

Hornell Hart's Analysis of the Evidence for Survival¹

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I

Ladies and gentlemen, this is going to be quite different from what I ordinarily ask you to listen to. I hesitated a long time before deciding on this topic. I know that you rightly expect something original; you expect something that is not to be found somewhere else; you expect something which, however controversial, will at least leave you with the feeling that there is evidence somewhere that you ought to take seriously.

Now actually I come here today to do quite a different sort of thing. I am going to talk about a book² which I believe to be very important for psychical research, the very essence of which is to maintain a cautious, high, dispassionate position on a topic very, very close to our deepest human needs. And this is a very hard thing to do. It is doubly hard for an author like Hornell Hart to do this when he himself has definite convictions. How in the world can a man present a topic with such intense and profound implications, a problem which arouses so much intense feeling, pro and con, maintaining objectivity and fairness, and at the same time, allowing you to see from time to time his own personal beliefs, never allowing those personal beliefs to sweep aside the cogent force of arguments with which he personally disagrees? I think that question in itself is important. I think the fact that it has been several decades since we had a compact, scholarly, well-organized book devoted simply to the survival issue as such, is another reason.

So I thought I would ask your indulgence in talking tonight about this book, with the feeling, partly, that we will be talking about Hornell Hart, partly talking about evidence, and largely we shall be attempting to find a stand, a position, a frame of reference for our own further study, discussion, and thought. And if I leave you with a feeling that Hornell Hart has *closed* any issues, this would be the opposite of what I would attempt to do.

I'm going to attempt, in the time that we ordinarily allow here, to show you the structure of the book; the basic philosophical and scientific spirit with which this effort is made; the ways of marshaling evidence upon the survival question; the kinds of conclusions

¹ This paper was delivered by Professor Murphy at a Meeting of the Society on April 13, 1960.

² Hornell Hart, *The Enigma of Survival: The Case For and Against an After Life*, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1959.

which can be drawn, pro and con; and the ways in which further evidence might consolidate the present gains and might improve the research so that more confident conclusions could ultimately be reached.

II

This is just one of many ways of accomplishing this purpose. I do not claim that the scientific or logical way is the only way. But I do assert that it is *one* way, and that Hart has done this so well as to be worthy of at least an evening's close dissection, if not further reading.

Now I'd like to remind you that even without taking into account the thought of ancient India, or the thinking around the Mediterranean basin before the rise of Greek philosophy, without even taking into account the great Hebrew tradition, without even considering the mythologies which swept over the Roman Empire from the Germanic and Celtic and other peoples, there have been *two basic theories of the mind* which have belonged consistently and regularly to Western civilization as such. They run right through our whole tradition in such a way that I think you will believe, as I try to state them, that they are both more or less self-evidently true; and yet, on closer inspection, they are starkly in opposition.

The first theory of the mind is that which was put forward by the Sophists in the period just before the brilliant discourses of Socrates—to the effect that the mind is a tissue of associations. The reason why we think of thunder when there is lightning, or vice versa, is that these two things are associated in our experience. There is a flash of lightning and we listen and wait confidently for the thunder. In the same way, we learn by watching people's faces what to expect, and rightly or wrongly, we expect different behaviors from smiles and from frowns. The little child very early learns to scan and understand the tone of the voice. He knows that trouble is brewing, or that he is going to get an embrace or something nice to remember. The mind, in other words, is artificially created by associations moment by moment. There are no inborn structures in the mind. The child is not born with ideas regarding the relation of a frown and a spanking, or the relation of lightning to thunder. The mind is a web, or a pattern, created by experiences, hour by hour. From this point of view, an old man looking back over his life puts together the experiences of various periods. He says "Ah, yes, this was I," as he looks at an old photograph of himself in knee-pants and he laughs and says: "Wasn't I a funny little fellow!" He re-creates on the assumption that the continuity is a continuity given by associations.

Now the other point of view, as particularly developed in the great Socratic discourses as we have them from Plato, assumes that there is a central "self," basically an unchanging, fundamental, and stable personal reality. The Greek actors, as you know, had these curious masks with heavy lips on them that seem to have acted as megaphones, so that a man was known by his mask. And the word "persona," from which we get the word "person," is the Latin word used in describing these ancient Greek and Roman masks. A "persona," in Latin, is the role of a given character. Now this has to be stable. The same Hercules, in the plays of Euripides, who is a man of great sublimity of character, is represented in one of the plays, *Hercules Mad*, as being overpowered with sudden insanity, slaying his wife and children. Now you have to believe, if you are to assimilate Greek tragedy, that it was the *same* Hercules, the same fundamental person from the cradle to the grave. Because if it is just an episode there is no particular human meaning in it. If a psychotic or other seriously disturbed person is just a conglomeration of states, this is indeed a tragedy; but it has no such tragic meaning as when you see a strong man, who is for you *still* that strong man, become a weakling or a coward. If you see a motherly or womanly woman behaving in a frightened or confused way with reference to the needs of the child, it is a tragedy, yes, but nothing like the tragedy it would be if the *same* person is thought to run through all these things. Now the "persona" or "mask" is the unchanging and stable element in the Greek dramas. The same Prometheus that you find chained on the rock and the same Prometheus that protests against Zeus gives you a continuity based upon the inner sameness of the person. Now which of these views might plausibly be related to survival?

The question answers itself. If the mind is nothing more than a conglomeration of states, attitudes, feelings, and thoughts, which bounce up and down like the bubbles of a fountain, or the spray of a cascade, then there is no central continuing unity on which we could confer responsibility in this life, or continuity after death. But if there is, as Plato argues, a fundamental, unchanging self, something which, despite the evanescent changes around it, is recognizably the same person all the way through, then this gives some sort of a conception such as Plato describes regarding the immortality of the soul.

III

Now Hornell Hart undertakes at the very beginning of this book to show you some of the philosophical assumptions that have entered into all of our modern studies, particularly psychical

research, and to show you that most of the people, for example, Edmund Gurney, and particularly Frank Podmore, who studied experiences essentially as associations, had no such belief in survival as Frederic Myers, who from the earliest years asked constantly whether there is within the person an unchanging and continuing self, and who of course answered this question with a thundering affirmative in his book (posthumously published at the end of the century) called *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*.³

Hart, in other words, raises the curtain in order to show us the same two great figures on the philosophical stage which have been there before, and which predetermine the approach of a modern psychical researcher. He may say, "I'm an empiricist. I take data wherever they lead me," but he's likely to have a basic assumption. He's likely to believe that the mind is a conglomeration, or kaleidoscopic series of bits, stuck together and endlessly changing, or, on the other hand, that there is a central first person singular, what Hart calls the "I-Persona," something which is "I" in the grammarian's sense, which goes on despite peripheral changes, to give a fundamental continuity from cradle to grave and beyond.

Now as for the organization of Hart's book, he undertakes, in each of the major portions, to show first the classes of evidence that exist to support either of these points of view, and then to quote back and forth from modern scholars who have espoused one or the other position. If, for example, you take the case of "collective hallucinations," as they are called, Hornell Hart and his wife Ella published many years ago a fascinating little study on such collective hallucinations,⁴ that is, cases in which the same dying person had been seen at a distance by two or more persons. There are not many such cases but there are a few. Along with the study of collective cases in which the people are present together at the time there is a study of cases in which there is the same apparition of drowning, for example, seen independently by different persons at different points.

Now suppose we assume, as Frank Podmore would have done in the early collection of spontaneous cases, that the basic concept is telepathy, that is to say, the flashing of an impression from one mind to the other. Suppose that as A dies, B and C catch the impression. Or even if the impression comes some hours after death, say even 24 hours, you can say if you wish that some sort of telepathic impression was received at the time of death but only

³F. W. H. Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, Longmans, Green, and Co., New York and London, 1903.
⁴*Visions and Apparitions Collectively and Reciprocally Perceived*, Pica S.P.R., Vol. XLI, 1932-1933, pp. 205-249.

slowly welled up or made its way into consciousness. A good many of the cases had to do with dreaming or a quasi-dreaming state; a person falls into a sort of brown study. A woman, for example, sees her brother trip over a rope and knows somehow or other that he is falling over the railing of a ship to drown in the water below. When this impression comes to her she is not asleep; she is in a momentarily dissociated state, a sort of brown study, it would appear. Under such circumstances you would explain all of the cases not as due to the I-Persona of the dying person reaching out at death or even after death, but rather to a telepathic impact alone. If such an experience happens to more than one person, perhaps one person receives the telepathic impact and then another receives it from the first.

On the contrary, says Frederic Myers, studying the same cases, let us try another view. Is there not intrinsic evidence here that each one sees the dying person in a slightly different way? As a matter of fact, doesn't each person see something colored by his own individuality? We have very curious cases in which different people at different points actually apperceive the vision in a different way. There is one dramatic case in which one sees the image reflected in a mirror, and now it is seen not as if it were an exact duplicate of what the first person sees. One person sees it directly, but the other person, standing a few feet apart in the room, sees it as if reflected. Each person then is making a dramatic personal reality out of this—not as if one were telepathically duplicating the other. This is what Frederic Myers had originally called "the invasion of space" by the dying person. And since each of us occupies a different portion of space, each of us will structure and give organization to the apparition in his or her own personal terms. What is interacting, says Hart (agreeing with Myers) is not momentary associations in the mind, but the deeper, central, unchanging, personal reality of the dying person in interaction with a living person receiving the impression.

Just recently in a new attempt to gather cases, the American Society for Psychical Research drew one that intrigued me very much—in which a girl whose chief interest is a farm in Wisconsin decides, in a dream, to make a journey to visit her mother who is teaching school out in Montana. About 2 o'clock in the morning, there is mother, working at her ironing. She sees the daughter coming in, as if to say, "Why are you visiting me at 2 o'clock in the morning?" There is a momentary interchange in what we would call a "reciprocal" telepathic experience.

Now how far do you get, says this point of view, with the theory of a passive telepathy carrying the impulse from A to B? Rather it looks as if there were a real reciprocity between the deep levels of

two persons. There is an I-Persona for each person; the two are interchanging. To this the first school of thought would immediately say: "How do you know what would be the ultimate evidence of an unchanging personality, an I-Persona? After all, doesn't the girl see from the point of view of what she herself is in her teens? Doesn't her mother see in terms of what she is as a school teacher who has to earn a living out in Montana for a few months of the year away from the family? Doesn't each of them think in terms of personal associations exactly as the Sophists would have said? Isn't the experience a pattern of the interwoven associations, rather than an unchanging expression of a stable personality?"

From this Hornell Hart goes on to consider a variety of other instances in which he gradually strengthens, a step at a time, the discussion of the problem of activity as contrasted with passivity in the telepathic or other spontaneous cases. I want to illustrate this by reference to two cases, one old and one new, in which I think I can make more clear what is meant by "activity" and by "passivity" in these impressions.

There is one of these collective cases in which no less than six persons saw an apparition, each one from an appropriate point of view. This is the case of R. C. Morton published 70 years ago in the *British Proceedings*.⁵ Miss Morton was a medical student who got interested in the scientific problem of a wraith, or a spectre, or "haunt," or whatever you want to call it, which would appear in the garden; people would look out of the upper story window and see it coming up the garden path. Then people would see the figure come in through the open door. Others at the head of the stairs would watch the figure climbing the steps. Miss Morton herself, not in the least bit bothered by any of this, took a piece of string and attached it with fish glue about a two-foot height from the staircase and watched the figure walk through the thread. She satisfied herself that this was not a solid person making a practical joke at the expense of those present.

Here then we have from these six different points of view something that acts like an entity (as Hart would say, an "I-Persona") and not like a reflection of different images or impressions.

Tyrrell, in his interesting collection of cases, has gone so far as to report instances in which there is an actual obliteration of part of the image if it is out of sight from the point of view of the eyes of the person at the time. One person sees the figure, for example,

⁵R. C. Morton, "Record of a Haunted House," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. 8, 1892, pp. 314-332.

cut off, in part, and it turns out actually that the room in which the actual image (a dog in this particular case) is seen, had been rebuilt. The dog ran where the floor used to be, the lower part of the dog's four legs was obliterated because the floor has been raised. This, in other words, is a case involving quite literally a distortion of "psychological space" from the point of view of something in the mind of the receiver.

Now I don't know if Tyrrell is aware of the verbal play that he is indulging in here. It is a fascinating one. He says that any theatrical performance depends not only upon a producer and a director, assistants having to do with props and lights etc., but upon a "stage carpenter." That is to say, somebody must be responsible for the actual filling-up of the space (the actual cabinet making, if it is that, the actual change in structure: bannister, rails, walls, and the actual floor itself). Now, in each person's mind, there is not just passivity, but there is a stage carpenter. If you prefer to say this in Freud's language and talk about the unconscious and dream-censorship, etc., you can. There is a dramatic process that is constantly re-working the passively received material so that all apparitions and all dreams are actively re-created by the I-Persona of the receiving person. The stage carpenter, in other words, is what intervenes (in the production of an apparition) between two personalities which otherwise would be flopping about helplessly, unable to make contact with one another.

There is, moreover, in Tyrrell—and here there is a frank avowal of a one-sided point of view—an implication that there must be both in the agent and in percipient; both in the sender and in the receiver, a stage carpenter. And the two stage carpenters must get together. This, if you like, is like the old theory of telepathy which René Warcollier and others offered; he says that the unconscious portions of two minds must interact (not the conscious minds, but the unconscious portions of two minds) if there is to be a telepathic reciprocity.

What can we conclude? We here utilized the Gurney and Podmore approach, the Myers and Tyrrell approach, constantly turning this to the light showing you that actually, aside from endless verbalization, you cannot settle the question in any final way by spontaneous cases alone. It seems to me that that conclusion, although it is offered very cautiously, is almost dinned into your ears as you read. When you read it, drop me a postcard and tell me whether you agree or not. I'm going to ask you to consider the possibility that the spontaneous cases, rich, important and valuable as they are, cannot lead to a final conviction here except at a verbal level. Now I can tell you that I prefer one of these theories to the other, and I can give you verbalizations, but since I cannot climb

down, like a super stage-carpenter, into the lower terrain, and cannot discover the unchanging I-Persona, I can only see the constantly changing Gardner Murphy, who is not the same person that talked to you last year, and very much not the same person that studied psychical research out of his grand-daddy's Home University Library book by Sir William Barrett fifty years ago. My subjective experience that I'm constantly changing does not settle anything. Or if I tell you, "I am the same. I'm not just a series of external changes," this won't convince you either. You'll be left with the feeling that these are interesting philosophical arguments, and spontaneous cases can be marshalled to support one or the other; but this is not the direction in which final conviction is likely to be achieved.

At this point, Hart resorts to a highly ingenious point, which he only gives brief space to here because the argument is of a statistical character, and he knows this is hard going. Actually he published this material in two earlier papers and only very tangentially handles it here. He undertakes to show that those qualities which any apparently post-mortem apparition will possess when it reaches high veridical value (that is, when it convinces you by internal evidence that it is not just a fluke, not just a chance coincidence) are the same attributes which a spontaneous case will possess, when we are dealing not with post-mortem communication but with known inter-communication between the living. And he goes on to this very daring argument: if the same natural history applies to the interaction between persons when they're both alive as appears when one of them is offered us as living and the other as deceased—i.e., if by an inner analysis of their attributes we discover that death doesn't make any difference in the attributes—if we discover that the same attributes hold for the cases when the two people are living, as when one is living and one is deceased, doesn't this argue that the sheer fact of death in itself does not alter the form of telepathic communication?

If you find that veridical apparitions occurring days or weeks after death are like those which come at the time of death or before death, doesn't this contain at least a potential challenge that maybe the same thing is happening, i.e., telepathy for an existing I-Persona? Now if you should happen to feel this way, you would be saying that the I-Persona theory fits and that the association theory doesn't fit. The association theory would say that if we change so much even in a year of our lives, certainly the fact of physical death should macerate, perhaps destroy everything—even if you had some sort of a mind-body theory which allows something to exist beyond death. Even a month after death the

action-attributes, the potentials, the beaming of the message directly to you so that several other people can see it at the same time—all this is not the kind of thing which a kaleidoscopic series of associations would be expected to produce, but it is the sort of thing which an I-Persona beyond death should approach. This cannot be made more convincing by purely verbal argument, but this statistical evaluation of the spontaneous cases is, I think, highly ingenious, and one of the few really new things that have been said in the matter of survival evidence from spontaneous cases for quite a long time.

IV

Now when we reach this point in the argument, we begin to say, Is there not any more direct kind of evidence? And on this, of course, Hart mobilizes the evidence from mediumship beginning with the great period which began when William James in 1884 discovered Mrs. L. E. Piper, a spiritualist medium; through her received messages coming from his wife's family which he and his wife were certain had never been normally communicated; and which could not be attributed to any easy device like unconscious whispering or any other trick. During the period of the 80's and 90's the mediumship of Mrs. Piper, followed in the first decade of this century by the mediumship of half a dozen other persons, yielded an extraordinary series of *soi-disant* communications from the deceased. Now this story, although it has been told a great many times, isn't known as well as it should be. Dr. Hyslop, Sr., for example, devoted books to the history of the analysis of the Piper and later on the Soule and other mediumistic phenomena, undertaking to show in great detail that the material is not of the sort which telepathic impulses could produce. We know something, said the late Dr. Hyslop (and later Dr. Walter Franklin Prince said the same thing) about the natural history of telepathy—not very much, but we know what sorts of things are easy and hard to communicate; we know something about the unconscious rather than the conscious nature of the telepathic impulse; we know something about the histrionic skills of the entranced mind of the medium which make it possible to enact the part of the deceased person and play-act through a communication. We know something about the limits to this play-acting business. And as this sort of thing is analyzed more and more closely, it shows that the two major theories which we have presented up until now in a naïve form, come up against equally solid obstacles.

May we restate these two naïve theories? The first would be, to take it naturalistically, and very simply, that the personality that

talks to you through a medium is simply a histrionic, play-acting pose which, for the moment, and under the influence of trance, believes itself to be a deceased entity; it fishes about, picks up odds and ends of information—perhaps through unconscious hints, but even through telepathic cues, and puts over successfully a replication, a simulation, of a deceased personality. That is theory number one. And this was the theory which Richard Hodgson, the great Australian scholar, developed when he first had his sittings with Mrs. Piper. The personalities that appeared to communicate through Mrs. Piper, he said, are simply dream-processes.

The other theory, however, which Hodgson gradually espoused—rejecting the first theory as the result of communications from his friend George Pelham who had died suddenly just before this—was that somehow there is an invasion of the sleeping body of the entranced medium; that this invaded body is now capable of talking or writing automatically, or conveying messages, which, although colored and distorted, do somehow verily represent the continuing personality of the deceased.

Now it is rather a shock to realize that almost all serious scholars working with the Hodgson material came to the conclusion early in this century that both views, the play-acting theory and the invasion theory, were untenable. Nevertheless there are two forms of survival theory which were developed, more or less at the same time, one by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, and the other by the elder Dr. Hyslop, which represent ways of bringing to bear upon the evidence certain rather more complex notions of what survival might mean. I will tell you in advance that they are something like this stage-carpenter idea from Tyrrell that I discussed a minute ago.

Mrs. Sidgwick's theory is that the entity which communicates is, to be sure, simply a histrionic pose, but that it constantly draws the needed information either from living or from deceased minds in order to complete the sense of the I-Persona, in order to give a continuity recognizable by the living. Dr. Hyslop pushed this a little further, arguing that there was fusion of the minds of living and deceased, that at times the trance personality is actually like the fusion of colors, for example, an orange that is so perfect that you can't decide how much is red and how much is yellow. It is not half-red and half-yellow; it is a fusion of the two. In this case we have the notion of a deep-level *collaboration between living medium and deceased communicator* to produce the fusion which appears in the replication of the *soi-distant* personality, which is not quite the deceased personality, nor is it a histrionic pose, but it is a new creation for the moment.

Now at this point Hart seems rather close to Dr. Hyslop; for he sums up the general view that we are strait-jacketing ourselves

unnecessarily by clinging to either of the naïve positions first stated. He is somewhat nearer to the I-Persona theory; he is somewhat more Socratic or Platonic than the view which I first quoted; but he is unmistakably closer to this kind of survival position than he is to the associationist position which originally I quoted in opposition.

Now this might seem complicated enough. Yes, it is; but the task of a man working as Hornell Hart is working is to go beyond the simple and to create all the difficulties that he can get people to face. And considering that the book is small, simple, direct, well-written, I think it is extraordinary to have gotten even to this point. But he attempts one more complex issue. And I will ask you to struggle with it.

We have the study of what has come to be called in recent years the *modus operandi* of mediumistic trance, the psychology of this process of interaction between medium's mind and communicator's mind. It is no longer enough to say that there are histrionic poses (play-acting, or roles, accepted and used by the entranced medium); it is no longer enough to say that somehow the deceased gets through. Neither of these states the facts. The facts are at a higher level of complexity. What happens is that a series or chain of communications can actually be observed if you are patient enough to allow this. The material here is drawn rather largely from the study of another medium, Mrs. Osborne Leonard, particularly the work done by C. Drayton Thomas in a remarkable series of papers published by the British S.P.R.

There is also some material from several other persons: some very interesting work done by Troubridge and Hall,⁶ who made one of the earliest studies (right after the First World War) of *modus operandi* of trance. There is Earl Balfour's celebrated study of Mrs. Willett's communications,⁷ as exemplified in one of the greatest of all mediumistic utterances, the "Ear of Dionysius." But basically what is happening here is that Hart is giving us the kind of evidence that Drayton Thomas offers us on this matter of *modus operandi*. You start by setting up an hypothesis to the effect that if the thing communicating were an entity, with certain human associations, having lived a certain life with certain deep affections, certain habits, fears, hopes, and expectations, then not only would

⁶ Una Troubridge and M. Radclyffe-Hall, "On a Series of Sittings with Mrs. Osborne Leonard," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. 30, 1918-1919, pp. 339-554.

⁷ G. W. Balfour, "The Ear of Dionysius: Further Scripts affording Evidence of Personal Survival," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIX, 1916-1918, pp. 197-286.

the words, the mannerisms, the form of speaking, the expressive machinery by which we recognize one another be recognizably the same, but it would be possible for the investigator to ask the communicator, step by step, to describe what the process of communication seems like to him. Instead of believing it or rejecting it, the thing to do is to get it down, study it, analyze it, publish it, and invite the collaboration of others. We haven't spread our American wings very much in our Society's publications, but Dorothy Berg,⁹ not very long ago, made a study of *modus operandi* in three mediums which is an attempt to bring together what has been done by several different investigators studying both British and American material.

In the volume now under discussion there is an attempt on the part of Hornell Hart to utilize these concepts; to show that there is more than a web of associations, more than a sheer reiteration of personal identity, but rather the expression in the mediumistic séance of the point of view of an entity struggling frantically to make itself clear. This has the errors, the confusion and the difficulties which you will expect a person, trying to use an organism other than his own, and working with very complex material which he must express if he wants to convey the sense of his own identity, will have to deal with, and will have to have "played back" to him so that he can correct the misunderstandings in such a way that finally something can be recorded as a mass of evidence that is more than that which can be simply attributed to the belief of the sitter.

Does it follow from this that the case is closed? Far from it. If Hornell Hart were interested simply in a legal presentation, if he were interested in being counsel for one party rather than the other, this would end the book in a grand climax. You would say the I-Persona theory wins, hands down. Not so Hornell Hart. Because you have forgotten something. You have forgotten that there are a large number of very careful, critical, well-informed investigators who have listened to all of this and still remain of their own opinion. And here are some of the reasons why. Hart takes particularly seriously E. R. Dodds, who is one of the classical scholars who have been deeply interested. As you know, a great deal of the British survival evidence has to do with the classicist Frederic Myers and other classicists who have communicated either fragmentary Greek and Latin messages or in other ways have shown their identification with the Graeco-Roman literature and history which meant so much to them in life. He therefore takes the

time and trouble to quote E. R. Dodds at great length, particularly from an article called "Why I do not Believe in Survival,"⁹ which is one of the strongest, solidest, clearest statements of the association theory which exists. In other words, just when you get to the point of saying the debate is nearly over (this is the 1948 election and we can go home now and don't have to worry how things are going to come out!) it becomes perfectly evident that there is always another human word as long as human beings struggle with incomplete, fragmentary, and distorted materials, as they must when such an issue and such limited kinds of material exist. Dodds argues strongly for the unknown limits of the association principle. He reminds us that there are some very curious cases in which persons actually alive at the time have appeared and communicated and have been thought to be giving post-mortem messages. There are at least two very dramatic cases. One is the case of a French chauffeur named Réallier¹⁰ who was at Salonika during the First World War and who appeared through Mrs. Halsey in New York and gave very good evidence for his identity. The only trouble was that he wasn't deceased, as he said he was, but was at the Salonika front. The second is the equally dramatic case of Gordon Davis published by S. G. Soal.¹¹ The materials in this case are communicated through Blanche Cooper in London on the basis of the assumption that the man is a boyhood friend who has passed on. Actually he is living in another part of London. This does fit the association theory; it does not fit the I-Persona theory. What are you going to do about it?

One thing you can do is to look for still more complicated evidence. Another is to look for still more sophisticated philosophies. And all of this Hart gives us. He even takes you, in this relatively short book, through a sort of a tunnel, a maze of both evidence and argument: terse presentations of the evidence and then summaries of the two points of view which I have been trying to describe to you.

If you don't happen to have had the enormous pleasure—and if you haven't, I hope that you will sometime—of exposing yourself to what has been known as the Lethe case,^{12, 13} here will be a

⁹ *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XLII, 1934, pp. 147-172.

¹⁰ James H. Hyslop, "A Case of Alleged Mind Reading," *JOURNAL A.S.P.R.*, February, 1919, pp. 130-136.

¹¹ "A Report on Some Communications Received through Mrs. Blanche Cooper," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXXV, 1925, pp. 471-594.

¹² J. G. Piddington, "Further Experiments with Mrs. Piper in 1908: II. Three Incidents from the Sittings: Lethe; the Sibyl; the Horace Ode Question," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIV, 1910, pp. 86-144.

¹³ Sir Oliver Lodge, "Evidence of Classical Scholarship and of Cross Correspondence in Some New Automatic Writings," *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XXV, 1911, pp. 114-175.

⁹ Dorothy A. Berg, "The Modus Operandi of Trance Communication: A Comparison of Theories," *JOURNAL A.S.P.R.*, January, 1951, pp. 17-36.

fragment to whet your appetite. The word "Lethe," the river of forgetfulness in the underworld, was regarded by one investigator as a good way of finding out whether Frederic Myers, purporting to communicate, is really the classicist that he pretends to be. Therefore, George Dorr, in a sitting near Boston, asked the purporting Myers what the word Lethe suggested. After a good deal of sparring around, the purporting Myers gives what appears to be a long string of meaningless associations. But a good many of them were Greek words or proper names. Finally, the scholarly team working on this did pick out the place in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which all these names that were given by the purporting Myers appear in connection with a journey to Lethe. This wasn't enough, however, to satisfy the I-Persona school of thought, and so the question was sent over to the presented by Sir Oliver Lodge to Mrs. Willett, the English medium. And in this instance the package was opened which contained the question, and immediately the purporting Myers said that this concerned a question asked before, and went on to make fragmentary replies. Finally he wrote in capital letters, "D-O-R-R- This is the Dorr to which I found no key," evidencing simultaneous knowledge of the American experiment and of the need to say something about Lethe. The Myers personality then goes on to give a long series of very appropriate associations with Lethe, this time not from Ovid, but from Virgil. If you don't have the pleasure of knowing the Lethe case, do expose yourself to that because it is a really great literary puzzle, whether you believe this supports one or the other view. It is one of those rare delights which the British scholarship back of psychical research has produced.

Does this case mean, for Hornell Hart, just a museum piece? No. This means: let's struggle some more with this evidence. For example, let's see whether any living person could have been the telepathic source of this material. Who might have influenced it? After going through the various data, one could say that it might have come in part from here, in part from there. Just as in the Ear of Dionysius, the attempt is to find a living source for the material.

VI

Now perhaps you will be disappointed if you have been occupying very high middle ground here to find two final steps which Hart thinks he must take as an honest man. The first is to recapitulate all the evidence, and then to recapitulate all the arguments, and then to state why he personally takes a particular view, while in your ears there is still ringing the discord, the babel of this confused and uncertain debate. You won't catch Hart saying, "I

tagged the base this time." You will find him only saying, "In the Big League games we have more than one umpire, and we have to decide which umpire is going to decide regarding the men running the bases." "Who of you," Hart is essentially saying, "is close enough to the evidence to have the right to say that you are right and somebody else is wrong?" Hart believes in the I-Persona theory but does not think that this closes the mouths or the minds or the hearts of anybody else.

I want to leave you then, with a book which essentially recapitulates the kinds of evidence, the kinds of points of view which are legitimate in this field. Now if I have conveyed to you any of the feeling of this effort, I hope that at the same time I have done two things: the first is to induce you to read some of the material which is presented here second-hand by Hart; the second is to convince you that we need more than verbal argument. We need new kinds of evidence. We need, in particular, types of evidence which are manifestly beyond the scope of any of the considerations brought forward. When people say that we have had all the evidence for seventy-five years, they have overlooked the fact that there is a good deal that is new under the sun. When Mrs. Piper appeared, she was new; when Mrs. Willett appeared, she had a new kind of evidence; when the cross-correspondences occurred, they were new; when Tyrrell presented his very dramatic study of the stage-carpenter and interaction in spontaneous cases, he presented something very new. Some people say, "Why do you want to go back and toy with these old things?" Quite a number of people believe that there are still new things to be found out by going through the literature in our field; new angles, new ways of interpreting, new experiments to be tried. This psychical research of ours is not a cut-and-dried and completed issue. It is a growing thing.

It happens to be a field in which final decisions are not easily made. Are there any other fields of which this is true? There are few other fields in the sciences, in the humanities, in history, in which we think the evidence is all in. Maybe, in the course of pursuing survival evidence more fully, we will not only get new methods and new arguments, but, if the process is vigorous, maybe we will get a stretching of our minds, a broadening of our perspective, an elevation of our ways of understanding, to a level that will make better sense out of what already exists as well as to find new ways of marshalling fresh evidence. I hope, however, that in our time the issue will not be closed, because I believe that it is like a prematurely closed wound, like a scab that forms too early. There are some things in nature that happen before the full implications have been worked through. I think there is nothing

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more unfortunate for psychical research than dogmatic and complete answers which attempt to close the minds of everybody else.

So I would say, "Here is the book, with vigor, with freshness, with charm, which leaves you with that feeling which you ought to have: that psychical research is unfinished; we hope it will remain unfinished for a long time. In the meantime a lot of terribly exciting and important stuff is being discovered all the time."

**The Menninger Foundation
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