

The Marriage of Parapsychology and Normal Psychology¹

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Regardless of the road we choose to travel, we all share the road blocks of the seemingly infinite number of variables complicating and frustrating our path. Their removal is, of course, our challenge.

Margaret L. Anderson, 1962, p. 291

I would like to begin by sharing with you an anecdote—in fact a coincidence. Unfortunately I have no dates for the two halves of this coincidence, but let that not cause us to dismiss it out of hand. Thus, it was some years ago that I happened to wonder to myself at one time the strange thought of whether a decapitated head continued to have consciousness for a while. It so happened that, at the time, I was reading the beginning of Nandor Fodor's (1966) *An Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science*, scouring it for terms that I might include in my second edition *A Glossary of Terms Used in Parapsychology*. I recall that I did not advance very far into this book, but came at length to the entry under "Community of Sensation", an old expression used in hypnosis to refer to a sort of sensory telepathy between hypnotist and subject, or, as we shall see, between the subject and another person. And almost before I realised it, there was the following text as a bizarre example of community of sensation:

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The most gruesome instance of mental community was experienced in the course of a hypnotic experiment by the celebrated Belgian painter, Antoine Wiertz (1806-1865). He desired to know if thought persists in the brain of a decapitated man and, according to Larelig's biography, with the connivance of a prison doctor friend, hid himself under the guillotine during an execution and instructed his hypnotiser, who was a party to the experiment, to command him to identify himself with the criminal. . . .while the condemned man was conducted to the scaffold Wiertz manifested extreme distress and begged to be demagnetised. "It was too late, however—the knife fell." "What do you feel? What do you see?" asks the doctor. "Lightning! A thunderbolt falls! It thinks! It sees!" "Who thinks and sees?" "The head. It suffers horribly. It thinks and feels but does not understand what has happened. It seeks its body and feels that the body must join it. It still waits for the supreme blow for death, but death does not come." As Wiertz spoke the witnesses saw the head, which had fallen into the basket and lay looking at them horribly; its arteries still oozing blood. It was only after some moments of suffering that apparently the guillotined head at last became aware that it was separated from its body. Wiertz became calmed and seemed exhausted, while the doctor resumed his questions. The painter answered: "I fly through space like a top spinning through fire. But am I dead? Is all over? If only they would let me join my body again! Have pity. Give it back to me and I can live again. I remember all. There are the judges in red robes. I hear the sentence. Oh! My wretched wife and children. I am abandoned. If only you would put my body to me, I should be with you once more. You refuse? All the same, I love you my poor babies. Miserable wretch that I am I have covered you with blood. When will this finish—or is not a murderer condemned to eternal punishment?" As Wiertz spoke these words the witnesses thought they detected the eyes of the decapitated head open wide with a look of unmistakeable suffering and of beseeching. The painter continued his lamentations. "No, such suffering cannot endure for ever; God is merciful. All that belongs to earth is fading away. I see in the distance a little light glittering like a diamond. I feel a calm stealing over me. What a good sleep I shall have. What joy!" These were the last words the painter spoke. He was still entranced but no longer replied to the question put by the doctor. They then approached the head and Dr. D. touched the forehead,

the temples and teeth and found that they were cold. The head was dead.” (p. 56)

My first question when I read this was who took down the mentation? Wiertz was supposedly in the state of community of sensation with the head, so was the hypnotist writing everything down verbatim? We are not told. I therefore make the *assumption* that a written record was made. We must also consider the question of whether Wiertz was truly in telepathic communication with the head, or whether he was projecting his own feelings.

But none of these questions bear on the coincidence itself. I suppose that in order to evaluate this unusual coincidence I should begin by asking for a show of hands as to how many people among you have ever wondered about the state of consciousness of a decapitated head? Then I would ask, how many people here have *read* an account like the one which I have just given, or indeed would *know* where to find one should the question be put to you? Very few, I would imagine. I suggest that the statistical probability of wondering about a decapitated head and then not long after coming across an account of exactly that, is astronomically low. You may call it a chance happening, and give free rein to the law of very large numbers, but if you do I ask what evidence *would* you accept to give up the hypothesis of chance? Chance? Or did I *somehow* manage to look ahead—without the use of reason or normal avenues of prediction—to something gruesome I would read in the near future? Was it, in other words, an act of precognition? I open with that question.²

² I would like to mention that two days before I had a trial run of this seminar intending to use the decapitated head anecdote I was watching an episode of the American TV show *The Simpsons*, in which the character Millhouse is conscripted into a film-acting rôle. At one point it looks like he was decapitated, and the cry goes up that he’s been killed, but then it is realised that it is only a dummy, and someone holds up the head, with strings hanging down. I took this as a very surprising coincidence, on top of the one I had had already. After the seminar, again on *The Simpsons*, the cartoon character Itchy (or Scratchy—I’m not sure which is which) has his head cut off. Later, a rough young man plays a song on his guitar for Lisa Simpson saying “Joy to the world: The teacher’s dead—they cut off her head.” Lisa queries the appropriateness of the thought, and indeed uses the word “decapitation”. Perhaps the animators of *The Simpsons* have a thing about decapitation, as they definitely do about Michelangelo (Thalbourne, 2002). That this is probable is suggested by the fact that the day after

Contrary to my usual practice, I won't begin by defining rigorously the term "parapsychology". Most people know it to be that area of science which examines such claims as telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis. These have traditionally been known as paranormal, but I'll question that assumption today. What *I* wish to do is argue that, while the prefix "para" (meaning "alongside of") tends to bring about a *separation* from normal psychology, the factors that they each have in *common* are much more important than their differences.

We can begin with the *methods* of parapsychology. In general these methods are indistinguishable from those of normal psychology. They were based on the Behavioristic approach of last century. The feature which they all have is that a *barrier* is set up between the participant and the object of influence or cognition, and while normal psychology would say there's no way that barrier can ever be penetrated—there is no influence upon that object and no cognition of it—parapsychologists say that they have evidence that such a barrier is in fact not entirely a barrier, but can sometimes be penetrated. If we want to examine the experimental methods that have led to such a (tentative) conclusion, then the best way is to take a look at the dozens of meta-analyses which have been conducted. I'll not be looking at these today but I can give you a reference if you like (Storm & Thalbourne, 2000).

Granted the claim that such barrier-penetrations have been reported to occur under laboratory conditions, the next question is replicability. Most normal psychologists reject the evidence of parapsychology on the

writing the above the cartoon cat in *The Simpsons* is guillotined. Finally, I was reviewing David Lester's 2005 book *Is there life after death?* (see the book review section in this *Journal*). On page 140 I found the following text:

"Solovitch (1999) noted that some therapists who utilize past-life therapy do not necessarily believe that they are helping patients recover previous reincarnations. They see hypnotic regression to previous lives as a way of tricking the unconscious of the patient into behaving better, and they see the story of reincarnation as a symbolic story created by the patient's unconscious to help the patient gain insight into a problem. For example, Solovitch reported a case from Norma Shealy of a paralyzed woman with no clear recollection of how she became paralyzed, who remembered being Anne Boleyn under hypnosis, *the wife Henry the Eighth of England had beheaded*. Solovitch concluded that this was a screen memory of an incident in which the woman's husband shot and wounded her." Thus, the theme of decapitation kept repeating itself. (Italics added)

grounds that replication in it is a very hit and miss affair, and many experiments are non-significant. I hope you won't judge me as discourteous, but parapsychologists wonder whether the concern about replication is due in part to the fact that *normal* psychology itself has problems with replication: we *know* that it is, sometimes or often, difficult to repeat our own psychological results. Indeed, there does seem to be a difference between paranormal and normal psychology in that in the latter the findings are usually taken to be stable, and that it is *originality* that is prized. Thus, as far as I'm aware, Honours students are not permitted to carry out replication studies for their thesis topic. In fact, normal journals tend to *downgrade* studies that are "merely" replications, and so we get the so-called "file-draw problem", in which non-significant studies accumulate in the bottom drawer of the filing cabinet when by rights they should be published, to allow a more accurate estimate of the validity and stability of the effect. On the other hand, in parapsychology, replications are considered to be very important, and are never rejected from journals on the mere grounds that they are replications. So that is perhaps one difference between normal and paranormal psychology.

I want to turn now to theory. Douglas Stokes (1987) reviewed a huge number of parapsychological theories, most attempting to explain the paranormal foremost, but a number of them were concerned also with normal psychology. One of these was put forward by the 19th century parapsychologist Frederic Myers. He coined the word "telepathy", and he also invented the term "subliminal", which is by now fairly much a household word. Though his theory is *very* detailed, and encompasses a very broad variety of phenomena, I will simply say that he is best known for his theory of the subliminal self: for example, he wrote as follows:

I suggest, then, that the stream of consciousness in which we habitually live is not the only consciousness which exists in connection with our organism. Our habitual or empirical consciousness may consist of a mere selection from a multitude of thoughts and sensations, of which some at least are equally conscious with those that we habitually know. I accord no primacy to my ordinary waking self, except that among my potential selves this one has shown itself the fittest to meet the needs of common life. I hold that it has established no further claim. And that it is perfectly possible that other thoughts, feelings, and memories, either isolated or in continuous connection, may now be actively conscious, as we say, "within me"—in some kind of coordination with my organism, and forming some part of my total individuality. I conceive it

possible that at some future time, and under changed conditions, I may recollect all: I may assume these various personalities under one single consciousness, in which ultimate and complete consciousness the empirical consciousness which at this moment directs my hand may be only one element out of many. (Myers, 1892, p. 301)

Myers published these words in 1892, and it is claimed that some of his ideas about the subliminal self influenced Freud's concept of the unconscious. So here we have a very early example of parapsychology having an impact upon normal psychology. Another, into which I won't be delving, is the case of hypnosis, arising from the work of Franz Anton Mesmer: hypnosis was once considered a paranormal phenomenon, or "supernormal" as they would have said in the 19th century. Hypnosis has well and truly been absorbed into normal psychology.

I wish now to jump ahead in time to the theory put forward by Robert Thouless and B. P. Wiesner, published in 1947. I am currently reviving this theory, because I think it was given insufficient attention at the time. The first concept which they came up with was the word "psi"—23rd letter of the Greek alphabet, first letter in the word "psyche", and meant to denote paranormal cognition (which most people call ESP), and paranormal action (called psychokinesis, or PK). However, in order to be consistent, these theorists renamed paranormal cognition "psi-gamma", and paranormal action "psi-kappa". (In the upshot only the word "psi" was broadly adopted, "ESP" and "PK" being the favoured usage.) Thouless and Wiesner proposed that, just as a successful participant might obtain information about a distant object or event by psi-gamma, *they also obtain information about their own brains*, and this process is involved in all cognition—normal or paranormal. Likewise, just as a successful participant might exert influence over a distant object or event by psi-kappa, *they also exert influence over their own brains*, and this process is involved in all volitional motor action—normal or paranormal³. In this, however, the

³ We should mention that the historian Carlos Alvarado (1981) cites no fewer than *nine* other authors who, prior to Thouless and Wiesner, postulated that bodily movement and psychokinetic effects were caused by the same "force". The earliest of these authors published this hypothesis before 1874. No doubt the notion has been entertained so frequently because PK effects and bodily movement have in common the fact that, at least on *some* occasions, they are both responsive to volitional control.

status of the self is problematic: Thouless and Wiesner took the view later championed by Popper and Eccles (1977) in *The Self and its Brain*, that the two are separate. These days, one would be well-advised to frame the theory in terms of the brain alone and some sort of executive function in it.

Thus, psi can be seen as action exerted “paranormally” outside the mind-body complex, but normally in conjunction with the brain. Alternatively—and the formulation that I prefer—is that the psi-process is actually quite normal, and it occurs under *ordinary* conditions as cognition and volition but under *unusual* conditions as an external manifestation of one and the same force. Note that in this latter formulation the word “paranormal” doesn’t appear. Thouless and Wiesner were probably the first to “de-paranormalise” parapsychology and attempt to marry it with psychology. Unfortunately the word “paranormal” didn’t die, and it flourishes today everywhere, from parapsychology journals to the mass media, particularly commercial television.

I mentioned a moment ago that I’m seeking to revive the Thouless-Wiesner theory. In my model, I dispense with the concepts ESP and PK (psi-gamma and psi-kappa), and introduce a new concept, called “psychopraxia”, meaning literally “the self accomplishing”. In my model, there are four distinct components: (1) first, there exists a self (which may be unconscious in part), and which (2) adopts a so-called “pro attitude”. A person can be said to have a pro attitude when they would consciously prefer state **S** over **not-S** *if the two alternatives were to be brought to their attention*; thus, they may be unconscious; I also propose that there may be multiple pro attitudes, and that the strongest of competing pro attitudes wins out. I then (3) postulate that there exists a set of necessary conditions which must all be in place to provide a sufficient condition for (4) the pro attitudinal effect to occur. This, then, is psychopraxia, or the psychopractic effect, and there’s no need to speak of ESP or PK.

Following Thouless and Wiesner, I propose that psychopraxia is not an exclusively paranormal phenomenon, but occurs normally in the relation between the self and its own brain, mysterious and controversial though that relation is. The so-called “paranormal” phenomenon is merely *unusual*. Indeed, a book was published in 2001 called *Parapsychology. The science of unusual experience*, in which the editors say “In practice there is considerable overlap between what is regarded as ‘paranormal’ and what is considered to be merely ‘unusual’” (Roberts & Groome, 2001, p. 1). But psychologists study the unusual all the time—genius and savant syndrome being examples that quickly come to mind. This being so, why use the word “paranormal” at all, when “unusual” would suffice? Parapsychology, by thereby marrying psychology, takes its place alongside of all the other specialties in psychological science which study the usual

and the unusual, avoiding like the plague any connotations of the supernatural.

I think we can say that parapsychology has arrived when it can contribute to other parts of psychology, and I don't mean simply with regard to methodological rigor and new statistical techniques as exemplified by the contributions of Sir Ronald Fisher to parapsychology. (Parenthetically, and just out of interest, Fisher was a member of the Society for Psychical Research for many years, and Peter Delin inherited all his journals and proceedings.)

Another contribution is the wealth of data on the psychology of belief in the paranormal: Why do some people believe in, and allege experience of, the paranormal, and why do others not? This specialty is in a kind of halfway house between parapsychology and normal psychology: while no assumptions are made about barrier-penetrations, nevertheless papers on this topic are readily accepted in parapsychological journals, although for a while the editor of one of our journals urged that they find a better home in social psychology. The area can probably best be named anomalistic psychology. A monograph attempting to cover all the research in this area (and there are many hundreds of studies by now) is due to be published by the Parapsychology Foundation in New York. I would suggest that parapsychology, or anomalistic psychology, has made a signal contribution to normal psychology under the guise of personality, attitude, cognition, and even abnormal psychology. Though I'm one of the principal researchers in this area it's nevertheless beyond me to give you a succinct description of the differences between what we like to call sheep (the believers) and goats (the disbelievers). Perhaps another time!

However, I would like to mention in this regard what I like to call Delin's Principle: according to this notion, parapsychological experiments should be set up in such a way as to yield data of interest to students of normal psychology. Thus, in my Honours thesis, where I was testing the hypothesis that closeness of relationship enhanced telepathy, I used close pairs and non-close pairs. But I believe it was Peter Delin who suggested that the non-close pairs consist of persons not close to *anyone*: they were "non-close-relaters", to coin a somewhat unwieldy term. Psychological tests were administered in addition to the test of interpersonal psychopraxis. In fact there was *no* difference between the two groups parapsychologically, but all was not lost, because there was a wealth of interesting *psychological* differences, such as on social introversion and social skills. This positive outcome led to some very interesting subsequent experimental findings. Thus, the study had a little something for everyone. I've continued to follow Delin's Principle to this day.

I'd like to devote the rest of this seminar to an example of my own of a possible—but for me rather different—contribution, in this case to the psychology of creativity. But first of all I'll take an example of what I call a psychopractic chart, in this case for the occurrence of unusual cognition in the context of the so-called “ganzfeld”. The ganzfeld may be defined as follows:

Term referring to a special type of environment (or the technique for producing it) consisting of homogeneous, unpatterned sensory stimulation: Audiovisual ganzfeld may be accomplished by placing translucent hemispheres (for example, halved ping-pong balls) over each eye of the subject, with diffused light (frequently red in hue) projected onto them from an external source, together with the playing of unstructured sounds (such as “white” or “pink” noise) into the ears, and generally with the person in a state of bodily comfort; the consequent deprivation of patterned sensory input is said to be conducive to introspection of inwardly-generated impressions, some of which may be extrasensory in origin. (Thalbourne, 2003, p. 45)

A psychopractic chart for the unusual elicitation of veridical information using the ganzfeld is given on the next page (see Table 1):

Note that necessary conditions can be simultaneous or consecutive—it is *not* the case that they must be all one after another (as the structure of the chart might suggest), though it *is* the case that the self and the pro attitude bear the initial scrutiny in putative cases of psychopraxia. In this chart we see all the components of the psychopractic model, except for the variables V_1 to V_n , which stand for those conditions which we know theoretically must exist but which are not yet elucidated or taken account of (since ganzfeld experiments fairly often don't succeed, presumably because of our ignorance of the necessary conditions). I'll come back to this issue in just a moment, but before I do I want parenthetically to consider what arguments might be used *against* the theory of psychopraxia: I can think of at least two: (1) the first is the assertion that *no* barrier-penetrations ever occur—in essence, that there are no unusual phenomena of which we need to take account; but then one must dispose of the meta-analytic evidence; and (2) the psychopractic process model is nothing more than a statement that every effect requires a cause; but I'd reply that we need to examine psychopractic charts in order to see whether at least some intervening necessary conditions can be specified even if others have not been so as yet.

Table 1.
Psychopractic Chart for the Ganzfeld

SELF
+
Pro Attitude towards goal of acquiring information about a target
Relaxation
Pink noise
Homogeneous visual field
Cognitive flexibility (lability)
Sensorially isolated image (target)
Experimenter warmth
Experimenter rapport
Variables V_1 to V_n
Mentation skill
↓
“Unusual” GOAL-STATE (Information about the target)

It is becoming increasingly clear that psychopractic charts are a useful adjunct for those who adopt the psychopraxia model: such charts are a list, starting from the top with the self, followed by the pro attitude, and then all the other necessary conditions that appear to be a part of the sufficient condition, the chart culminating in the desired goal, mental or physical. However, parapsychology has not yet advanced enough for us to specify the *total* sufficient condition for any goal. Therefore, I recommend that the knowledge a researcher *does* have be displayed in such a psychopractic chart, and that what they do *not* know—the missing conditions—be represented by the notation “Variables V_1 to V_n ” to indicate the variable or variables (number unspecified) that they don’t know, which would fulfil the sufficient condition. In a science like parapsychology this is a wise manoeuvre, to show where our ignorance lies. Perhaps a so-called “necessary” condition is not really necessary: for example, in the ganzfeld, is it important that the noise input into the participant’s ears be “pink” or “white”? I am not aware of any ganzfeld experiment that has varied this

variable to see whether it has any effect on performance. In the meantime, parapsychologists laud ganzfeld experiments which achieve a result of 50% hitting (where just 25% is expected), when we should be scratching our heads as to what happened to all those participants who only scored a *miss*.

The missing conditions might come to light as a result of brainstorming with the following questions: What is being taken for granted, and what is missing that could be put in its appropriate place? A concept that's relevant to this quest is that of "tacit knowledge".⁴ Somewhere reported in the scientific literature (perhaps in Michael Polanyi) there is an anecdote that a group of researchers in physics were having trouble replicating an effect claimed elsewhere. Finally, in desperation, with failure after failure, the researchers actually *visited* the original laboratory, and went through, with the researchers there, the entire method that was originally used to produce the effect. Through such experience, the group of researchers were able to go back to their own laboratory and at long last produce the effect.

The writer telling this story uses the expression "tacit knowledge" to refer to all those aspects of the method that were crucial but which were not mentioned (as perhaps being too trivial) in the original report. We suspect that something similar may be happening on a wide scale in parapsychology. Perhaps there should be more collegial visits by unsuccessful experimenters to laboratories experiencing successful experimentation. It may be that "tacit knowledge" would be instrumental in improving parapsychological success-rates. Moreover, we tend to *assume* that the scientific report is an adequate description of the methodology that was in fact used. But researchers use their discretion to include or omit various details, and the latter may turn out to be more important than they seem at first. A possible example of this occurred to me when I was reading a paper published recently in the *European Journal of Parapsychology* (Goulding, Westerlund, Parker & Wackermann, 2004). The authors noted that "Bem and Honorton (1994) stated that in order to maximise the effect size it was important to create a warm social ambience in the laboratory" (pp. 69-70, p. 87). Thus, each experimenter tried to create this warm social environment before the start of the ganzfeld experiment, and indeed rated its presence on a 10-point rating scale ranging from 1 ("to no extent at all") to

⁴ Julie Milton (1991) also uses this expression in regard to the so-called "judging process" in free-response experiments. She says: "One clear conclusion from this postal survey of successful research personnel is that there really is a great deal of opinion that has not yet emerged into print. If this is true for free-response judging procedures, it is probably true for other important aspects of psi studies too." (p. 19)

10 (“to a large extent”). (Note that this rating scale was filled in only by experimenters, and not by participants.) My criticism is that the phrase “warm social ambience” is not very informative. Just exactly how do you set this up? Can you supply a recipe for others to follow? It’s mentioned that participants were welcomed by the experimenter and were offered coffee, tea, or soft drinks, but surely there is more to it than that. To add insult to injury, there was *no* significant difference between hit trials and miss trials regarding the pre-trial creation of a warm social environment (p. 82). So much for the ganzfeld and its ilk.

I’m now going to make what some would consider a humungous leap, and take the creative writing of poetry as an example of endogenous psychopraxia. What I’ll do is set up a causal sequence from self to successful outcome—a psychopractic chart—and compare it with the chart for the ganzfeld—a process intended to produce *exogenous* psychopraxia—to see if there are any insurmountable differences. Note that in setting up this chart I am doing something akin to multiple regression analysis, or path analysis, where the known predictor variables are used to predict a dependent variable. I am merely spelling out the variables in more detail.

To begin our task we start with the self, which is the fountain of all action. The goal of that action is to be found in the pro attitude—perhaps the pro attitude in this case is to give free rein to the poetic spirit, and let it lead where it does according to the inspiration, or Muse, without a concrete conclusion in mind, and experiencing the delight of production. Suppose we hear in our minds the rhythm or the beat—the cadence of a new-forming poem, with perhaps a few words putting themselves forward; we are open to our topic which has probably lain incubating for a greater or lesser time. And the words come, not necessarily voluntarily: The experience of many poets is that of being a passive vessel, a vessel into which the words are poured, the verse often ready-made. Says Frederic Myers (1892) again, “For the true poet. . .the melody of his [sic] coming poem floats as a self-created and impalpable entity within him, before words have shaped themselves or thought itself is born.” (p. 342)

In the writings of psychiatrists Goodwin and Jamison (1990, pp. 337-338) we find the following quote:

From virtually all perspectives—early Greek philosopher to 20th century specialist—there is agreement that artistic creativity and inspiration involve, indeed require, a dipping into untapped irrational sources while maintaining ongoing contact with realities of “life at the surface”. The degree to which individuals can, or desire to, “summon up the depths” is one of the more fascinating of individual differences.

It seems to me that this could scarcely be a better description of a primal aspect of the trait known as transliminality, defined as “the hypothesised tendency for psychological material to cross thresholds into or out of consciousness” (Thalbourne & Houran, 2000, p. 861). In a study of 50 psychology undergraduates, transliminality correlated significantly positively with a questionnaire measure of creative personality (Thalbourne, 2000, p. 198). Thus, I posit high transliminality to be a condition necessary for poetic creativity. But of course not the *only* condition.

In a 1998 paper I showed that creative personality is correlated with a number of variables, such as absorption, magical ideation, mystical experience, fantasy-proneness, hyperaesthesia, and positive attitude toward dream-interpretation, but items representing each of these variables occur in the so-called Transliminality Scale, and are thus taken care of.

A further correlate of creative personality is belief in, and alleged experience of, the psychic. I published a review of this literature earlier this year in the *European Journal of Parapsychology* (Thalbourne, 2005). Thus we expect that those who are believers/experients with respect to the psychic are likely to be more creative.

Another possible necessary condition for poetic creativity is some aspect of bipolar disorder, or manic-depression. Using biographical data from the 18th through the 20th centuries, Goodwin and Jamison concluded that “...among writers, poets appear the most likely to suffer from manic-depressive illness” (1990, p. 346). They suggest that

Even within the field of literary accomplishment, differences in the characteristics of manic-depressive illness are likely to produce relative gains and losses to various types of writers. Poets may benefit much more from mood or cognitive changes than do novelists, for example, because the language and rhythms of poetry are more akin to primitive thought processes and psychosis and because the nature of sustained work is probably different in poetry and fiction. (Goodwin & Jamison, 1990, p. 342).

Along these lines, a condition which should perhaps be taken into consideration is the season, since there is evidence that creativity is greater in spring and summer (Jamison, 1989).

It is thought that—to a large extent unconsciously—people the description of whom we have been building up are more likely to hear that inner cadence and, as it were, to clothe it with words, while semantic activation occurs on a much greater scale than in normal healthy persons. Connections are made between radically different elements. I thus conclude

that some aspect or aspects of bipolar disorder are a necessary condition for poetic creativity; that aspect may be unusually extensive experience with the emotional highs and lows of life.

Other positive necessary conditions may be associative productivity and idiosyncrasy, which were assumed to be aspects of creativity in an experiment reported by Shaw and colleagues in 1986. These indices decreased upon the administration of lithium carbonate and returned to their pre-test levels once lithium was stopped.

Schlitz and Honorton (1992) studied students from the world-renowned conservatory for the performing arts, the Julliard School in New York City. These students were very successful in a ganzfeld experiment. Though there were no poets represented, Schlitz and Honorton observed that the students are self-confident, disciplined, and comfortable with new challenges. They also take on those new challenges with the expectation of success. These four features may perhaps be worth studying as potential necessary conditions for poetic creativity (though a caveat is that they may be more the *result* of creativity than its *cause*.)

We are now in a (very tentative) position to begin the process of enumerating necessary conditions for the creation of a poem. I've already discussed some of these conditions, but I've added several more from the general consensus as to what it takes to be creative. I'd like to give a reference for every one of the stated necessary conditions, but at this early stage in the work I can do that for only some of them. Note, however, that I don't claim completeness in this regard, and I'd welcome from amongst you anyone who can confirm or deny the given conditions, and who can come up with more conditions so that we approach that much closer to assembling the sufficient condition. Thus I give you a psychopractic chart for the elicitation of creative poetry (see Table 2).

I'm now going to make a very large claim. We've had a look at the psychopractic chart for the ganzfeld, and we've now seen such a chart for poetic creativity. I maintain that there is *no essential difference in formal structure* between the two psychopractic tables. After all, the self is the same, a pro attitude is there, a set of necessary conditions is enumerated, and if they attain sufficiency then the goal-state occurs. That there are variables that we haven't explicitly specified is represented in the notation "Variables V_1 to V_n ". Students of the ganzfeld, or for that matter of poetic creativity (or even creativity in general), might seek to assemble as many of these missing conditions as possible, if they hope to foster psychopraxia in all its manifestations.

Creativity is one of the harder endogenous phenomena to specify as regards its psychopractic table, and in that difficulty it resembles what we once called ESP. I have two conclusions: first, we have here a case study

that *begins* to suggest that the principle of psychopraxia operates similarly whether it is endosomatic or exosomatic, and is therefore a plausible candidate for *unifying* the two domains under one superordinate process; and second, there is no such thing as the paranormal, only familiar processes operating in unusual, anomalous circumstances.

Table 2.
Psychopractic Chart for a Creative Poem

SELF
+
Pro Attitude towards goal state (a creative poem)
A deep acquaintance with the highs and lows of life (as in bipolar disorder)
Spring or summer
Subconscious incubation of ideas
Liability to inspiration “out of the blue” or from “within the depths”
Belief in and experience of the psychic
Associative productivity
Ability to work hard to achieve one’s aims
Relative indifference to criticism of one’s work
The expectation of success
Comfort with new challenges
Self-confidence
Discipline
Variables V_1 to V_n
↓
GOAL-STATE (CREATIVE POEM)

Therefore, may parapsychology be married to normal psychology, and let it not be a shotgun wedding, and may they henceforth be partners,

rather than the adversaries that they have been so often in the past. Thank you for your attendance today.

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