

AFTERNOON GENERAL DISCUSSION

HAYNES: I would like to put in a plea for two realities, not one; for two sides of one's head, two sides of the brain, not one; for reason as well as for intuition; and most of all for creation, as well as for the creator, a creation which includes mathematics *and* the dance of Shiva; the reality of created things, whose nature can be explored by reason, *and* the reality of a creator; the reality of matter (which matters!) *and* the reality of mind. And I should also like to plead that one of the tasks of parapsychology (as well, perhaps, as religion) is to study the living interaction of mind—creative or created—with matter.

SERVADIO: I quite agree with you because I just wanted to point out that, in my opinion, there are two faces of reality—an inner face of reality and an outer face of reality. This model corresponds with what you just said.

IREDELL: My comment is prompted by Kathy Wilson's having listed the subjects in which parapsychology might be studied, and this follows rather on Renée Haynes' comment just now. The area which I would think was the absolutely appropriate slot would be Religious Knowledge. In my own schooldays, which were way back in the thirties, paranormal occurrences or inexplicable occurrences were studied in Religious Knowledge. Discussion ensued when people recounted their modern counterpart of "miracles" and considered possible physical or paranormal explanations. I grew up in an area and in a school where we took these things for granted. I use paranormal faculties, telepathy particularly, nearly every day. There was the reference yesterday to the elusive quality of results—elusive results, in fact. I have had a dual interest in parapsychology, partly experimental and partly personal, and have come to a conclusion that there can be almost 100 percent positive results, but, in order to attain these, there must be the ingredient of crisis or urgency. I feel that man has developed his sensory powers to use and extrasensory powers should be only a supplement and not a substitution to supplant the normal senses.

HERBERT: I just wanted to ask Miss Wilson who presented a paper on education in parapsychology, whether she has done any kind of survey of different countries in this respect, which might be rather interesting. For example, in Switzerland, Dr. Theo Locher seemed to have achieved some quite considerable organization among secondary schools and colleges in courses in parapsychology.

WILSON: No, I haven't done any comparative studies, but I am interested in finding out about it. I've only really investigated the situation in Britain.

DUPLESSIS: I want to add information about education in Paris. For two or three years now I have been lecturing on parapsychology to students of about 17 or 18 years of age, with about 30 students in the class. They were very interested, particularly in ESP, telepathy, precognition and clairvoyance, though not much in psychokinesis.

ROUSSEL: I learned a lot from this conference, seeing the clash between what I would call the spiritualist wing and the more materialistic wing. I would like to know what is the explanatory value of the methodology of those two sides by coming back to the OBE. Sue, you were great, brilliant this morning with your exposition. You finished by saying that you would like to explore the OBE from the purely psychological point of view. This morning I mentioned that Robert Monroe was seeing the OBE as a continuum, a gradient of just first reaching telepathy or on a deep level to inhabit the world of thought or on an even deeper level to have the same experience that the physicists have when they describe the world. Would you use the OBE as a way of research, to have a dialogue between what physicists find and what some person like Robert Monroe, who has had much experience with the OBE, finds in describing the world?

BIERMAN: I share Sue's opinion that OBEs are purely psychological phenomena on the basis of just comparing the incidence rate of psi during those phenomena with the incidence of psi in normal states. So the apparent non-locality which is in the OBE is an illusion, as it were. However, I think non-locality in psi phenomena is fundamental and that's indeed something that is analogous to modern physical theories. It's not equivalent, though. So, as a physicist I'm interested in psi phenomena much more than in the OBE. For instance: in the artificial intelligence work that I am engaged in I think that I could simulate an OBE within a certain psychological model, and if I can simulate something on a computer my interest is somewhat lost.

BLACKMORE: You were asking what kind of tool the OBE can be and what kind of explanation you think we want. I think one of the things that I should have stressed more this morning was that I think what is interesting about the OBE is not whether or not it is a paranormal phenomena, but why it takes the form it does. Why it has the relationship it does, as you have described, to different levels that people can get into. I think we can use the experience of the OBE itself as a tool for getting to other places. The more I investigate induction methods, the more I find that when you're inducing one of these things you can start

to get closer to others as well. So that's one side of it. But I do very strongly believe that there is no good just doing this exploring in isolation. People have been doing this for centuries and centuries and they don't have the language with which to describe it. The point at which we will have some kind of breakthrough is where we can describe what is happening in terms that relate to the rest of psychology. Now my guess—and it's no more than that—is that the cognitive psychology we have now is going to lead us into it. What we need to talk about is the structure of thinking, the structure of memory which produces the capacity to enter these different states. Maybe artificial intelligence is going to be possible, because we can ask what kind of processing goes on in different machines. Obviously I'm talking on a simple level, but we may talk about how the structure will lead to the capacity for different states. Now, it is this kind of thing that I want to go hand-in-hand with the exploration. I don't think one is of much value without the other.

MAHER: I was interested in the tendency to regard out-of-body phenomena as purely mentalistic. It seems to me from what I've read in the literature as well as my own personal experiences that so often there seem to be physical components to the experience in terms of the sensations that are experienced and reported by the OBErs. What I'm trying to get at, what I'd like to propose is that it would be a mistake to denigrate the physical theory, or put aside this avenue of approach. I'm glad that the Russian school of thought is pursuing this track, not because I think that they are wholly right, but because I feel that it is an important aspect of trying to understand these phenomena. I think that it is the convergence of these different approaches that is going to make us come to an eventual understanding of the phenomena we are interested in.

BLACKMORE: What do you mean by physical aspects of the OBE?

MAHER: I'm talking about the strange physical motor sensations, the flying through space for example. It seems to be an experience of some principle of geomagnetic force or something of that sort, which appears to be translated physically in an experience. At least that is a possibility.

BLACKMORE: You may be talking about the sort of thing which I've taken a very great interest in—the vibrations. In reports of OBEs, Monroe, Muldoon and many others say that before the OBE you get the sensation of vibrating. It is described in different ways in spontaneous cases, but I think many people are getting the same thing—shaking, jittering, a movement up and down. I found a lovely description in psychiatric not paranormal literature; someone said "it was like when Mickey Mouse bumped into a gate and he goes boing." I can induce this with a reasonable reliability and I have tried to explore it. Personally, I found two forms of it. One is to do with our eye movements and I

think we've got to clear that one out of the way. You get certain rapid eye movements when you are awake and it can give you that kind of a sensation, but I think that is probably not what most of them are talking about, although it can come in. I think the other one is something to do with the jump I was talking about this morning. You can get yourself to the state where you seem to have two positions and you're just going boing-boing between the two. You've got yourself into a split. Now I don't really know what is happening there, but it strikes me as being a cognitive process that is going on. A flashing between these two constructions of the external world which produces a very powerful physical response. Your muscles tense up; it has very definite physical motor effects. I believe that the thing to understand is the internal mental cognitive side of it and we'll then understand the physical. You presumably disagree and think that it's something to do with magnetism or energies out there. I think the energies are all in here.

REIN: Can I go back to Dr. Servadio's lecture and the phenomena of scientific methodology and basically say that in the end it may turn out that the scientific methodology may not distinguish between physical and non-physical phenomena. As a biologist, I am very aware of the relationship between psychic states and the physical body. The use of scientific technology should allow us to distinguish between what is actually biological in origin and what is in fact psychic in origin. This should help with the whole scientific approach to psychic research in terms of determining whether or not OBEs are part of such an investigation. The human aura may, in fact, be entirely electromagnetic or may contain a psychic component to it. A similar conclusion was reached in a meeting that I went to of the scientific and medical network, which said basically that the existing scientific methodology was probably not adequate for studying psychic phenomena and it required a certain amount of paradigm shift in order to incorporate and study these phenomena.

SERVADIO: In principle I agree with you. I was reminded immediately of what happened to Freud, who tried to create a scientific psychology based on neurology and then, after this brilliant tour de force, realized that he had come to a dead end and so developed psychoanalysis. He abandoned the purely material terrain of neurology and went on with the psychological approach.

ANGOFF: Ladies and Gentlemen, this 31st Annual International Conference of the Parapsychology Foundation is adjourned.