

When, with precognition, the *time* dimension enters the picture, the difficulties with a physical interpretation (*i.e.*, dealing with the physical energies now known to us) increase enormously. With all our fondness for four-dimensional time-space worlds, we cannot in physical terms make any sense out of a response to a situation which physically does not yet exist. Sheer inference from present data as a basis for guessing the future does not, of course, make trouble; it is the genuine precognition of complex, not normally inferable, happenings that makes the problem. Much good material, both spontaneous³⁹ and experimental,⁴⁰ is now at hand to show the reality of precognition. Psychokinesis⁴¹ may also be mentioned as a process very hard to explain in terms of present-day physical interpretations of the organism; but it is doubtful whether this additional evidence is needed to support the view of personality we are now considering. For telepathy has shown the reality within the organism of capacities which are not to be expected on any ordinary physical basis, and precognition has shown the ability of the organism to transcend its usual relations with the environment. These capacities strongly suggest, then, that personality is not the assemblage of physical energies, pure and simple, which the more naive scientific approach would suggest.

Such a philosophical argument will be impressive to some, empty to others. Speaking only for myself, and not for psychical research as a whole, I would note that philosophical arguments have throughout history been useful chiefly in opening men's eyes to the *necessity for research*; they are useful in opening, not closing, questions. As far as survival is concerned, such an argument *may* ultimately prove to be a boomerang, in the sense that the discovery of

³⁹ “Report on Cases of Apparent Precognition,” by H. F. Saltmarsh, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XLII (1934), pp. 49-103.

⁴⁰ “Experiments in Precognitive Telepathy,” by S. G. Soal and K. M. Goldney, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XLVII (1943), pp. 21-150.

⁴¹ “The Psychokinetic Effect: I. The First Experiment,” by Louisa E. Rhine and J. B. Rhine, *Journal of Parapsychology*, March, 1943, pp. 20-43. See also other papers on the psychokinetic research appearing in subsequent issues of the *Journal of Parapsychology*.

wider and deeper psychical powers within the depths of the living self may show the capacity of the individual to produce, when strongly motivated, the most fantastically complex types of survival evidence. On the other hand, the reality of these processes does categorically show that personality is not locked up within the realm of physics and physical chemistry as now understood; and this may well mean that certain aspects or capacities of the individual, if not the entire personality, may extend beyond the physical existence of the organism.

Summary:—In this outline no attempt has been made to “prove” survival, nor even to cite all of the more convincing types of cases, but to present in organized form the classes of evidence gathered by psychical research, with typical examples of each. During the sixty-odd years of organized research in this field, instances have been attested of apparitions which indirectly suggest the survival of personality, and of mediumship in which data are frequently given which are known neither to medium nor to sitter. Mediumistic phenomena, especially, have tended to become more and more complex and impressive. During the present century much has been learned from the cross correspondences, in which a deceased personality is represented as conveying, through different automatists, parts of an integrated message; and along with this cooperation between automatists, we have noted instances of purporting cooperation between communicators. We have stressed the importance of proxy sittings, in which little or no use is made by the communicator of information known to anyone physically present, and in which survival evidence takes the form of messages which are appropriate in reference to a distant sitter—sometimes, indeed, offering information transcending the knowledge of this distant sitter. We have concluded with a brief discussion of the possible implications of telepathy and precognition as pointing to the reality, in human personality, of capacities which can only with great difficulty be subsumed under the current physical conceptions of the living individual.