

PARAPSYCHOLOGY IN NATURE

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Parapsychological phenomena are usually considered as being *human*, related to subjects acting spontaneously or under accepted suggestion.

Experience reveals, however, that paranormal phenomena can be associated with superior animals. For thirty years I have thought that they are associated with the whole of nature.

Contrary to Myers' doctrine I maintain that what is wrongly called the "sixth sense" is a remote survival from geological times when the nervous system had not yet acquired the fine specialization now found in the human brain. I was anxious to know whether paranormal phenomena have counterparts in the established sciences, particularly the natural sciences.

The most significant results came from three sciences: biology, psychology and sociology (physics being excluded, since it is but a mathematical picture).

In biology, there has been a revolution. Clear-sighted biologists re-read Claude Bernard and no longer believe that the "directing idea," "the legislative force" of life-phenomena can be pushed aside. The greatest French biologist, the late Lucien Cuenot, rehabilitated the principle of finality, exposed the insufficiencies and even absurdities of mechanistic interpretations. Genetics has felt the impact of new observations. The doctrine of evolution becomes impregnated with finality and our great Lamarck is back in honor again.

Obscure points in Lamarck become clear when parapsychological facts are admitted. How, otherwise, can mimicry, pollination of flowers or the sense of orientation of animals, etc.

be explained? How else explain the "convergence" which causes similar organic implements to appear in completely different species, so that, without proceeding from each other, they suggest renewed attempts by nature to realize an identical result in periods divided by hundreds of millions of years? The simple instincts of animals and plants suggest an original "psychism" solidified into an automatism leaving a fringe of intelligence necessary to individual behavior.

Psychology is frankly oriented toward parapsychology, since research in the depths of the mind will soon reveal the paranormal. Among so many disclosures of the unconscious what I have called "prosopopeia" (personification), the generator of spiritual phenomena, is re-established in importance.

Finally, modern sociology against its will has done a service to parapsychology by laying stress on the objective character of certain social phenomena which cannot be considered a mere total of individual phenomena. For Durkheim there is a social reality existing by laws which cannot be changed by individual will. A society is a new being which is more than an "arithmetical product"—a completely novel, unforeseeable combination.

Similarity to parapsychological phenomena is particularly striking. When persons gather for a seance, a "symbiosis" appears. Revelations made by the subject in the unconscious or semiconscious state always borrow something from the conscious or unconscious of those present. Sociology and biology both confirm undeniable parapsychological characteristics. There is a soul of the hive or the termitary. A new entity emerges from association of individuals and rules their behavior.

Such, very briefly sketched, are the trends of modern science of the living and its approaches toward parapsychology. More effort here and there, and the junction will have been made—provided we remain on firm scientific ground.