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Body, mind, and death

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BODY, MIND, AND DEATH

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THE TULLY CLEON KNOLES LECTURES IN PHILOSOPHY

To write philosophy which can be grasped by philosophical "laymen" is not an easy task. This task, which is a requirement of the annual University of the Pacific Knoles Lectures in Philosophy, was successfully undertaken by Frederick C. Dommeyer, whose monograph incorporating the sixteenth annual lectures in the series follows.

Those who have known Tully C. Knoles find the requirement of the lectureship to be highly appropriate, for the former President and Chancellor of Pacific possessed an exceptional ability to illuminate difficult truth for the academic community which for three decades was blessed by his leadership.

I

INTRODUCTION

AT THE outset, it is useful to say what this monograph is designed to do. It is limited to a scholarly consideration of the problem of discarnate survival after bodily death. "Discarnate survival" means that a human being's "soul," "spirit," or "mind," or some part of it, will continue to exist either quite apart from its former body or any other physical body. As used here, the words "soul," "spirit" and "mind" are synonymous, though the latter term is preferred because it has less association with the supernaturalistic and religious. The human mind does exist; that is an empirical fact. The question is: can the human mind or some elements of it exist without a physical body? This question is pertinent because it is an obvious fact that the human body does not last very long after burial despite embalment. If the mind is to survive death, it must therefore do so without its former body. To "live on" without its former body entails either one or another of two things: (1) the surviving mind must continue to exist solely as mind, or (2) the surviving mind must enter another body. (Paul's view of a "spiritual body," transmigration or reincarnation.)

Discarnate survival is a western notion, having a source in Greece. But the idea that the mind exists discarnate, *between incarnations*, is also common in India. It is also a notion that has got into Christian thought, though it is not the only idea of survival found in Christianity. In any case, it is the idea of "discarnate survival" that will be examined in this monograph.

Is there any accepted method to be used in dealing with the survival issue? In established areas of research in science, there are well defined methods and techniques in use. This is not so with respect to the survival issue. It is possible therefore that some readers will expect proof of survival in the form of some ingenious *a priori* argument. In the history of theology, there have been neat arguments that purported to prove God's existence, e.g., St. Anselm's ontological argument. Are there any *a priori* arguments that will prove the existence of discarnate survival? Some theorists have thought so. A later survey of their arguments will show, however, that this road is a futile one.

There have been other methods of proof used by survival theorists, e.g., the method of direct experimentation with mediums. It is a fair question to ask what method is utilized in this monograph. The answer is grounded on one or two simple considerations. First, it is clear that no one has yet solved the survival problem in a conclusive way. This means that none of the methods employed up to this time has met with recognized success. The logic of this situation seems to require that a new and successful method of proof or disproof must be created, or one must satisfy himself with a careful survey of the methods already used, assess these and their results, look for insights that others may have missed and, finally, decide whether it is or is not probably so that discarnate minds are surviving. It would be presumptuous for the present writer to suppose that he could do the former thing; if not presumptuous, then highly improbable. The better method is therefore the latter one. Also, this latter method is not without some real advantage: it will enable us to see blind alleys as well as fruitful avenues which merit further exploration.

There are different conceptions of discarnate survival.

Such conceptions vary first in regard to the temporal factor. Survival may be conceived as "immortality," i.e., as eternal life. So conceived, it is impossible to establish its existence by empirical means. On the other hand, discarnate survival may be conceived to have a finite duration in any given instance of it. Evidences for this kind of survival are conceivable in empirical terms.

To some readers, *finite* discarnate survival might be thought quite worthless. Some reflection shows otherwise. We value our present lives, even though we know them to be of finite duration; and some of us make this valuation without any expectation of a future life. A mind is a complex of capacities, e.g., capacity to think, to will, to desire, to know, to remember, to imagine, etc. The capacities it has constitute its "nature," whereas the exercise of them is its "history." If all or some of this complex of capacities which makes up the mind were to survive bodily death, and if all or some of the surviving capacities were exercised to some degree, a finite survival might have some considerable value. This claim can be substantiated by considering some of the variations discarnate survival of a mind might take. Though not all of the imaginable forms are attractive, there are several that we might be very happy to have in a life after this one.

Professor C. J. Ducasse has described some forms of discarnate survival which are worth considering.¹ We offer no proof for the existence of any of these forms at this part of our exposition; we are interested merely in sketching out possibilities.

It is possible, he says, that the mind might survive only through its capacities or dispositions, with only sporadic

¹ *A Critical Examination of the Belief in a Life After Death* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1961).

exercise of them, say, "when direct or indirect contact happened to occur between that otherwise wholly dormant personality and the organism of a medium."² Survival in this form for a discarnate mind would lead to a rather quiet existence in that it would involve a dormant state for the surviving mind except when mediumistic contact permitted the exercise of a capacity or capacities.

Another form of discarnate survival conceived by Ducasse is exercise of mental capacities but without critical control. Here, we would have discarnate mental life in the form of reverie.

Or, a discarnate mind might do nothing more than recall its *ante mortem* life, Ducasse suggests, and distill what wisdom it could from its memories. Such a life would resemble that of a very old man who, lacking other interests, would spend his time recalling the old days. From his recollection of past failures and triumphs, his reflections could now distill a wisdom which, for lack of the data of a whole life time, he could not achieve in his former life.

Or, a discarnate mind might be a creative mind, according to Ducasse. In such a case, its capacities would be exercised in doing mathematics, in composing music, in creating poetry or in other constructive tasks.

And lastly, quoting Ducasse directly: ". . . 'life' could mean also response—then telepathic or clairvoyant—to stimuli from a then non-physical environment; and voluntary, 'psychokinetic,' reaction upon the excarnate personalities, or the possibly impersonal constituents, of that non-physical environment."³ Ducasse believes that the *post mortem* life just depicted would be the fullest kind, a form of discarnate life to the reality of which, as he believes, the

² *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

cross-correspondence cases “appear to testify more strongly than do any of the other kinds of *prima facie* evidence of survival.”⁴

The main point of this *Introduction* is to make clear that there are different possibilities with respect to survival after bodily death. Yet, it is commonplace for those who have given little thought to the survival problem to suppose that the “hereafter” is infinite in duration and an improved continuation of their present lives. Or, some other equally naive conception is accepted by them. But none of these suppositions need be true. It is possible that the life hereafter, if there is one, is mostly the survival of dormant capacities, with only occasional activation of them, as Professor Ducasse has suggested. It is also possible that survival is finite in length of time.

II

OBJECTIONS TO DISCARNATE SURVIVAL STATED AND ANSWERED

THREE objections to the idea of discarnate survival are often made: (1) that a mind freed from its body and accustomed environment would not be the *same* mind or, in any case, would be so different as to make the notion of its survival essentially pointless; (2) that the mind is wholly dependent for its existence on its body and hence, with the death of the body, the mind must also cease to exist; and (3) that the idea of discarnate existence of a mind cannot be made meaningful.

The first objection is sometimes stated more fully in

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

the following way. A man's essential nature is intrinsically linked with his bodily capacities and physical environment. He perceives the world around him through a variety of sense organs; he sees, hears, tastes, etc., because of these organic structures. But even more is involved: his personality, and even his character to a degree, are functions of his bodily capacities. A man's physical work, his participation in sports, his sex life and much else depend upon the functioning of his body. With his body's death, all these must cease. Therefore, even if his mind survives in discarnate form, *what* survives will be so different from what it was when it was embodied that it will be in effect a different mind.

The first objection seems to be based upon a confusion over the meaning of the word "same." Is the mind of a child the *same* mind as that of the adult who is the child grown up? If it is meant here that the mind of the child has continued *unchanged* over the years it takes him to become an adult, then it is not the same, for obviously the adult is different in his mental capacities. In this sense of "sameness," however, a human being would not have the same body from day to day, or even from second to second. But this is not the way one speaks. It is commonly said that a man has the same body today that he had yesterday. This is said because, even though some changes in his body have occurred over the interval, other factors have persisted. The body of yesterday is thus *continuous* with the one of today. In the case of a mind, the situation is similar. From birth on, a person's mind no doubt changes; but it normally exemplifies the kind of continuity just noted and is therefore the same mind over a long span of years. Admittedly, the event of bodily death might bring about marked changes in the body's mind, but there is no *a priori* reason for

supposing that some of the mind's capacities could not persist after bodily death. Neither is there any *a priori* reason for supposing that such dispositions could not be exercised in ways similar to those that characterized the mind before its disembodiment, e.g., many of the recollections of the embodied mind could be repeated by the discarnate mind, etc.

The second objection is a more far-reaching one. Those who assert it maintain that mental phenomena (thinking, willing, desiring, remembering, imagining, etc.) are entirely dependent upon physiological processes. They add that, when death occurs, these processes are no longer operative, and that the mental activities dependent upon them therefore no longer occur. Corliss Lamont is a proponent of this view.⁵

This physicalistic view of the body-mind relationship is plausible, but is it sound? Lamont's view assumes the primacy of a body-mind causal relationship, and in that direction, i.e., that the mental phenomena are ultimately caused by physical processes. There is no doubt that this is his position, for he writes: "There is every reason to believe, not only that body was prior in the long evolution which resulted in the species man, but that it is also prior in the production and growth of every human individual. . . . At the moment of conception there is nothing present that can legitimately be described as . . . mind."⁶

Why is his materialistic position questionable? First, the causal relation between body and mind is two-directional, and neither direction seems necessarily to have metaphysical priority over the other. I *wish* to raise

⁵ Cf. *The Illusion of Immortality*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1959.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

my arm, and it does rise as a result of the wishing. Wishing is, of course, a mental event. True, if I were paralyzed, I could not raise my arm despite my wishing to do so. It is nonetheless a fact that wishing to raise my arm is one of a number of causal conditions of the intentional raising of it. There is thus no reason for viewing one causal direction as metaphysically prior to the other.

Lamont is aware of these facts—at least in part. He writes: “Such examples as these of the mind’s control over the body are often interpreted as conclusively proving that the mind is independent of the body. But they point with at least equal force to a connection between the two so exceedingly intimate that it becomes inconceivable how the one could function properly without the other.”⁷

There are some things worth noting about Lamont’s position. First, note his comment that the connection between body and mind is so intimate that “it becomes inconceivable how the one could function properly without the other.” The weasel word here is “properly.” The question is not whether they could function *properly* without one another, but whether they could function at all. In the quotation footnoted (⁶) above, Lamont said that body is prior to mind in both the evolution of man and in the individual’s development from conception. Was “body” functioning improperly on these occasions? Also, if body can function independently of mind, as Lamont says it can, why cannot mind function independently of body? Lamont is simply metaphysically dogmatic here; he offers no reasons to support his claim that body is metaphysically prior to mind, that body can function without mind and that mind cannot function without a body. He is simply exemplifying a prejudice when he writes: “If we take the posi-

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86

tion that the mind is a function of the brain, there is no mystery here.”⁸

A quite different position from Lamont’s physicalism can be taken; it is a position that subsumes all the facts noted; and it is consistent with the survival of a discarnate mind after bodily death. This quite different position involves the assumption that it is possible for a mind to exist before it possesses a body. Lamont would say of course that the scientific facts are not in harmony with the notion of the existence of a discarnate mind. I believe they are. Let us suppose then that a mind exists prior to its possession of a body. Let it be further assumed that somewhere in the history of this mind it obtains a body for itself. We can imagine that at this stage we have an ordinary human being, a unity of body and mind. In such a person, we would have bodily and mental occurrences interacting causally in either direction. Let it be admitted readily that, if this mind did not have a body, it could not desire to raise a physical arm and have one rise. Let it be admitted also that, if the body did not have a mind, injury to the body’s brain would have no effect on mental occurrences in the way it would in an ordinary person. But it does *not* follow that a cessation of these causal interactions between bodily and mental events, and *vice-versa*, would mean the end of the mind’s existence. On the contrary, we might suppose that its status after death of the body would be very much what it was before it became embodied. except that now it might have memories of its period of embodiment.

The third objection to discarnate survival is the most extreme of all three because those asserting it maintain that the idea itself is meaningless. If this were so, the hypo-

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

thesis of discarnate survival would be neither confirmable nor disconfirmable. Disputing this view, Professor H. H. Price of Oxford University has written an article in which he makes an effort to show that discarnate survival *is* a meaningful notion.⁹ Price contends that we could hardly be said to have any experiences at all unless we were aware of *some* world. Therefore, if anyone takes discarnate survival seriously, he must be prepared to offer some conception of what the "next world" *might be* like and some idea of the sort of experience a discarnate mind could be expected to have.

Professor Price suggests that we conceive this "next world" as a "dream world." When we are asleep, the usual sensory stimuli are absent, as they would have to be too for a discarnate mind. Yet, we can and do have a variety of experiences through dreaming. Sense perception does not occur in a dream but something very much like it in result does, for we "see," "hear," etc., in our dreams. True, the laws of physics do not always operate in this dream world, e.g., one can fall from a great height slowly enough so as to have a most comfortable landing. The laws of psychology would be more likely to apply in such a "next world." Despite such differences, however, we can still conceive an experienceable world made out of the stuff of dreams. In Price's language, this world would be an "imagy" one rather than an imagined one. And for the discarnate minds that live in this "imaged" world, it would have all the sense of being real that our present sensory world has.

Professor Price speculates that such an "imagy world" would be less concrete and specific than our present world

⁹ See *Survival and the Idea of 'Another World,'* Proc. of the S.P.R., Vol. 50, Jan., 1953.

of sense perception. With only our memories left, we would be inclined to create “generic” images. The next world would not therefore be an exact replica of the present one. Price writes: “To some extent it would be, so to speak, a generalized picture, rather than a detailed reproduction.”¹⁰ Nonetheless, says Price, there is not a single reason why we should not feel as vital and alive in such an “imagy world” as we now feel in our present world of sense perception. The fact is that there is no reason why the next world—as thus conceived—could not contain within it visual images resembling the bodies we possess in this world.

After describing such an “imagy world,” the question of *where* it would be is taken up by Price. He says that there is no difficulty here so long as we continue to think of this “next world” as a dreamlike one made up of mental images. Such images have their own space, i.e., there are spatial properties within the next world. E.g., the devil chasing me in this “imagy world” is *behind* me. But there is no reason why the spatial properties in this next world need be *in* physical space. As Price writes: “If you like, it would be its own ‘where’.”¹¹ Therefore, when we leave the physical space of this world and “go” to the next one, there is not any movement in physical space which need be conceived—nor for that matter, any movement in imaged space—for the “movement” from the first world to the second has to be interpreted simply as being in one space and then being in the other, and that alone.

Is such an imaged-world delusive or unreal? It would be delusive, Price holds, only if it were confused with another world, e.g., the physical. But such confusion need not occur if a study of the next world reveals its laws to be

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

psychological rather than physical. Also, to call such a world as Price is here imagining “unreal” would mean only that the imaged-world is different from the physical one.

Would such a “next world” be *subjective*? It need not be conceived as entirely private. It can be imagined that telepathy occurs in it. To the extent that it did occur, discarnate minds would have a shared world.

Such an imaged-world would be mind-dependent. Its dependency would be on the desires and memories of those experiencing it. Price pictures it as a wish-fulfillment world in the sense in which dreams are said to be fulfillments of wishes. The “next world” would be, to a degree at least, a function of the kind of person one was in this life. Just as one cannot voluntarily control the content of his dreams, so also one could not voluntarily control his imaging of the “next world.” Price suggests indeed that this world to come would not be a pleasant one for all discarnate minds—no more so than are the dreams of all sleepers.

The foregoing considerations have thus disposed of the more commonplace objections to the possibility of human survival after death. It has been shown that it is not absurd to speak of the *same* mind even though that mind is embodied at one time and discarnate at another. We have established that the materialist’s argument against discarnate survival after bodily death is not conclusive and merely reflects his metaphysical prejudices. It has also been established that discarnate survival is not an unthinkable idea; Price has shown it to be both thinkable and describable in very familiar terms.

III

PROOFS AND EVIDENCES FOR SURVIVAL AFTER BODILY DEATH

THE question may be raised as to what common-sense evidences, if any, one finds for survival after death. The data of science (and parapsychology) are excluded from the notion of "common-sense evidences."

Before turning to these evidences, if any, it will be useful to distinguish between causes of belief and reasons for belief. A cause of belief is some factor which when present is sufficient to account for the belief. A cause of belief *qua* cause does not "justify" the belief which is its effect. A reason for a belief may be a cause of belief, and when it is a cause it "justifies" the belief to some degree. But it must be kept in mind that a reason for belief does not always serve as a cause of it, for the person concerned may not be rational enough to appreciate the force of the reason. But a reason is the only kind of factor that ought to be a cause of belief if the belief is to be a rational one.

In *common-sense* experience, there are doubtless causes of belief in discarnate survival, and these causes are often not reasons. The causes listed below are not reasons.

(1) The loss of consciousness and its recovery, e.g., sleeping followed by waking, etc., are ordinary experiences which often cause primitive or uncritical minds to suppose that death is much like them. Such an interpretation suggests that the dead will "awake" too, just as one normally wakes up from a sleep.

(2) The religious traditions of a culture often serve

as non-rational causes of belief in discarnate survival. Though some theologians believe they have reasons for their beliefs, the devotees themselves seldom come in contact with rational grounds for religious belief; *their* beliefs, e.g., in God or personal survival, are more often caused by indoctrination.

(3) Fear of death, as Bertrand Russell has pointed out, is sometimes a cause of belief in survival among common-sense persons. Men—or some men, at least—cannot face up to the fact of death at the end of their bodily lives; they find death abhorrent and fear it. They are thus led to believe in survival. In a somewhat similar view, Henri Bergson says that man's intelligence tells him he must die, but his myth-making faculty tells him he will live forever. Obviously, fear of death or the mind's unwillingness to accept the fact of death is not an acceptable reason for believing in survival.

(4) There have been political and religious leaders who, as a means of social control, cause the masses to accept belief in survival. So far as the leaders are concerned, the truth or falsity of this belief is irrelevant; what is relevant is its usefulness in influencing the behavior of the masses. If belief in heavenly bliss in the next life is tied up with civil or other kinds of obedience, and damnation with disobedience, the masses can be led, through appropriate indoctrination, to obey rulers more readily. Karl Marx regarded religion in capitalist societies as operating very much in this fashion when he described it as "the opium of the people."

(5) Another common-sense cause of belief in survival is man's inability to conceive readily of his absolute extinction as a person. His difficulty here results from the fact that he has experienced only life and never death.

Even when he tries to imagine his own death, he is forced to take the posture of a spectator (living) who observes in imagination his dying, the events of his funeral, burial, etc. When he imagines the cessation of all experience for himself, it is still *he* who imagines it.

(6) One can experience in dreams the “seeing” of dead persons as active and living. One might imagine himself to have seen a ghost in a graveyard or may have been told stories of “the departed” returning to their old homes as “haunts.” Such things can serve for the uncritical mind as causes (non-rational) of belief in survival after bodily death.

There are doubtless other such causes for belief in survival. The question arises, however, as to whether there are any *reasons* in common-sense experience for such belief. With Professor C. D. Broad, the present writer must confess ignorance of any.¹²

Does natural science (exclusive of parapsychology) provide evidence for survival of the human mind after bodily death? It can be said with some confidence that no generally accepted corpus of scientific fact or theory includes in it any evidences or conclusions regarding survival.

A number of “arguments” have been offered which purport to prove survival of a discarnate mind. These arguments are neither common-sensical nor scientific; they are based on assumptions of a metaphysical, ethical or other sort that give them—for those accepting the assumptions—a *prima facie* plausibility. Such arguments will be called “philosophical.”

(a) The alleged *universality* of the belief in survival

¹² C. D. Broad, *The Mind and Its Place in Nature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949), p. 525.

has been offered as a ground for belief in it as a fact. "All people believe in survival after bodily death. Therefore, there is survival." Such an obvious *non sequitur* hardly deserves any attention. Not only is the argument invalid, but the premise of it is clearly false, since there are many who do not believe in survival.

(b) It has been held that the *instinctive desire* for survival is evidence for the fact of a life hereafter. An underlying assumption of this argument is that all instinctive desires are satisfied by the environment. There is a sexual instinct and the environment provides means for its satisfaction, and so with the suckling instinct, etc. But present day psychologists find no survival instinct in man. Even if they did, the conclusion of the argument would be doubtful in that it is based in part on a questionable assumption.

(c) Some have maintained that knowledge of survival after bodily death is revealed to man through *intuition*. Such a view does not provide "proof" in the form of an argument. Nevertheless, since it provides presumably a kind of direct "proof," this notion will be discussed here. On this view, the proposition that man survives bodily death is self-evidently true.

The only notable philosopher who has recently supported intuitionism is Henri Bergson. His doctrine was rooted in a metaphysics and epistemology of doubtful soundness. In any event, if the proposition "man survives bodily death" were self-evidently true, its denial should be a self-contradiction. Its denial does not appear to be that.

(d) The *argument from scripture* is another of the classical attempts to prove survival. The scriptures assure us, this argument affirms, that there is a life after death. Therefore, there is such a life since the scriptures are authoritative and true.

The difficulty here is to know which, of a great many and often incompatible scriptural writings, are true. The point can be raised also as to what reason there is for believing any of these documents to be authoritative.

(e) The *argument from evolution* is an attempt to adapt the theory of evolution to the survival scene. This argument takes the form of an assertion that the evolutionary processes in man necessarily require immortality. Persons who hold such a view “read into” organic evolution the idea of progress and a philosophy of world history. Le Conte, a geologist, held that there could be no end-product of Nature’s history other than immortality else “the beautiful cosmos would be precisely as if it had never been, an idle dream, an idiot-tale signifying nothing.”¹³

The obvious objection to this sort of reasoning is that it reads from Darwin’s theory of organic evolution an evolution of the Cosmos, not a part of Darwin’s theory. It also extends a conception applicable to physical organisms to a non-physical entity, the mind. As well, it reads a “progress” into evolution that was never intended in Darwin’s doctrine of “natural selection.”

(f) Another argument, not entirely unlike the one just considered, takes as premise that the universe has in it many signs of *purpose* or *design*. The marvelous adaptation of animals to their environments—not to mention the explicit purposes man finds in his own life—leads some to conclude that we are living in a teleological universe. With such a conception in mind, it is simple for some to infer that there must be survival after death.

Needless to say, both the premise and the conclusion are far from established. There are other more plausible

¹³ Joseph Le Conte, *Evolution and Its Relation to Religious Thought* (New York: D. Appleton, 1883), p. 329.

theories, e.g., the theory of evolution, that account for the facts of adaptation.

(g) There are two or three arguments for survival that have been termed “metaphysical.”

According to one of them, the soul is simple, i.e., it is not a complex of elements. In virtue of its simplicity, it is indestructible. (To destroy means to break to pieces. What is simple has no parts and hence cannot be broken to pieces.) Being indestructible, the mind (soul) must be everlasting. But what reason is there for supposing the mind to be simple? There is no reason. Rather, the mind is a complex of certain capacities, and it may add to its capacities or lose one or more of them. In amnesia, for example, the mind has lost its capacity to remember.

There are some philosophers (the Stoics and Nietzsche) who have held to the conception of a universe that has a cyclical character, i.e., repeats itself. If phase A of universal history is to be repeated and person P is alive during phase A, P will live again.

But the metaphysical assumption underlying this argument is completely speculative. There is no evidence for such a doctrine of cosmic repetition or “eternal recurrence.”

A third argument that might be termed “metaphysical” concerns the idea that the universe is *rational*. There are those who argue in one form or another (e.g., Royce) that the rationality of the universe implies survival. To discuss such theories in detail would be rather pointless, for they make an array of metaphysical assumptions of a highly questionable nature.

Suffice it to say here that it is very questionable whether the universe ought to be described as rational or irrational. These predicates would seem applicable to persons; and

to ascribe them to the universe, unless it is a person, seems a peculiar use of language. In the absence of evidence that the universe is a person, such an attribution is a form of anthropomorphism not justified by the facts.

It might be objected, however, that something other than persons can be rational or irrational, i.e., a system of propositions. Let us suppose then that the universe is a system of propositions and that it is this that we now say is rational. In this kind of situation, does it follow that it is true that man survives bodily death? If the denial of this proposition were a self-contradiction (which it is not, as was said earlier), the proposition itself would be analytically true. If the proposition, "man survives bodily death," is, however, interpreted as a synthetic proposition, then its truth would depend upon the empirical evidence for it. But "rational," as applied to a system of propositions, is not a matter of empirical evidence; it is rather a question of the consistency of propositions within a system. False propositions can be consistent with one another; the proposition under consideration could be consistent with others and yet false.

This argument based on the supposed rationality of the universe therefore gets nowhere.

(h) There are several arguments for survival that have been called "ethical." They emphasize diverse considerations, but they appear to have in common the idea that there must be survival after bodily death because justice, goodness, decency (or some other moral or ethical notion) requires it.

Immanuel Kant, the 18th Century German philosopher, gave a classical formulation of one version of the argument. Kant came to the conclusion, in the writing of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, that there were no evidences

for the survival of mind after death. On the other hand, it was Kant's belief that the moral life required the postulation of God, Freedom and Immortality.

The moral law—for Kant the Categorical Imperative—requires that man promote the highest good. But this presupposes, according to Kant, that the highest good can be realized, the highest good being the conjunction in the same person of happiness precisely proportioned to morality. Such an exact proportioning, however, does not occur in this life. The moral life, for its realization, therefore requires a life hereafter, an immortality, where an infinite progress towards harmony with the moral law is possible. Thus only is the highest good achievable.

There are assumptions in Kant's argument that can be easily avoided. Why should one assume that man's happiness is ultimately directly proportioned to his morality? Why should one assume that the universe is so organized that it will fulfill the human requirements of morality? To postulate such things as Kant does is wishful thinking and speculation.

Another variety of the ethical argument takes its departure from the presumed inherent value of human personality. The argument is: the human personality is valuable; it must survive, or the universe would be needlessly throwing away its most valuable elements.

Though there are philosophers, e.g., the Personal Idealists, who attribute inherent value to the self or person, there is nothing about the nature of *being valuable* that entails that a valuable thing should exist forever, or for any finite period of time. It would be inherently valuable if I experienced pleasure now, but it does not follow that I do. Being valuable does not entail existing.

An interesting variation of the ethical argument for

survival has to do with the Cyrenaic view of life. According to the argument, if there were no life hereafter, it would be all right to live a life of "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die." But, so the argument runs, this sort of life is not morally admissible. What is morally admissible is quite a different sort of morality, and that kind of morality makes sense only on the assumption that there is a life hereafter.

The assumption behind this argument is, of course, that if this life were the only one, human beings would naturally follow an ethics of short-run egoistic hedonism. But this assumption, despite St. Paul and A. E. Taylor, is probably untenable. There are many who do not believe in survival but who nonetheless live decent non-Cyrenaic lives. And conversely, there are those who believe in survival who seek the immediate pleasures of sense.

A final ethical argument to be considered holds that the world would be very evil without the fact of survival after death. The world is not that bad, so there must be survival, the argument concludes. The reply to this argument is, of course, that the world might be just that evil.

The main difficulty with the arguments of this chapter is that they require assumptions which some persons obtain from their religious or moral training or prejudices. Granted those assumptions, the arguments would sometimes provide conclusions of the sort noted. But the assumptions, as was made clear, are not ones for the soundness of which there is any evidence.

IV

OSTENSIBLE EVIDENCES FOR SURVIVAL FROM PARAPSYCHOLOGY

IT WAS noted earlier that neither common sense nor science (exclusive of parapsychology) provides evidences for survival. The weaknesses of the philosophical arguments have also been indicated. We turn now to parapsychology to see what it has to offer in the way of evidence for discarnate survival.

Many persons have out-of-the-body experiences. Such experiences are sometimes called “astral projections” and an “astral body” supposedly leaves the physical body when they occur. What is thought to leave the physical body is also referred to on occasion as an “etheric double.”

A professor friend of the writer has had a number of such experiences. He would go to bed and then shortly thereafter have the experience of watching himself from a location in the room diagonally across and up in the corner. Another person known to the writer “gets out of her body” regularly and leaves it by a distance of some one hundred feet; but, fearing her ability to return to her physical body, she will go no further away. On the other hand, many years ago I knew a woman whose etheric double travelled among the planets of the solar system. She was a veritable John Glenn—in a psychic sense.

What is interesting about such experiences is that they are sometimes associated with paranormal knowledge. There is, for example, a case on record where a young man obtained information about a room in which he had never physically been. He had however been “in” the room

in an out-of-the-body experience. He brought back from the experience a detailed knowledge of various minute features of the furniture there, etc. From such a case, one is led naturally to the conclusion that "something" (a mind) must have gone to the room if this man's physical body had not.

Such experiences and the theories about them lead very easily to a survival view. At death, the "etheric double" (mind) just does not return to its physical body any more.

There is however another explanation for these experiences which does not require that anything be conceived to have left the physical body. All we need suppose is that *some* persons can "perceive" their own bodies and other things and events while asleep and with eyes closed. Some readers will suppose this strange hypothesis cannot be true. Those who know what clairvoyance is will recognize the plausibility of this explanation. Clairvoyance is "seeing" without using one's physical eyes. There are innumerable cases of it recounted in the literature of psychical research.

"Materializations" sometimes provide *prima facie* evidence for survival. The present writer has seen only fraudulently produced materializations, though there are those who have photographed, seen and felt what purported to be ectoplasmic manifestations.

At one seance attended by the writer and a professor-friend, the ectoplasmic form of the friend's grandmother appeared at one end of the darkened seance room. This form sang songs with the professor, songs with which he had been familiar in his childhood. The professor was convinced he had been in contact with the "spirit" of his grandmother and that she had therefore survived death as a discarnate mind.

A commonly held theory about such materializations is that a discarnate mind cannot manifest itself to the living without some physical means. The ectoplasm is material substance and it provides the spirit with the body it needs to show itself and to speak. This ectoplasm is supposedly "drawn" from the medium's body mainly but from those of the sitters to a lesser degree. Sometimes only a "voice box" of ectoplasm is produced, but that is enough for communication from the spirit.

In the opinion of the writer, materializations are a very weak link in the chain of survival evidence. Suffice it to say that the seance attended by the professor-friend of the writer was proved fraudulent beyond a shadow of a doubt. Also, the ectoplasm of materializations remains a scientific enigma. One would imagine that, with all the medical work done on bodies over the centuries, some evidence of their ability to produce ectoplasm would have been forthcoming by now. But this substance has no place in scientific physiology.

Apparitions are frequently cited as evidence for survival. There are hundreds of records of apparitions preserved in the archives of the British Society for Psychical Research. The connection between apparitions and the survival issue becomes clear when it is recognized that some apparitions of the dead appear to living persons. It is not difficult to theorize that an apparition is a way by which a deceased person can make himself known to the living.

One might suppose that an easy explanation of apparitions is that they are merely "psychological." This might be viewed as plausible except for two or three additional facts: (1) inexplicable knowledge, e.g., precognitive knowledge is often associated with an apparition's pres-

ence; (2) the same apparition has been seen many times by one person, e.g., in the case of the "Lady" who appeared many times to Bernadette of Lourdes; (3) the same apparition is often seen collectively, i.e., by several persons. It has been pointed out by G. N. M. Tyrrell that in approximately one-third of the cases where an apparition *could* have been seen collectively (because of the presence of several persons), it *was* seen collectively.

If it could be shown that apparitions are causally connected with surviving discarnate minds, such phantasms would offer adequate evidence for the survival hypothesis. Since there are apparitions of the living, however, the presence of the apparition of a person cannot be construed as conclusive evidence of survival.

On the other hand, it is not always easy to establish that an apparition has nothing to do with a discarnate mind of a deceased person. The difficulty of this problem may be appreciated by asking: what evidence is there for believing that there exists a causal connection between the sensible appearances of an ordinary living person and such a person? The fact is that some apparitions have all the earmarks of being connected causally with real, living persons, and are not. A woman in India had a half-brother, an airman in France during World War I, whose name was Eldred W. Bowyer-Bower. She related how she saw what she took to be her half-brother in her home in India. "Thinking he . . . had been sent out to India, I was simply delighted to see him, and turned round quickly to put baby in a safe place on the bed, so that I could go on talking to my brother, then turned again and put my hand out to him, when I found he was not there. I thought he was only joking, so I called him and looked everywhere I could think

of looking.”¹⁴ She then relates how she became quite frightened and surmised that her experience was an indication of his death in France. This apparition occurred in India on March 11, 1917. Her half-brother in France had died in air combat that day. The paranormal knowledge is not what is of immediate interest. It is rather the inability of the woman to distinguish this apparition from the sensible appearance of her living brother *except* on the basis of “his” inexplicable disappearance.

It would seem correct to say that the failure of an apparition to be followed by experiences that would be expected, were the apparition the sensible appearance of a living person, is what leads us sometimes to call it an apparition. There are occasions also when the apparition is so out of harmony with expectations existing before its occurrence that it is construed as an apparition. And there are also corollary situations where the intrinsic appearance of the phantasm makes it difficult to suppose it other than an apparition.

None of these reflections, however, serve to dissociate the phantasm from a discarnate spirit; they serve only to dissociate the phantasm from the sensible appearance of a living person. It is after all possible that the unusual way in which some phantasms appear results from the fact that they are causally related to discarnate minds rather than to living persons. Though this is possible, there is no evidence that sustains this view.

There is another, more plausible, explanation for apparitions which does not involve the positing of discarnate minds. One can view an apparition as a retrocognitive, precognitive, clairvoyant or telepathic hallucination.

¹⁴ G. N. M. Tyrrell, See *Apparitions* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd., 1953), p. 139.

There are cases of apparitions which certainly suggest this interpretation, e.g., the well-known case of Goethe. He wrote: "As I rode away along the footpath at Drusenheim a strange fantasy took hold of me. I saw in my mind's eye my own figure riding towards me attired in a dress I had never worn—pike grey with gold lace. I shook off the phantasy, but eight years afterwards I found myself on the very road going to visit Fredericka, and that, too, in the very dress I had seen myself in, in this phantasm, although my wearing it was quite accidental."¹⁵ Such a phantasm might well be explained as a precognitive hallucination.

A very striking case of an apparition is described by Professor Ducasse.¹⁶ An account of it is included here because the "specter" in it, Ducasse believes, cannot be explained by means of the theory offered above. The original account of this phantasm is to be found in a rare pamphlet in the New York Public Library. It was authored by the Rev. Abraham Cummings in 1826; he was a Baptist minister in Maine and a graduate of Brown University. *Immortality Proved by the Testimony of Sense* is the pamphlet's title.

The apparitions were of the deceased Mrs. George Butler in a village near Machiasport. Mrs. Butler's "specter" appeared a number of times over a period of some months. It was seen by groups of people numbering as many as forty persons together; it appeared in and out of doors. It delivered long discourses to those present and moved about among them. It predicted births and deaths accurately.

Professor Ducasse writes: ". . . the Rev. Cummings

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁶ Ducasse, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

had the rare good sense to obtain at the time over thirty affidavits—reproduced in the pamphlet—from some of the hundred or more persons who had heard and/or seen the ‘Specter.’ ”¹⁷

Of what did this apparition consist? On one occasion, Capt. Butler placed his hand “upon” the apparition and it passed down through the apparition as though its body were made of light. His action was witnessed by six or seven persons.¹⁸

What can one make of such a case? I believe it is possible to bring it under the ESP hypothesis. There are some features of the specter story that provide hints as to what may have actually occurred. First, the specter delivered discourses “sometimes over an hour long.”¹⁹ By what means were these discourses delivered? Were there physical sound waves in the air that caused the persons present to hear the specter’s words? It is not likely there were, when one considers that Capt. Butler’s hand passed through the specter’s body as though it were light. It is not reasonable to suppose that such a spectral body had a voice box capable of producing physical sounds. If the “auditory sensations” experienced by the witnesses were not caused by sound waves, there is left only one plausible hypothesis to account for the discourses they heard. That hypothesis is that they heard these discourses clairaudiently. There are many recorded cases of clairaudience.

In this Butler case, then, why cannot one explain what happened by positing the parapsychological events needed to explain it? The work of Tyrrell has already clearly established the occurrence of “collective apparitions,” i.e., an apparition that is seen by a number of people together.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

Why should it be supposed any less possible that there are collective clairaudient experiences? Why can it not be supposed that some person present, when the Butler specter appeared and spoke, was the "sender" of both the visual and auditory "hallucinations" and that some others there had the capacity to "receive" them? Let it be further assumed that the "sender" had the retrocognitive or clairvoyant powers needed to duplicate some knowledge the living Mrs. Butler had had; let it be further assumed that he had the precognitive powers needed for the predictions the specter made. Or, several persons may have jointly functioned as "sender-receivers."

No one has ever established that apparitions, "seen" singly or collectively, are causally tied to discarnate minds; there is no more reason for positing that collective "hearings" are. Dr. J. B. Rhine has pointed out that the occurrences of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, etc., are associated with the states of mind of senders and receivers; the attitudes, the motivations and enthusiasms of the subject are important, as are those of the sender. It is not impossible therefore that these groups of persons in the Butler case were, by nature or by conditions of the time, in states of mind that led to these very unusual ESP manifestations. Whatever the explanation of the Butler case, it would have to refer to unusual conditions because the circumstances to be explained are themselves most unusual.

If the above explanation, in its main outline, is not accepted, what alternatives remain? Certainly, the "specter" was not the physical Mrs. Butler. Neither do we know of any causal chain that would lead from her physical body as cause to the specter as effect. Even if we did, this would have nothing to do with survival. But could the discarnate mind of Mrs. Butler (assuming there is such a thing pos-

sible) *be* the phantasm? This is not a reasonable suggestion; the phantasm was in space and time; it walked about among the witnesses, and minds do not do that kind of thing. Could the discarnate mind of Mrs. Butler have caused the phantasm to be seen and heard collectively? Though this is conceivable, it is hardly more than that. It seems like a simple and desirable explanation only until one looks more closely at the mechanism of such a causal feat. How could Mrs. Butler as discarnate mind communicate by physical voice to those who heard her discourses? As discarnate mind, she would have no physical voice box. Her only means of communication would have been by telepathic or other ESP means. She would have had to “send” the visual and auditory “hallucinations” that were experienced. Also, since she made accurate predictions about deaths and births, Mrs. Butler’s discarnate mind must have precognitive powers posited of it. Then, there is the matter of “reception”; the witnesses had to have the capacities to “hear” clairaudiently, to “see” clairvoyantly, etc., what they reported seeing, hearing, etc. The survival interpretation therefore does not exclude the positing of ESP powers of the same magnitude as those involved in the non-survival ESP explanation; the former view includes those powers and, *in addition*, posits the existence of a discarnate mind. The non-survival ESP interpretation is therefore logically simpler and more probably true than the other hypothesis as an explanation of the Butler case.

“Possession” is another *prima facie* evidence of survival. This phenomenon—if we assume momentarily the theoretical interpretation imbedded in the term—is the “taking over” of a person’s body by a personality (mind) notably different from his own. In some instances, the identifiable personality of a known deceased person seems

to have taken over the body of a living individual. Under such circumstances, it is easy to think in terms of the "possession" of a body by an alien mind, and easy to believe that minds survive the death of the bodies they earlier inhabited.

Were this "possession view" tenable, it would of course constitute evidence for discarnate survival. In "possession," the mind is reputed to display an ability "to move" from one body to another; it is reputed also to display this ability without *immediately* "possessing" the second body upon leaving the first. Both of these abilities are suggestive of an independent status for a mind.

Professor C. J. Ducasse believes that the *Watseka Wonder* case requires such a "possession" hypothesis for its explanation.²⁰ It must be granted that this case is very striking; and it does provide strong *prima facie* evidence for "possession."

In the *Watseka Wonder* case, two girls were involved: Mary Roff was one of them. Mary Roff had died at 18 years of age on July 5, 1865. She was hardly a normal girl in that she suffered from "fits." More interesting, however, she was able when carefully blindfolded to read closed books and the contents of sealed envelopes.

The other girl was Lurancy Vennum. She was born on April 16, 1864, and was therefore somewhat over a year old when Mary Roff died. Until the age of 13 (July, 1877), Lurancy seemed well and normal. At 13, however, she complained of feeling queer and experienced a fit, "including a cataleptic state lasting five hours."²¹ On later occasions, while in a trance state, she talked with "angels" or "spirits" of deceased persons. Her sanity was questioned.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 171-174.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

She seemed to be “possessed” by different alien spirits in turn. The most interesting of these “possessions” was that by the mind of Mary Roff. Lurancy claimed to be Mary Roff. She gave every evidence of homesickness, wanting to see “her” (Mary’s) parents and brothers. Some few days later, Lurancy was permitted to live with the Roff family. She seemed very happy, she knew everybody that Mary had known in her life-time some twelve to twenty-five years earlier. She called by name persons who had been friends and neighbors of the Roff family during Mary’s lifetime. She called attention to hundreds of incidents that had occurred in Mary’s natural life. At the same time, she had a complete loss of her own identity as “Lurancy” and knew none of the Vennum family, nor their neighbors and friends. This life of Lurancy as “Mary” lasted about three and one-half months, with occasional returns of the Mary-personality later in life.

About this case, Professor Ducasse has written:

What distinguishes this case from the more common ones of alternating personalities is, of course, that the personality that displaced Lurancy’s was, by every test that could be applied, not a dissociated part of her own, but the personality and all the memories that had belonged to a particular 18 year old girl who had died at a time when Lurancy was but 14 months old. . . .²²

Ducasse further adds that there was no way whereby Lurancy could have obtained (normally) “the extensive and detailed knowledge Mary had possessed, which Lurancy manifested. . . .²³

²² *Ibid.*, p. 173.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

For the Vennums were away from Watseka for the first 7 years of Lurancy's life; and when they returned to Watseka, their acquaintance with the Roffs consisted only of one brief call of a few minutes by Mrs. Roff on Mrs. Vennum, and of a formal speaking acquaintance between the two men, until the time when Mr. Roff brought Dr. Stevens to the Vennums on account of Lurancy's insane behavior.²⁴

The key part of Ducasse's interpretation is his view that the mind that displaced Lurancy's own, namely, that of Mary, "was, by every test that could be applied . . . the personality and all the memories that had belonged . . ." to Mary.

But why need the "possession" hypothesis be accepted here? Ordinary dreams and the hypnotic trance, not to mention the mediumistic situation, testify to the "dramatizing powers" of the unconscious. Under hypnosis, a subject can be caused by suggestion to play the role of another person. On several occasions, the writer has seen hypnotized subjects take on the roles of others in realistic fashion. The hypnotist, for example, might suggest that the subject is a Civil War veteran. Without delay, the subject would start telling a tale of his suffering as a soldier, his experiences in battle, etc. Granting such well-known powers of the unconscious to dramatize under hypnosis, and recalling also the remarkable though common-place dramatizations of man's dream-life, and adding to this the power of retrocognition, we have a non-possession hypothesis for explaining the Watseka Wonder case. There is no need for believing that "something" that had earlier been "in" Mary was later "in" Lurancy, i.e., that a mind had somehow

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

gone from one to the other. With that need no longer present, the *Watseka Wonder* case has no bearing upon the survival issue.

Sometimes *poltergeist* manifestations are taken as evidence for survival. Poltergeist manifestations appear to be a species of psychokinetic phenomena, i.e., there is movement of physical things without any apparent physical cause and it is theorized that the cause is discarnate spirits. Such manifestations ordinarily occur in the presence of adolescent children or those of retarded development. The manifestations are usually of a mischievous nature, e.g., pieces of iron are flung about a blacksmith's shop, with no normal explanation. Loud sounds, cracking noises, rappings or explosions sometimes accompany the other phenomena. Hewat McKenzie,²⁵ a friend of the famous sensitive Eileen Garrett, believed that the spiritualist hypothesis best explained such phenomena. He viewed the spirits as earthbound and unhappy and conceived their mischievous behavior to have the purpose of attracting attention of living persons. Eileen Garrett in trance discovered that such "spirits" suffered from deep emotional conflicts that had not been resolved before their deaths. Revenge and the righting of wrongs appeared to be the motivations for the location and activities of these *poltergeists*.

Clearly, if there are such unhappy discarnate spirits who, for the reasons noted, are earth-bound, we have here good evidence for survival. The difficulty with such a conclusion, however, is that these "unhappy spirits" are *not* part of the empirical data. The existence of them is only hypothetical. The data are certain movements of physical things, and various noises. Are these caused by trickery of

²⁵ Eileen J. Garrett, *My Life as a Search for the Meaning of Mediumship* (New York: Oquaga Press, 1939), p. 143.

the adolescents or by the stupidities of the retarded folk who seem to be present in places where poltergeist phenomena occur? Are the movements of the physical objects natural, e.g., an object not well-balanced on a shelf falling because of a breath of wind, or knocked down by a cat walking on a mantel? Or, in cases where it is claimed that such movements of objects have been seen, was the percipient hallucinated? Were the noises simply the cracking sounds of dried beams in an old house? Were the rappings sounds of a small animal trapped in the attic of a house? Investigations of such cases by such competently trained persons as Dr. J. G. Pratt and Mr. W. G. Roll have produced no assurance that there are spirits at work in poltergeist cases that have come to their attention. It is therefore hazardous to use such events as data for a survival hypothesis. Furthermore, in the case of the paranormal movement of objects, or the influencing of such movement psychokinetically, there is some ground for supposing that embodied minds are the causes. Dr. Rhine's studies of psychokinesis suggest this. In no instance has he found evidence for believing that a discarnate mind was the cause of psychokinetic phenomena.

Another *prima facie* evidence for discarnate survival is "spirit communication." This subject, however, is so important a one in relation to the survival issue that a separate chapter will be devoted to it.

The conclusion of this present chapter concerning the *prima facie* parapsychological evidences for survival is that they are not impressive.

V

THE EVIDENCES FOR SURVIVAL FROM MEDIUMSHIP

THERE are four hypotheses concerning mediumistic phenomena. The four are:

- (1) the hypothesis that all mediumistic phenomena are fraudulently produced;
- (2) the hypothesis that daemons of a non-human kind are responsible for the messages that purport to come from discarnate spirits;
- (3) the survival hypothesis, i.e., that mediums are actually in communication with the discarnate minds of persons who formerly lived on earth;
- (4) the hypothesis that ESP is able to explain all the "spirit-communication" data associated with mediumistic activity; that there are no discarnate minds; that the phenomena are created by human beings in ways which even their creators do not understand.

Let us consider these four hypotheses. The first hypothesis is the one that critics of spiritualism generally accept. For example, the Seybert Commission of the University of Pennsylvania, after 14 months of investigation in 1884-85, said: "Spiritualism presents the melancholy spectacle of gross fraud, perpetrated upon an uncritical portion of the community. . . ." ²⁶

It is tempting to accept the hypothesis of fraudulent

²⁶ Carl A. Murchison, ed., *The Case For and Against Psychological Belief* (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University, 1927), p. 66.

mediumship—tempting, because it would relieve one of the difficult task of appraising a large and confusing mass of data which, if not faked, constitute *prima facie* evidence for survival. This temptation must, however, be resisted.

Frauds in spiritualism have been many and striking. At centers, such as those at Lily Dale, N. Y., and Chesterfield, Ind., there have been numerous fraudulent mediums. At Lily Dale the writer and two friends witnessed frauds that were overt and opportunities for self-deception that were contrived. More recently, Dr. Andrija Puharich visited the spiritualist center at Chesterfield and there, by use of a “snooperscope” which enabled him to take motion pictures in the dark, unmasked indisputably the fakers in the seance rooms of that center.

What about the spiritualist churches, rather than the centers? On the one hand, in the churches one looks hard to find grounds for any other view than the dismal one afforded by the centers. On the other hand, events occur occasionally in spiritualist churches that provide grounds for denying the thesis of universal fraud.

Some years ago, the writer, his wife, Professor R. F. Piper of Syracuse University and his wife attended the Spiritualist Church of a Mrs. Williams in Syracuse, N. Y. Our going to the church that evening was unplanned. I had never seen Mrs. Williams, the minister, before that particular service. Yet, this woman—apparently by clair-audient means—brought me “greetings” from a boy whom I had known in my boyhood. Without any prompting from me, Mrs. Williams brought me the information that this childhood acquaintance was *that* tall when he had drowned (she indicated his height by a hand motion) and that his name was Robert. She asked me if this information was correct. I could not remember the boy’s first name, though

I did recall his last as "Herrick." I told her that the other information was correct. Later, through my parents, I verified the boy's first name; it was "Robert."

Let it be said at once that (1) I do not take this episode to constitute evidence for the survival view and (2) I believe it can be better explained by a non-survival (ESP) hypothesis. The Herrick episode is referred to only to substantiate the claim that not all mediumistic situations involve fraud. Whatever explanation is to be given for Mrs. Williams's performance, it is not reasonable to explain it on the hypothesis of fraud. No one in the city of Syracuse knew about the Herrick boy other than myself, and even I did not know the first name Mrs. Williams correctly elicited. Without going into detail, I can say that it would have been literally impossible for Mrs. Williams to get this information by normal means. Even had she been able to obtain it by normal means, it is inconceivable that she would have done so in the light of the small fee involved (twenty-five cents). And, as stated above, she had no normal means of knowing our party would appear in her church that evening.

The "Herrick case," however convincing to me, is likely to be "too private" to have much effect upon others. Let us consider therefore a classical example of a medium whose powers seem indisputable. That medium is Mrs. Leonora E. Piper (no relation to the Pipers mentioned earlier). This woman was carefully studied by scientists and philosophers for a period of some twenty years and more. She was an object of interest to Professor William James of Harvard University from 1885 until his death in 1910. Dr. Richard Hodgson, well-known for his researches in the field of the psychic, and one-time Secretary of the American Society for Psychical Research, studied Mrs.

Piper for a period of eighteen years, beginning in 1887. Mrs. Piper made three trips to England because of her unusual paranormal powers, where such men as Henry Sidgwick, Sir Oliver Lodge and F. W. H. Myers, all dedicated and sincere investigators, studied her capacities. By 1900, the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research contained some 1500 pages on Mrs. Piper. Since then, hundreds of additional pages have been devoted to her case.

Mrs. Piper's method was the usual one of falling into a trance. Then, the "spirits" would speak through her, though later in her personal history as a medium it was automatic writing that became the characteristic expression of her automatism. She had a number of "controls," the most famous of which was a Dr. Phinuit. These "controls" sometimes communicated directly and, on occasion, communicated in behalf of other "spirits." After Hodgson's death in 1906, Mrs. Piper impersonated him in a trance and James, in describing the event, said: "I felt a slight shiver down my spine, as though I really had been talking to my old friend."²⁷

There are two reasons why Mrs. Piper was of special interest. (1) She was studied by capable scholars and scientists under carefully supervised conditions; and (2) her knowledge, though often on trivial matters concerning the deceased and the living, could *not* have been obtained by normal means. On this point, Professor Ducasse says: ". . . because we do not merely believe but positively know that the information she gave was not obtained by her in any of the normal manners, there is in her case no escape from the fact that it had some para-

²⁷ T. Konstantin Oesterreich, *Occultism and Modern Science* (New York: McBride, 1923), p. 43.

normal source.”²⁸ T. Konstantin Oesterreich also wrote: “Mrs. Piper . . . produced supernormal phenomena with such regularity and under such unimpeachable conditions that they can, with the greatest probability, be regarded as established facts.” He adds on the same page: “Thus we have here a case of which the supernormal character is above all suspicion.”²⁹

The case of Mrs. Piper is too long to consider in detail. The point is, however, that here is a woman who is indisputably regarded by competent, careful observers as having paranormal powers of acquiring knowledge. How these are to be explained—whether on a spiritualist hypothesis, or on some other one—is not presently at issue. The only point emphasized here is the denial that all mediums are engaged in fraudulent conduct and that there is evidence that makes this denial reasonable.

If anyone has any doubt about Mrs. Piper’s unusual powers, he should read about the surveillance of her by detectives, note that her mail, which involved only a few letters, was read, that her sitters were not identified, etc., and that still, in the face of such conditions, she was capable of providing paranormal knowledge. Her case is a most remarkable one.

Let us turn now to the second hypothesis explanatory of the phenomena associated with a medium, the hypothesis that daemons or non-human spirits personate discarnate spirits of deceased human beings. This hypothesis has a whimsical quality about it that makes it attractive. It is fascinating to suppose that there are such daemons communicating through mediums with living human beings but playing on these latter the practical joke of mak-

²⁸ Ducasse, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

²⁹ Oesterreich, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

ing them suppose that it is really deceased spirits that are sending the messages. It is too bad that this hypothesis cannot be taken seriously.

But such a view has only one virtue, in addition to its whimsicality. It does "explain" the "spirit-messages" by purporting to show what their nature and origin are. This virtue is that of "relevance," which is admittedly an important feature of an hypothesis but not the only criterion of a good hypothesis. It is necessary, in addition, that a good hypothesis be true, and there are no evidences that this hypothesis about daemons is so.

The third hypothesis in explanation of the data of the mediumistic situation is the survival hypothesis, i.e., that mediums are actually in communication with the discarnate minds of persons who formerly lived on earth. This is a very natural hypothesis and seems hardly to be more than a description of what is alleged to happen in the mediumistic situation.³⁰

The general characteristics of the mediumistic trance are fairly well known. The trance state is usually marked by some degree of loss of consciousness. Using the language of mediumship (without any presupposition that what it presumes is true), a medium may function either through "possession" or "telepathically." In the former case, the medium will appear to be "possessed" by a consciousness or personality not her own, and personate the intruding spirit, often imitating voice inflexion and other personal characteristics. Needless to say, such seeming "possessions" can be very impressive to an observer. As was noted earlier, Professor James was much moved when his friend Hodgson was accurately personated by a med-

³⁰ Ducasse, *op. cit.*, p. 199. (See Sec. 5 for his view on what would prove survival.)

ium. When the medium functions "telepathically," however, she may serve as a *vehicle* for communication between a discarnate spirit and some one in this life.

The particular manifestations in the trance state vary from medium to medium. The automatism may manifest itself vocally, through automatic writing, by means of a Ouija board or in some other manner. A medium will not necessarily remain constant in these "particularities"; the form of the expression may change from voice to writing, etc., and the medium's capacities may wane or even disappear entirely.

A common feature of the trance state is the appearance of a "control" or "guide." These discarnate entities (assuming this view for the moment) take over and play the role of a "master of ceremonies"; they use the medium's physical body or part of it, e.g., the voice box, to speak and convey information from other spirits to the living.

The spiritist hypothesis, which is of course a form of the survival hypothesis, is simple enough in its outward form. The hypothesis is minimally that spirits (minds) exist in a disembodied state and that these minds are those of persons who had formerly lived a bodily life on earth.

What sorts of evidence can be offered to support this form of the survival hypothesis?

(1) The survival hypothesis as related to mediumship is a very natural one to accept in the light of the *prima facie* facts. The ordinary seance employs the language of the "spirit world," "spirits," "those on this side," "those on the other side," "messages," "controls," etc. Indeed, as suggested before, the survival hypothesis seems on the surface to do no more than affirm what the facts clearly are. On the other hand, the spirits (minds) are not directly observed. Those who believe them to exist discarnately

rather infer that they do have that sort of reality. In any case, many sitters in a seance room leave it satisfied in their belief in survival on the basis of what they have observed and inferred.

(2) Another kind of evidence for the survival hypothesis is "the selectiveness" which is a characteristic of the trance experience. It is possible seemingly to receive specific thoughts, memories, etc., from different discarnate minds relevant to a particular sitter at the seance while the other persons there are ignored. The claim is that this aspect of the mediumistic situation is better explained on a spiritist hypothesis than through telepathy or some other form of ESP.

(3) It is also pointed out, in behalf of the spiritist hypothesis, that the difficulties of communication and the changes in communication are suggestive of the spiritist hypothesis rather than the ESP hypothesis. The difficulties of communicating are often mentioned by the discarnate minds and they exemplify such troubles in their communications. Also, with a change in communicators or controls, there appear marked changes in what is communicated and how it is communicated. All of this is suggestive of a spiritist hypothesis.

(4) The "communicators" are quite proper in their approaches to sitters, greeting in a familiar way those they knew in "this life" and pointing out that they did not know others in the seance group. Anyone familiar with trance scripts knows how friendly some "controls" and spirits can become with those they knew in this life.

(5) Other evidence suggesting the truth of the spiritist hypothesis is found in the fact that a "spirit" at a later sitting will refer to what was said at an earlier one and take on from there. Such an occurrence is said to reveal memory

on the part of the communicating discarnate spirits, an important characteristic of a "person."

(6) It is sometimes the case that facts given by the discarnate mind were known by no one at the seance—in some cases, not even to the sitter at the time of the seance. E.g., F. Bligh Bond has cited in a book, *The Gate of Remembrance*,³¹ the case of a spirit who gave information about the location of an underground chapel, information known to no living person. Such cases are of course suggestive of the spiritist hypothesis.

(7) The sudden intrusion of an unexpected communicator into a seance suggests the survival hypothesis. In Tambof, Russia, a family received a communication during a seance from a spirit who claimed to be Anastasie Péréliquine. She related that she had just died the day before in a hospital as a result of poisoning herself with matches. She gave her age as 17 and her vocation as that of a housemaid. No one at the seance knew of the girl or her death. Subsequent investigation revealed, however, that such a girl had died the day before in the hospital. Her name and age had been correctly given at the seance, as was the cause of her death, namely, poisoning herself with phosphorus while in a depressed state of mind.³² The unexpected and radical intrusion of this girl's discarnate spirit (if such it was) is bound to suggest the survival hypothesis.

None of these evidences is conclusive and, as will be observed later, there are many grounds for criticizing the survival hypothesis that effectively negate any force the foregoing citation of evidences might have.

There have also been some experimental tests devised

³¹ *Ind. J. of Para.*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1960, p. 174.

³² Gardner Murphy, "An Outline of Survival Evidence," *JASPR*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, 1945, pp. 16-17.

to prove or disprove the spiritist or survival hypothesis—some of them having been suggested by men “on this side” and two kinds at least by minds “on the other side.” These tests have been conceived generally in such a way as to eliminate the hypothesis that telepathy or some other ESP elements explains the mediumistic situation. The first of these to be discussed is “proxy sittings.”

In a proxy sitting, the real sitter is not present. He gets a friend or stranger to sit in the seance in his place. Often, some object of the deceased person, with whom communication is desired, is sent to the seance with the proxy sitter.³³ Under such circumstances, proxy sittings have produced “messages” and paranormal knowledge despite the absence of the real sitter. The idea behind a proxy sitting is to remove from the seance the real sitter from whom the medium might pick up telepathically items of information which could then be included in the “message.”

The difficulty with this kind of test, however, is that both telepathy and clairvoyance—not to mention other forms of ESP—are not prevented from operating because of the geographical distance between the real sitter and the medium. Dr. Rhine’s Zener card experiments at Duke University have established conclusively that distance is not a factor in the possibility of telepathic communication.

There are also the so-called book tests. These too were designed to eliminate telepathy as an explanation alternative to the survival hypothesis. As A. T. Baird points out,³⁴ Sir William Crookes was probably the first to use the book test. The idea is that there be a communication through a medium specifying a word or passage on a certain page of a named book located in a particular place.

³³ A. T. Baird, *One Hundred Cases for Survival after Death* (New York: Bernard Ackerman, 1944), pp. 167-176.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

The medium has never been in the room in question and is presumed unfamiliar with the book. The sitter then follows out the instructions. He then must determine whether the word or passage in question has an appropriateness or significance for him. Since no living person seems to have the requisite information originally—neither medium nor sitter—telepathy seems to be precluded as an explanation in such book tests. A “spirit” must therefore be involved, and the survival hypothesis thus receives confirmation.

In such tests, it is not always the case that fraud has been eliminated as a possible explanation. But even with the elimination of fraud as an explanation, clairvoyance or some other ESP capacity is a possible explanation.

Newspaper tests are not entirely dissimilar to the book tests, though they have the advantage of making fraud extremely difficult. Reverend C. Drayton Thomas conducted some newspaper tests with Mrs. Osborne Leonard. In these tests, the “communicating intelligences” gave to the medium some names on one day “that were printed in certain columns and pages of the next day’s *Times*, and the results obtained were very striking, as neither the compositor nor the editor of that paper could tell at the hour when Mr. Thomas was sitting what particular item would appear in next day’s issue.”³⁵

A trouble with such newspaper tests, however, is that precognition cannot be eliminated as an explanation in lieu of the spiritist hypothesis.

The sealed letter test is another one of the experimental devices designed to test the survival hypothesis. The application of this test requires the use of a sealed envelope containing some message or other item of meaningful communication. The envelope is prepared by a living person,

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

but in anticipation of his eventual death. After the writer of the message dies, he is supposed to "send back" to the living the sealed message. The letter is then opened for verification or disproof. The sealed letter has been kept naturally under lock and key all this time, usually by some responsible organization.

Sealed letter tests made by the well-known F. W. H. Myers and Sir Oliver Lodge were failures so far as the survival hypothesis was concerned. The sealed messages were never obtained by mediums.

Even if there had been successful cases of mediumistic communication of sealed messages, such tests would not have been conclusive because of the possibility of telepathic or clairvoyant "leakage." In precisely such a situation, when Hereward Carrington was involved in such an experiment, the contents of the sealed letter were given by a medium at a time when the writer of the message was still alive. Obviously, sealed letter experiments cannot function as intended when ESP reveals their contents occasionally before the death of the writer.³⁶

Another interesting effort to set up a conclusive test for the spiritist or survival hypothesis is known as the word association test.³⁷ This test was attempted by the English psychical researcher, Whately Carington. He gave four reports on his work in *The Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, running from 1934 to 1939. It was the objective of Carington's word-association test to determine whether the trance personalities of mediums were distinct or autonomous entities. Birge describes the test in the following way: "If the emotional reactions of a trance personality to a group of words are significantly

³⁶ *Ind. J. of Para.*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1960, p. 174.

³⁷ William R. Birge, "How Can We Study Mediumship?" in *Does Man Survive Death?*, ed. by Eileen Garrett (New York: Helix Press, 1957), p. 62.

different from those of the medium in her normal state, this difference must indicate that the trance personality is what it purports to be—an autonomous agent. With some degree of inconclusiveness, Carington had to admit that his work did not establish the autonomy of trance personalities.”³⁸

Cross-reference and cross-correspondence tests are presumably created by discarnate minds in “the other world.” In a cross-reference test, a discarnate communicator supposedly makes himself known through two or more sensitives (mediums) by repeating the same message to each of them, or by using the same phrase or symbol.

The data provided by such cross-reference tests suggest that a single “spirit” (discarnate mind) is attempting to identify himself by this device. But unfortunately for the survival hypothesis, an ESP interpretation of cross-references is possible. One possibility is that a sensitive B simply “picks up” telepathically sensitive A’s “message” and repeats it in a seance—without any intent to defraud and simply as a message coming from the same “spirit.” If such an interpretation is possible—and it is—cross-references cannot be viewed as constituting conclusive evidence for the survival hypothesis.

Cross-correspondence cases are taken by some to supply the best evidence for discarnate survival. Professor C. D. Broad gives a clear statement of what an ideal cross-correspondence case would be for one communicator. I shall quote him. He writes:

The ideal Cross-Correspondence would be of the following form. Suppose three automatic writers in different places produce automatic scripts over a series of years. Sup-

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

pose that they do not communicate with each other, but send their scripts from time to time to an impartial authority for comparison. Suppose A, B, and C in their scripts get statements which, taken separately, are fragmentary and unintelligible to them; and suppose further that after such an unintelligible and fragmentary statement in A's script comes an injunction to refer to what B and C are now writing or will shortly write or have written at some definite time in the past. Suppose that similar injunctions are found in B's and C's scripts after fragmentary and unintelligible passages in them. Suppose finally that when the impartial authority compares the scripts and follows the directions contained in them he finds that these separately unintelligible sentences combine to convey something which is highly characteristic of a certain deceased person who is alleged to be communicating. Then we should have a perfect instance of a Cross-Correspondence; and it would be difficult to resist the conviction that the phenomena are controlled intentionally by a single mind, which cannot be identified with the conscious part of the mind of any of the automatic writers.³⁹

Since no one automatist had the whole message, it is assumed that the cross-correspondences cannot be explained by telepathy. The conclusion forced on one seems to be the survival or spiritist hypothesis. One must then accept the *prima facie* claim that a known and recognized mind is communicating with the living.

It is desirable now to turn to criticisms of the survival interpretation of mediumistic phenomena in somewhat greater detail than has been done up to this point. Since

³⁹ C. D. Broad, *The Mind and Its Place in Nature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1951), p. 543.

the cross-correspondences are viewed by some survival theorists as the strongest evidence for the spiritist hypothesis, we might begin our criticisms there.

(1) Professor R. H. Thouless says that he finds himself "somewhat exasperated" by cross-correspondence cases.⁴⁰ He writes: "They seem unnecessarily elaborate for the purpose in hand."⁴¹ He adds: "My impression is that these experiments failed through over-elaboration."⁴²

(2) A more serious criticism is that, though the cross-correspondence cases involve evidence of a mind (or minds) other than those of the several automatists, there is no guarantee that this mind is that of the deceased person. There is, in fact, a well-authenticated case that illustrates the point of this criticism. An Englishman of the cross-correspondence period, J. F. Piddington, decided to prepare a sealed letter which would contain information known only to himself. It was his plan, as is usual in such tests, to communicate the content of the letter after his own death through a medium. In this letter, he gave a description of a peculiarity of his. This peculiarity concerned the number "7." He would walk in groups of seven steps, count objects in groups of seven and otherwise observe sevens in this and that. Some three years after he had prepared this sealed letter test, six automatists (including Mrs. and Miss Verrall, Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Holland) began to get in their scripts references to the number seven. About this, Rosalind Heywood writes: "The existence of a cross correspondence shouted itself aloud to those who read the scripts, and at last Mr. Piddington was

⁴⁰ *The Empirical Evidence for Survival*, JASPR, Vol LIV, No. 1, 1960, p. 27.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

driven to confess that the allusions tallied with the content of his intended posthumous letter.”⁴³ This case would more properly be called a cross-reference. Nonetheless, it does establish that such cases *can* occur in the context of the living and that their occurrence does not necessitate the existence of a discarnate spirit. It is obvious in the “sevens case” described above that clairvoyance or telepathy accounted for the facts, not messages from a discarnate spirit or mind. This is of course the same sort of problem that can be raised with respect to cross-correspondence cases, namely, how can one be certain that any such case, cross-reference or cross-correspondence, has not been devised by a living person or persons. It is not necessary to suppose that the devising was done on a conscious level by those living persons; the devising might have been done in the subconscious mind or minds of one or several living persons.

With all that, there are some who would say quite properly: the question is whether such a cross-correspondence case, that had *not* been devised by a person P before he died, but which only P’s mind was equipped to devise, could occur after his body’s death unless his mind survived. That is a good query. But about this question one can ask whether there is such uniqueness of ability and knowledge as the question presupposes, i.e., are there things “which only P’s mind was equipped to devise?” Even the calculus was discovered more or less simultaneously by two minds, namely, Newton’s and Leibniz.’ How can we ever be certain such a criterion is satisfied? There is always the chance that an embodied mind was responsible for any cross-correspondence. Moreover, it is my impression that

⁴³ Rosalind Heywood, *Beyond the Reach of Sense* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1961), p. 89.

the scripts involved in the classical cross-correspondences do not involve anything so unique as the discovery of a new branch of mathematics. As will be seen later, they often involve jumbles of data to which it is difficult to assign any meaning.

(3) With reference to cross-correspondence cases generally, Professor Broad sets forth the hypothesis that they are products of the minds of the automatists. Some of the automatists, particularly Mrs. Verrall, were well aware of the difficulties of getting proof of survival that would not be explained away by the ESP hypothesis. Broad suggests (1) that when a person is much concerned over a problem, it is worked on by "processes which are unconscious relatively"⁴⁴ to the part of the mind which is normally in control of the body; (2) that it is highly probable that "telepathy can and does take place between the unconscious parts of living minds";⁴⁵ and (3) that the unconscious mind is very often quite willing to provide "evidence" for what the conscious mind would like to believe. Broad then adds that, granting these propositions, it would be probable that the mind of one of the automatists worked out the problem of providing satisfactory evidence for survival and then conveyed telepathically the partial messages to the other automatists, who were, in their togetherness, to provide conclusive evidence for survival.

The survival alternative to this hypothesis is to ascribe similar powers to a discarnate mind in telepathic contact with living minds and, in some cross-correspondence cases, with other discarnate minds. Since we know that human minds associated with bodies do exist, Broad's hypothesis is the more economical one, and hence the more probably

⁴⁴ Broad, *op. cit.*, p. 544.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

true one, for it does not necessitate the added assumption that there are discarnate minds.

Professor E. R. Dodds holds substantially the same position as Broad in regard to this issue.⁴⁶ He writes: "I am not wholly satisfied . . . that the cross-correspondences are the result of design. But . . . even if they are, I know of no conclusive answer to the suggestion put forward by . . . Broad and others, that the design of most of those hitherto published may have originated in the subconscious mind of Mrs. Verrall."⁴⁷

If we leave now the question of cross-correspondence cases, we might consider next some interesting "fictitious spirit cases." They are worth a little space because they reveal the degree to which the subconscious mind goes on occasion in the way of "dramatizing" what it picks up telepathically or by other ESP means.

One interesting "fictitious spirit case" is that of "John Ferguson."⁴⁸ The medium in the case in question was Mrs. Blanche Cooper. The voices produced at her seances corresponded realistically with the various personalities who were assumed to be communicating. She had two guides, "Nada" and "Afid," both of whom manifested themselves at her seances.

But "John Ferguson" was fictitious from beginning to end. "He" was the product of the thoughts of a British psychical researcher, by the name of Soal, who had "sittings" with Mrs. Cooper. Soal's thoughts were telepathically transferred from his mind to the medium's subconscious mind. Soal writes: "The case of John Ferguson, which extended over ten sittings, shows throughout a cur-

⁴⁶ Prof. E. R. Dodds, "Why I Do Not Believe in Survival," *Proc., S.P.R.*, Vol. XLII, (Part 135), 1934, pp. 147-172.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁴⁸ *A Report on Some Communications Received through Mrs. Blanche Cooper*, by S. G. Soal, *Proc., S.P.R.*, Dec., 1925, (Part XCVI), p. 471.

ious consistency, nor uncommon in such fictitious cases. . . . Thus it will be observed that John Ferguson never got mixed in his dates, ages, etc., but would repeat in Sitting 19 what he had said in Sitting 11.⁴⁹ He would invent new scenes and happenings to cope with new facts discovered by the sitter.”⁵⁰

Another similar case is that of Bessie Beals. Dr. G. Stanley Hall in 1909 deceived the control Hodgson (through the medium, Mrs. Piper). Mrs. Piper, after the third sitting following the deception, communicated quite fully with “Bessie” through her control. Other such cases could be cited, but the point is made.

Other difficulties connected with the spiritist or survival hypothesis can now be noted more briefly. They will serve to counterbalance the previously listed evidences in favor of the survival hypothesis.

(1) Mediumistic personifications have considerable likeness to the artificial personalities created in the hypnotic state.

(2) Despite the great numbers of purported messages that have come through mediums, these communications have been generally of the most trivial sort; exceptions to this statement are rare.⁵¹

(3) Though mediums have been bringing their messages to the living for over a century, nothing significant has been conveyed about “the next world.” The references to the next life made by the “communicators” reflect a spiritualistic matrix or other body of beliefs characteristic of “this side.”

⁴⁹ The case itself began at sitting No. 11; hence the later figures of 11 and 19.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 524-525.

⁵¹ See *The Boy and the Brothers* review, *JASPR*, Vol. LVI, No. 3, July, 1962, p. 149, for an exception.

(4) Though one might not be justified in making a universal statement about seance messages, it does seem fair to say that many of them have clearly been products of the medium's subconscious mind, and ESP if the paranormal enters them.

(5) Great numbers of messages have been fraudulent—so many, in fact, that the Seybert Commission described all of them in that manner.

(6) Mediums themselves will on occasion admit that they do not know the origin of their "communications." A very gifted medium, Eileen Garrett, writes:

Speaking as one who has had close contact with all mental phenomena for a great many years, and who regards the field of psychic research as a vaster territory than is even suspected, I feel the right to question the meaning of the messages, appearances of the alleged dead, and all the symbolism relating to this particular field. Although I have seen apparitions of thousands of alleged dead, and have received what appeared to be communications from them, I do not yet truly know whence these communications come.⁵²

(7) Dr. J. B. Rhine, an undisputed leader in the parapsychological field, writes: ". . . the more careful and informed students of the problem seem to agree that no really scientific evidence of incorporeal personal agency has yet been reported."⁵³

(8) Professor Broad points out that if one considers "the apparently haphazard way in which men are born and die," so many being conceived by mistake, accidentally

⁵² "The Answer is Not Yet" in *Does Man Survive Death?*, ed. by Eileen Garrett (New York: Helix Press, 1957), p. 8.

⁵³ J. B. Rhine, "The Laboratory's Task," *Does Man Survive Death?*, ed. by Eileen Garrett (New York: Helix Press, 1957), p. 72.

and in ignorance, then it seems that "the claim to permanence for creatures whose earthly lives begin and end in these trivial ways is somewhat ridiculous."⁵⁴

(9) Evidence against survival comes also through a consideration of a cultural relativism that Professor E. R. Dodds notes.⁵⁵ He points out that, prior to the origin of the spiritualist movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the "spirits" did not have a monopoly in controlling mediums. Just as often, the declared source of communication was a daemon; whereas, in other cases, no sources other than the seer or "wise woman" were alleged as the agency.

(10) Professor Dodds also indicates that it is a well-known fact that the subconscious mind is "addicted to dramatisation,"⁵⁶ and that its dramas are most often in terms of wish-fulfillments. The hunger for contact with the dead, along with the spiritualist environment in the last and early part of this century, can account for the so-called spirit messages.

(11) The spirits, even though they bring veridical information on occasion, "seem to be cast in the same general mold; they are often too much alike, and think and talk too much like the medium, to convince the general observer of their autonomy."⁵⁷

(12) The "communicators" often display, as Gardner Murphy says, a "moral flabbiness," a willingness to have it both ways. The Hodgson personality well illustrated this, as James pointed out after studying 69 sittings in which Hodgson ostensibly appeared. Such vacillation and irre-

⁵⁴ Broad, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

⁵⁵ Dodds, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-172.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁵⁷ Gardner Murphy, "Difficulties Confronting the Survival Hypothesis," *Three Papers on the Survival Problem*, ASPR, p. 87.

sponsibility as Gardner Murphy notes are characteristic of the dissociated mind, i.e., the subconscious mind out of which these mediumistic automatism arise.⁵⁸

I would submit, at the conclusion of this Chapter, that none of the evidences for survival come up to the standards set by Mr. Roll. He writes:

We can now say what type of finding will indicate an incorporeal personal agent. It would consist in records which have motivational and personality factors foreign to the subject but typical of the deceased personality in question, as well as intellectual or cognitive characteristics that are not part of the furnishings of the subject's mind but were possessed by the supposed communicator. This type of material should be obtained in experiments in which there is no close linkage with living persons who have the personality traits or the technical knowledge shown in the record.⁵⁹

VI

THE ESP HYPOTHESIS

IT IS clear from the foregoing that there exists a mass of parapsychological data for which there are competing explanations. We are concerned here only with those data for which the survival hypothesis is a possible explanation. With respect to such data, the question must be: is the survival (spiritist) hypothesis more or less probable than its strongest competitor, the ESP hypothesis.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁵⁹ W. G. Roll, "The Contribution of Studies of 'Mediumship' to Research on Survival After Death," *J. of Para.*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1960, p. 276.

The ESP hypothesis holds that *prima facie* mediumistic communications, out-of-the-body experiences, apparitions, etc., can be explained entirely by reference to *living human beings*, their subconscious minds and the parapsychological capacities grounded in man's subliminal nature—i.e., no discarnate spirits need be supposed to exist.

What kinds of evidence support the ESP hypothesis? We have already noted some evidences along the way. More generally, however, the evidences for ESP are found in two areas of research. (1) Laboratory studies, usually statistical, of telepathy, of clairvoyance, of precognition, of psychokinesis, etc. Such researches have been carried on at Duke University, Harvard, Stanford, City College (N. Y.), University of Utrecht, Oxford, Cambridge, etc. (2) Case studies of such spontaneous manifestations of psi as those associated with Mrs. Leonora Piper, Edgar Cayce, Peter Hurkos, Eileen Garrett, etc. With regard to both (1) and (2), it is not possible to do more here than barely suggest what has been done in these areas.

Duke University is presently a world-center of parapsychology. For approximately thirty years Dr. J. B. Rhine and his colleagues have been carrying out experiments in ESP and PK (psychokinesis). The Duke workers believe that they have indisputable evidence for the existence of ESP and PK phenomena. The former kind of phenomena were studied chiefly by means of Zener cards; the latter, by use of dice.

Dr. Rhine views ESP phenomena as "nonphysical." Neither distance nor time is a factor in psi occurrences. The basic process productive of psi occurrences is unconscious.⁶⁰ But especially interesting in relation to the ESP

⁶⁰ J. B. Rhine and J. G. Pratt, *Parapsychology* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1957), p. 87.

hypothesis is a subject's tendency on occasion to miss a specific symbol in a consistent way, i.e., substitute another for it. Also interesting for the same reason is a tendency occasionally for a subject to *displace*, i.e., to call consistently the target adjacent to the intended one. Such occurrences in the laboratory are the analogues of the symbolical and allegorical tendencies found as manifestations of the subconscious mind in many cases of spontaneous mediumship.

But let us turn to (2) now, i.e., the question of spontaneous cases. Even a very abbreviated examination of one or two gifted sensitives is likely to reveal how far-reaching are the psi powers of a few persons. The capacities of such sensitives take some of the wind out of the sails of survival theorists who argue for a spiritist hypothesis on the grounds that the ESP hypothesis must be pushed far beyond its empirical foundations in order to explain the relevant data. For example, Frank Edwards reports⁶¹ that Edgar Cayce, the Virginia Beach seer, could sleep with a book under his pillow and thereafter quote from it verbatim. Clairvoyance is seemingly the only explanation.

In 1906, Cayce and a Bowling Green physician, Dr. John Blackburn, were working together. They were approached by a local teacher in a business college. The latter person was concerned over a murder in his home town in Canada. Could Cayce identify the murderer? Cayce was unsure, but went into a trance to try. He was then given the name and address of the victim. After a pause, he said that the murderer was the victim's sister. He then gave the make, caliber and serial number of the pistol used in the murder and indicated its hiding place to be a

⁶¹ Frank Edwards, *Strange People* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1961), p. 207.

basement drain pipe. Was the information correct? The answer was not long in coming, for both the teacher and Cayce were visited by a Chief of Police who had warrants for their arrest.

Cayce would often prescribe medicines for the sick. On one occasion he prescribed a product with the name "Oil of Smoke." The patient in Louisville could not locate this medicine in any of the drug stores. Cayce in a trance state thereupon specified a drug store where the medicine could be purchased, but a telegram came back to him saying that this designated drug store did not have the medicine in stock. Cayce then went into another trance and came up with the information that the druggist *did* have the product; he now described its location on a certain shelf of the store and said it was behind some other items. Three bottles of "Oil of Smoke" with aged labels were thus located.

In the summer of 1962 at Virginia Beach, Hugh Lynn Cayce, son of Edgar, told the writer of his father's reluctance to play bridge with members of the family. In being pressed to explain his reluctance, the elder Cayce explained that he was able to read clairvoyantly the cards in the other hands. He proved his statement by reading off a concealed hand.

Peter Hurkos is another gifted sensitive. He has a special talent for psychometry, i.e., knowing facts about an object or its owner through contact or proximity with the object. His powers are, however, not limited to psychometry.

The nature of his gift reveals itself in comments Hurkos makes about it. He writes: "There were many ways to use this gift. I could turn to theft, for I often knew when strangers were carrying large amounts of money, or had

jewels of great value on their persons or in their houses. I could have turned to gambling, because I can stand by a roulette wheel and almost consistently—eight times out of ten—tell whether the wheel will come up red or black. Often the exact number that will win has flashed across my mind even as the ball is spun around its steely circle.”⁶²

Space does not permit citing the many examples of Hurkos' unusual abilities. But one instance, based on an attempt to trick him, is so interesting that it is worth describing. At one of Hurkos' stage performances, a man placed a photograph on a designated table; others in the audience had also placed articles there for tests of Hurkos' psychometrical powers. When Hurkos picked up the photograph, he said that he felt “confused.” The owner of it asked what Hurkos meant. Hurkos said: “I mean that this picture is not right. No person can be alive and dead at the same time.”⁶³ The man then admitted to Hurkos that he had attempted to trick him by superimposing one picture on another. The body on the photograph was that of the trickster's living brother, but the face was that of his dead wife.

It is now desirable to bring to a head the issue of the survival (spiritist) hypothesis vs. the ESP hypothesis. Since it is the cross-correspondence cases that constitute, in the minds of many theorists, the strongest evidence for the survival hypothesis, we can consider them as crucial. In discussing cross-correspondences as they relate to this controversy, Saltmarsh writes: “It is quite obvious that mere repetition would not be evidence of anything beyond pure telepathy or mind reading on the part of one or other of the automatists concerned, but where the idea is suggested

⁶² See *Psychic* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1961), p. 56.

⁶³ Hurkos, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

by allusions, or conveyed in a disguised form, then the telepathic (ESP) hypothesis becomes more difficult to sustain.”⁶⁴ To this statement, however, W. G. Roll replies:

I do not believe that many contemporary parapsychologists would agree with this view. In fact, at the time Saltmarsh wrote these lines, it must have been obvious that the allusions and symbolic associations found in the cross-correspondences are *characteristic* of ESP. Even in card tests one of the five symbols may be consistently substituted for another in the subject's response, so that, in a manner of speaking, this figure becomes a symbol of the other. . . . Dr. L. E. Rhine has a large group of cases in which the target idea was conveyed symbolically and allusively. For instance, one of her correspondents dreamed that he saw an acquaintance ‘toiling up a terrifically steep hill with a perfectly enormous rock bound upon his back.’ Next day he learned that this person was dying. Not only is ESP prone to such distortions, but the procedure used by the cross-correspondence subjects most of the time, namely automatic writing, is apparently itself likely to be flavored with symbolism, puns, and literary allusions, as noted, for instance, by Dr. L. R. Wolberg.⁶⁵

Roll then adds:

If the ESP evidence points to the existence of a transformation process which often results in symbolic and indirect correlations, it equally emphasizes that the final product, whether it is a dream image, a spoken utter-

⁶⁴ H. F. Saltmarsh, *Evidence of Personal Survival from Correspondences* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1938), p. 62.

⁶⁵ W. G. Roll, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

ance, or a piece of writing automatism, is part of the mental equipment of the subject in question. The process is similar to (and perhaps borrowed from) the function which translates desires and anxieties into the symbolism of dreams. As a rule, the group of S.P.R. subjects who appeared to communicate with deceased personalities kept well within the bounds of their habitual mode of expression. Thus, in spite of the fact that the supposed agents consisted of a group of classical scholars and the messages were on classical themes, Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Fleming (known also as Mrs. Holland), neither of whom knew Greek or Latin, seldom produced words in these languages, whereas Mrs. Verrall and her daughter, both well versed in them, frequently did.⁶⁶

It seems clear that Saltmarsh's objection to the ESP hypothesis because of its presumed failure to deal with allusion and symbolism is off-beam. W. G. Roll seems to answer the question decisively enough.

Professor Ducasse, who seems to favor the survival hypothesis,⁶⁷ offers two main objections, as I see it, to the ESP hypothesis. The first is that the telepathy needed for the ESP hypothesis must have a "virtually unlimited range." In the classical cross-correspondence cases, all that is needed for an ESP hypothesis is telepathic or other ESP capacities among the automatists sufficient to explain what occurred, and this does not presuppose telepathy of "virtually unlimited range." Even if it did presuppose it, the present writer would not be so certain that there are not occasional sensitives who have that range, e.g., the capacities of a Cayce or Hurkos suggest no narrow limits.

⁶⁶ Roll, *op cit.*, pp. 263-264.

⁶⁷ *Vide Ducasse, op. cit.*, Chapter XIX.

Professor Ducasse says in his second objection that the automatists in the cross-correspondences could not have had the capacities and skills they displayed transmitted from another living being by ESP, and that there must therefore have been contact with the discarnate spirits whose skills and capacities they are—Myers in this case. In a letter of July 31, 1962, Professor Ducasse wrote about the Lethe cross-correspondence case as follows:

. . . consider the Lethe case, and the answers made by the purported surviving F. W. H. Myers, through the pencil and vocal organs of Mrs. Piper, to the questions asked by G. B. Dorr. Would you maintain that Mrs. Piper—a woman of limited education—not only herself had or got by ESP the knowledge of the recondite details of Ovid's writings required for the allusions made by the purported Myers—some of which knowledge Dorr did not himself have; but in addition herself had and exercised the capacity which Myers had (but which even Mrs. Verrall, who was a lecturer on classics at Newham College, said she did not have), so to combine those allusions as to make them say together tacitly about Lethe something other than any of the things which, singly, they referred to; which Myers knew of; and which it took Piddington much study and thought to identify?

The Lethe case, to which Professor Ducasse refers, was initiated by Sir Oliver Lodge. He knew that "Myers" was appearing in the scripts of both Mrs. Willett in England and Mrs. Piper in the United States. Sir Oliver thereupon wrote to a friend in the United States, Mr. George B. Dorr, and asked him to ask "Myers," through Mrs. Piper, about "Lethe," i.e., what does the word mean? He

planned to ask the same question of "Myers" through Mrs. Willett in England. It was Lodge's view that if "Myers" gave evidence of knowing that he had been asked the question through both women, this would establish that "Myers" was not a split-off part of the dissociated mind of the mediums but a real entity. It is difficult to understand why Lodge thought such a test would be conclusive because either medium could be imagined to have obtained telepathic knowledge from the other that this question was being asked of "Myers" through both automatists. Or, telepathic knowledge might have come to both mediums through Lodge himself. Let us go back, however, to Professor Ducasse's view as expressed in his letter, where he attributes such unusual capacities to Mrs. Piper through contact with Myers.

When Alson Smith describes Mrs. Piper's answer to the question put by Dorr, namely "What does the word 'Lethe' mean to you?"—a question actually addressed to "Myers" through Mrs. Piper as medium—the answer coming through Mrs. Piper hardly displays the traits ascribed to it by Professor Ducasse. Smith writes:

When Mr. Dorr, in the United States, asked this question of "Myers" communicating through Mrs. Piper, the result was a torrent of classical material, very much jumbled, which he could not understand. However, classical scholars in London went over the script and were able to pick out specific references to the little-known story of Ceyx and Alcyone and the despatching of the goddess Iris to the underworld. This is the story that is at the end of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and the river Lethe figures in it.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Alson Smith, *Immortality, the Scientific Evidence* (New York: G. and R. Anthony, Inc., 1954), pp. 80-82.

Dorr then did not understand this jumble. Neither did Mrs. Piper, for the script had to be sent to classical scholars in London. In the light of these facts, it is obvious that any skills or capacities that Mrs. Piper had as a basis for writing the script in question were not on a conscious level. There is no reason for supposing that this jumble, before Mrs. Piper's subconscious mind performed its acts of allusion, symbolism and indirect correlations on it, could not have been obtained by telepathy from some living person or by clairvoyance.

It is well here to recall the view of Broad on these cross-correspondence cases, for they are generally admitted to be the best sort of evidence that can be mustered for the survivalist's position. I shall quote Broad more fully at this time. He writes:

I also cannot help feeling suspicious of the enormous amount of learning and ingenuity which the impartial authority has to exercise in order to find the key to the riddle which the scripts set. Would not the same amount of patience, learning, and ingenuity discover almost as good Cross-Correspondences between almost any set of manuscripts? . . . There is another remark to be made on the Cross-Correspondences. Suppose that they rendered it practically certain that *some* mind other than the conscious minds of the automatists is controlling the experiments, can we feel any confidence that it is the mind of a certain deceased person who professes to be communicating? Is it not at least equally probable that it might be the unconscious part of the mind of one of the automatists or of one of the officers of the Society for Psychical Research? It would certainly be true to say that some of the automatists (in particular

Mrs. Verrall) were well aware of the problem of getting evidence for survival which could not be explained away by the hypothesis of telepathy between the living. . . . It is also true that the alleged communicators in the Cross-Correspondences had been well known in life to Mrs. Verrall and to many prominent and active members of the Society who were not themselves automatists. . . . I am of course quite well aware that such a theory goes far beyond anything for which we have direct evidence; for it seems to imply that the unconscious part of Mrs. Verrall's mind was capable of a kind of *selective* telepathy, conveying so much and no more to one automatist and so much and no more to another automatist. But I must point out that, if we do not ascribe this power to any embodied mind, we have to ascribe it to the disembodied mind of the supposed communicator.⁶⁹

Broad then points out that the ESP hypothesis is logically simpler because the survival hypothesis requires "the assumption *both* of an otherwise unknown power of selective telepathy *and* of an otherwise unknown substance, viz., a disembodied spirit, to exercise this power."⁷⁰ He points out that the ESP hypothesis puts forward only the first of these two assumptions, and thus has "a greater intrinsic probability" while at the same time being equally capable of explaining the facts.⁷¹ I go along here with Broad's reasoning.

If we would keep in mind the following facts, the ESP hypothesis will appear both reasonable and more probably true than its only serious competitor, the survival hypothesis. (1) The subconscious mind is a "dramatizing"

⁶⁹ Broad, *op. cit.*, pp. 543 ff.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 546.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 546.

aspect of mind, as evidenced by dreams, hypnotic trances and the "fictitious" cases of spirit communication discussed earlier. (2) The subconscious mind is, as W. G. Roll has asserted, characteristically symbolical and allusive in its manifestations. (3) It is sometimes said by survival theorists that the skills or creative capacities displayed by a medium, and for which the medium cannot be directly responsible, prove that they have their origin in a discarnate spirit of whom they are thought to be uniquely characteristic. There is no reason to suppose that any skill or creative capacity cannot be reproduced by a living person without benefit of a discarnate spirit. If it is not inherent in the medium, it may then be conceived to have its source in another living person. If it is argued, as it sometimes is, that a medium cannot acquire a skill telepathically or by other ESP means from another living person, it ought to be kept in mind that exactly the same problem is present for one who asserts that the skill comes from a discarnate mind. And we have already noted in the case of Newton and Leibniz that even so rare a creative capacity as bringing into being a new field of mathematics, namely calculus, does not serve to distinguish either one of them in a unique manner.

The conclusion of this monograph is therefore that the evidences go against the survival hypothesis in the main, or so the writer believes. Since this conclusion is a probable one, it is not inconceivable that there is evidence that has been overlooked by the writer or that new evidence will be forthcoming that will require a reversal of judgment in favor of the survival hypothesis. The conclusion is not held dogmatically but only tentatively.

VII

CONCLUSION

IT HAS been asserted in this monograph that the hypothesis of discarnate survival is a possible one. On the basis of a review of the arguments and evidences available, the writer maintained that the *prima facie* evidences for survival coming from parapsychology were better explained by an ESP hypothesis than by a survival hypothesis. This would suggest that a purely rational man would not believe in the survival hypothesis, but would incline toward belief in the ESP hypothesis to the degree merited by the evidence.

Though a purely rational man would behave in the manner just described, it does not follow that human beings as we know them to exist ought to act as a purely rational man would act. For one thing, no man is purely rational, and he could not be if he wanted to be. There are values other than truth values; there are moral values, esthetic values, etc. It is not only possible, but the case, that there are some values in human experience that are, *in certain circumstances*, to be preferred over truth value. It might be better for a married man to believe his wife is very beautiful or a good cook (when such is not the case) than for him to believe the facts; the pragmatic consequences of believing what is false are *sometimes* quite valuable and otherwise harmless.

It is possible that one who believes in discarnate survival, even when it is "less probably" true than the ESP hypothesis, would have a peace of mind that the skeptic lacks; that such a person would conduct himself in a super-

ior moral fashion, displaying greater altruism in his behavior than he would were he to believe what the evidence dictates. The question again is: is *knowing* the truth more valuable for a person than *having* beliefs (which may be false) but which have valuable pragmatic consequences for oneself and for others? One could, in certain situations, wisely choose the moral values consequent upon false belief rather than believing truly without the enjoyment of these values. The beliefs associated with religion frequently offer man such a choice.

Nor is the religious man as irrational as might appear on the surface. After all, "the improbable" is sometimes true. Though I would not go as far as Tertullian who said *Credo quia absurdum est* (I believe because it is absurd), I would affirm that there are beliefs concerning which the question of their truth value ought properly to be relegated to a secondary position.