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TO THE EDITOR OF *Philosophy*

SIR,

When Professor H. H. Price, in his admirable article on some philosophical questions about Telepathy and Clairvoyance, criticizes the Radiation Hypothesis as an explanation of psychic phenomena, it seems that he is subject to a misconception. He assumes that this hypothesis is based on "some form of physical radiation by the brain of the agent and picked up by the brain of the percipient." This assumption limits the scope of the Radiation Hypothesis to energy in the *physical* field, but the whole problem is much more complicated than his statement bears out. The Radiation Hypothesis suggests that waves and radiations to a great extent express the nature of things, and that the whole web of radiations is connected through the activity of release-systems whereby waves of one order may set waves of another moving and so attain ends outside the original field in which they operate. In this manner non-physical energy may cause physical effects and vice versa. The magnetic field of the brain—which nowadays undergoes measurements—seems to act as such a release-instrument and allow thought-vibrations to induce movements of the body. I recall the declaration of the eminent French scientist, Daniel Berthelot: "it would not be surprising if it were so that human thoughts expressed themselves through electrical currents corresponding to what we know of wireless telegraphy." In this manner "the new physics offer a contribution to the old metaphysical problem of the relationship between body and soul" (E. Zimmern, in *Revolution of Physics*, Foreword by Professor Max Planck).

This view has a direct bearing on the problem of Telepathy and Clairvoyance which, as Professor Price says, must be accepted as established facts. It is no question of "brain-waves." The brain is no container of thoughts or memory, according to this view, but operates as a transmitter and transformer of energy inside the individual human system. It is also worth while to notice that Telepathy and Clairvoyance mostly occur when bodily functions and the activity of the brain are low or detached. The vibrations of thought and our perceptive qualities belong to the soul and our senses transmit radiative impressions from the outside world in ordinary life, but occasionally they are passed over and direct contacts between the soul and other wave-systems is established and then Telepathy becomes possible.

If every body or event issues waves, and life radiates as well as solid crystals, then it would not become unpalatable to think that waves are picked up whenever they synchronize with the wave-system of a detached perceiving soul. But to that end it is necessary to assume the existence of *fields* conveying the various forms of radiation in the universe.

Physical radiations bring pictures of the exterior world to our consciousness and without them we would know very little of things about us. These radiations depend on *distance in space* between bodies, but that is not the case with Telepathic communications. This well-known fact leads to the assumption of a special field of conveyance for transmissions which produce Telepathic phenomena.

In physics several fields for transmissions exist and their properties vary very widely. I once asked my friend, Lord Rutherford, if he believed in an Ether which transmits light-radiations, and his characteristic answer was that "it must exist but I do not like to talk about it." The possible properties of this Ether have been discussed since early times. Einstein has published his view that the properties of space offer a substitute for this Ether. Other writers suggest several kinds of Ether suitable for separate and different forms of radiations, physical as well as non-physical.

It is now suggested that non-physical radiations operate in a field which is independent of distance between bodies in space, or we could say that thought is the shortest distance between points in space. If Telepathic transmissions occur in such

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a medium they are independent of distance between bodies, and this is what the Radiation Hypothesis assumes. Therefore Professor Price's argument against the theory in this respect becomes irrelevant.

We are well aware that human beings in bodies that move closely to each other may in reality feel miles apart in other respects. Their thoughts and emotions never touch. Their innermost beings—whatever we mean by that expression—seem to move in separate worlds. It is no far-fetched idea that in fact they do so, although our senses convey a picture of them as belonging to the same sphere. When we speak of Telepathy an analogous situation occurs. Sense-perceptions belong to physical space, but some psychic phenomena do not. They evidently move in a different field and it is of interest to notice that Professor Price—starting from other points than my own—also is brought to discuss the existence of a “realm which is neither mental in the ordinary sense nor physical in the ordinary sense, but possesses some properties of both.” This idea is in line with the field of psychic events which the Radiation Hypothesis accepts.

But separate individual agents need means of contact within that realm and such means are offered through waves and radiations interacting between themselves and inducing movements in other fields through special releases.

Professor Price regards it difficult to accept the idea that a “complex proposition” or even a “complex picture” could be transmitted by radiation, but our sense-perceptions do depend on “complex” radiations and how our Self collects them to render a representative picture of the exterior world remains an unsolved problem. Exactly a similar problem meets us when radiations of a non-physical nature are transmitted to and enter our consciousness. The objection mentioned by Professor Price evidently belongs to the function of consciousness and has nothing to do with the Radiation Hypothesis as such.

I fully agree with Professor Price that a discussion of this kind must suffer from inadequacy of words. Modern physics have broken the frame of our distinctly delineated earlier picture of existence, but we still labour with terms like ‘physical,’ ‘matter,’ etc. We need a new terminology that covers the present situation, but must struggle along with the deficient means available. It is a handicap, but I hope the general idea of thoughts expressed above will be sufficiently comprehended.

It has been my wish to focus the discussion originated by Professor Price in this direction, as I believe it would become helpful to the many who with him realize that we are in fact facing a new conception of fundamental problems.

Yours faithfully,

ERIK PALMSTIERNA.

LONDON,

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