

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

ULLMAN: Dr. Hernández-Peón will now open the general discussion with a brief statement.

HERNÁNDEZ-PEÓN: Dr. Cavanna and I would like to express a note of optimism regarding future research in parapsychology. In the light of recent progress in the study of the neurophysiological mechanisms involved in different states of consciousness,<sup>1</sup> it is conceivable that in the reasonably near future the chemical processes involved in synaptic transmission of those specific neural pathways will be unraveled. This information may enable us to design experiments for achieving selective pharmacological and physiological control of the optimal states of consciousness that are necessary for the operation of psi phenomena. We think that this goal may be closer than is usually assumed at present.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ullman and I plan to collaborate in a series of experiments designed to explore some implications of the neurophysiological models presented at this conference as possible psi-facilitating conditions in both human and animal experimentation.

MUNDLE: I would like to make a few remarks on Dr. Beloff's valuable summary. It is largely a matter of opinion, and I'm sure Dr. Beloff will agree, as to which is the right order of priorities. Certainly, hypnosis comes first in terms of cost and simplicity: experiments can be done in any psychology laboratory. Unfortunately, although hypnosis has been tried in connection with ESP for the last 80 years, the results have been negative. I would, therefore, not be inclined to say that this is our most hopeful method. The most important thing Dr. Beloff pointed out is the importance of not wasting time on unselected subjects. Effort should be concentrated on people who already have the gift of ESP.

KRIPPNER: I agree in principle with what Professor Mundle just said, but I would like to interject a word of caution. Hypnosis is not 100 percent safe in the hands of untrained individuals. I hope that any of you

planning to work with hypnosis would collaborate with a professional hypnotist. Although the dangers with hypnosis are smaller than with drug techniques, for instance, they still exist.

GILBERT: Dr. Krippner, in terms of broadening your projects, how will you go about finding your subjects?

KRIPPNER: We have about 200 applicants; one-third of these show great promise in terms of their own psychic experiences. Therefore, I think we have no lack of possibly gifted subjects. We might do some pilot work with them, but I certainly do agree with Professor Mundle and Dr. Beloff—we need a screening device to ensure that our efforts aren't wasted.

GILBERT: In the last five years the Society for Psychical Research (S.P.R.) in London has done several hundred screenings in search of suitable ESP subjects as opposed to already established mediums or sensitives; all results have been negative.<sup>2</sup> I wonder why across the Atlantic there are suitable subjects, yet in England none can be found.

BELOFF: May I make a point in connection with the S.P.R. screenings. It is perfectly true that they produced negative results, but we must keep in mind that they were, of course, looking exclusively for card-guessing subjects.

OWEN: May I suggest that there might be a genetic basis for psi ability. High psi ability is found both in rare individuals and in "normal" individuals in very special psychic states. Therefore, we can postulate a genetic factor underlying this faculty. The nature of this genetic factor could be of different kinds, with different implications for success in inducing psi-favorable states:

1. It could be determined by a simple gene complex. If so, it would have to be of low penetrance or recessive, otherwise hereditary transmission of psi ability would be observed. If this unitary hypothesis is maintained, the only manipulation showing any promise would be a highly specific chemical interaction with the central nervous system to substitute for the effects of the determinant gene.

2. If psi was polygenically determined, it could emerge in two ways: (1) because of the concomitant presence of several factors in adequate strength or (2) as an outcome of a delicate mutual adjustment, a critical balance of several factors.

From this polygenic hypothesis derive two interesting corollaries: If (1) is true, psi might manifest itself as a threshold faculty, widely present but apparent only in rare persons. In this case, an enhancement in "normal" individuals by a relative shift of the threshold could be attempted in the laboratory. If (2) is true, psi would be more akin to genius, and therefore much more difficult to influence, owing to the variety of subtle interactions between the factors at play.

OSMOND: May I make another suggestion. I think one of the ways to find sensitives would be to place an advertisement in a rather obscure magazine. If interested readers sent in two dollars each, they would receive information on whether they belong to that category of people which is likely to have psi ability. You would receive a large number of responses, because most people who have this gift live in an environment that does not know about them. Therefore, they're extremely keen to receive an objective confirmation of their possible abilities. This technique, based on the use of relatively simple scales, would have three advantages: First, you would be dealing with a selected population; second, the volunteers would have provided most of the money for the project—quite an important consideration; and third, you would achieve some satisfaction into the bargain.

WEBSTER: It seems to me that one thing that has held back parapsychological research is that the vast majority of the public is quite skeptical. On the other hand, the drug-using new generations, principally in North America, have a great predisposition toward the control of consciousness. This generates a positive attitude toward parapsychology, which in ensuing years will help to reduce the public stigma attached to this work. Young people are very imaginative. When they take drugs they temporarily live in odd dimensions, and when they come back from their "trips," they may retain the validity of their experiences. Therefore, they wouldn't scoff at people involved in ESP work, and they would possibly even foster research. You wouldn't be working alone as so many parapsychologists have been for years.

ULLMAN: As there are no further interventions, as chairman I would like to make a few closing remarks. May I call your attention to a particular ability that our sponsor, Mrs. Garrett, has shown on repeated occasions. She seems to be particularly sensitive to the needs of the community of parapsychological researchers. In different stages of parapsycho-

logical research she was instrumental in bringing together, at the right time, what seem to me to be the right people. Parapsychologists have been working in relative isolation within their own countries. It was not until the international conference in 1953 sponsored by the Parapsychology Foundation in Utrecht, that we had the opportunity to establish a meaningful sense of scientific kinship transcending national boundaries. I recall that after that conference several participants felt a consensual validation by their colleagues, which compensated somehow for the loneliness that characterized their scientific pursuits. A cross-fertilization of ideas also occurred, which brought about very valuable research projects and further scientific meetings. Today I have the impression that we are nearer than ever to the possibility that a breakthrough might occur in parapsychology during our own lifetime.

The opportunity to gather here in a small, more intimate meeting has been both timely and productive. We have looked at psi and altered states of consciousness through the lenses of chemistry, psychology, and neurophysiology. In so doing, we took a closer look at some experiments in the fields of hypnosis, psychedelic and hypnodelic states, and sleep and dreaming.

This meeting also yielded both subjective and objective consequences. Subjectively (I can only speak for myself, but I think this might be congruent with the feelings of the group) this experience has left me in a mildly intoxicated state that I could best describe as euphoric rather than specifically psychedelic or hypnodelic, brought about alike by the friendly and articulate atmosphere in which this exchange has occurred and by the interest of the topics we discussed. Objectively, this meeting helped to develop ideas in the minds of some of us for meaningful collaborative research. For instance, Drs. Hernández-Peón and Cavanna are discussing the possibility of a joint project dealing with the investigation of the chemical factors at play in specific neurophysiological mechanisms controlling sleep and wakefulness. Furthermore, Dr. Hernández-Peón and myself are planning animal experiments. Dr. Rao intends to spend some time with us at Maimonides and to start a dream laboratory in India.

We acknowledge with deep gratitude the generosity and dedication of Eileen Garrett in making this meeting possible. Without her help, this type of interdisciplinary symposium could not conceivably have been held. It is with pleasure that I now ask her to make a few concluding remarks.

**GARRETT:** Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, we are ready to begin again. I especially want to thank you ladies, for permitting your

husbands to come; I hope it hasn't been too difficult for you who have been present.

Many of my friends with whom I have worked as a sensitive, a guinea pig rather, are here in the room. You know how I feel about you: I love you very dearly and I always will. I thank all of you who have become my friends during this time, and I especially thank my charming hypnotist.\* I shall carry an image of you, and Heaven knows what I will be able to do with it.

I thank Professor Mundle for having come. It was good to have a philosopher among us, who are dealing with a subject regarded as so far out. I thank the members of the psychical research societies, with whom I have worked for fifty-two years.

I couldn't tell you what's in my heart; it wouldn't be possible. Thank you again.

---

\*Mrs. Garrett refers to Dr. Arnold Ludwig, who kindly agreed to hypnotize her on the free Sunday during the conference as part of a demonstration. This was an attempt to demonstrate for the participants the physiological and psychological differences among three different states of consciousness: (1) a simple clairvoyant state, (2) a self-induced trance state, and (3) a hypnotic trance. The most unselfish cooperation of Mr. Douglas Johnson and Mrs. Garrett is gratefully acknowledged.

#### REFERENCES

1. HERNÁNDEZ-PEÓN, R.: "Neural Systems in the Brain Stem Involved in Wakefulness, Sleep and Conscious Experience," *Proc. Int. Cong. Neurol. Surg.* (1967), pp. 429-441.
2. MEDHURST, R. G., H. START, and G. T. THOMPSON: "A Large-Scale Experiment to Discover Agents and Percipients for ESP Testing, 1961-1962," *J. Soc. Psychic. Res.*, **43**, No. 725 (1965/66), 109-135.