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Direct Contacts with Past and Future: Retrocognition and Precognition¹

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I

We all accept, in a sense, direct contact with the past, partly through our memories and partly by the implicit trust that we put in records, documents, artifacts from bygone times; and partly we have the same confidence regarding the future because we extrapolate. We know that there will be a June coming along after January, and we hope that there will be a human race after this doubtful period of the twentieth century. We use, in a sense, retrospective and prospective methods all the time. But I am asking you this evening to consider a radically different way of meeting the past and future: to consider the possibility that in a sense we may step out of time and space and make *direct* rather than inferential contact. We look to the bottom of the well and we look to the furthest star.

In the *Inferno*, in the beautiful translation of John Ciardi, you will find the following extraordinary words:

"Ah, so may your soul sometime have rest,
I begged him, "solve the riddle that pursues me
through this dark place and leaves my mind perplexed:

you seem to see in advance all time's intent,
if I have heard and understood correctly;
but you seem to lack all knowledge of the present."

"We see asquint, like those whose twisted sight
can make out only the far-off," he said,
"for the King of All still grants us that much light.

When things draw near, or happen, we perceive
nothing of them. Except what others bring us
we have no news of those who are alive.

So may you understand that all we know
will be dead forever from that day and hour
when the Portal of the Future is swung to."²

¹ This paper was delivered by Professor Murphy at a meeting of the Society held on January 24, 1966.—Ed.

² Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*. A verse rendering for the modern reader by John Ciardi. New York: Mentor Books, 1954. (P. 99.) Quoted with the kind permission of Mr. Ciardi and of Mentor Books.—Ed.

These poor souls in perdition remind us of certain hypnotic subjects we are told about for whom the present is obliterated in their attempt to make contact with a remote future. We have a considerable literature in psychical research about the plausibility of this kind of perception. But on the whole, strangely enough, there has been more skepticism about seeing the past than about seeing the future, and claims of precognition are accepted with more confidence of the likelihood of ultimate authentication than are cases of retrocognition. Some years ago W. H. W. Sabine (24) published a paper on the case for retrocognition in which you get the impression that a rather sorry figure is cut by the claims for a contact with the past. It is rather remarkable that from the time of Sir Walter Scott on, these cases are largely concerned with men marching and battles of long ago. It is very difficult to authenticate such cases, yet there are a good many of them on record.

I ran into an unusual case a few years ago when Mr. Ballou and I were working on William James' interest in psychical research (17). I want to read some excerpts from this case, and I will ask you to consider, as you listen to the exact words of those concerned, whether it is a case of clairvoyance (as James thought) in the sense of direct observation of something going on at the time, or whether (as I would be inclined to say) the sensitive pursued a thread originally written in human experience, going back in time to a series of events which were retrocognitively observed. This is the issue that I ask you to consider.

Mr. Ayer's Statement

On Thursday, A.M., Nov. 3rd, 1898, Mr. George Titus came to the Mascoma Mills [near Enfield, New Hampshire]. At about 6:15 A.M. he called Mr. J. C. Ayer to one side to tell him the following:

"My wife had three trances last night; in one she caught hold of me, and I tried to pull her away but could not. She then said, 'I know where the girl is [a girl, Bertha Huse, who had mysteriously disappeared four days earlier]. I can find her. The girl went onto the bridge and walked out on a log and then walked back and forth, looking toward the hills. She slipped off and went down backwards. She did not intend to commit suicide. You will find her in the mud, with one foot out' ". . . .

Mr. Sunderlin's Statement

On the morning of Thursday, Nov. 3rd, Geo. A. Titus came to my barn about 5:20, and . . . said, ". . . My wife has had a trance, and declares she can tell where to find the body of Bertha Huse. She says she is in the lake (Mascoma) at the east side of Shaker Bridge."

I naturally laughed at the idea, but Titus stuck to his story. Titus told me that on coming upstairs after supper . . . he found his wife sitting in a rocking chair, asleep but gesticulating. He aroused her, whereupon she at once said, "Oh, George, why did you wake me. In a few minutes I could have told you where that girl is. If I go into another trance tonight or any other time, don't disturb me."

They then retired for the night. Along toward 11 or 12, Titus said he was waked by his wife's groans and mutterings. When he lit a lamp, he found his wife in apparent spasms, though still asleep. While so asleep she declared that Bertha Huse would be found in the lake to the east of the bridge, lying head down between two logs, her body covered by mud and brush; but that one foot would be sticking up, on which was a new rubber. That the girl first appeared to her (Mrs. Titus) on the bridge. That she appeared undecided whether to go in at the spot she was on, or from some point further down the bridge. That while standing on a frost-covered log with her back to the water, her foot slipped, and she went into the lake backwards.

Sunderlin continuing said: "I told Titus, 'Well, George, if you and your wife feel this way, you better hitch up and go out to the bridge. And if your wife thinks she is then sure of the spot, drive up to Enfield and see if you can get Whitney [a man who had sent to Boston for divers] interested in this.' "

When Titus came back later in the day, he told me, "When we arrived at the bridge, she [Mrs. Titus] got out of the buggy, and walked along the east side of the bridge, looking intently into the lake. Suddenly she stopped, and said, 'George, she is right down there, between those two logs.' She then got into the buggy, and we drove to Whitney's house.

"Mr. Whitney smiled, on hearing the story, but went to the lake with us. My wife went directly to the spot she had pointed out to me, and told Whitney, 'She is right down there.' As her opinion could not be shaken, Whitney brought the diver. The diver shook his head and said, 'I have been down there.' My wife said, 'No, you have been down there, and there, but not *there*. She is head down in the mud, with one foot sticking up, and a new rubber on it.'

"The diver turned to Whitney, and said, 'I am under your orders, sir.' The diver went down at the spot indicated. In a minute the girl's hat came up. Shortly after the diver brought up the body" (17, pp. 72-88).²

We have had dozens of cases like this in psychical research and we have called them cases of clairvoyance. Osty (19) described a somewhat similar and very dramatic case of so-called psychometry in which a sensitive, holding a scarf which belonged to an old man who had wandered off, correctly described the spot where his body

² Originally published in *Proc. A.S.P.R.*, Vol. 1, 1907, 220ff.

was later found. There is everything about cases like this to suggest a direct contact with the past, but we have insisted on regarding them as within the framework of ordinary extrasensory perception—type clairvoyance—and have hesitated to face the possibility of a displacement in time.

Several years ago I spoke at an A.S.P.R. meeting about a case in Lincoln, Nebraska, that I was personally able to investigate.⁴ Briefly, the percipient, Mrs. Coleen Buterbaugh, was stopped in her tracks by a very intense odor as she stepped into an office suite in the music building at the Nebraska Wesleyan University. A moment later she saw the well-defined figure of a very tall woman reaching up into the shelves of an old music cabinet which contained choral arrangements. She noted the clothes and old-fashioned bouffant "hair-do" of the apparition. Turning to one side, she sensed a man's presence sitting at a desk, and looking out of the window behind this desk she saw not the campus as it then existed, but open farm country as it had existed almost five decades earlier. Later investigation disclosed that a music teacher, Miss Mills, fitted the description of the apparition. Miss Mills had worked at the college from 1912 until her sudden death, in a room just across the hall from the office suite, in 1936. Mrs. Buterbaugh commented that "I realized that these people were not in my time, but that *I was back in their time*." The dramatic thing in this case is that the time Mrs. Buterbaugh got into was not just an earlier phase of her own time; it appeared that she made contact with a bit of the temporal stream of the second decade of the century.

I want to read one other case which seems to me to give a striking psychological analysis of what may be going on. It is quoted from *Phantasms of the Living* (6) by G. N. M. Tyrrell in his extraordinary documentary collection of cases, *Apparitions* (29):

"The narrator and his niece were sitting in the drawing-room about 2 P.M. 'I saw that what I supposed at the first moment to be dirty soapy water running in at the door; and I was in the act of jumping up to scold the housemaid for upsetting the water, when I saw that the supposed water was the tail or train of a lady's dress. The lady glided in backwards, as if she had been slid in on a slide, each part of her dress keeping its place without disturbance. She glided in till I could see the whole of her, *except the tip of her nose, her lips, and the tip of her chin, which were hidden by the edge of the door*. Her head was slightly turned over her shoulder, and her eye also turned, so that it appeared fixed upon me. She held her arm, which was a very fine one, in a peculiar way, as if she were proud of it. She

⁴ This case appears under the title of "Unfinished Business" in the October, 1966, issue of *Journal A.S.P.R.*—Ed.

was dressed in a pale blue evening dress, worked with white lace. I instantly recognized the figure as a lady whom I had known some 25 years or more before; and with whom I had frequently danced. She was a bright, dashing girl, a good dancer, and we were good friends, but nothing more. She had afterwards married, and I had occasionally heard of her, but I do not think I had seen her for certainly more than 20 or 25 years. She looked much as I used to see her.

Some years afterwards the percipient found that the lady had died, about seven months after [the appearance of the] apparition, of cancer in the face. "She never showed me the front of her face," he says; "it was always concealed by the edge of the door" (29, pp. 56-57).

I would bring out again the fact that here is a case which, if you look at it closely, suggests that the narrator is not making clairvoyant contact with a contemporary event, but that somehow what the occultists call an "akashic record"—some sort of record belonging in a different time than the one we live in—became accessible to him in a peculiar way.

Perhaps some of the best documented cases of retrocognition we have, which I will merely mention to clinch the story, are those which Walter Franklin Prince, long associated with our Society, investigated and which are described in papers both by Prince (21) and by Pagenstecher (20) dealing with a Mexican woman's capacity, holding a psychometric object, to make contact with what appeared to be the memories of persons distant in time.

I am asking you, then, to consider the possibility that all of these cases I have described represent a momentary dislocation or a momentary separation from the ordinary time-space contacts. What is so fundamentally mysterious about this? If we once grant the fact of time, about which we know very little, why is it fundamentally more repugnant to our basic philosophical considerations to make contact with time in general than to make contact with our own personal time? What are the hooks, after all, by which we attach our own past to our own present? We gain a little something, I think, if we use a phrase which has been appearing in the psychiatric literature, "the relation of time and brain." We know that certain parts of the brain are more closely related to the experience of time than others are. We know that both spatial and temporal localizations are dependent to a considerable degree upon the way in which the brain is organized. If we have faulty brain organization, a temporal lobe dysfunction, then there will be various types of disorders or, as they are called, disorientations of time, place, and person. But with most of us, disorientations of time are merely of the sort we refer to as the feeling of "having been there before," or what the French have called *déjà vu*. These experiences are very

common: in questioning college classes, I have found that sixty or seventy per cent of the students claim to have had *déjà vu*.

II

Regarding precognition I have said somewhat more in recent years (13, 14). My own feeling is that W. F. Prince's case (22) of Mrs. Hand and her suicide is a particularly effective example of spontaneous precognition, and I will recapitulate it very briefly:

A disturbed woman had written a rambling document to the effect that her head would still continue to live after it had been severed from her body. She wandered down to a nearby railroad track and arranged herself for decapitation by the next train. Twenty-four hours before the suicide, Prince had a vivid dream concerning a *hand*; he felt a woman's hand grip his, the closing of jaws and teeth upon his own hands, and was filled with the horror of the thought of a severed head still living. The woman's name being Mrs. Hand, the thing was overdetermined, as the analysts would say.

I would also draw your attention to Louisa E. Rhine's series of cases published in the *Journal of Parapsychology* and in her book, *Hidden Channels of the Mind* (23), in which we are very keenly reminded that it is in the dream state that precognitive phenomena are particularly likely to appear; whereas what Ernest Taves, who worked with us, used to call "simulcog"—simultaneous cognition, or seeing the event at the moment it is happening—is more characteristic of the waking state. It will be interesting to see, now that we have solved relatively successfully some of the gravest problems of dream analysis and are working actively on the question of time displacements, whether in point of fact L. E. Rhine's generalization, which seems to be well supported from other studies, holds up from this point of view.

I thought I would also mention a recent book, which I am sure many of you have read, by Ruth Montgomery (12) about the precognitive experiences of Jeane Dixon. Here we have for the first time in my memory a large number of dramatic cases spelled out in quite considerable detail and with lots of names and dates. Although we don't have the type of authentication that we would like to have in psychical research, there are many cases which can be cross-checked and which do indicate, apparently, a rather extraordinary capacity on the part of Mrs. Dixon to "cut through time." A number of the experiences described are of course inferable from various facts known at the time, but to pick a very specific date like February 20, 1947, as the date of the separation of India and Pakistan long months before any specific evidence existed to make

possible the statement of the date surely warrants our regarding this book as something a little more than the usual flotsam and jetsam of journalistic excitement. I would say it is too bad, as it always is, that we don't have adequate authentication—we try to do better in our own professional publications. But this doesn't mean that we can afford to toss aside cases of more or less fully described phenomena of this type.

The case for precognition is considerably eked out by the existence of a fair amount of experimental work, although there is extraordinarily little, if any, experimental work on retrocognition. Lois Hutchinson's experiment (7) reported in the *Journal of Parapsychology* is a nice, clean-cut study of the possibility of determining in advance the order in which randomly prepared cards will appear at varying time intervals. A paper by Jarl Fahler and Karlis Osis (5) to be published in our own *Journal* reports on the "checking effect" in a precognition experiment; two hypnotized subjects scored significantly higher on trials where they felt they were correct than on the other trials. And of course there are the much-quoted Soal-Goldney studies (27) in which there are rather dramatic evidences of the subject's ability to "see" randomized targets one or two steps ahead of their presentation, depending upon his speed of calling.

III

This is the kind of material we have on record. I have tried to give you neither the very best, nor the utterly worthless, but a fair sampling of a variety of evidence. Some of it, from the spontaneous cases, suggests a rather rich psychology of the time perception process; and I would say that it begins to articulate rather well with what we know about time disorientation in the case of the physiology of the brain. I want to give, however, most of my emphasis tonight to the theoretical aspects of these issues, and I will try to spin out a theory stated clearly enough so that you can see what is wrong with it and ask me some challenging questions. My benefit always lies in having to struggle with your questions, seeing how far I can go in removing the inconsistencies which I am sure are always present in what I have to offer.

First, I am going to ask you to consider the possibility that retrocognition and precognition are cut off the same bolt—that they are two aspects of the same psychological function—and that furthermore disorientations in space (long-distance telepathy and clairvoyance) are cut off the same bolt as retrocognition and precognition. Or, stated more broadly, that disorientation in time and space is all one phenomenon: that there are not odd people who

have retrocognitive experiences but none of precognition; or odd people who have precognitive experiences but none of retrocognition; or clairvoyant people who have neither retrocognitive nor precognitive experiences. And I am going to ask you to consider the possibility that the same basic function is involved in all these phenomena; namely, if you once jog out of the path, if you once lose your way on the world-line that the physicists talk about—this time-space course that we cut through the world—if you once get lost, you can show up almost anywhere as determined by your deep needs and the needs of other people upon whom you are psychologically dependent.

I am also going to ask you to consider the possibility that the same kinds of people have these different gifts in a marked degree; ask you if it isn't true that in the study of mediumship and in the study of highly sensitive people and even in the study of laboratory subjects we find that the gift for one of these phenomena mostly goes with the gift for the others. I would say that on the whole it looks as if we were dealing with a basic kind of predisposition and if we examine it very closely we will find that there are various psychological clues which apply with equal force to all of these different kinds of displacements.

Some of you will remember my saying that there are three well-authenticated laws or principles which seem to be useful in explaining highly developed extrasensory powers (15, 16). I may use different words at different times, but tonight I would say *motivation, readiness, and dissociation*, especially stressing motivation. By motivation, I mean really caring whether you make contact or not, and the deeper the motivation, the greater the likelihood of making contact. We find in most of these cases quite a good deal of emotional freight being carried; some of these cases really bother us. I have had to refer to a case of a woman's decapitation; to Pagenstecher's cases, some of which included violent deaths; to Osty's case of the old man, which was very possibly a suicide case; and to the case of a woman with cancer. I did not do this because I was looking for trouble—this is the way the material comes to us. The affective freight is pretty intense. It looks as if motivation to communicate and to receive the communication were a pretty consistent part of the story, and this would also be true in the psychoanalytic approach. I believe it is typically when there is a good deal of human affect that contact is likely to be made; that it is this affective load that tries to jog us out of the "ordinary" world which is not quite adequate emotionally to our present conscious and unconscious needs and interests. I think that most of the cases we have described have a "bang," a big, intense emotional overtone to offer. Most of Jeane Dixon's precognitive experiences, for

example, are saturated with this component. And if you ask why the experimental material, although frequently significant in a statistical sense, is usually less overpowering than the spontaneous material, I would reply that a lack of intensity at the emotional level might well be one of the factors involved.

IV

Now, is there anything that can be done to meet our hunger for a philosophical comprehension of what it could mean to get out of the time-space sequence? I am asking you first to look at this phenomenon very simply and naturalistically. Is it more extraordinary for me to be able to see a person in the back row than one in the front row? If I am equal to the task of seeing to the back of the room, the question of the amount of distance is not relevant. Equip me with a telescope and I can see the planets and stars. Why is it more complicated to grasp the idea of several days or months than the idea of a few seconds or minutes in the time phenomenon?

I am asking you next to consider the fact that since you look *through space*, why do you recoil at the idea of looking *through time*? I have been arguing that these are two aspects of the same basic disorientation. You get out of your world-line—the jogging course which you ordinarily follow, the path which you must take from point to point and along which you are changing both in space and in time, moment by moment. Suppose that you jog out of this. Perhaps it is something like an out-of-the-body experience. In fact, some out-of-the-body experiences look as if they were cases of jogging out of time and space and back again. But let us merely ask ourselves very simply whether it is not possible that as you become a sort of Mrs. Butlerbaugh, whose experience has been referred to above, you momentarily get away from that point on the path at which you would ordinarily expect to find yourself. You are, in other words, in another time-space complex—not just your eyes, but your whole self. Now, disorientations with respect to time, place, and person are well known in neurology and psychiatry and are frequently associated with temporal lobe dysfunction. But it isn't time, it isn't place, it isn't time and place; it is *time, place, and person*. In other words, it is a highly ego-organized, a highly personalized experience. As ancient Indian psychology has constantly reminded us, the phenomenon of self-realization is not a phenomenon of displaced time or displaced space, but a rediscovery of the self *outside* of time and space. If you can grant yourself the legitimate possibility of thinking of yourself as momentarily out of time and space, you have the likelihood that the same basic psychological syndrome that can lead you to an extrasensory experience—

to a clairvoyant perception of an accident in Times Square or to a precognitive impression as to what the headlines will be in tomorrow's *Times*—can also lead to the possibility that perhaps both time and space together are as easy to transcend as either one separately. Perhaps actually what happens is that we jog out of the time-space world, and that to get out of one is to get out of the other automatically because it is the one time-space world that we are ordinarily in; and to jog off the world-line is to jog into another world-line in which the only thing that is constant is some deep individuality of our own.

Now, at this point the thing begins to creep, begins to become eerie. The paranormal has for many of us various qualities which are basically repugnant. When Mrs. Butlerbaugh had the experience of seeing the tall woman who apparently belonged to an earlier era and the campus of Nebraska Wesleyan University as it had been thirty years or more before, she was frightened. Now why was she frightened? What could hurt her? The tall woman wasn't going to hurt her, the fields out there weren't going to hurt her. She went back to her office and tried to pound the typewriter, but she couldn't do it because she was too upset. She even hesitated to tell her boss about the experience. Could she have been lonely? Nothing more lonely than space travel except travel in time and space together, as in the kind of cases I am discussing. And I am saying, if this is human, why wouldn't it frighten us? All the safety we have—the loved ones, the familiar world, the obligations, our body and its surroundings, our lifelong values and interests—is bound up with our place in time and space. So if we were to jog out of it, wouldn't it scare us to death? Once in a while we throw in some symbolism. I don't know whether the cold breeze that is said to accompany some apparitions is just a bit of "stage business"—whether it's thrown in or whether it's one of the props which some complex machinery is arranging. But I'm reasonably sure that whether or not it is causally a part of the experience, it symbolizes very well what is involved.

Now, why has retrocognition been even more disturbing than precognition? When you read the ill-fated reports of some of these retrocognitive experiences, they are frightening because they not only lift us out of our own immediate world, but also beyond any possibility of ever being able to communicate. When the two English women, Miss Moberly and Miss Jourdain, had their curious retrocognitive experiences in the gardens of Versailles and published a book about them (11), what you would expect to have happened did happen: they were disbelieved and as the years went by they were more and more rejected (8, 25, 28). This rejection has also been evident, in general, in the history of mediumship and in the

history of clairvoyance and all other types of paranormal phenomena and it takes a good deal of courage to insist on the legitimacy of recounting a retrocognitive experience in the first person singular. (I do not mean to prejudge the question what the verdict of history may be regarding the Versailles case.)

This is one rather practical reason for the fear. But there is another reason why we are scared and why so many of us reject the possibility of the paranormal. We think we are caught in the toils of a universe so planned that it moves in its stately and foreordained course without jogging in and out in an unpredictable way. This raises the issue which scientists and philosophers have called the issue of determinism versus freedom of the individual will. The ordinary conception has been that in order to give us any breathing space, the universe has to be thrown together in loose pieces—what William James called a pluralistic universe (9). If the universe should be so constructed that it is all one great big architectural whole involving time, a world-line, and laws of spatial organization, then we will feel that we are caught in the terrible, vise-like grip of an unchangeable order. This is symbolized by the three gray ladies, the *Parcae* that the Greeks talked about, who go on spinning their thread all the time and chopping it off. We get the chopped-off part of that particular destiny and have no control over what these gray ladies establish for us.

I think, then, that we are afraid of retrocognition and precognition because we are afraid of what we conceive to be this limitation of our personal freedom. Whether this is a philosophically sound conception of where freedom really lies is another problem. William James struggled with it over and over again; he couldn't let it alone. He was celebrated, as you know, for two ideas. One was the notion of the "block universe"; the idea of a magnificent architectural whole in which everything is related to everything else. And then, in violent protest against this, he was a believer in what he called "arbitrary spontaneity"—the idea of a universe of loose, poorly put together pieces. Now, most of us don't like either of these ideas and we would rather not mess with them. Maybe the philosophy is badly stated anyway and maybe there isn't basically either a block universe or a poorly flung together series of events. If you struggle with what Heisenberg tried to say about the uncertainty principle and what has been said by various other philosophers of science in trying to refute it, I'm sure you will realize that this problem is enormously more complicated than many of the other problems that physicists have been trying to work with. When Professor Margenau (10) talked with us at the A.S.P.R. Forum on ESP, he made clear the enormous depth and intricacy of the issues about the nature of determinism which are raised by

contemporary physics. But this doesn't help us in coming to terms with precognition and retrocognition because they bother us from every point of view. In fact, I think one reason why so little research has been done on precognition and retrocognition is because we are running scared. Perhaps we don't realize that no matter how we come out, we are going to find ourselves terribly lonely, and that we can share this loneliness only occasionally with other people, like people who have had out-of-the-body experiences. It should be noted that when these people come back, they don't form societies and clubs of people who have had out-of-the-body experiences. They try to communicate with those who have *not* been out of their bodies. They want to be taken back into the human race, not to be blackballed as queer.

Now I think we can probably say that the main attempts to escape from this loneliness today are in terms of multiple theories of time. In the *Proceedings* of our sister society, the S.P.R. in London, there is a paper by H. A. C. Dobbs (2) which espouses one of the various two-dimensional conceptions of time. And there are a great many others—you can get them at any supermarket, with any number of dimensions you want. You can get J. W. Dunne, for example, who wrote *An Experiment with Time* (4), and he doesn't give you just two dimensions of time—there are elevators within elevators. In my own attempt to spin a relatively simple two-dimensional theory of time, I will ask you to consider the difference between the time of the man you see on a mountain path below you and your own time as you look down from a higher peak; the difference in the kind of time he has as he trudges, as he grunts along with a pack on his back and an alpenstock in his hand, knowing only the path which he confronts, and the kind of time you have as you look off to the Wengern Alp and all the rest of the magnificent Alps. He has no way of knowing—he can't even see the little Alpendhubel and he's just poking along and will gradually get to where he's going in another kind of time. But from your viewpoint, high on the path above him, the whole range of the Alps can be seen in one glance as simultaneously present.

Now, I am asking you to consider the possibility that, without your being aware of it, you may jog occasionally from one time to the other. That is to say, you are mostly moving along, slogging it out along this particular little path, but every once in a while, just like a person in an out-of-the-body experience, you look down, not from Cloud Nine, but from a higher peak from which you see all the little people trudging; and their world-lines all involve time, space, and motion. There is no motion in the over-all view; it is what one of the philosophers called "seeing things with the vision of eternity"—*sub specie aeternitatis*—the way things are when time

becomes a map, a spatial map, and not the process of movement.

In Bergson's *Time and Free Will* (1) you will find a magnificent and sophisticated justification of the idea that time is only time number one, the act of trudging along the path. What the philosopher thinks he sees is just an abstraction, says Bergson. It is the act of *becoming* which is real. The reality is *le devenir réel*—the process of becoming is the reality. And I am asking you to consider the possibility that we have given the word "time" to two quite different things. To go from the sublime to the ridiculous, I hope that some day you will hear an amusing discussion of the philosophy of time recorded on a disk by Severn Darden in which he asks us to imagine that we take "all the time there is" and pull it together and squeeze it down until it is just a tiny little compressed eternity: all the time there is—at *that time*. Now, this is a perfect symbolization of the two-aspect theory of time: "All the time there is"—that is what you see as you stand on the mountain top. But at that moment, the poor hiker below, who knows only the sweat on his brow and the soreness of his feet, is in another kind of time, the "moving" time. And so I am asking you to consider the possibility that Bergson is perfectly right, and that the block universe is perfectly right too; and that the problem is how to weave so vast a tapestry, with the warp and woof both fully considered, that we have room for *both kinds of time*—moving time and block time.

V

Now, I think all this indicates why it is very important to have sophisticated conceptions of time and space when one is planning research; why it is important to try to find out from the records whether the spontaneous case, the mediumistic case, or the experimental case was really "out of time" in one or the other sense. It seems quite clear that in Soal's experiments (27) with Shackleton we are dealing with a block universe sort of time, while in the Pagenstecher cases (20, 21) there was a retrocognitive contact with a time which is really lost and cannot be recovered. And it is quite likely that in phenomena like suspended animation, or the fire walk, or some of the other phenomena that suggest a physiological reorientation in the person struggling against the forces of nature, there is a time involved which is more like life time than the block time which I have described earlier. It is quite possible, for example, that if we studied the phenomena of the fire walk, as when a man in South India walks through a red-hot trench without his feet apparently being burnt, we would find that there are changes in physiological time. And we have often been reminded that

unorthodox healings are essentially like ordinary healings except that they take place with extreme rapidity. It may well be that unorthodox healings occur within a framework of biological time rather than physical time.

These issues have got to be faced, I think, if we are going to set up tough, realistic, modern experiments in which questions of time dimension and space dimension are considered simultaneously, as in Dr. Osis' experiments (18). One of the most remarkable things about his experiments is the conception of building both time and space factors into the experimental design. It isn't just a question of asking whether increasing the time interval produces increasing difficulty in precognition, or whether spatial separation makes a difference in the transmission of telepathic or clairvoyant impressions. It looks very much as if the two factors were interdependent; as if there were *interactions* between the temporal and spatial factors which must be taken into consideration. And this means, I think, in support of what I have tried to argue, that the time-space manifold as a whole is involved and that we get, not out of time or out of space, but out of the time-space manifold. This is at least conceivable and it suggests that the design in which we can study temporal and spatial factors together has the richest likelihood of throwing light on the basic theoretical issues.

I think also that there are three other broad research issues that follow from any honest attempt, however muddled, to deal with these time and space problems:

1. There is the issue of studying more closely the physical and physiological conditions that are involved in temporal displacements. Oxygen deprivation, certain endocrine factors, etc., appear to be predisposing factors. I have already mentioned briefly the work on the brain, on temporal lobe disorders. I would like to see whether the definition I have given with regard to temporal lobe dysfunction, of disorientation of time, place, and person, really holds up. And I would say that cases of reliving one's entire life in the moment of drowning or asphyxiation, of which there are now a good many, and cases of apparent telepathic sensitivity between identical twins, some of which are now beginning to be studied experimentally (3), are instances suggesting that time, place, and person disorientation is one basic unity and that it has its physiological as well as its psychological aspects.

2. Psychological factors such as confidence, readiness, motivation, and dissociation—the ability to separate oneself from all other realities and bear down upon the one that is important at the time—are also involved in temporal displacements and need further study. There is a factor, which Dr. G. R. Schmeidler has put her finger on, having to do with the *attitude* toward time, in which different ways

of regarding time are apparently related to the capacity for precognitive function (26). I would like to see these studies pursued by many different investigators and extended to relate to retrocognitive as well as to precognitive functions. And cases of depersonalization occurring spontaneously, or cases of altered ego states that come to us during the course of everyday personality investigations, may give us something dramatic, just as the out-of-the-body experiences which appear under such altered ego conditions are likely to be important.

3. The world of drugs, hypnosis, and dreams—in my judgment, much of the best work being done today is the work on dreams (30, 31)—throws considerable light on the question whether we do in fact get out of space and time more or less under the same conditions. I have quoted Dr. Louisa Rhine (23) and I could quote several other investigators as saying that precognitive experiences are particularly common in dreams. And perhaps this is also true of retrocognition and of extrasensory excursions to great distances. Except for Dr. Osis' experiments (18), however, we simply haven't organized the data to see whether time and space factors are involved in the same basic predispositions, as I have argued they should be.

In conclusion, and I want to bear down hard on this, I think that the integrations needed in parapsychology today have got to be integrations drawing from *all* the sciences. The attempt that I see in many cases to separate sharply between physiological explanations and psychological explanations, as if man were so structured that you can draw a clean, knife-blade line between his physiological and his psychological organization, doesn't work in psychical research. I think we have reached the point where every kind of knowledge—knowledge from physics, from physiology, from psychology, and that includes history and biography and the study of works of art—every kind of integration has got to be achieved because we are up against problems which are much too big for us; and unless we use all the resources available to us, we are not going to solve these problems.

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APPENDIX

A Sampling of Questions from the Floor, with Replies by Dr. Murphy

Q. Is the trance state referred to in reports of ESP experiences such as the Titus case an hypnotic trance or a different state? If it is different, how can it be identified?

A. I think there are a great many different kinds of trance states and a great many different kinds of hypnotic states, and rather frequently some of the hypnotic states are indistinguishable from some of the trance states. It has been said that there are as many different kinds of hypnotic trance as there are waking states, and I think this is probably true.

Q. In psi tests is the subject more likely to have obtained success on a given trial if he is confident of having been correct on that trial?

A. Yes, I think that on the whole this is true, as suggested by some experimental work on the "checking effect," notably by Humphrey and Nicol.¹ These studies have not as yet been adequately replicated, but I think there is something there.

Q. Since Einstein has integrated time and space, known as the time-space continuum, is it possible that time is curved the same as space? If this is so, then time would also curve back upon itself.

A. When you make up abstractions like these, you can play the game in a wide variety of ways. I think it is perfectly possible to conceive of time as curving back upon itself, but neither of the two kinds of time that I have discussed this evening would correspond exactly to what you have in mind. The time-space pattern as a whole would be subject, as I have argued, to the "rubber sheet" effect which I have described elsewhere.²

Q. How is it that the disoriented space-time experience does not confront the subject with a vast conglomeration of percepts? He seems to be able to select meaningfully.

A. Yes. To take the case of Mrs. Buterbaugh, she went back to one particular time and space point and remained remarkably constant to it. If we went back into all spaces and times, we would have nothing but chaos. I think that the sharpness of definition as you move from one point to another in space-time must be maintained, or there would be nothing to report.

Q. In the total time line, do you feel that a physical wave length of some type exists, a wave length that can be cut in two, at random moments of physical and mental stress?

A. I think we are far too remote from known facts to justify this wide use of the term "waves." There may be forms of reality which are far beyond physical waves as we can conceive of them today.

Q. What is the difference between motivation and readiness? When a person is motivated isn't he in a state of readiness?

A. Not necessarily. There may be readiness, for example, to receive a punishment, but no motivation to receive it; and, on the other hand, there may be high motivation, let us say in a state of

¹ B. M. Humphrey and J. F. Nicol, "The Feeling of Success in ESP," *Journal A.S.P.R.*, Vol. 49, January, 1955, 3-37. (See also an article published after the date of Dr. Murphy's lecture: "Checking for Awareness of Hits in a Precognition Experiment with Hypnotized Subjects," by J. Fahler and K. Osis, *Journal A.S.P.R.*, Vol. 60, October, 1966, 340-346.—Ed.)
² "Lawfulness Versus Caprice: Is There a 'Law of Psychic Phenomena?'" *Journal A.S.P.R.*, Vol. 58, October, 1964, 238-249.

excitement, but such disorientation that there is no readiness. I think the terms overlap, but that they are very far from being identical.

Q. What of precognitive experiences without emotional affect and which, although clear-cut and detailed, are trivial in meaning to the persons experiencing them?

A. I admit that there are a number of cases like this. I would say that when there is an enormous amount of readiness, there could be a minimum of motivation.

Q. If precognition is substantiated, what would be the implications for the Judeo-Christian ethical system based on the concept of free will?

A. Well, I will try to deal with this as well as I can in the short time available by saying that I think it is an unreal issue. It seems to me that there is still a great deal of spontaneous action in real life, but whether it can ultimately be reduced to a single time system or whether it involves more than one is a philosophical issue that I think is a long way ahead of us. I don't personally feel that I am limited at all by the fact that my body is constructed in a certain way. It limits the way my heart is going to beat, but I don't feel that spontaneity as I empirically observe it is altered by the abstractions which are yielded in the scientific description of the universe.

Q. What are your feelings on the question of completely unconscious precognitive experiences?

A. I wouldn't know the role of unconscious and preconscious factors, but I belong more or less to the school of thought which says that we live in terms of all that we are and that we are only conscious of a small part of what we are. But if you mean by your question that precognition springs from more than just the conscious level of our lives, then I firmly do believe that.

Q. What about the question of the hereditary factor in ESP?

A. I would say that the evidence for a hereditary factor in all paranormal gifts is quite strong; and my bias would be to say that it applies to precognition, retrocognition, clairvoyance, telepathy—as far as I know, right across the board, equally.

Q. Would you comment on the fact that Goethe and certain other poets and philosophers have described healthy, joyous experiences of a psychic nature which left them unafraid?

A. Well, that's true. I don't mean to belittle that, it's true.

Goethe's own very extraordinary precognitive experience³ of meeting himself as he was to be eight years later—as far as I know, there was no note of fear about that. But I would say that for most of us, getting lost, getting out of our usual world, is the thing that frightens us. Goethe had an extraordinary capacity for describing the world as it really was inside himself, and I don't think he had anything to lose in the kind of experience that he described. I think this is consistent with the idea that most of us may have to be afraid of the paranormal because we are living in such dependency on others.

Q. *Do you feel that in the so-called cosmic or "oceanic" experience the subject may be moving up to the mountain-top as far as the new concepts of time are concerned?*

A. Yes, I think I would have to agree with this. And I would say the same for some of the psychedelic drug experiences. William James raised this question toward the end of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Why do you move toward unity and not toward disintegration under the influence of some of these deeply moving, frightening, disturbing impressions? Why don't they break you up instead of integrating you? Why is it that taking LSD-25 in a good stiff dose produces a relatively large number of integrated or, to use Bucke's phrase, cosmic consciousness experiences, and a relatively small number of fragmented, dissociated, meaningless experiences? It may be that jolting a person out of the everyday life he lives is more likely to push him into a bigger perspective than into a smaller perspective. What the ultimate meaning of this is, cosmically or mystically, I don't know; but I think it must be admitted that the implication of this question is probably correct.

Q. *What is your feeling about the use of LSD for research purposes?*

A. I think that under very strict medical supervision—watching the person for a whole month before he takes the drug, and then following through for a year or more, as the Menlo Park investigators do—the value compares with many other heroic measures, and it is a heroic measure. I know a few people who have taken LSD; I have not myself taken it. I would say that in all these heroic cases, the gain is likely to be great enough to warrant the risk if the risks are very carefully assessed and proper supervision is maintained.

Q. *How much research has been done lately in evaluating the effect of giving the subject immediate knowledge of results in an ESP test?*

³ W. F. Prince, *Noted Witnesses for Psychic Occurrences*. Boston: Boston Society for Psychic Research, 1928, p. 136.

A. I would draw attention to Dr. Charles T. Tart's very interesting article on this problem which has recently appeared in our *Journal*. In most ESP tests we give the subject very little knowledge as to how well he is doing; in engineering language, we don't give him good feedback. A thermostat won't work if it can't move up or down depending upon the warmth or cold in the room. I think a fundamental step forward in the types of investigation I have described this evening is enabling the subject to catch swiftly how well he has done. There are, however, enormous technical difficulties in applying this to precognition experiments. If you give him feedback, he's no longer using the same material for precognitive purposes. You have got to use new material. This can be done, but it makes the experiment much more complex.

Q. *Are you saying that so-called "ghost cases" are essentially cases of retrocognition?*

A. Yes, I think that many of them are.

Q. *You say that willingness is an important factor in the paranormal, but it seems to me that in not one of the experiences you quoted did the events happen to a willing subject.*

A. Well, in William James' case, the case of the trance medium, Mrs. Titus, in Enfield, New Hampshire, this woman apparently had a long history of serving as a clairvoyant and found a great deal of self-realization in it. In the sensitive that Osty worked with there was also a high degree of professional self-fulfillment. You must distinguish between the experimental cases and the purely spontaneous ones. In the experimental cases, both the experimenter and the subject who works with him are likely to have a considerable motivation toward success and fulfillment. So I don't really think that this violates the principle of motivation. Of course, you have to have an open channel as well as high positive motivation—one won't work without the other.