

Reprinted from the Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research
Volume 60 — October 1966 — Number 4

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

BY

GARDNER MURPHY, Ph.D.

AND

HERBERT L. KLEMME, M.D.

Unfinished Business

GARDNER MURPHY, PH.D. AND HERBERT L. KLEMMER, M.D.

I. CASE REPORT

On October 3, 1963, Mrs. Coleen Buterbaugh, secretary to Dean Sam Dahl, of Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, Nebraska, was asked by Dean Dahl to take a message to a colleague, Professor Martin (pseudonym), in his office suite in the C. C. White Building nearby. At about 8:50 A.M. Mrs. Buterbaugh entered this building and walked briskly along its extensive hall, hearing the sounds of students in a group of rooms set aside for music practice, and notably a marimba playing. Entering the first room of the suite (see Figure 1), she took about four steps and was stopped short (at point "B") by a very intense odor—a musty, disagreeable odor. Raising her eyes, she saw (at point "C") the figure of a very tall, black-haired woman (more fully described below) in a shirtwaist and ankle-length skirt who was extending her right arm to the upper right-hand shelves in an old music cabinet. We now continue the account in Mrs. Buterbaugh's own words:¹

... As I first walked into the room everything was quite normal. About four steps into the room was when the strong odor hit me. When I say strong odor, I mean the kind that simply stops you in your tracks and almost chokes you. I was looking down at the floor, as one often does when walking, and as soon as that odor stopped me I felt that there was someone in the room with me. It was then that I was aware that there were no noises out in the hall. Everything was deathly quiet. I looked up and something drew my eyes to the cabinet [point "D"] along the wall in the next room. I looked up and there she was. She had her back to me, reaching up into one of the shelves of the cabinet with her right hand, and standing perfectly still. She wasn't at all aware of my presence. While I was watching her she never moved. She was not transparent and yet I knew she wasn't real. While I was looking at her she just faded away—not parts of her body one at a time, but her whole body all at once.

Up until the time she faded away I was not aware of anyone else being in the suite of rooms, but just about the time of her fading out I felt as though I still was not alone. To my left was a desk [point "E"] and I had a feeling there was a man sitting at that desk. I turned

¹ A professor at the University of Nebraska, noting an account of the case in the *Lincoln Evening Journal* (issue of October 31, 1963), sent G.M. a copy of it. G.M. wrote to Dean Dahl and with his encouragement a letter of inquiry concerning the details of her experience was sent to Mrs. Buterbaugh. She replied in a letter dated November 20, 1963.

around and saw no one, but I still felt his presence. When that feeling of his presence left I have no idea, because it was then, when I looked out the window behind that desk, that I got frightened and left the room. I am not sure whether I ran or walked out of the room. Dr. Murphy, when I looked out that window there wasn't one modern thing out there. The street (Madison Street), which is less than a half block away from the building, was not even there and neither was the new Willard House. That was when I realized that these people were not in my time, but that I was back in their time.

It was not until I was back out in the hall that I again heard the familiar noises. This must have all taken place in a few seconds because the girls that were going into the orientation class as I entered the rooms were still going in and someone was still playing the marimba. . . .

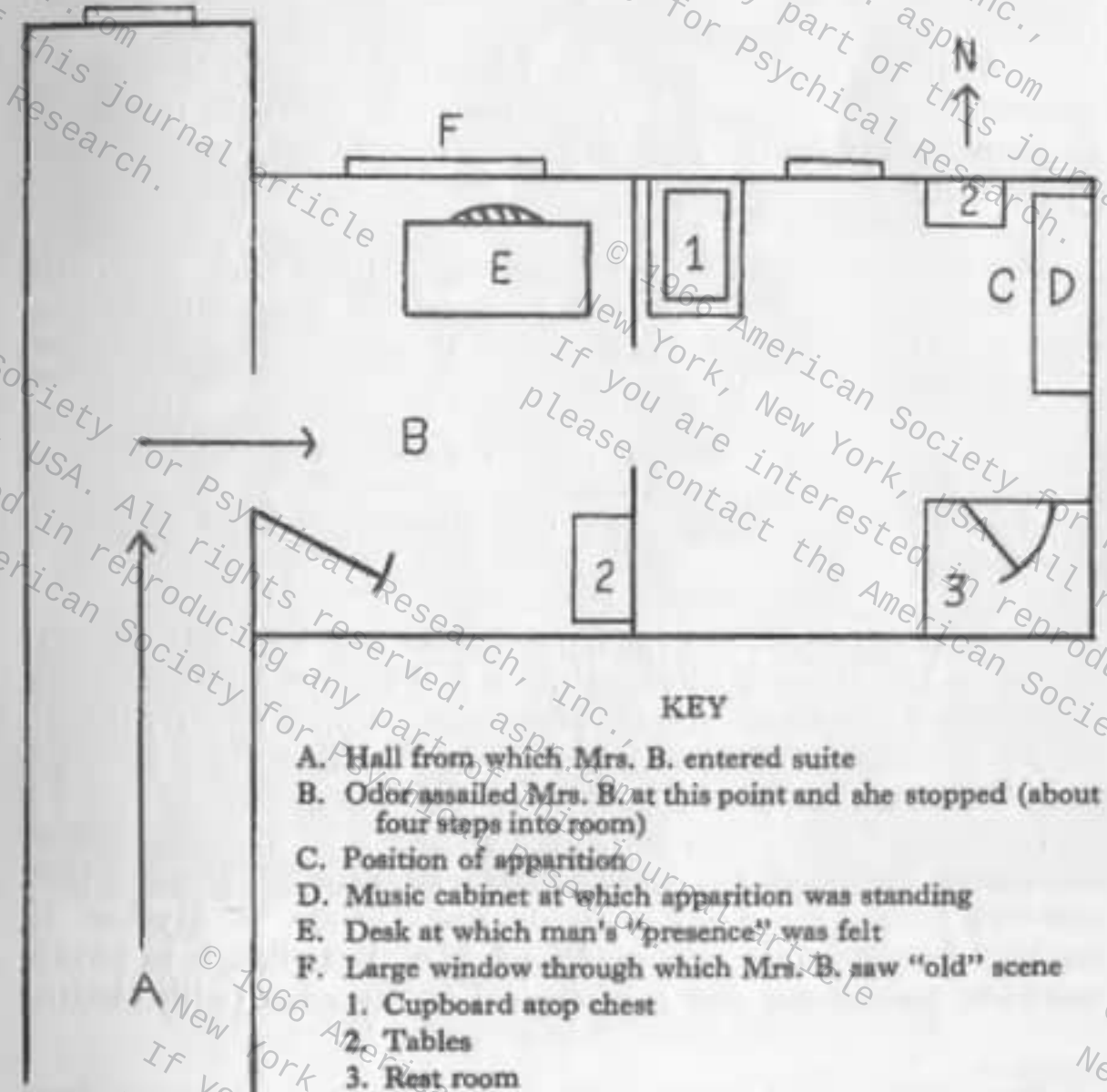


Fig. 1. Floor plan of two-room suite of offices (in C. C. White Building) temporarily occupied by Dr. Martin and in which Mrs. B.'s experience occurred.

Mrs. Buterbaugh made no further attempt to find Professor Martin, but went back to her office in the Old Main Building and tried to work at her typewriter. She found she could not do so, and went to describe her experience to Dean Dahl, who listened with full attention and sympathy. Neither Dean Dahl nor Mrs. Buterbaugh had at this time any idea at all as to the identity of the figure seen, or indeed whether it had any "identity." In the course of the day, however, it was suggested by a member of the staff that there might be some resemblance between the figure and the appearance of a Miss Clarissa U. Mills, an instructor in theory and piano, who had many years before used the office in which the figure appeared and who had died suddenly, in 1936, in a room just across the hall. Identifiable features were the extreme tallness, estimated at six feet, the black hair, and the appropriateness of place and action. Evidence of identity, however, has not been offered by anyone as conclusive.

In reply to further questions from G.M., Mrs. Buterbaugh described somewhat more fully what she saw when she looked out the window behind the desk where she had sensed the "presence" of the man:

... The window was open. Even though it was fairly early in the morning, it appeared as though it were a very warm, summer afternoon. It was very still. There were a few scattered trees—about two on my right (east) and about three on my left (west). It seems to me there were more, but these are the only ones I can be definite about. The rest was open field; the new Willard sorority house and also Madison Street were not there. I remember seeing a very vague outline of some sort of building to my right and that is about all. Nothing else but open field.

This is the raw core of a spontaneous case which would ordinarily be put in the category of apparitions. But the intense odor which initiated the experience and the appearance of open country instead of the existing university campus² suggests that there is much more here than a typical apparitional experience.

In March, 1964, G.M. addressed an A.S.P.R. meeting in New York and described the case. On the basis of suggestions then received from Drs. Jan Ehrenwald and George H. Hyslop, he decided that it would be wise to ask Mrs. Buterbaugh to have a complete psychiatric and neurological examination (with electro-

² We were able to find a photograph (not clear enough for reproduction here) taken in 1915 which shows the difference between the contemporary and the erstwhile campus. It is very unlikely that Mrs. Buterbaugh could have seen this photograph prior to the time of her experience.



Mrs. Buterbaugh, standing at the old music cabinet, demonstrates height of apparition.

(Photograph by courtesy of the Lincoln Evening Journal.)

Unfinished Business

309

encephalogram). This was not suggested with any thought that experiences of the sort described are abnormal, but solely on the basis of the assumption that unusual experiences with regard to time are often associated with various well-known types of temporal lobe dysfunction; and that in any event, the more we could learn about the subject of the case, both physiologically and psychologically, the better for the research.

Arrangements were therefore completed with Mrs. Buterbaugh to visit her in Lincoln, Nebraska, on May 13, 1964. Before this date G.M. discovered that H.L.K.—a psychiatrist then at the Topeka VA Hospital known to be interested in psychical phenomena and willing to carry out various psychiatric aspects of the study—would be glad to go along for the investigation.

On the way to Lincoln G.M. gave H.L.K. a full account of the case and read to him extensively from the material contained in the various exhibits, so that upon arrival the two investigators were about equally familiar with the raw facts as related above. They found Dean Dahl and Mrs. Buterbaugh in the Old Main Building. Mrs. Buterbaugh then took them to the C. C. White Building, in which the curious experience had occurred, and spent about twenty minutes reviewing the facts. She said that the newspaper account which had been sent to G.M. was based on an earlier interview and that it was essentially accurate. She then went to lunch with us. After lunch there were extended conversations with Mrs. Buterbaugh and briefer conversations with Dean Dahl and with other faculty members who knew some portions of the total episode. Arrangements were made for the neurological and EEG examinations, the results to be sent to us in Topeka for study. (The first EEG examination took place on June 26, 1964.)

Mrs. Buterbaugh impressed us as a very direct, matter-of-fact, down-to-earth, and realistic person who was fulfilling very competently her life assignment as a wife, mother, and full-time professional secretary. She seemed eager to be asked direct questions and to give all the information she possessed about the case. We now give H.L.K.'s summary of his psychiatric interview and his later (February 16, 1966) comments. We wish, however, to make it clear at this point that we found nothing strange whatever in the manner in which Mrs. Buterbaugh responded to an experience which was, to say the least, very strange indeed.³

³ Mrs. Buterbaugh has kindly given us written permission to use her name in connection with this case. We wish to thank her for her cooperation in all the phases of its investigation.

II. REPORT OF CONSULTATION

May 13, 1964

1. *Identification and Circumstances of this Consultation*

Mrs. Coleen (nee Cochran) Buterbaugh is a 41-year-old, Baptist, Scotch-Irish mother of four boys and the wife of a retired Air Force Master Sergeant. She is secretary to the Dean of Nebraska Wesleyan University and has resided with her husband in Lincoln, Nebraska, since 1960.

Dr. Gardner Murphy asked this examiner to see Mrs. B. pursuant to the thorough investigation of the recent retrocognitive experience reported by the subject. This examination took place over a period of four hours, beginning with the meeting of Mrs. B. in the outer office of Dean Dahl, a showing of the rooms in which the experience occurred, at lunch with Mrs. B. and Dr. Murphy, and during the course of the next three hours when Mrs. B. was interviewed jointly by Dr. Murphy and this examiner. The examiner was able to interview Mrs. B. alone for a period of approximately 45 minutes in the office of Dean Dahl. As Mrs. B. was attempting to continue her functions as secretary, the interview was interrupted many times by the ringing of the telephone and by various members of the faculty and student body breaking in upon the examination.

The details of the subject's background and current situation as reported were obtained from her and from Dean Dahl and are considered to be reliable. Mrs. B. was very frank and cooperative and there were no significant discrepancies in any of her accounts and no evidence that she was trying to tell anything other than the truth as she experienced it.

2. *Background*

Mrs. B. (born January 13, 1923) was the second of two daughters born to the 22-year-old wife of a 23-year-old movie theater manager in Brewster, Nebraska. The parents moved frequently and the family lived successively in six Nebraska communities. The father is described as a jovial, lenient man with many inventive ideas and schemes upon which he never acted. He loved the outdoors and to whistle and sing. He is now an invalid, suffering from heart trouble and recovering from a broken hip, and is cared for by his wife in Denver, Colorado.

The mother is described as more strict, but a cute, petite, jolly, happy woman, five feet tall, who is lots of fun. The mother still

enjoys excellent health. Mrs. B. states that they were very close as a family and very, very happy.

Her earliest memory is of the fourth grade when she was ten years old. She enjoyed school and made average grades, but had no favorite subjects. She enjoyed and participated in sports and had many friends. She describes herself as tomboyish, unlike her older sister, who was more "refined." The family had no particular religion and went to church only occasionally. She began dating at the age of 16 and was very popular. She graduated from high school at the age of 18 and married her French-German husband after two months of courtship. After two years of marriage, when their first son was a year old, the husband was shipped overseas to the South Pacific and remained there until the war's end in 1945.

Mrs. B. describes her marriage as a very happy one and the family, consisting of four boys, now ages 21, 16, 13, and 9, do many things together. They fish, camp, and bowl as a family unit. She states that it is a usual thing for her to be playing football with them. The oldest boy plays the guitar and the 13-year-old plays the clarinet. As Mrs. B. describes this family, it becomes quite evident that it is very action-oriented and one that is accustomed to operating as a very close unit. Inasmuch as Mrs. B. works full time and also has the care of the home, each of the boys is said to chip in and help with the housework. During the 15-year period between 1945 and 1960 this family has been stationed in Utah, San Francisco, the Philippine Islands, and Germany. In 1960 Mrs. B.'s husband was transferred to Lincoln, Nebraska, where the family has remained until now. In 1963 Mr. B. retired from the Air Force and accepted a local position in Lincoln.

For the past 22 months Mrs. B. has worked as secretary to Dean Dahl of Nebraska Wesleyan University. The Dean is highly complimentary of her work, abilities, and stability.

3. *Circumstances of the Reported Experience*

On the morning of October 3, 1963, Mrs. B. arose at her usual hour of 6:30 A.M., prepared breakfast for the family, and reported to work at her usual time of 8:00 A.M. She had slept well the night before, having retired at 11:00 P.M., and awoke the next morning fresh, alert, and rested, as usual. From 8:00 A.M. until approximately 8:45 A.M. she worked at her job of typing and dictation for Dean Dahl. Then Dean Dahl asked her to go to the C. C. White Building to take a message to Dr. Ian Martin, a visiting music professor from Edinburgh, Scotland, who at the time was engaged in arranging choral group singing. Mrs. B. had never been to his office in the C. C. White Building. She wondered why Dean Dahl

did not simply ask her to phone. As she walked to the far north end of the C. C. White Building she was aware of the changing of the classes, the chatter of the students, and a marimba playing. As she came to the suite of two rooms occupied by Dr. Martin, she found the door open and stepped inside (see Figure 1). She took four small steps into the empty room and as she took the fourth step an odor assailed her nostrils which she describes as being very powerful, as if it were "jetted out of a pipe." She stated further that although this odor assailed her and was very strong, there was no disturbance of the air. She described the odor as being musty, old; as if something were very, very old, not unlike the odor in an old building that has been unoccupied for a very long time.

As she walked into the first room she thinks that she must have been walking with her head down, as she usually does. As the odor assailed her she raised her head and looked into the adjoining room. There she saw the figure of a very tall woman (possibly six feet tall) with her back toward her. The figure was reaching with the right hand into one of the high shelves of an old music cabinet (see photograph). Strikingly, the figure was dressed in a bushy bouffant hairdo (later described as consistent with the fashion of 1915), a long-sleeved white blouse, and a full ankle-length dark brown or black skirt. For a period of time (which Mrs. B. estimates as having been long enough for her to have walked over to the figure if she had been so inclined) the figure stood there with the right hand in the files. As she watched the figure, it vanished instantaneously. She describes the figure as being of substance and not transparent. Mrs. B. then described what she had felt all along as the presence of a male figure sitting in a chair in the more proximal room. As she swept her eyes from the vanished figure of the woman to the chair where she felt the presence of the male figure, she saw nothing.

As she raised her eyes to the window she saw that the scene had changed. Instead of the girls' dormitory and Willard House, which one would normally see from the window, she saw nothing but rolling countryside: no buildings, no streets; merely a landscape suggesting the countryside of midsummer. Upon seeing that the view from the window had changed, Mrs. B. left the room. One of the things that she noticed during this experience was that there was extreme quiet. No sounds were heard during the entire time, and it was not until she stepped into the hall that her ears were again assailed with the usual noises of the chattering students changing classes and the sound of the marimba playing in the background. She realized then, and only then, that only a short period of time could have elapsed because, as she pointed out, the students were still changing classes.

Mrs. B., forgetting her errand to find Dr. Martin, then went back to her office, sat down at the typewriter, and wondered what she should do. She reasoned that she really couldn't tell anyone of this experience because who would believe her? Might they not say, or think, that she was crazy? She attempted to go about her work as usual, but found that she could only type a line or two, then would have to stop (observed by Dean Dahl). This occurred several times and after approximately 30 minutes to an hour she decided she would have to talk to someone and immediately consulted Dean Dahl. After she had told him of her experience, she was relieved to find that he did not question the veracity of her statements. (In a later interview Dean Dahl stated that he never once questioned that she was reporting accurately what she had seen.) Then Dean Dahl and Mrs. B. contacted other faculty members, wondering just what the apparition was that she had seen. Upon investigation, they discovered that a music teacher named Miss Clarissa Mills fit the description of the apparition and that she had worked at the college from 1912 until her death in 1936. They obtained some old yearbooks (never before seen by Mrs. B.) and found Miss Mills' picture. Mrs. B. identified the hairdo as that worn by the apparition and the picture was dated 1915. When they found an older faculty member who remembered Miss Mills, she was described by him as being a very tall, thin, black-haired spinster whose interests were in music and choral group singing. Upon examining the filing cabinet with which the apparition was occupied, it was found to contain choral group arrangements, many of which dated back before the death of Miss Mills in 1936.

4. *Psychological Examination*

Mrs. B. is a petite (5 feet, 99 pounds), attractive, naturally red-headed woman who is well-dressed, warm, friendly, and cooperative. She met Dr. Murphy and the examiner in a self-assured, positive manner and exhibited an eagerness to share her experience. She was alert, accurate, and made her points concisely and clearly. She exhibited no evidence of perceptual or thought disorder. She was judged to be of high normal to superior intelligence and her vocabulary was consistent with her educational and socio-economic status. She does not appear to be a reflective person, but is more inclined to be action-oriented. Her affects and actions were appropriate and her prevailing mood was one of happiness and contentment, although her recent experience was perplexing. Investigation of her daily activity disclosed that she is quite interested in all active sports, both as a participant and as an observer, and she frequently plays baseball and football with her four sons.

Mrs. B. relates to others easily and well. Her major attachments seem to be to her family and appear to be very adequate. She spoke affectionately of her husband and sons. In talking about ideas, little was obtained during the examination, but she does place strong values upon both work and play. Observation of Mrs. B. at work revealed that she is proficient, effective, and derives considerable satisfaction from her job. In all of these areas her immediate boss, Dean Dahl, corroborated these observations. An example of her ability in her recreational activity is that she carries a 152 average in a bowling league. Her self-image and self-esteem are good and there is no evidence of self-dissatisfaction or self-directed aggression. She aspires to continue to improve herself and hopes to go back to college when her sons are grown.

Relative to the present situation, although she had been through a rather traumatic experience she did not seem to be experiencing any particular discomfort. But at the time of the experience she was shaken by what she had seen, and even now is perplexed. In the area of reality testing, Mrs. B. uses good common sense and adheres to reality consistently. She says that her marital adjustment is an excellent one and that she and her husband are extremely happy.

Recapitulation: In the relatively short period of time that this examiner spent with Mrs. B., he can only say that very little evidence of gross psychopathology was found. She appears happy and action-oriented; a successful wife, mother, and employee. Repression as a mental mechanism seems to have been extended beyond the usual expected time as she has no recall before the age of ten years. The experience that she had of perceiving an apparition is a unique one and no similar incident had occurred to her before. She did admit to *déjà vu* phenomena and described these in some detail for the examiner. The immediate and complete acceptance of the account as told by Mrs. B. to Dean Dahl attests to the positive forces manifest in this relationship.

Diagnostic conclusions: During the brief span of this examination Mrs. B. was seen as a comfortable, happy wife and mother. No evidence of gross psychopathology was discovered.

HERBERT L. KLEMME, M.D.

III. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

February 16, 1966

At the request of Dr. Gardner Murphy and because of our mutual interest in psychical phenomena, I interviewed Mrs. B. on three separate occasions for a total of approximately twelve hours—

five and a half hours in the formal private interview situation and the remainder of the time in observations and interviews in the presence of other persons. Dates of the interviews were: May 13, 1964, March 12, 1965, and June 3, 1965.

In summary, Mrs. B. was found to be an intelligent, happy, and action-oriented person and a successful wife, mother, and employee. The experience she described was a unique one, although she has had several episodes of the so-called *déjà vu* phenomenon. Because of the description of the olfactory sensation of a musty odor which can be caused by pathological involvement of the uncinate gyrus of the temporal lobe, a complete neurological examination was requested. The neurological examination was entirely normal except for the initial electroencephalogram which disclosed "two 250-300 microvolt bursts lasting only five seconds of high amplitude, hyper-synchronous, diffuse five cycles per second sharp waves" under the influence of chloral hydrate. The neurologist commented that such paroxysms during wake-sleep and sleep-wake transition are common. (A second EEG executed at a later date was interpreted as being entirely normal.)

In view of this information, Mrs. B. was asked at the second interview (March 12, 1965) specifically about any phenomena she might have experienced which could be epileptiform in nature. She then described a recurrent phenomenon which occurs at least once a week when she lies down to sleep. Her description of this recurrent experience seems to be the same as the neurologically described syndrome called "predormital sleep paralysis." This is a state through which some people often pass while falling asleep. Though fully conscious, the person is unable to move a muscle. This condition sometimes occurs in persons who suffer from narcolepsy or other sleep disturbances, but it is also fairly common in otherwise normal people (1, p. 127). Mrs. B.'s first experience with predormital sleep paralysis occurred in 1954 and caused her severe fright; but when she was reassured by her physician that it was not serious, she relegated it to being of little or no significance and did not mention it to a physician thereafter until she was questioned by this examiner.

On June 3, 1965, arrangements were made to have Mrs. B. re-experience the C. C. White Building phenomena while in time regression under hypnosis with a concomitant EEG tracing. Mrs. B. was an excellent hypnotic subject and experienced both positive and negative hallucinations in the first and only session of hypnosis. During time regression she said she re-experienced the episode of the C. C. White Building in its entirety; while still under hypnosis she was questioned intensively about the phenomenon and described it exactly as she had before. During regression to the point

of reliving the scene, the resting EEG frequencies suddenly changed to a low voltage, fast, "alert" response lasting a total of four seconds, then spindling of drowsiness supervened in another six seconds without evidence of arousal or movement. There was no evidence of any electrical central nervous system abnormality in this EEG tracing, which lasted for over one hour. When Mrs. B. awakened from the trance state, she was amnesic for the entire period and performed posthypnotic suggestions well.

Initially, and especially when the first EEG revealed abnormalities, it was deemed expedient that no stone be left unturned and that a total neurological examination should be done. At this point in time there was no way of knowing whether this first EEG pattern was or was not an early symptom of a serious neurological disease process. During the ensuing year and a half no new symptoms appeared and the neurological examinations continued to be unchanged. The subsequent EEG taken approximately one year later was entirely normal. One can only conclude that the neurological condition of predormital sleep paralysis is not progressive and is not interfering with Mrs. B.'s day-to-day activities; for all intents and purposes, she is performing as a physically and mentally normal, healthy individual.

Whether the neurological aberrations discovered during the course of the evaluation did or did not have anything to do with Mrs. B.'s unusual experience in the C. C. White Building is a moot point.

HERBERT L. KLEMME, M.D.

IV. DISCUSSION

Intense odors are familiar to neurologists as a warning or "aura" in certain pseudoconvulsive or convulsive states. But this aspect of Mrs. Buterbaugh's experience is regarded by us as quite likely a symbol or marker of a transition from one mental state to another as she left the "here-and-now" and plunged into the past. Or the odor could itself have been the first manifestation of a somewhat dissociated state, or a state of altered ego, not unlike what F. W. H. Myers has called a "sensory automatism" (4, Vol. I, Ch. 6). It is possible to regard a normal sensory process as potentiating a paranormal process, or to regard both normal and pathological processes as working together in the potentiation of the paranormal. Or perhaps it is best of all to regard these distinctions between the normal, the pathological, and the paranormal as very arbitrary and ultimately unjustifiable distinctions. The most important thing is that Mrs. Buterbaugh was in a special state allowing special types

of perception. To call any of these phenomena either pathological or paranormal in no way helps to explain them.

In discussing the case, we found ourselves moving rather rapidly toward certain ways of conceptualizing these phenomena, which we piece together and here offer very tentatively, but without apology, as suggesting a way of combining a number of current dynamic conceptions about psychical phenomena. We chose the title "Unfinished Business" because we wish to stress a common factor which seems to run through several features of this curious case.

First, Professor Martin had come to Nebraska Wesleyan University a month prior to Mrs. Buterbaugh's experience to work on matters concerning choral singing in which he felt the University had something to offer, even to a distinguished specialist in this field, and he had been assigned to the office in which the experience happened. Secondly, Miss Mills, who had used this office many years before, had been concerned with choral singing. Third, in the upper two right-hand shelves of the music cabinet, to which the figure had been extending its right arm, was found a series of items on choral singing from Bach, from Pergolesi, and from Thomas Whitney Surette's "Concord Choral Arrangements." Fourth, Mrs. Buterbaugh had been sent by Dean Dahl that morning to complete some arrangements apparently having to do with choral singing, but Professor Martin was not there. There is a firm theme to find something (indeed, something having to do with the integration of male voices, or male and female voices together), which purpose could not be completed by any of the three persons involved. Three minds were concerned with the same theme.

This conception is very strongly reminiscent of Whately Carington's conception of a psychon system, or a cluster of related ideas binding together different minds which contain similar psychons (2). The point which Carington repeatedly stressed is that classical association theory, binding psychons together, is useful in psychical research if we do not insist on the concept of an ego anchored firmly in time and place; as competing with another ego and separating itself from the psychological activities of all other egos. Rather, it will be recalled, the Carington thesis is that associations form as easily between A's mind and B's mind as they do between two parts of A's mind; and that the possession of a common item or cluster of items (which Carington called a "K-object") is the seed of a telepathic process of communication. It would appear to be simple, then, to put Carington's theory to work, saying that the three legs of the tripod on which Mrs. Buterbaugh's experience is erected all have to do with *unfinished business*, something which must be *found*; and all have, in fact, to do with un-

finished business of a specific sort, namely, choral arrangements for male and female voices.

Incidental to such a thesis, various psychoanalytic conceptions might be brought in: First, a male figure is obviously needed to complete the picture and is perhaps provided by Mrs. Buterbaugh's awareness of a man's "presence" at the desk. Second, a very short female figure (Mrs. Buterbaugh is only five feet tall) reaches up (see photograph) to indicate the extended upper-reaching activity of the tall figure of Miss Mills, as if the effort to *reach* were central. From this point of view, the three contemporary minds—those of Dean Dahl, Professor Martin, and Mrs. Buterbaugh—are all striving to complete a pattern and they, so to speak, drag into their efforts the timeless or other-time-related efforts of Miss Mills to find certain material having to do with choral arrangements. It should, incidentally, be noted again here that Miss Mills⁴ died shortly before 9 A.M. in the office across the hall after struggling through a bitter wind to the C. C. White Building, and that Mrs. Buterbaugh arrived at the building shortly before 9 A.M. Perhaps this is another psychological link.

Our first impression of the case was that its claim to paranormal character lay largely in the authentication of a relation between the woman's figure seen by Mrs. Buterbaugh and the actual Clarissa Mills who had made much use of the room in which the apparition had appeared. It must be admitted, however, that our perspective has changed considerably. The evidence connecting the apparition with Miss Mills is not entirely convincing. It is true that the appearance of the figure from behind, particularly its height, hairdo, and clothing, are easily reconciled with the impression that this, in a certain sense, "was" Miss Mills; but in the absence of a view of the face, it is hard to prove that this was anything more than a perception of a tall woman's figure. And it is not too remote a shot to suggest that for a very short woman, as Mrs. Buterbaugh is, to see a very tall female figure could be connected plausibly enough with some sort of infantile memory in which a little girl saw the tall (relative to her own size) figure of her mother, or indeed of some mother surrogate. The figure of the man was not even identified, and cannot be given much weight.

On the other hand, if we note that the initiation of the whole experience by a strong odor is something strongly suggestive of the commonplace olfactory aura initiating subacute as well as acute convulsive attacks, and that these frequently involve disorientation in time, interest naturally shifts to Mrs. Buterbaugh's looking out

⁴ We were not successful in our attempts to determine just what Miss Mills had been teaching, or what lectures she was preparing, in the last weeks of her life.

the window and seeing the campus "as it was." This aspect of the experience may very well have been paranormal, and a clean-cut case of retrocognition. It is also quite possible that Mrs. Buterbaugh had been thrown into a moment of orientation to the past, and that this predisposed her to look at the campus as she imagined it or heard it to have been. However, it would seem that the case for something paranormal in the total experience is somewhat stronger because of this report of seeing the campus as it had been long ago, and we are inclined to shift attention somewhat away from the apparition of Miss Mills and somewhat more to the retrocognitive aspect of the case. We feel that retrocognition is a reasonable classification of this experience, utilizing the Carington theory (2) to include retrocognitive experiences. We are less sure that the dynamic interpretation having to do with the choral arrangements is a related clue. We do believe, however, that at this stage in our ignorance of such matters, it is legitimate to speculate and to combine these speculations into a system. But this must not be defended dogmatically, and its primary purpose is to guide in the collection, classification, and interpretation of spontaneous cases.

To return to the neurological aspects of the case, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (3) William James vigorously took the position that giving a neurological term to a human condition leaves the question of its total meaning and value completely open. George Fox's neurological difficulties do not, said James, bear on the spiritual meaning of his message, nor of the Society of Friends which he founded. In the same way, we wish to affirm our own conviction that there are many different approaches to human nature and to human adjustment problems, and that the utilization of one approach never rules out the possibility that others may likewise be useful.

Specifically, we think that there are indications in the neurological record, as well as in the psychiatric interview and interpretation, of some trouble signs. Most of these would not in themselves demand clinical attention, but those having to do with the occurrence of predormital sleep paralysis suggest that at times there have been neurological problems of at least subclinical interest. Moreover, they seem to be related to the paranormal phenomena with which our inquiry began. As already mentioned, temporal lobe difficulties of the sort indicated in the record are not infrequently related to disorientations in time such as feelings of "having been there before" (*déjà vu*) and, by implication, of "glimpses into the past," as suggested by the observations reported here. This does not in any sense bear on the question of the reality of the contact with the past which may have been involved in Mrs.

Butterbaugh's perception of the apparition of the woman, the sense of the man's "presence," and, more significantly, the view of the Nebraska Wesleyan University campus as it existed some years earlier.

The retrocognitive aspects of the experience, together with the aura which initiated it, all mark it as being at least of great psychological interest; and by pursuing this vivid little thread rather than tossing it aside, we may hope to lead with Ariadne to something new and valuable. We venture therefore to suggest that whatever mild pathologies there may be in this case leave entirely open the question of its paranormal features. The case may be viewed as relatively "normal" or relatively "pathological" as far as the neurological record is concerned. It may also be regarded as presenting a "good" line of evidence for paranormal contact with the past, or this evidence may be regarded as unconvincing. Our purpose is not to plead, but to lay bare for consideration what seems to be some rich psychical research material and some rich neurological material which interdigitate and give meaning one to the other. For us, then, the case as a whole, and not only its parts, remains "unfinished business."

REFERENCES

1. BRAIN, W. RUSSELL. *Clinical Neurology*. (Second edition.) London: Oxford University Press, 1964.
2. CARINGTON, WHATELY. "Experiments on the Paranormal Cognition of Drawings, IV." *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. 47, 1942-45, 155-228. (See the section *A Theory of Paranormal Cognition and Allied Phenomena*.)
3. JAMES, WILLIAM. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902.
4. MYERS, F. W. H. *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903.

The Menninger Foundation
Topeka, Kansas 66601