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Editorial Comment

This report by Dr. Gardner Murphy and Ernest Taves is published by this Society by authority of the Board of Trustees and the Research and Publications Committee.

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This issue of the *Proceedings* of the American Society for Psychical Research contains our first formal report of the research in the field of Extra-Sensory Perception carried on by Dr. Gardner Murphy and Ernest Taves. All phases of the inquiry are not covered in this report. Additional results will be recorded in a subsequent issue of the *Proceedings*.

The field in which this inquiry is being carried on is still largely virgin territory awaiting scientific exploration. Some small fringes of the area have been surveyed and charted by the many scores of investigators who have entered the field in recent years. Many items of knowledge of intrinsic value have been recorded plus many other items whose place in the larger pattern of knowledge still remains to be determined.

There is no more difficult field in which to carry on scientific research than that which embraces the inquiries into Extra-Sensory Perception and other extra-normal phenomena. The term "extra" is applied because scientists have thus far failed to include these manifestations in the generalizations of law and principles which cover the more easily studied phenomena of the physical and biological sciences. Electromagnetic radiation in the range that has given us our radios might well have been called "ghost" waves if their existence had been known before the days of Faraday, Maxwell and Hertz.

In the experiments of Hertz an electric spark was created. It lived its brief existence of a tiny fraction of a second and then gave up the ghost. Before the time of Maxwell's researches scientists would have appeared to be

fully justified in saying that there was no "ghost", and when the spark snapped out of existence, that ended everything for the spark. But Hertz designed a receiver which resurrected the ghost out of empty space and caused the spark to once again live its brief existence, but in a new environment.

There is an interesting analogy between the phenomena of electromagnetic waves and Extra-Sensory Perception. When a spark is created, invisible waves are radiated into the ether or into space. When a receiver properly attuned to these waves is available, it can extract the energy of the waves and transform it into an electric current which will reproduce the spark. When an individual indulges in mental activity, something intangible may be given off which progresses through time and space. We do not know what the nature of this "something" is, but there is adequate evidence available that it can stimulate another individual at a distance beyond the range of the normal sensory powers so that the second individual reproduces in whole or in part the thoughts generated by the first individual. This phenomenon is known as telepathy. When an inanimate object is used as the "sender", the phenomenon is called clairvoyance.

The report by Dr. Murphy and Taves contains a small but valuable part of the evidence that a transmission of some kind takes place between individuals at a distance and apparently between objects and individuals. Even if everyone were satisfied with the existing evidence that an extra-normal transmission of something takes place, the task of the investigator would still be far from completed. We are almost completely without demonstrable scientific knowledge of the nature of the something that is transmitted. We do not know whether it has the form of waves, that are transmitted like electromagnetic waves, or whether it has a form completely different from anything we now know about. We must learn what part of the living body is responsible for the generation of the something that goes

out into space and we must learn what part of us acts as a receiver and makes the telepathic material available to our consciousness.

This approach to the problem may make it appear that only a purely physical interpretation of the phenomena is being considered and that all other interpretations are ruled out, or in other words that participation in the phenomena by extra-physical entities, or "spirits" is not being considered. Such is not the case. No agency of transmission is ruled out. Science works from the known to the unknown. We know a great deal about physical phenomena. When we have attained a sufficient mastery over the purely physical phenomena involved in Extra-Sensory Perception, we have provided ourselves with an important route for penetrating into the realms that lie beyond.

The work reported in this number of the *Proceedings* is entirely consistent with the findings of other investigators which indicate that telepathic and clairvoyant transmission of intelligence is a natural phenomenon, the reality of which has been amply demonstrated, but that the ability is not uniformly distributed. A large number of persons can demonstrate telepathic ability to a limited extent under some highly specialized circumstances, and a smaller number can demonstrate it under a wider range of conditions. A rare individual can be found in every sufficiently large group who will give an astounding demonstration of sensitivity to telepathic transmission. This distribution corresponds to the distribution of normal and abnormal characteristics, mental and physical, in most randomly selected groups.

The work of Murphy and Taves indicates that ordinary subjects working in an ordinary mental state with statistically measurable material can manifest in experiments, similar in structure but differing slightly in content, large deviations from chance that are statistically significant while in others they do not average significantly above chance expectations.

In one experiment in which the results are statistically significant, the deviating experimental factor was the use of the color red, or the red-white combination.

The scores on the simple choice of red or white cards are significantly low, not merely low enough to arouse interest, but so extremely low that such a result would be expected to appear by chance only once in the course of 4,000 such experiments. This was due to uniformly low scores by all subjects tested and not to a large deviation by any one individual—a social factor associated with possible antagonism to the color red may be involved but as yet no adequate hypothesis is available.

In one card reading experiments the group made higher than chance scores that are statistically significant and could be expected by chance but once in 670 such experiments. This high average was due largely to a few individuals who made very high scores. One individual who made one-tenth of the calls in the test scored one-third of the total deviation above chance, thus reducing the total score of the remaining 42 subjects to below the level of "significance" although indicating that the group did manifest some small ability to score above chance.

WILLIAM H. BUTTON, *President*

JOHN J. O'NEILL, for the Research
and Publications Committee.