

FIRST SIGHT: PART ONE, A MODEL OF PSI AND THE MIND

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ABSTRACT: A model of the mind by which psi functioning may be better understood is described. A phenomenological approach is taken, and the model that is developed is psychological, teleological, and not physically reductionistic. This model assumes that each organism, by its nature, extends beyond itself into the larger pre-sensory surround. Psi is assumed to be neither knowledge nor action, but to belong to the outermost temporal edge of those normal pre-experiential mental processes by which the mind structures all its experiences and commences all its actions. Psi processes are posited to function normally as the unconscious leading edge of the development of all consciousness and all intention. This unconscious functioning is normal and continuous, and is a constituent element of all experience. Like subliminal apprehensions, presensory apprehensions sometimes can be seen by the anticipatory arousal of networks of meaning and affective activation that they evoke, and that function normally to help our minds select and understand the contents of our experience and initiate our actions. These anticipatory, orienting networks are ordinarily experienced as inadvertencies, events (both “inner” and “outer”) that seem to have no particular meaning but that implicitly express the action of the orienting activity. Such inadvertencies are marginal to consciousness, and ordinarily may be noticed only when the mind is not occupied with conscious work. By sensitively consulting the implications of inadvertencies, traces of the psi effect may be noticed. It is assumed that unconscious mental processes, including psi processes, are motivated by personal intentions and needs, also largely unconscious. The problems of psi-hitting, psi-missing, and directional switching are addressed. Implications of the model for understanding psi-conductive states are developed, and a relationship between psi and states of dissociation or prolonged confusion or uncertainty is proposed. Persons who are relatively “psychic” are either more prone to intentions and states of mind that facilitate production of such marginal material, or have developed more interest and skills in the introspective examination with which they can be understood, or both. The roots of the model and its relation to some other conceptual contributions in parapsychology are examined.

I am sketching a model with two major aspects: a model of the mind and its functioning in the world, and a model of psi and its functioning within the context of the mind. I begin with a basic premise about the nature of psi and its place in mental functioning and then describe an approach to understanding the mind in which psi functioning can be seen to have a sensible place. The model I propose is psychological, because it appears that most of parapsychology’s more robust findings are psychological in nature, and it is these findings that most need to be understood and extended. Therefore, it will be the interface between

parapsychology and general psychology, and not the various other fields of science, that will be of most interest here.

PSI AND THE MIND

Basic Premise About the Nature of Psi

ESP is the leading edge of the mind's ability to move to the next experience; PK is the leading edge of the mind's ability to move the next effect to its intention. These psi processes are continuously active but normally unconscious and implicit. Therefore, in terms of this premise, psi is the initial stage of the incipience of experience. This implies that all experience and all intention begin at the psi level of functioning. Psi is not "second sight" but "first sight."

From this perspective, psi processes are not unusual or exotic. They function as the initiating part of the mind's perpetual preconscious working toward the end of constructing its experience and framing its choices. They are quite everyday, and serve as the implicit foundation out of which all experience is formed. How may we conceive of the nature of the mind in a way that will make this understanding of psi functioning sensible?

Historical Context and Alternative Views of the Mind

William James (1890) defined psychology as the study of mental processes. He said that the central problem for psychologists "is that thinking of some sort goes on" (p. 224). He spoke of the stream of consciousness, then immediately pointed out that it was actually more like a pulsing chain of mental events: thought, feeling, memory, thought, perception, feeling, and so on. There is an essential problem here to which parapsychology can contribute in a basic way: How is it that a thought moves to the particular next thing and not some other? At any given moment there are presumably many contending possibilities, even excluding extrasensory events.

A popular model. In the conventional model of the mind in the world, physical processes are the bedrock of reality.¹ Mental events are generated by physical (neurobiological) events. Organisms, including human beings, can be understood as biological machines with clear physical boundaries. Because the nervous system generates consciousness, the reality of mental events is secondary and derivative. Since physical processes produce mental events, these events cannot also be elicited by happenings beyond the physical boundaries of the organism, except inasmuch as their effects somehow impinge upon the sensory system. The laws governing mental processes are mechanical and impersonal in nature. Implicit in this presumption of physiology-generating-mind is the deeper presumption of a reductionistic "hierarchy of the sciences," in which the constructs of physics are seen as reflecting the deepest substrate of reality. From this point of

view, the answer to the question about why the particular next thought occurs must be found in the biophysical events that cause that thought to occur.

An alternative model. “Mental” and “physical” are constructions placed upon reality, and neither is presumed to refer to processes more real or basic than the other (Kelly, 1955). The notion of “organism” is itself a construction and the being referred to is not rigidly bounded but at its edges blurs into its surround such that the two are not entirely distinguishable. All conscious processes occur in a context of unconscious or preconscious mental processes, which must be understood in terms of meaning rather than impersonal, biological mechanism. On the contrary, mental processes are primarily goal-directed and personal, including those that are unconscious or “automatic” (Bargh, 1989). At the edge of perception, an organism and its surround lack distinguishable identity. There is a transactional zone in which organism and surround, or self and other, are one another. Each organism is situated at its edges beyond the line of its sensory impingement with physical events, and is responsive to meanings in the larger surround, which is of indefinite extent. From this perspective, the particular next thought occurs because it is chosen by an intentional self using preconscious processes and consulting preconscious (and sometimes extrasensory) information.

Early observations of unconscious processes. At about the same time that James was defining the central problems of psychology, two other important lines of work were beginning that strongly suggested the reality of unconscious mental processes. Jastrow noticed that subjects who believed that they were merely guessing could distinguish the difference between two weights correctly even when the differences were so slight that they were not consciously perceptible (Pierce & Jastrow, 1884). Freud found that with patients like Anna O., inscrutable physical symptoms could be explained and treated if they were seen as a derivative of unconscious emotional conflicts (Freud, 1892/1963). Alongside these observations, mainstream psychology developed a skeptical tradition in which unconscious processes are still viewed with strong suspicion by many.

The current scene. Despite this suspicion, Jastrow’s and Freud’s observations led to much work on what has come to be called the “cool” and the “warm” unconscious, respectively. All of this work has grown considerably, and there is now much overlap (Bornstein & Masling, 1998; Ulleman & Bargh, 1989; Weinberger, Siegel, & Decamello, 2000). Some scientists, such as Epstein (1994) and Shevrin (Shevrin, Bond, Brakel, Hertel, & Williams, 1996), are now doing sophisticated research that is informed by both traditions at once. Out of all of this emerges a picture of the mind as being a zone of conscious self-awareness with a subliminal surround that precedes and conditions consciousness in many complex but systematic ways.²

The findings of parapsychology are not incongruent with this picture, but add to it the idea that an organism's engagement with this surround is not bounded by physical, sensory impingement but extends beyond that in space and in time.

The Boundaries of an Organism

Is it reasonable to suppose that an organism is not rigidly bounded but at its edges blurs into its surround such that the two are not entirely distinguishable? This is obviously the case in a physical sense. The bagel on my plate at breakfast time is well on the way to becoming part of Jim Carpenter a couple of hours later. In the words of the children's rhyme: "It's a very odd thing, as odd as can be, that whatever Miss Gee eats, becomes part of Miss Gee." Or as Gardner Murphy asked (1956): at what point does the oxygen one breathes become part of oneself? In another example of blurry physical boundaries, consider the gecko, a lizard remarkable for its ability to walk upside down on ceilings. Recent research (Autumn et al., 2002) has discovered that its defiance of gravity is permitted by the fact that the extremely fine hairs on its feet provide such a density of contact with a surface that it creates billions of weak molecular attractions called van der Waals forces. These forces act only at very small distances and hold together the molecules of objects. In other words, the same tiny forces that hold the gecko together and hold the ceiling together also hold the gecko to the ceiling. At this very fine level of contact, gecko and ceiling are energetically merged. I suggest that there is an analogous blur at the edge of our mental being. At the leading edge of perception and intention, organism and surround lack distinguishable identities. In this transactional zone, they *are* one another. Adding the dimension of time, it might be best to say that in this zone they *become themselves out of each other*. Each sentient being exists at its edges beyond the line of contact between physical events and the sensorimotor system and is responsive to meanings in that indefinitely larger surround.³

Were it not for the anomalies of parapsychology, we might not need to pose the idea that by our nature we extend beyond ourselves in apprehension and action. Given the reality of those anomalies, this idea seems almost inescapable.

ELABORATION OF THE MODEL OF PSI

The following discussion focuses more on the perceptive aspect of psi functioning (ESP) than on the active aspect (PK); however, I believe that the basic ideas may be applied to PK as well. Next I describe how psi may function in the formation of all experience.

History of a Perception (or a Memory or Feeling or Image)

In the following sequence, run backwards, I sketch a general series of events that appears to lead to every experience. Using the example of a visual perception, and beginning at the end of the sequence:

- D. I see X (an attributed understanding of an experience) and I think about it.
- C. Just prior to that, I experience a collection of sensations that I attempt to construe.
- B. Just prior to that, sensations register subliminally.
- A. Just prior to that, an extrasensory anticipation of the event (and/or a psychoinetic elicitation of the event) initiates the perceptual process.

A great deal of the work of experimental psychology has focused on processes at Level C. Psychologists studying subliminal perception, or “perception without awareness” (PWA), as is preferred today (Bornstein & Pittman, 1992), added the preconscious step B to the cognitive account. The findings of parapsychologists add step A.

In the genesis of a perception, each step links to the next and orients it in a helpful way. Think of these colloquially as different parts of a person playing different roles, all communicating quickly and efficiently: We might speak of an inner *Prophet*, an *Artist*, a *Scientist*, and a *Person of Ordinary Consciousness*. The Prophet knows something is coming, the Artist has a sense of something interesting, the Scientist sees a collection of facts and tries to form an understanding of it, the Person of Ordinary Consciousness sees X—all in a fraction of a second. Each sends a rapid, helpful message on to the next.⁴

In regard to the guidance of the flow of consciousness, we ordinarily want consciousness to focus on the most useful thing at any given moment. This implicit motive guides the orienting information that is passed on from each perceptual stage to the next.

In seeking this “most useful” thing, we are pursuing a balance of several needs all the time, although different needs may be more salient at different times. Some of these needs are general, and many are shared with all animals.

1. We want to continue to live, and to live happily and freely, so we also want to avoid potential danger, pain, and confinement.

2. We want to maintain harmonious and fruitful relations with our interpersonal network, so we also want to avoid conflict, shame, and guilt.
3. We want to maintain adequate control over our circumstances and a well-functioning predictive understanding of events, so we also want to avoid confusion, identity diffusion, the invalidation of core constructs (Kelly, 1955), and a loss of freedom to explore and investigate.

Some needs are more personal and feature unconscious emotional reactions (as to events resembling former trauma or happiness) and unconscious beliefs (Weiss, 1993).

Rational consciousness is a marvelous, very powerful tool, responsible for human dominance of the planet, and each of us is constantly selecting the most interesting issue to present to it from the myriad of potential concerns that exist in the present or the personally meaningful future.

One implication of the metaphor of inner “parts” or “roles” needs to be clarified. Starting with a single perception and moving backward, it might seem as if one event leads to one perception. Actually this model assumes that at the A level, we are in touch with virtually everything, or at least so much that we currently have no way to assess its boundaries. *Step A must begin the winnowing process from virtually everything to one best thing.* This initial step of selection and deselection is the basic psi process. In everyday experience it is “bound” and functions altogether unconsciously, although it goes on all the time and must operate in what seems to the rational mind an unbelievably complex and intricate way. In making this selection, it must use two criteria: How important is the potential event? How likely is it to actually occur to me? These two criteria together might be said to constitute the event’s *sensed relevance*.

With this mammoth task of selecting and deselection in terms of sensed relevance, the psi function (the Prophet) has only one binary tool: in regard to ESP, it is to orient toward the thing or away from it to something else instead. In regard to PK, it is to impel the potential object of intention in the prointention direction, or in some contrary direction. As Freud said (1933), the unconscious mind has no sense of negation. It does not choose “this or not-this,” it chooses “this or that.” In the language of parapsychology, all psi-missing is some form of displacement. One thing is selected as “toward” and the rest as “away from.” This act takes place prior to the GSR or ERP deflections of presentiment studies (e.g., Bierman & Radin, 1997; Radin, 1997); or perhaps the GSR deflection signals the moment of decision for the future event in question (such as the later presentation of an emotional picture).⁵

Focusing now exclusively on ESP and returning to the metaphor of inner roles, if the Prophet selects an event as “toward,” the Artist is alerted.

The Artist then senses that something interesting (or important or ominous or novel or confusing or attractive) is coming, and preconscious attention is sharpened in the direction of the sensory events that are now beginning to impinge upon the peripheral nervous system. The Scientist is alerted that this particular collection of sensations (among the myriad that are present at any given moment) is especially salient and begins to focus upon them. Then the Person of Ordinary Consciousness arrives at a perception.⁶

Conscious experiences are either constituted by thoughts (ideas, images, feelings, memories) or sensory perceptions that quickly give rise to thoughts or construals. All experiences have a preconscious phase that is quite brief (Schilder, 1942). What is known about the development of sensory experiences may serve as a model for the development of all experiences, including those that refer not to physical sensations but to feelings or ideas.

When a preconsciously apprehended piece of sensory information is selected as salient, this selection initiates an activation of preconscious affective responses and associated meanings. This activation does not by itself result in a conscious experience but in the arousal of an *apprehensive network* that potentiates experience. This network is not simply of a meaning, but of presemantic affect and classes of meanings. This network poses a set of implicit questions that preconscious attention seeks to answer by consulting additional sensory information. With it the person poses tentative, general, preverbal hypotheses in terms of which to scan for confirmatory evidence. Thereby, it guides the effort to construe. Preconscious processes, including psi, anticipate and implicitly structure the formation of experience.

At the very leading edge of the formation of experience, psi apprehension arouses an anticipational nexus of meanings. These pose, as it were, a set of questions that are to be answered by forthcoming sensory experience. It is sensory experience that provides conscious awareness. It provides the validating information to the anticipational questions. Psi is part of the preparatory process that helps the mind make the best use of its sensory experience. In the ordinary flow of developing awarenesses, the anticipational questions slip into oblivion before they can ever become issues to awareness, in favor of the actual developing experience.⁷

Suppose I notice a flicker of movement on my right, just at the edge of my visual field. I turn my head and see that my son has entered the room. This model proposes that before the flicker of light, a psi apprehension suggested that something meaningful was forthcoming and my awareness was alerted in a general direction and to a family of potential meanings. The flicker, as we know from work in PWA, itself arouses an anticipational network of potential meaning, beginning to question the movement and preparing me to understand it. When I turn and see my son, I have full visual information that I can quickly understand, and I have a simple awareness, a bit of knowing. All the rapid machinations of

preknowing have vanished before I can glimpse them or know of their participation in my experience.

Preconscious Expectation and Inadvertency

What happens if this process is interrupted before the natural, rapid flow of events can develop and a perception is formed? Both parapsychologists and the psychologists studying PWA have been asking this question and have independently found many of the same answers. Basically, the orienting action of Steps A and B can be glimpsed in the feelings, cognitions, and behavior of the person whose perception is merely potential. Usually we can see these things more clearly in others than in ourselves unless we are examining our own experience in retrospect with a certain detachment. When conscious perception is allowed to develop, this is what is available to awareness. When that is denied or prevented for some reason, either because the event never is allowed to impinge upon sensation (as in an ESP experiment), or because the impingement is interrupted too quickly for it to be grasped or is otherwise occluded (as in PWA), one may see the anticipational arousal expressed *inadvertently* in the feelings or associations or behavior of the person, with the latter having no insight into the origin of those things. The expression must be inadvertent because one cannot make a *conscious* choice in regard to something unless there is a conscious perception of it. Prior to the conscious perception, or in situations that prevent its forming, one is able to see no more than the effects of preconscious choices, which are experienced by consciousness as inadvertency.

In general, both psi apprehension and subliminal apprehension can be seen primarily in the interpretation of inadvertency. Ordinarily, consciousness occludes these preconscious processes and is oblivious to them, but when conscious experience is prevented, we can glimpse the hints and whispers of implicit meaning. Analogously, the sky in the daytime, flooded with the sun's light, looks blue and empty, but at night without the sun, it can be seen filled with flickering starlight.

Seeing the Action of Preconscious Arousal

Inadvertent psychological events are those that "just happen" as opposed to being experienced as things "I do." An image comes to mind, the memory of a song occurs of its own volition, a mood descends or arises, a silly mispronunciation intrudes into speech, one name is substituted for another, a shadow is misinterpreted as a snake, or in the depth of sleep a dream takes shape. In the context of an ESP experiment, the percipient utters free associations, the remote viewer scribbles and consults an inner flow of images, the card-guesser impulsively throws a card on one pile among

five, the subject being stared at by someone out of sight generates faint, unfelt neurophysiological responses being sent to a polygraph.

Although they are presumably active all the time, we rarely see the extrasensory and the subliminal-sensory levels of experience in action. I have an occasional experience in which I can see the subliminal at work in my own stream of consciousness. Since I have become a little hard of hearing, my threshold for clearly hearing vocal speech is a little different from that of most people. Recently in a family conversation, I uttered some thought only to see my daughter roll her eyes in an expression that gently said, "He's doing it again." I had expressed a restatement of something that someone else in the conversation had said a short time before. Others had been conscious of the remark, but I had not. My own words popped into my head as, I thought, a brand new idea. This "popping up" is one kind of inadvertency, not stimulated by anything around me, as far as I could tell at the time.

Inadvertent expressions of preconscious processes have been studied extensively by psychologists. Poetzel (1917) found that images flashed briefly and not consciously seen were expressed metaphorically later in dreams. Cognitive psychologists found that subliminal or occluded stimuli affected later processes of learning, forgetting, affective response, and association if the later material was connected somehow to the unconscious stimuli (Bornstein & Pittman, 1992; Dixon, 1981). Psychodynamic and social psychological researchers found that the emotional significance of subliminal material affected a person's later mood and spontaneous social behavior (e.g. Chen & Bargh, 1997; Silverman, 1983; Silverman, Lachman, & Milich, 1982). For example, a person exposed to an aggressive subliminal stimulus was more apt to be either more withdrawn or more querulous when placed in a later contentious situation, as compared to someone subliminally exposed to neutral messages. The same aggressive messages presented to full awareness had no such effect.

In a parallel manner, parapsychologists found that people could indeed not see the material enclosed in opaque envelopes, but they could sometimes successfully guess them, and perhaps to a higher degree, could express a meaningful inadvertent response to the hidden content by their physiological responses or spontaneous imagery or affective responses to similar content exposed later. Many other examples could be listed of the various presensory and subliminal-sensory effects that have been studied. For instance, in a ganzfeld ESP study, the percipient allows the development of spontaneous feelings and images that are not consciously experienced as being caused by the target material (which is neither seen nor heard). However, later examination of the target material often suggests associative connections to the feelings and images to the extent that the experiences can be correctly identified as associated. In a typical PWA experiment in which conscious recognition of a stimulus is prevented, the effects of the stimulus (seen perhaps as a meaningless flicker of light) may be observed

by a variety of behaviors that the subject experiences as bearing no relation at all to the stimulus. For example, Banse (1999) showed that preconscious presentation of the names and faces of loved ones, when compared to those of other persons, caused a shift in the emotional evaluation of meaningless Chinese characters; Verney, Granholm, and Marshall (2003) showed that a person's general level of cognitive ability could be assessed by the kind of pupillary response involuntarily given to masked stimuli; and Talbot, Duberstein, and Scott (1991) found that the number of goldfish crackers eaten in a bogus tasting task declined when subjects had been exposed subliminally to the words "Mommy is leaving me," which was designed to unconsciously arouse a depressive mood.

Similar Actions of Preconscious Processes Employing Subliminal and Extrasensory Information

Similar conditions, such as drawing responses versus verbalizing them; sensory attenuation; hypnosis; free association; dreaming sleep; relaxed reverie; and a positive, encouraging environment, have been found to enhance the expression of the effect in both parapsychological and PWA experiments (Nash, 1986; Schmeidler, 1986, 1988). Similar sorts of people have been seen to be more likely to show the effects: people with stronger tendencies toward dissociation or creativity or absorption, those positively disposed toward the possibility of showing an effect, those who are more socially engaged, and those who are less anxious. The expression of both kinds of stimuli tends to be fragmented and metaphorical rather than literal and complete (Schmeidler, 1986). Finally, some studies showed significant positive correlations when subjects were tested with both subliminal and ESP stimuli. Since the surveys of Nash and Schmeidler, continuing work in both PWA and psi processes has brought to light other commonalities between the two. For example, both may more commonly be expressed by effects on emotion or on some aspect of psychophysiological functioning rather than by cognitive retrieval (Bem, 2003; Kunst-Wilson & Zajonc, 1980; Radin, 1997; Shevrin, 1988). When effects on associative processes are assessed, familiar and well-learned material is often more sensitive to effects than unfamiliar material (Bargh, 1992; Stanford, 1973). There is evidence that the effectiveness of precognitive guessing and unconscious precognitive physiological responses tends to drop off sharply as the time between response period and target event increases (Bierman & Radin, 1997; Honorton & Ferrari, 1989; Sondow, 1989). In an analogous way, the effectiveness of subliminal primes tends to drop off logarithmically over time (Newell & Rosenbloom, 1981). Thus it seems as if the mind's preconscious processes normally construct its experiences over very short time spans, reaching backward in using sensory primes and forward in precognition. Finally, situations requiring careful assessment and judgment tend to make both kinds of effects vanish (Allison, 1963; Carpenter, 2002;

Darley & Gross, 1983; Stanford, 1966). Putting all of this together, it appears that scientists in these different fields have been studying similar things without realizing it.

Preconscious Psychological Processes

It would be fruitful for parapsychologists to join with other psychologists to elucidate those preconscious processes that govern the movement of consciousness to the next thing (and that bring the next thing to consciousness). We may think of Preconscious Psychological Processes (PPP) as all of those processes that precede and condition conscious experience. If we come to understand the patterns governing the movement of consciousness to the next thing through the mechanics of PPP, we will also understand much of the working principles of parapsychology—and parapsychology will clearly be part of psychology. The focus need not be exclusively on the extrasensory. Perhaps the functions of PPP as they govern pre-experiential cognizance of events with weak or unattended sensory impingement will be found to be more or less the same as those that govern cognizance of events that have no sensory impingement. In the broad sense, the processes of psi and the other processes of PPP may be the same. In that case, defining the focus of our interest as “extrasensory” may be too narrow, like limiting the study of vision to the perception of blue things.

A Phenomenological Perspective

In a phenomenological approach, experience-as-such is taken as primary reality, and all of the myriads of constructions which we may invent and with which we interpret reality are taken as secondary and imposed. This is assumed to be true even if the constructions are so deeply presumed as to be experienced as “necessarily so,” and even if the constructions are extremely powerful and useful, as are the constructions of physical science. Approaching reality with such conceptual innocence has some advantages in regard to our understanding of psi phenomena. Our preoccupation with the “extrasensory mystery” has led us to imagine that some special senses are required for dealing with reality not local to ourselves. This “mystery” is really created partly by the everyday fact of not being conscious of that extended reality, but also by the physically reductionistic model of the human being as a “subjective” mind inside a physical box, or body. This split is deeply presumed in western culture and is even embedded in the structure of our language (Barrett, 1962, Heidegger, 1962). A more adequate approach to the reality of human experience is that of the existential-phenomenological position of Heidegger (1962), in which a human being is understood as “being in the world,” or as the psychologist McCurdy (1965) put it, as the universe from a particular center. Boss (1979), similarly speaks of the person as a “world-luminating realm of openness.” In this

phenomenological approach, no split is assumed between the mind and the physical world, including one's own body. If the self is not presumed to be a bounded, subjective isolate inside a separate, objective reality, then the "mystery" vanishes.

A Hypothesis of Functional Equivalence

For one burdened with the metaphysical presupposition that an organism must have no interaction with its surround beyond its physical boundaries, the gap between a very faint stimulus and no stimulus at all is absolute and enormous. From a phenomenological perspective, the importance of this gap is an open question, and some evidence suggests that the gap may be very slight in many ways, or even nonexistent. This observation can seem astonishing or even outrageous, as with a cartographer surprised to step through a latitude without a scratch.

It may be that the mind utilizes its available extrasensory and subliminal-sensory material in highly similar ways. We may call this a *Hypothesis of Functional Equivalence*.

The Ubiquity of Psi in the Construction of Experience

Those apparent traces of psi phenomena that are available to most people in everyday life are so occasional and furtive as to make them seem to be exotic curiosities at best, or even as transient illusions or misperceptions: hence the great argument over whether psi phenomena are real at all. I posit that the occasional psychic eruptions into everyday life are hints of a constant preconscious mental activity, one function of which is to prepare the mind for its incipient experiences and choices.

This model of psi as a seamlessly functioning component of normal preconscious processes normalizes parapsychology inasmuch as it suggests how psi phenomena function in everyday experience in an unconscious and implicit way. It also suggests the reason that we are not flooded with extrasensory awareness all the time.

The Issue of a Filter or Barrier Between Psi and Awareness

We do not need to propose any sort of hypothetical barrier or filter to protect consciousness from psi processes any more than we need a barrier or filter to protect consciousness from a subliminal or incidental stimulus. The extrasensory exchange is intrinsically preconscious and not ever available to awareness. The fact that it awakens an orienting nexus of potential meaning (both cognitive and affective) that quickly prepares us for experience sometimes allows us to see its action by consulting this marginal level of awareness. In that marginal awareness, psi information is not transformed into something fragmented or

metaphorical, although it might appear to be; it preconsciously alerts us to classes of potential meaning that help us to interpret the sensory events to come, and these activated classes of meaning can sometimes be glimpsed as such. When expressions of these activated classes of meaning are later compared to the initiating stimulus in the full light of consciousness, they may seem metaphorical or fragmented: A bear may have aroused an image of some other kind of animal or some other kind of danger, a line of windows in a building may have evoked an image of a row on a checkerboard, or a scene of an automobile accident may have stirred up an imageless sense of repulsion. I suggest that these expressions occur when the mind chooses to attempt an interpretation of preconscious experience prior to obtaining clearly interpretable sensory information. The expressions then will seem partial and allusory.

No barrier or filter mechanism is required to understand the relation between psi and consciousness. Conscious awareness is the well-lit workshop within which each person constructs an understanding of reality and negotiates within it. With conscious awareness, I can be sure of what I know, remember what I have learned, communicate it to others, and carry out disciplined processes of reasoning in order to reach more reliable conclusions and make wiser decisions. Preconscious apprehensions, including extrasensory ones, are preparatory for that. They are constitutive of and subordinate to consciousness. Psi processes are to conscious awareness as, in the language of Polanyi (1958), tool is to object. When I write a paper, the eye-hand skills of typing on a keyboard are largely implicit and out of awareness as I focus on the ideas I am trying to formulate. I need no filter or barrier to keep that typing knowledge away – it functions as a preconscious means to my intended goal. It is not the case that we “know” via psi and then somehow inhibit that “knowing” in favor of conscious awareness. Knowing is in the province of consciousness. A better metaphor would be to say that preconscious psi apprehensions are not blocked from consciousness but rather serve as bridges into it.

Tending to Know or Not Know, and Switching Tendencies

I presume that unconscious processes follow a dialectical logic (Jung, 1960a, p. 539; Kelly, 1955; Rychlak, 1968, 1973), that is, that meanings are naturally understood in the context of their potential opposites. Computers do not reason this way. They reason within a fixed set of premises, and all their conclusions are determined by those premises. Human reasoning uses premises that are always poised within a context of potential dialectical opposites. We may assert that 2 plus 2 is 5 or 12, and see where those odd ideas take us. This reasoning-in-the-context-of-alternatives has important implications for how psi processes function. These processes may lead the mind toward an understanding

of a meaning, or decisively away from it.⁸ The tendency “toward” a potential meaning will lead to allusions-toward that meaning and will tend to result in a psi-hitting event if the proper inadvertencies are interpreted in the proper ways. The tendency *away-from* that meaning will produce allusions-away and express as psi-missing.

Switching from one tendency to the other will result in a self-cancelling effect in a given period of effort. These tendencies “toward” and “away from” and the switching between them are all intrinsically unconscious phenomena unavailable to awareness as such. The rapidity of the switching of these tendencies will result in different densities of hitting and missing within a period of time and show itself as different degrees of scoring extremity. A situation in which the individual is inclined “toward” the event and in which little switching occurs will be expressed as a strong positive deviation from chance expectation, or strong psi-hitting. A situation with a predominant inclination “toward” but in which rapid switching occurs will result in only a negligible overall positive deviation. Similar expectations arise in regard to a disposition “away from” the psychically apprehended event. An experimental condition in which individual participants vary in their orientation toward versus away from the target, but in which there is also a general elicitation of low tendential switching, will express itself in the form of scores that show large intersubject variance with little aggregate deviation.

Hypothesis of Directional Intention and Hypothesis of Intentional Stability

Parapsychologists need to frame separate hypotheses about factors that make for directional tendencies and factors that determine the rapidity of tendential switching (presumed to be the mechanism for scoring extremity). I believe that these have often been confounded and that this has probably led to less reliability of results. For example, it seems likely to me that the tendency toward or away from an awareness is primarily determined by intention, particularly unconscious intention. We may call this the *Hypothesis of Directional Intention*. On the other hand, it seems likely that the rapidity of directional switching is probably a function of the relative consistency of (unconscious) intention. This is the *Hypothesis of Intentional Stability*. A single-minded, consistent intention would express as relatively extreme scoring. Conflicted or alternating intentions would produce small deviations from chance.

Psi-missing

What is the function of psi-missing? This model suggests a particular interpretation of that vexing phenomenon. Because we are assuming that psi does function persistently and unconsciously, we must

ask of what benefit might be the tendency to turn *away-from* some potential event? The most obvious answer is that the winnowing function, described above, requires that all potential meanings but one be turned *away-from* at the initial preconscious level, in order to bring upon the stage of awareness the one most useful thing at that moment. If something elected to be an ESP target does not pass this test of “probably most useful” in a given instant, it will pass on only a sense of avoidance in favor of the other thing being selected instead. But what about the situation of a *persistent* avoidance of the meaning of some event? Why would we maintain a posture of avoiding a particular thing long enough to produce a significantly negative deviation in an ESP experiment? Why would it not only be deselected at a given moment, but also systematically and positively selected-against for a sustained period of time? From the point of view of the parapsychologist, these psi-misses have been seen as errors (Rhine, 1952), but this is probably too narrow a view. Imagine an early ancestor of yours walking through dense woods. On the right is a safe passage that he or she cannot clearly see; on the left is a dangerous predator crouching behind a bush. No sensory hint of the predator impinges upon the person, but he or she psychically engages its presence. The best action, the one that leads the person to live long enough to become your ancestor, is to very quickly become interested in something to the right and head that way. Suppose the psychic apprehension instead alerted the person to “some sort of trouble on the left”? It might cause him or her to pause an instant and take too long a look at the dangerous bush. Immediate avoidance by simply preferring a dialectical alternative to the danger is the healthiest choice. If this dialectical counterpreference were encountered in an ESP test, it would be expressed as a psi-miss. In everyday life it would not be experienced at all, but would pass on by as one of the countless experiences in which no extraordinary coincidence whatever is noted—another of the many nonpsychic moments.⁹

There is an interesting analogy to this in the literature on the effect of subliminal primes on social judgment. It is known that sometimes a prime results in the facilitation of a perception or attribution (i.e., the content of a prime becomes more likely to be expressed in a judgment) whereas sometimes it results in a reduction in the likelihood of the expression of the prime. The former, called “assimilation,” is associated with primes that are highly relevant to the target, while the second, called “contrast,” is found when primes are highly irrelevant to the target (see Schwarz & Bless, 1992, for a review). Assimilation and contrast are for subliminal primes what psi-hitting and psi-missing are for extrasensory information. The mind is apparently capable of assessing the relevance of material that is either subliminal or extrasensory, using relevant material and turning away from irrelevant material. In terms of

the Hypothesis of Directional Intention, this appraised relevance and irrelevance is one important criterion for the direction of intention.

Psi-missing and Anxiety

We know that anxious people tend to psi-miss more than others do (Palmer 1977), and we also know that more-anxious people find more events potentially dangerous, or anxiety-arousing (Hollander & Simeon, 2003). Hence, there are more things they are inclined to avoid, psychically and otherwise. A study I carried out some years ago (Carpenter, 1971) illustrates this point. Subjects performed an ESP guessing task in which half their targets were placed with, and thereby were linked to, hidden material that was potentially emotionally arousing (erotic pictures), and the other half were linked to blank cards. Subjects who were low in anxiety (in terms of scores on the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale), psi-hit on the targets linked to the more arousing stimuli (expressing an implicit interest in the more evocative material), while subjects who were high in anxiety psi-missed on that material, as if expressing a wish to avoid a potentially dangerous event. (No subjects ever actually saw the evocative material, so this potentiality was never realized for any of them.) Ballard (1980) in one study confirmed this tendency for more-anxious females (but not males) to miss the targets linked to more evocative material. A second study did not permit a fair test of this relationship for females due to their unusually high group mean on trait anxiety, but a conceptually similar effect was found, in that subjects of both sexes who showed larger declines in *state* anxiety after a relaxation procedure that preceded the ESP task showed a preference for the erotically charged targets, whereas those who failed to become less anxious avoided those targets by missing them. We might expect that the actual emotional state at the time of encountering the material would be more important than a general tendency to be anxious, so this result is not surprising.

Others have also reported a psi-missing tendency in regard to target material that was potentially anxiety-arousing (e.g., Johnson & Nordbeck, 1972; Johnson, 1977). That psi-missing in these cases does not represent a mere absence of psi-response is underscored by the findings of Bem (2003) and Sava, Child, and Smith (2004), in which fear-arousing material was found to elicit a greater *implicit* psi response than emotionally neutral material. The implicit response was relative preference within an emotionally matched pair of pictures for the one that was to be subliminally exposed later. Bem interprets this as an indication of "precognitive habituation" of the fear response. Analogous findings have been reported in the PWA literature with threatening subliminal stimuli, e.g., Fox (1996), MacLeod and Rutherford (1992), and Mogg, Bradley, and Hallowell (1994).

We might pose as a general premise, then, that psi-missing as an expression of a preconscious orientation away from a potential event is as much an active event as psi-hitting and is a generally adaptive strategy

intended to minimize the probability of encountering something undesirable. Its being undesirable may simply reflect the fact that something else is considered more important at the moment, or it may reflect an apprehension that the thing could be positively dangerous if encountered. Like psi-hitting, psi-missing is guided by (largely unconscious) intention: in this case, the intention to avoid something.¹⁰ This is one of those situations in which conscious and unconscious intention are at odds with each other. While they are often congruent and function in harmony with each other, this is not always so. In the psi-missing situation, the conscious intention to correctly come to know the material is contrary to the unconscious wish to avoid it, and the unconscious wish has its way.

The Switching of the Tendency to Hit or Miss

What is the function of a low rate of tendential switching (or relative tendential stability)? It is an indication that the event in question is sensed as being worthy of a definite response—a response seeking either awareness and engagement, or avoidance.

And of what value is rapid tendential switching? It is the creation of an effective psychological nonrelation to the event in question. Perhaps this is the treatment the mind gives to almost all potential meanings encountered in the indefinitely large surround. In terms of responses to an ESP target, it is expressed as scores unnaturally close to chance expectation. When directional tendency switches more rapidly than a period of guessing effort (e.g., a forced-choice run or a ganzfeld session), the associative bits leading toward and away from the target will tend to balance one another and produce overall a result clinging closely to chance expectation. From the point of view of this model, the chance-level score is as much an expression of psi functioning as is the score representing an extreme deviation from chance expectation. As bizarre as this idea may seem, this process might in fact represent an efficient psychological economy. In order to work well, consciousness must be singular and sustained. That would be impossible if we were not effectively oblivious to almost all potential meanings all the time. Similarly, the implicit behavioral responsiveness that the mind may make to preconscious information must be free to not-respond to all but the few things at any moment that are sensed to be most salient.

In gestalt terms, the focus of preconscious attention and conscious awareness must be “figure” and everything else relegated to “ground.” To borrow a theater analogy, the mind constructs not only the bright stage of awareness but also the unconscious background surrounding it: the darkened house lights, the unseen machinery backstage, the occluded noises and distractions outside the theater.

Why would rapid tendential switching occur when one is consciously trying to “get” some extrasensory content? That is, why would chance-level

scores be produced with some consistency in an ESP test (yielding an overall tightness of score variance)? Some hints can be gained by looking at patterns that have been reported (Carpenter, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1977, 1991; Carpenter & Carpenter, 1967; Palmer, 1972; Rogers, 1966, 1967; Stanford, 1966a, 1966b, 1967, 1968; Whittlesey, 1960). Whittlesey's results might be particularly instructive. He administered a dose of LSD-25 to his subjects, thinking that a drug that could open the "doors of perception" might open doors to extrasensory perception as well. His subjects produced chance-level scores with such consistency that the overall tight variance was highly extrachance. In their psychedelic state, his subjects also vigorously complained that they found the ESP test profoundly trivial and meaningless. As they pursued their personal thoughts and visions, they also succeeded in removing the ESP targets far away from their experience, perhaps by an automatic bimodal balancing of responsive tendencies. Looking over all the accumulated findings involving scoring extremity, it appears that large-deviation scoring is associated with freshness; enthusiasm; a sustained, unreflective immersion in the task; more engaging target material; a task that is generally salient and involving for the subjects; and an absence of interruptions. Small-deviation scoring is associated with fatigue, cognitive work, uninteresting target material, a nonengaging task, repetitive testing, self-reflective analysis of the experience, or with some situational alteration, such as a change in task. As already stated, inconsistent unconscious intention is hypothesized to be the cause of rapid switching and small deviations. This cluster of observations suggests that the degree of consistency of unconscious intention might be affected by variables such as moods of unreflective absorption or playfulness versus moods of irritability or distractibility (Carpenter, 1991); a mental set of suspended, free-floating attention versus a set of rational analysis; extrasensory information that is seen as vitally important and interesting versus unimportant or trivial; the general cognitive tendency to intellectually analyze and break apart ongoing experience versus a capacity for fully engaged "flow"; and situational constraints such as sustained versus interrupted conditions (Carpenter, 1977). These factors may be broken up into two main categories. On the one hand, irritation, uninteresting target material, and a nonengaging and/or repetitive task are all situations in which one might easily imagine that the person has a wish to quit the task even while persisting in it, resulting in mixed or alternating intentions. The second cluster of factors includes distraction, rational analysis, obsessive doubt, and situational interruptions, and these would all seem to require that the subject in fact be moving away from the sustained inner searching that is hypothesized to provide consistent intentional direction to some other focus of effort. In both cases the subject seems likely to be dealing with an internal conflict of intentions to know and not-know, or some oscillation of such intentions.

The hypothesized rapid switching of direction, with small-deviation performance at times of mixed motivation in regard to the extrasensory

material, would appear to be quite functional. This may represent all of the many times when some other task is more important than retrieving a bit of extrasensory information. For example, cognitive work might be required instead. At such times it is helpful to be free of distractions (as by extrasensory apprehensions) so that the mind may attend effectively to the conscious matter at hand.

Tendential Switching and the Maintenance of Conscious Focus

Extrasensory apprehensions are unconscious, and we can only glimpse their effects by suspending cognitive work and consulting the vague material at the edges of experience. When rational, cognitive work is called for, attention to the preconscious material is best suspended. Since balanced hitting and missing tendencies produce an effective nonrelation to the material in question, this is a sensible mechanism for protecting the focus of conscious work. To attempt to use conscious work in an ESP test is therefore self-defeating, as White (1964) has reminded us from examining the introspective discoveries of earlier explorers in this area. I am suggesting here that it is self-defeating not primarily because it creates a tendency to psi-miss (it may not), but because it produces a tendency to highly internally balanced scoring, with little direct evidence of ESP at all.

In many situations, the cognitive work of rational analysis on clear mental contents is desirable. At such times, the mind protects its focus unconsciously by switching directional tendencies in regard to unwanted potential experiences rapidly enough that there is no consistent, and thereby distracting, allusion toward or away from those realities. At such times, extrasensory engagement is "tightly bound" by cognitive functioning, and no evidence of ESP will be observed.

In general, a stable orientation toward or away from some potential meaning serves to assure that the behavior of the organism will reflect some response to the potential meaning (toward expressing and experiencing it, or in a counter direction), while rapidly shifting orientations will assure that no apparent response at all will be reflected in experience or behavior.

The mind strives to know what its experience is. In Jung's terms, the primary function of the psyche is to create consciousness and meaning (Jung, 1960b, p. 323, Rychlak, 1968). When we can manage to perceive an experience clearly enough to be able to clearly construe it, we may carry out cognitive work. In fact, the act of construal of experience is itself a commencement of cognitive work. It is functional to do this work undeterred by extraneous concerns, including extrasensory ones. These are moments of cognitive closure and relative certainty. These conditions are necessary for analysis and judgment, and we generally experience satisfaction in attaining them and frustration in having them elude us. They generally preclude access to the sort of

material that might permit a sense of psychic cognizance as well as an awareness of the expression of subliminal stimulation.

Times of Uncertainty, Confusion, or Disorientation

When an experience cannot be tightly construed (interpreting the meaning of a shadow or mood or flash of light or strange sound or mind-tugging incipient memory), the mind consults allusions directed toward the potential meaning as guided by preconscious processes. If the ambiguity is sustained (perhaps a picture will not quickly come into focus), then one keeps guessing by consulting the allusions being generated as potential guides to meaning.¹¹ During such times, we preconsciously sustain a directional tendency in regard to the incipient meaning in order to generate helpful allusions toward the desired understanding. We will guess around the thing we are trying to see or to remember, and thereby close in on it, until with an “ah hah,” we come to know what we have been trying to know.

There are states in which such ambiguity and uncertainty are sustained for relatively long periods of time. In describing the early delusional stage of schizophrenic breakdown, Jaspers (1964) wrote:

Patients feel uncanny and that there is something suspicious afoot. Everything gets a *new meaning*. The environment is somehow different – not to a gross degree . . . but there is some change which envelops everything with a subtle, pervasive and strangely uncertain light. Something seems in the air which the patient cannot account for. . . . A patient noticed the waiter in the coffee-house; he skipped past him so quickly and uncannily. He noticed odd behavior in an acquaintance which made him feel strange; everything in the street was so different, something was bound to be happening. A passer-by gave such a penetrating glance, he could be a detective. Then there was a dog who seemed hypnotized, a kind of mechanical dog made of rubber. . . . In other cases patients have noticed transfigured faces, unusual beauty of landscape, brilliant golden hair, overpowering glory of the sunlight. Something must be going on, the world is changing, a new era is starting. Lights are bewitched and will not burn, something is behind it. . . . Gestures, ambiguous words provide ‘tacit intimations.’ All sorts of things are being conveyed to the patient. People imply quite different things in such harmless remarks as ‘the carnations are lovely’ or ‘the blouse fits all right’ and understand these meanings very well among themselves. . . . Patients resist any attempt to explain these things as coincidence. These

'devilish incidents' are most certainly not coincidences. . . .
The fact that the soap is now on the table and was not
there before is obviously an insult. (pp. 98-100)

During such times, what the person takes to be extrasensory experiences may virtually flood awareness. Simple events may be pregnant with secret meanings. The faces of others seem transparent as their unspoken thoughts seem to beam straight through. Stock market figures contain coded messages transmitted psychokinetically from somewhere in space, and the static on a radio is the whisper of an evil spirit. It is an occasional discomfiture to parapsychologists when such persons, who consider themselves to be experts in this field and expect to be treated as someone with authority and wisdom, turn up at the laboratory door.

Is any genuine extrasensory knowledge displayed in the welter of delusion? Sometimes, it seems, possibly so, although the clinical setting is not conducive to the protocols of controlled research. Such sustained confusion and a sense of ineffable, implicit meaning do appear to result in the person's consulting inadvertencies and trying to wrest meaning from them. The need for meaning, for *an explanation*, can be agonizingly strong. If the person can then reach some delusional interpretation of his or her situation, it may feel like a great relief ("Ah! It's the FBI!"). Often, with sensitive clinical examination, the odd constructions of such a person can be seen to contain a grain of truth, perhaps gleaned subliminally or extrasensorily. As Laing (1961) has said, delusions may be "realizations gone wrong."¹²

There are briefer, more benign conditions in which cognitive certainty is delayed to an unusual extent. In the dissociated states of highly dissociative people, there may be prolonged periods of disorientation in which an adult may behave and seem to think in the manner of a confused little child. During a few such periods in my clinical practice, I have observed what seemed to be striking instances of accurate ESP. Brain damage may also be linked to periods of disorientation, confusion, and cognitive uncertainty that are prolonged. Perhaps it is of interest that some famous "psychics," including ones who have done well in controlled laboratory study, experienced brain and other nervous system damage that seemed to initiate or heighten their psychic experiences (McMoneagle, 1997; Mitchell, 1876; Puharich, 1973), while Schmeidler (1952) has reported strong psi-hitting among patients suffering from brain concussion, particularly those whose adaptation to their injury seemed to feature passive acceptance.

Finally, it is also possible to for a well-functioning person to deliberately adopt a mental set of suspended cognitive closure, of "free-floating" attention. This is the "evenly suspended attention" that Freud (1912/1958) recommended to practicing analysts as they listened to the free associations of their clients. Coupled with a strong wish to know the unknown material, it is also the approach recommended by a number of

highly successful ESP performers, based upon their introspections (White, 1964). Adopted deliberately, perhaps honed by practice and inward disciplines such as meditation, it appears to permit relatively reliable access to images and feelings that inadvertently express connotations of nonsensory material. Laboratory evidence that this is so is given by the findings of Bem (personal communication) of superior ESP performance on the part of experienced meditators, and of Palmer, Khamashta, and Israelson (1979) of extreme psi scoring in a sensory-attenuation situation on the part of meditators who reported achieving relatively free and spontaneous imagery and a deep loss of awareness of their bodies.

Psi-conducive States

I suggest that states of mind in which there is a prolongation of cognitive openness or uncertainty, with a relative absence of a clearly interpreted focus of experience, will permit little intentional-conflict and cognitive work of the sort that is hypothesized to trigger tendential switching. Therefore, an unconscious posture of “toward” or “away-from” some important extrasensory reality will tend to be maintained with some stability, and result in access to inadvertencies that strongly imply or disimply the thing in question. In an ESP test, there will be extreme scoring, with strong deviations from chance expectation. If the unconscious intention to engage the particular thing is positive, then strong hitting would be expected. However, if the unconscious intention is negative (as it might be in the terrified persons experiencing psychotic breakdown), a great deal of distortion away from the actual realities would be expected—or as in an ESP test, strong psi-missing.

The More Psychic Person: Learning to Read the Connotations

In terms of paranormal cognizance or influence, the everyday lives of most people are long, quiet spans of well-bounded normality, punctuated perhaps by extremely rare, anomalous physical events or very occasional lightning-flashes of unusual knowledge. However, some people are different. Some individuals report a great many incidents of apparently genuine paranormal knowledge; and a few of these have also demonstrated this ability in well-controlled laboratory conditions.

What distinguishes such persons from the rest of us is a question that deserves fuller treatment than it can receive here. In terms of this model, however, a handful of features would be expected to be present, although they cannot be expected to fully account for the phenomena in any particular case. These features include:

Intention. Persons who are prone to having many psychic experiences and who have some degree of control over their production would be expected to have a general intention to gain knowledge (or have

influence) in this way; and this intention should be relatively congruent at both a conscious and unconscious level, and be consistent over time. This intentional pattern probably begins at an early age. In some cases (e.g., Tanous & Ardman, 1976), the ability seems to have been prized by important adults. Many apparently gifted psychics such as Alex Tanous (Tanous & Ardman, 1976), Hélène Smith (Flournoy, 1900), and Daniel Home (Burton, 1944), all had a family tradition of close relatives who appeared to have psychic experiences. This is popularly taken as indicating a hereditary factor in psychic ability, but it may also indicate family environments in which psychic matters were of strong interest. In the childhoods of some other individuals, such as Gerard Croiset (Tenhaeff, 1953), Ted Serios (Eisenbud, 1967), and Eileen Garrett (Garrett, 2002), psychic awareness seems to have relieved the problems of a difficult early environment, or as with Joseph McMoneagle (McMoneagle, 2002), even been an important survival skill in dangerous circumstances. Having a relatively strong intention to gain paranormal knowledge should tend to orient preconscious response positively, resulting in the evocation of anticipatory material of a pro-content sort; and the consistency of the positive intention should lead to a stable tendency to produce discernable referents to the content.

Adventurousness, outgoingness, and relative freedom from anxiety. Persons who are characteristically timid, avoidant, and fearful would be expected to carry a preconscious attitude of avoidance toward many potential experiences. On the contrary, persons who boldly tend to seek out new experiences and meet life cheerfully and optimistically should tend to be more positively responsive at a preconscious level to important extrasensory information. A person whose life is largely constrained by illness, such as Mollie Fancher and Caryll Houselander (Smith, 1969), or societal constraints (Zingrone, 1994), and is thereby frustratingly unadventurous, may find that paranormal experience offers an important compensatory freedom.

A high general level of effectiveness (or a relative absence of general self-defeating tendencies). Persons who are generally effective are presumed to have motivations to succeed that are consistent at different levels of awareness and are relatively invariant over time. On the contrary, persons who are self-defeating may be understood to have unconscious motivation to fail in spite of a conscious wish to be successful (Engel & Ferguson, 1990). Persons who have unusual facility in producing psychic information would be expected to display a general tendency to be successful across situations. This appears to be true of a number of gifted individuals, for example, Bill Delmore (Edward Kelly, personal communication) and Pat Price (Targ & Puthoff, 1977), and seems consistent with biographical material about several others.

Creativity and a capacity to delay cognitive closure. This model suggests that cognitive closure (a condition in which one knows clearly the content of one's experience) serves to "bind" preconscious apprehensions and leave

them securely outside of awareness. Delaying such closure permits one to consult inadvertent material such as inner imagery, stray associations, and novel impulses—all of which may convey the influence of extrasensory apprehension. Creative persons are characterized in part by a capacity to sustain a condition of fruitful uncertainty, a need to find a new solution, and an ability to eschew premature closure of experience while the new, creative thing finds form (Fellini, 1997; Kelly, 1979; Perls, 1970). William Stafford (1998) says about writing a poem, “I wait deliciously. And the thing that occurs depends partly upon how much I hunger” (p. 4). Thus, in a general sense, effectively psychic persons might be expected to be relatively creative, at least in the general sense of McCurdy, having “the power to see the world in new ways, to utilize fruitfully the abilities which one has, to expand and reorganize one’s life, to transcend one’s previous limitations” (1961, p. 562). Other related dimensions of cognitive style include a general capacity for dissociation and absorption.

The cultivation of skills in interpreting inadvertency. This model leads to the expectation that persons who are particularly facile at generating accurate extrasensory information have developed some experiential skills at attending to marginal experience, questioning it patiently but hungrily, and understanding the structure of their own preconscious associative network (e.g., Vaughn, 1973). Persons who practice the “inward” disciplines of prayer or meditation might be expected to have developed such skills. For example, Amanda Jones (1910), a well-known psychic of the nineteenth century, believed that “the development of what may be called spiritual illumination seems to me a not unlikely result of those inner communings characteristic of Quaker worship” (quoted in Smith, 1969, p. 38). Similarly, those who have learned how to produce creative works of art or science, or those who have developed great insight into their own dream life (Boss, 1958), may also be particularly well equipped. There may be experiential skills that are peculiar to many persons who cultivate extrasensory information, such as the capacity to attend to mental imagery (Watt, 1996). As a personal observation, one technique apparently used by several relatively psychic persons might be called “serial divination,” by which I mean a process of imagining associations to some inadvertency (say a bit of dream content), and following that by treating those associations as material to question by further imagining associations to those, and so on, until one reaches a sense of rightness.

Roots of the Model

This model is the result of many years of reflection on the mystery of psi. This reflection was enhanced by pondering the parallels between the discovery of new personal meaning in clinical psychological work and discovering sensorily unavailable meaning in the parapsychology experiment (Carpenter, 1988), as well as parallels between research in subliminal

perception and in extrasensory perception. My own first experimental explorations in the direction of this model showed both these influences. In one pair of experiments (Carpenter, 1971), highly emotional extrasensory stimuli were treated as if they were subliminal primes in forced-choice guessing tasks, and extrasensory success was examined as a function of the “primes” and certain subject variables having to do with attitude and affective style—all in the manner of subliminal perception studies of the period. In another study that was carried on for many years (Carpenter, 2002), a quasi-psychotherapeutic group was used as a receptive medium for the influence of a randomly selected ESP target. This design was inspired by PWA studies that showed the behavioral/emotional influences of subliminal primes in spontaneous interpersonal behavior, and by the personal experience of many cases of psychotherapy in which the important discovery of personal meaning and the apparent intrusion of extrasensory information went hand in hand. Alongside these influences, there are also several major congruencies that one can see between this model and the conceptual work of other parapsychologists. I will cite the major ones of which I am aware.

Gertrude Schmeidler, throughout her very productive career, has demonstrated the fruitfulness of considering parapsychological phenomena as essentially continuous with the rest of normal psychological functioning. For example, her establishment of the “sheep-goat” effect showed, after the fashion of “New Look” theory, that the subject’s attitude was important in determining the quality of her or his (extrasensory) perception (Schmeidler & McConnell, 1958). In her survey of findings assessing the extent to which paranormal processes followed the same patterns as normal psychological processes (Schmeidler, 1988), her discussions of cognitive and perceptual patterns are especially germane to the point of view developed here. K. R. Rao (1962, 1991) developed a conception of psi process as inherently and preconsciously bidirectional, and produced many innovative studies demonstrating the efficacy of this concept. J. B. Rhine (1952, 1953), along with his many other contributions, called special attention to the importance of psi-missing, asserted that psi functioning is essentially unconscious, and sketched a general program for work that assumed that psi functioning would ultimately be understandable within the general terms of a broadened, normal science of psychology and biology. In an earlier generation, F. W. H. Myers (1893, 1903) bequeathed to all subsequent researchers a conception of unconscious mental functioning that provided a meaningful locus for psi processes (Kelly & Kelly, in press). He also pointed to the importance of dissociated states and inadvertent responses for the expression of psi.

Perhaps the strongest parallel between the current model and previous work exists with the Psi-Mediated Instrumental Response (PMIR) theory of Rex Stanford (1974a, 1974b, 1977, 1991). Although the current model was developed largely independently of Stanford’s work, a careful

reading brings to light some important similarities, so it is worth pointing out in some detail where our points of view merge and where they differ.

In the earlier version of his important and productive model, Stanford proposed that psi is a mechanism used by an organism to scan its environment for need-relevant objects and events and for useful information about those things. When important information is obtained by scanning, the probability of behaviors already in the repertoire of the organism changes in such a way as to make the fulfillment of its needs more likely. This model has led to many research studies, particularly in the areas of nondeliberate expressions of ESP. In an important revision of his theory, Stanford (1978) dropped the assumption of psi-scanning (thinking it presumed much too much computing capacity of the human brain), and also dropped the idea that psi involves an exchange of information at all. In its place he proposed a Conformance Behavior Model. Instead of picturing an organism scanning for information and altering its behavior, he said that it is in the nature of things that if relatively random systems are in conjunction with "disposed systems" (such as organisms with needs or extrapersonal events with high probabilities of occurrence), then the relatively random systems will alter the probabilities of their events in order to better conform to the requirements of the disposed systems.

The model proposed in this paper bears most similarity to the earlier version of Stanford's theory, before scanning and information exchange were dropped as core constructs. Somewhat like the earlier Stanford, I am assuming that an organism has available to it some sort of apprehension of an indefinitely large surround of events extending beyond its physical boundaries. And also like Stanford, I am proposing that events that are particularly important to the needs and intentions of the organism will somehow be selected for special response. Of course, these might be said to be at least implicit assumptions required for conceiving of any ESP experiment, and in that sense they are not proprietary to Stanford's theory. The similarity deepens when we note that Stanford and I both place special emphasis on nonconscious behavioral expressions of psi information.

One major difference between the models has to do with the centrality of the role that it is presumed psi plays in human functioning. Stanford argued that psi is not only active at moments in which parapsychologists choose to study it, but is also expressed frequently and implicitly in spontaneous behaviors. In the current model, psi is conceived as being even more broadly active and important, functioning ubiquitously as the initiating point of all human experience and volition. The models also differ in the kinds of phenomena they attempt to cover. This point will be made clearer in the paper to follow this one in a subsequent issue of this journal, in which implications and applications of the current model are developed further. For now, it may simply be noted that many particulars are different, such as the treatment of psi-missing and scoring extremity. Perhaps most importantly, given that they

arise from somewhat different starting points, the models also differ in the meta-theoretical context in which they are imbedded. The Conformance Model and the scanning idea that preceded it both work within the implicit assumption of a mind (or nervous system) that is separate from some "outer" event, and that must be imagined to be connected to that event in some way to be able to know of it or to affect it. Although this paper cannot attempt to spell out its different ontology in any detail, as stated earlier, I wish to work within the sort of existential/phenomenological position developed by Heidegger in philosophy and Boss in medicine and psychology. From this perspective, human being is natively "in the world," not separated from it inside an insular "mind," peeping at it through sensory or extrasensory windows. The understanding of an insular mind and an exterior world are the products of an intellectual construction of the sort given us by Descartes. They are not given realities, in spite of how terribly comfortable they seem for us in light of the conceptual tradition we have inherited and within which we must think (Barrett, 1962).

Both Stanford's model and mine are teleological, and both depart in that sense from the mainstream paradigm of science (Edge, 1978).¹³ My model, however, is more existential and personal than Stanford's. Particularly in his Conformance concept he is proposing something very general about how nature works. I am discussing an elaborated understanding of what organisms, including persons, *do*. I am staying within the perspective of the motivated business of living, and proposing a conception keyed to the interests and experiences of the organism. His conception in its current form is more general and stays more closely tied to the language of physical science. The two conceptions may ultimately prove to be different perspectives on the same reality, but they are clearly different in their intention.

The Paper To Come

Part Two of this paper is slated for an upcoming issue of this journal. There this model will be developed further, primarily in terms of the presumed commingling of psi functioning with other preconscious psychological processes. Special focus will be upon subliminal perception, remembered information, and the development of creative acts. Pertinent research findings in parapsychology and mainstream psychology will be summarized. Following that, the utility of the model will be assessed. The congruence of the model with a number of major parapsychological findings will be examined, as well as the capacity of the model to make useful sense of the apparently nonpsychic experience of persons who are neither parapsychologists nor psychics. The fear of psi will get special attention. The utility of the model for harmonizing the findings and agenda of parapsychology with those of other branches of science will also be

examined. Finally, a number of directions for future research that are called for by this model will be described.

CONCLUSION

This model attempts to suggest how psi functions in everyday life. It will be argued in Part Two of this paper that the model has some capacity to organize accumulated findings, and to suggest directions for new ones, and that it thereby shows some promise for rendering the findings of this field more intelligible.

The anomalous observations of parapsychology now lie about our cultural landscape like so many odd, disparate stones. Yet they suggest an implicit coherence that cries out for understanding. Great lurches forward in the history of science have come from deeply questioning similar anomalies. For centuries people puzzled at unusual phenomena in which the inert material of the natural world seemed oddly and transiently active. What was the lightning in the sky? Why did lodestone have the power to attract certain metals? Why did shards of magnetized metal point always to the same invisible point in space? How could a rod of amber, when rubbed on velvet, draw to itself feathers and scraps of paper? Most such anomalies were passing curiosities, of little practical concern for everyday life. Then in the nineteenth century the musings of many lifetimes culminated in the work of Hertz and Faraday and Maxwell and their colleagues, and electromagnetic energies were understood to be all-pervasive forces in nature, even constitutive of matter itself. Today our understanding of these forces has yielded a very different world than one that anyone could have dreamed of before.

Perhaps the anomalies of parapsychology promise as great a revolution and as bounteous a result. Perhaps the mind, now largely seen as a by-product of physiological processes, actually is centrally active in the construction of reality. Perhaps the smoothly functioning human mind is packed with unseen forces and processes by which that constructing takes place. And perhaps the observations of parapsychologists show us a doorway to understanding how all of that may work.

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NOTES

1. One popular understanding of James sees him as taking this position as well. In his *Principles* (1890) he rejected the idea of unconscious mental processes as they were popularly understood in his day, calling such ideas "whimsies." Below consciousness lies impersonal neurological process, as is the assumption for most scientists today. However the whole body of James's work shows an abiding interest in unconscious mental processes (Kelly & Kelly, in press; Weinberger, 2000).
2. Giving an adequate summary of this work would make this paper far too long. Suffice it to say that many hundreds of studies on preconscious mental processes have been reported, and the field is very active today. Methods of arousing preconscious processes are so well accepted today by many researchers that they are used as techniques with which to study other questions. For example, the action of subliminal primes has proved useful for studying a variety of phenomena ranging from relationship schemas (Baldwin, Fehr, Kedian, Seidel, & Thomson, 1993) to attachment theory (Milkulincer, Hirschberger, Nachmias, & Gillath, 2001) to psychoanalytic theory (Silverman, 1976; Sohlberg, Billinghamurst & Nysten, 1998; Weinberger & Hardaway, 1990).

3. This is reminiscent of Heidegger's (1962) analogy of a human being as like an outrigger canoe, part of which is always away from itself.
4. The idea that perception is not a simple, all-or-nothing thing but entails a process of development over time is an old one in psychology. It dates at least to the Wurzburg school of the early twentieth century (Gollwitzer, 1990), was important to gestalt psychologists such as Werner (1935, 1956), and was an essential premise in the New Look studies of the 1940s and 1950s. Some theorists (e.g., Flavell & Draguns, 1957; Solley & Murphy, 1960) have proposed normative developmental sequences roughly similar to the colloquial sketch I outlined here, of course omitting the extrasensory stage.
5. Broughton (2002) has provided an interesting discussion of the ways in which the emotional system of the brain and body may participate in the preconscious psi response.
6. These terms are not chosen gratuitously, since it may be that more sustained, conscious focus on one of these levels of experience and pre-experience tends toward different career choices. Perhaps more focus on everyday consciousness tends toward a life in one of the many practical modes (bankers, grocers, race car drivers), focus on freshly and adequately construing data tends toward scientific work, focus on incipient possibilities of meaning tends toward artistic pursuits, and focus on the preconscious leading edge of experience tends toward the life of a seer or psychic.
7. Note that in this model of the mind, preconscious processes are active and purposeful, posing hypotheses about reality and tentatively evaluating evidence. The mind even at this stage of functioning is not presumed to be mechanically passive, merely generating responses as the organism is stimulated.
8. For other helpful discussions of the importance of dialectical thinking in these parapsychological processes, see Ballard, 1991, and Rao, 1965a, 1965b pp. 116-128.
9. This interpretation of psi-missing is congruent with that of Stanford (1974, 1977, 1991), who has argued that psi cognizance may lead toward conscious awareness or not, and that often its more important expression is the facilitation of behavioral tendencies *without* any accompanying awareness. In his model of "psi-mediated instrumental response," missing may represent a highly adaptive response to some undesirable potential event.
10. This may cast a new light on the clinical phenomena of repression and denial. Freud early in his theorizing proposed that the unconscious censor prohibited certain meanings from entering awareness because the experience of knowing them would be somehow too upsetting. We now know from cognitive research that to "know" anything requires a memory of it, and that we remember, basically, whatever we think about (Ebbinghaus, 1885; Erdelyi, 1990). If something is not thought about, even though it is initially experienced, it is quickly forgotten and then not known. Perhaps in general terms, in repression the mind decides first to not become engaged with something, and not becoming engaged leads to not knowing. Avoiding

the unpleasant awareness may not be the motivator of repression, but its by-product. In terms of the parapsychology study, it may not be the case that the wish to avoid awareness leads to behavioral avoidance of associates to the target, but rather that the desire to avoid the target leads to the behavioral avoidance of it, and with that, avoidance of the occasion to come to know it. We choose to know A, not to not-know B. Freud thought that we want to not-know and therefore avoid. Perhaps we want to avoid and miss the opportunity to know. If an event is not either remembered or sensed, it cannot be experienced and construed. As stated earlier, this latter fact is also why we are not flooded with conscious information of all the extrasensory engagements available to us.

11. Systematizing such a consulting process in the face of protracted uncertainty may result in some procedure of divination (von Franz, 1980).

12. For further discussions of psi in the context of mental illness, see Carpenter (2002), Ehrenwald (1955, 1970), and Eisenbud (1970).

13. Rychlak (1968) has in a more general way shown the need to introduce a teleological conception of causation into any psychology which aspires to adequately account for human behavior.