

How We Might Reverse The Decline of PARAPSYCHOLOGY

Researcher bemoans the lack of first-rate mediums today and suggests what you can do to correct the situation.

By Raymond Bayless

IT NOW must be apparent to everyone interested in parapsychology that the entire field is suffering such a tremendous decline that it is nearly impossible to find any form of psi phenomena worth studying. This general decline affects not only mental mediumship such as automatic writing and trance, which usually takes the form of spirit communications, but also to a far greater degree physical mediumship. Phenomena in both categories are so rare at the present time that for all practical purpose they are nonexistent. The situation from the parapsychologists' point of view is deplorable.

The few genuine mental mediums today are at their best a far cry from the great psychics of past years. In previous times they scarcely would have been noticed. Their phenomena are usually so marginal it is not practical to attempt their study. Our best contemporary mediums

are lucky indeed even to supply some evidence of paranormality!

Happily there are a few exceptions to brighten the dismal parapsychological panorama. Dr. Konstantin Raudive has succeeded in duplicating Jurgensen's voice effects and has produced similar faint paranormal voices which have been studied by such researchers as Prof. Hans Bender of Germany. These voices, significantly, are cast in an obvious spiritistic mold, claiming to be the dead and frequently giving their names. In view of the present parapsychological climate their importance cannot be overstated.

Mr. Attila von Szalay, a non-professional medium and a personal friend of mine, also produces a paranormal voice which has been recorded on tape. I have myself witnessed many of his spontaneous and experimental effects. These voices are faint

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promising enough to encourage a fledgling psychologist to involve himself in research?" (Why only a psychologist? Why not a physicist, a chemist, etc.?) One answer was, "He should be warned . . . that careful research on parapsychology will almost surely net negative results." Incredible!

Without a great deal of effort remarks can be culled from the writings of parapsychologists which reflect, I believe, a vast underswell of discouragement and disillusionment in the ranks. I am convinced that many researchers actually have serious doubts that quantitative ESP phenomena really represent psychic phenomena. For example, I know one noted parapsychologist who would joyfully drop the ESP testing being done presently in order to witness and study mediumistic phenomena. And this eagerness to observe *real* physical effects is not confined to this one researcher!

Indeed, the "phenomena" studied by inference in the laboratories are so far removed from mediumistic phenomena that it can be argued that the laboratory manifestations really are not psychic phenomena at all. Certainly they bear little resemblance to them. As a consequence pronouncements by parapsychologists regarding the

scope of telepathy, precognition, psychokinesis, etc., and their relationship to the survival question are seriously limited by lack of experience and real knowledge and cannot be taken too seriously.

In anticipation of outraged cries that I do not understand the statistical quantitative approach and the goal of contemporary parapsychology, I reply — nonsense! I am quite aware of the value of certain phases of present-day research but I emphatically deplore the fall of much of psychic research into triviality and utter sterility and, above all, the obvious guilt of many parapsychologists in ignoring and even subverting research into the major phenomena of psychism. This ridiculous and unscientific attitude must be changed if parapsychology is to recover its lost gains and luster.

What can be considered the golden age of mediumship began some years before the founding of the British College of Psychic Science by J. Hewat McKenzie in 1920 and began to tarnish in the mid- and late 1930's. Naturally, many mediums began their active careers before this time but in general more genuine psychism existed during this period than during any other time.

The remarkable Moore sisters, Mrs. Gladys Osborne Leonard,

but this does not affect their importance.

The controversial photographic effects produced by Ted Serios also have presented major phenomena, judged by any standard.

But with these exceptions and perhaps a few others the psychic horizon is devoid of phenomena for systematic investigation. Psychic science, or parapsychology if you prefer, is in desperate straits.

It might be argued that laboratory ESP research, the quantitative statistical approach, has filled the gap and is forging ahead. Unfortunately, however, quantitative studies in reality have proved so marginal — except from a statistical standpoint — that many parapsychologists today are openly disillusioned or secretly of the opinion that this general approach has proved a failure.

Contrary to earlier hopes the experimental approach has not yielded any method for producing psychic phenomena upon demand other than that *inferred* by a statistical deviation from chance. It is true that a few principles have been uncovered but compared to the phenomena of the past (raps, telekinetic effects, levitation of objects, lights, etc.) and the rules which were discovered to govern their

production and behavior these seem slight.

Dr. Raynor Johnson, the eminent Australian physicist, in his book *Psychical Research* pointedly observes, "When we were considering ESP we remarked that the card experiments revealed only the faculty on the fringe of its development, not in its fuller manifestations as some of the spontaneous cases revealed it." He believes these same observations can be applied to the study of psychokinesis through the throwing of dice as contrasted with the more complex forms of physical mediumship.

Even more pointedly Dr. Johnson wrote regarding such experimentation ". . . the phenomena being so investigated are those on the fringe of normality; they have none of the emotional associations and dramatic undertones of many spontaneous phenomena. To name a card as a 'circle' rather than as a 'square' is not a very stirring disclosure — and it may well be that careful study of paranormal phenomena in their full flowering . . . will reveal much that cannot be found in experimental work."

In the recent volume *Parapsychology Today* (edited by J. B. Rhine) the question is asked of a panel of parapsychologists: "Does parapsychology seem

Eileen Garrett, Mrs. Etta Mason, Evan J. Powell, Arthur Ford, Estelle Roberts, the fascinating continental mediums such as the Schneider brothers, and Franek Kluski, the interesting mediumship of the Valiantine circle (which included George Valiantine, H. Dennis Bradley, Lord Charles Hope and the Marquis Carlo Centurione Scotto) and the Glasgow trance medium John Sloan — all were active during this period.

It is true that certain of these psychics were at one time or another considered highly controversial. The career of George Valiantine was marred by fraud, although I believe from the available evidence that he also was quite capable of genuine phenomena. The Schneider brothers likewise both were involved in incidents which did not enhance their reputations. Despite such occasional lapses all these mediums, in my opinion, were able to produce splendid provable phenomena as a serious study of their records will convince all experienced investigators who retain an open mind. However, mere familiarity with published material is frequently a poor substitute for actual experience with psychic manifestations, physical phenomena in particular.

The last few years have seen

the loss of the last of the great mediums. Mrs. Osborne Leonard has passed away. Geraldine Cummins is no longer with us. Estelle Roberts, Eileen Garrett and Arthur Ford have died and the last great "voice" medium, John Sloan, died in 1951. Unfortunately no one has come on the mediumistic scene to replace these remarkable and valuable people.

Researchers wonder why this deplorable situation has come about.

One very good reason occurs to me immediately. Due to prevailing materialistic influences and the generally fast tempo of life today people no longer undertake the necessary program of development vital to mediumship. The old traditional "home circle" of orthodox Spiritualism is a thing of the past. It was and is a splendid avenue for the development of psychic abilities but today few even know the correct procedures to follow. Consequently mediumship is a dying art. Even if it is true that no extraordinary psychics are being born today the "home circle" method could help fill the gap. Phenomena including physical evidence can be produced again and a new age of mediumship can take place.

In England Mr. K. J. Batchelor has written a paper, unfor-

MEDIUMS OF THE GOLDEN AGE

THE MOORE SISTERS, Scottish voice mediums, sat extensively for the British College of Psychic Science. They are discussed in H. Dennis Bradley's *The Wisdom of the Gods*.

GLADYS OSBORNE LEONARD, the most thoroughly investigated British trance medium, achieved fame when she convinced Sir Oliver Lodge of survival after death. See Sir Oliver Lodge: *Raymond*, and Susy Smith: *The Mediumship of Mrs. Leonard*.

EILEEN GARRETT, celebrated British trance medium, was equally noted as a psychic researcher. Her autobiography, *Adventures in the Supernormal*, describes her career.

ETTA MASON, English mental medium and psychometrist, sat under contract for the British College of Psychic Science. See H. A. Dallas: *Comrades on the Homeward Way*.

EVAN J. POWELL, English physical medium, was extensively investigated by J. Malcolm Bird (*My Psychic Adventures*) and Dr. Robin Sanders-Clark.

ARTHUR FORD, the best known American trance medium, was especially noted for his alleged communication from Houdini and his televised seance in September 1967 with Bishop Pike.

ESTELLE ROBERTS was an English medium widely acclaimed for both mental and physical phenomena. See Maurice Barbanell: *The Trumpet Shall Sound*.

WILLI and RUDI SCHNEIDER, famed Austrian physical mediums, were extensively studied by Baron Schrenk-Notzing and Harry Price. See Price's book, *Rudi Schneider*.

FRANEK KLUSKI, a nonprofessional physical medium, was investigated widely in Poland and later in France by Professors Richet and Geley. An unusual feature of his mediumship was the materialization of animal forms.

GEORGE VALIANTINE, an American-born trance medium, was most famous for communications in languages unknown to him. His phenomena are the subject of H. Dennis Bradley's *Toward the Stars* and *The Wisdom of the Gods*.

H. DENNIS BRADLEY, noted as the champion of Valiantine's mediumship, later developed independent voice manifestations of his own.

LORD CHARLES HOPE, primarily an investigator, formed a private circle after sitting with Valiantine and noting Bradley's development as a voice medium. Lord Hope himself recorded interesting phenomena including a voice manifestation.

THE MARQUIS CARLY CENTURIONE SCOTTO, like Bradley, attended Valiantine sittings and then developed his own mediumship, including independent voice and teleportation. See Gwendolyn Kelly Hack: *Modern Psychic Mysteries*.

JOHN SLOAN, Glasgow trance medium, was the subject of J. Arthur Findlay's *On the Edge of the Etheric*.

and success is sure to result if the rules are faithfully followed.

These may seem arbitrary and contrary to certain patterns of your thinking and perhaps even silly — but they *work!* I would like to encourage enough people to experiment to create a resurgence of psychic phenomena. Exact instructions vary, of course, for the production of different phenomena. Here we will be concerned primarily with the production of raps.

The first requirement is to gather together a small group of fellow experimenters (four or five) who possess *vast patience*. They should be persons who can work together in harmony. It is of the utmost importance that both before and during all sittings controversial subjects which might arouse intense feelings be avoided.

A small room is best, with the sitters, alternating in sex as nearly as possible, seated around a small solidly constructed table. It should be free of creaks and the surface should be free of varnish — sand it if necessary. The table should be of wood and light weight.

Complete darkness at first will facilitate the development of phenomena. After raps have been obtained then a small red light can be used. In extraordinary cases the phenomena will

continue in fairly strong light but this is rare.

Each sitting should last from one to one and a half hours. Music should be played or sung for about 15 minutes at the beginning of the sitting. Singing during the sitting sometimes will strengthen the phenomena. Conversation should be limited and loud talking completely avoided. A pleasant cheerful attitude is a requisite.

The experimenters should rest their fingertips lightly on the upper surface of the table. When the arms become strained, the hands may be placed palms down for rest periods. Obviously the lighter the contact, the less chance of subconscious activity. Eventually when raps are forthcoming, especially in light, it can be demonstrated that subconscious activity is eliminated, for with good fortune raps can be heard when no one is in contact with the table.

To repeat, patience is necessary. Do not be surprised if no raps occur for as long as the first six months. In one set of experiments we obtained raps within five sittings but our group was psychologically well-knit.

If raps are not forthcoming within six months of weekly or twice-weekly sittings I suggest that one sitter withdraw and be replaced with a new participant.

tunately not published, detailing conditions favorable and unfavorable for table tipping phenomena. The usual table tipping affairs one encounters are mainly due to subconscious activity and/or fraud. Batcheldor, however, details conditions under which these factors can be controlled and suggests that many physical effects can be produced without the presence of a powerful medium.

Batcheldor's paper was circulated privately in England and in the June 1970 issue of the *Journal of the Society for Psychological Research* there appeared an important article by C. Brookes-Smith and D. W. Hunt describing a remarkable series of experiments based upon instructions given by Batcheldor. During these experiments there occurred numerous psychokinetic movements of objects, raps and knockings and levitations of a 40-pound table. On one occasion the table rose four or five feet into the air. These experiments, all in dim but adequate red light, are among the most important conducted in many years. This paper should be read by every serious investigator.

For the most part the psychokinetic effects were quite uncontrolled and seemed to lack "awareness." In my opinion this lack of intelligence was due to

the experimenters' admitted prejudice against the spiritistic concept. This attitude was a grave mistake and represented an unfortunately limited knowledge of the seance room.

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TWO YEARS ago a small number of fellow investigators and I undertook to produce paranormal voice phenomena and accompanying general effects. Without going into detail I will state simply that our three series of experiments with various sitters attained different degrees of success. Hundreds of raps were produced, some in quite adequate light. One complete levitation of a seven and one-half pound table occurred. A great many touches were experienced, some in light. The traditional cold breezes were felt on occasion and one genuine paranormal voice was heard. (Eventually this material will be published.)

As a result of these experiments I have compiled instructions for the reception of raps and other phenomena, including paranormal table tipping. These instructions are based on tradition, experience and the advice of Dr. Robin Sanders-Clark, former member of the British College of Psychic Science. This simple method has been used for years by orthodox Spiritualists

Even though all requirements seem to be filled one or more of the sitters may not be suited psychologically or "psychically" and alternate members should be tried.

Even when hands continue to maintain light fingertip contact with the table during the times raps are heard the problem of subconscious action and fraud still can be controlled. These raps can range from the faintest of slow ticks, to fast multiple tappings, to loud bangs on the table's surface. Some raps sound "fleshy," others are sharp. The variety of effects can be remarkably wide and the chance of other phenomena such as touches and table tipping is very good.

Assuming that a successful "circle" has been formed and raps have been obtained during a number of sittings, the strength of the effects should gradually increase until the raps display intelligence. A simple code can be devised and answers to questions received. Paranormal table tipping likewise can be used to answer questions.

The natural question at this juncture is: what is the nature of the intelligence behind the phenomena? Some parapsychologists prefer to avoid the spiritistic concept; others accept it. We cannot discuss spiritistic and nonspiritistic concepts here but I

state frankly that I am a convinced survivalist.

I suggest that if your attitude is that the phenomena quite possibly are instigated by surviving spirits you will find the effects intelligently patterned and far more highly developed. Phenomena lacking control, such as the English experimenters encountered, will not occur. It seems significant to me that the best results are obtained when the sitters accept the possibility of the existence of surviving spirits.

Even if the experimenter only adapts his behavior to spiritistic concepts for the purpose of the experiments it will help. Further important suggestions are: At the beginning of each sitting spirit friends and relatives should be formally greeted. They should be thanked for previous participation and invited to participate and aid the present sitting. At the end of each sitting they should be thanked again for their help and presence. In other words, common courtesy helps.

I repeat, the traditional spiritualistic procedure appears to produce the best results.

By following these quite simple rules you should be able to produce raps and other psychic phenomena. And when you do it will be a step along the way in aiding parapsychology to regain its lost luster and make real progress.