

The patterns of psi experiences among our aborigines appear, from popular and anthropological accounts, to be similar to claims made by a great many diversified native peoples. This common feature in itself calls for investigation along scientific and not anecdotal lines.

Reviews

SCHIZOPHRENIC ART: Its Meaning in Psychotherapy. By Margaret Naumburg. Illustrated. 247 pp. Grune & Stratton, New York, 1950. \$10.

Interest in the artistic productions of psychotics has passed through several stages since the turn of the century. Old-school psychiatrists saw in them little more than bizarre and, sometimes, repulsive expressions of the deranged mind. It was the advent of a new approach to art in general which discovered the striking creative qualities, especially of the art of the schizophrenic patient. Notably Prinzhorn's monograph on the *Art of the Mentally Ill* (1922) drew attention to the similarity between art productions of preliterate peoples, children, and schizophrenics.

Again, Schilder (1918) and other psychoanalysts commented on the relations of this type of artistic productions to the work of modern cubistic and expressionistic artists and analyzed their underlying symbolic significance.

It is at this point that Miss Naumburg's approach takes up the work where it was left by her predecessors. Her book is based on a careful analysis of the art of two schizophrenic patients studied at the New York Psychiatric Institute. It shows how the patients may use drawing, painting, and sculpturing as means of expression to bring out deep-seated emotional conflicts which they are unable to express on the verbal level. Thus, with the aid of the therapist, they are helped to gain increasing insight into the meaning of their own world of symbols, much in the same way as this can be achieved by the psychoanalytic approach to the imagery of the dream. This may, in turn, lead to the gradual release of pent-up emotional tensions and result in striking improvement of the whole clinical picture. Miss Naumburg's approach can thus be used as a new tool of psychotherapy on the nonverbal level.

JAN 1951 (April)
(1951)

Yet, the importance of her work goes beyond its purely clinical and psychiatric implications. It demonstrates the basic identity of the creative impulses that lie dormant in the unconscious in both health and disease, in primitive peoples as well as in civilized man. At the same time it brings home to us once more the importance of giving free rein to the creative aspects of the unconscious through socially recognized and culturally determined channels.

In Miss Naumburg's view modern abstract painting and sculpturing as well as primitive art and the untutored expressions of the schizophrenic artist spring from the same common matrix of what Jung has described as the Collective Unconscious and are subject to the identical laws of psychodynamics as discovered by Freud.

It may well be that, as far as their origin from deeper layers of the personality is concerned, certain creative manifestations of the spiritualistic trance are derived from the same layers of the personality structure, although they may greatly differ in their degree of integration—or distortion and fragmentation, as the case may be—from schizophrenic productions.

The book is profusely illustrated with beautiful colored and black-and-white reproductions and will be enjoyed by every reader interested in the creative potentialities of the human mind, be it in its "normal," "abnormal," or "supernormal" aspects.

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SIXTY YEARS OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH: Houdini and I among the Spiritualists. By Joseph F. Rinn. 618 pp. The Truth Seeker Company, New York, 1950. \$5.00.

This book, in spite of its title (so reminiscent of one of the classics in the field of parapsychology, *Extra-Sensory Perception after Sixty Years*¹), has actually little to do with serious psychical research. A glance at the Table of Contents discloses some strange bedfellows. Sir William Barrett rubs shoulders with Martinka's Magic Shop; Drs. Hodgson, James, and Hyslop share a chapter with a mysterious self-filling champagne bottle and one J. Randall Brown, Psychic Marvel; Dr. Stevens, who "married a ghost," leaves the center of the stage in favor of Mrs. Piper and her control "Phenuit" (*sic*), and they in turn are quickly replaced by Evatima Tardo, a lady fortunate enough to be immune to both cobra and gila monster bites;

¹ Pratt, J. G., Rhine, J. B., *et al.*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1940.

and Dr. Rhine shares the honors with the Indian rope trick! By thoroughly perusing this volume, we learn how to kiss a baby ghost, how spirits operate a typewriter, about Myna, the bird with a human voice, how Houdini did many of his feats of magic, and, above all, how Mr. Rinn himself out-magicked (if we may coin a word) the magicians, outdid an imposing roster of pseudo-mediums, and, single-handed, outwitted absolutely everybody else—including, of course, Drs. Hodgson, Hyslop, W. F. Prince, and Rhine, as well as Mrs. Sedgwick (*sic*) and others.

It might well be asked why space in the *JOURNAL* is used for a review of such a shoddy volume as this. The answer can be given in the words of the Rev. M. A. Bayfield, who said, when asked by the Editor of the *Journal* of the (English) Society for Psychical Research to review two books, one by Charles Mercier and the other by Edward Clodd: "Were it not that to ignore these books might be taken as an acknowledgment that their contentions are unanswerable, I should have replied to the Editor . . . that they really do not deserve notice."² When Mr. Rinn discloses to his readers how Houdini walked through a brick wall, made an elephant disappear, and swallowed 200 threaded needles, he is on home territory and we have no quarrel with him; when he goes to infantile lengths to expose "mediums" that no parapsychologist would have taken seriously in the first place, we may smile indulgently and hope that he found it a pleasant way to pass his time. We are all entitled to our opinions, and if Mr. Rinn feels that the evidence³ for paranormal phenomena is insufficient to establish their reality, then he has every right to say so. But what he *does not* have a right to do is to make up situations and conversations out of the whole cloth (as we are prepared to demonstrate that he does), presenting them as if they were historical facts, for the purpose of making men of the calibre of Hodgson, Hyslop, and W. F. Prince appear to be fools and knaves. One cannot help wondering how Mr. Rinn thought he was going to be able to "get away" with his slanderous imputations against the sanity and honesty of some of the keystone figures of psychical research, for even a child could see that he becomes quite irrational when speaking of these men. For example, what are we to think of Mr. Rinn's own sanity when he says that he got up at a meeting at which Dr. Prince was the speaker and announced to him and to the audience: "I won't

² *Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. XVIII, 1918, pp. 198-200.

³ It should be pointed out, however, that Mr. Rinn's knowledge of psychical research seems to be derived in the main from newspaper reports — even these he is unable to quote accurately — and from the writings of his hero, Edward Clodd, whose misspellings of names, etc., are faithfully reproduced.

stand for your appearing here and telling lies . . . I am one of the oldest members of the Society for Psychical Research⁴ and I know the facts. That man [Dr. Prince] is a liar, because he makes his living out of this nonsense" (p. 470); but then, on p. 479, "I wanted Dr. Prince retained on the committee [the Scientific American Committee] for I trusted implicitly in his integrity." How Dr. Prince could be both a "liar" and a man of integrity is somewhat hard to understand.

To point out all the instances of inaccurate reporting, misinterpretation of data, and downright, crude misrepresentation of published facts which appear in this work would take a review of mammoth proportions. We will thus have to limit ourselves to giving a few examples:

1. P. 28. "In the fall of 1886, Mrs. Hannah V. Ross, of Boston, had a reputation as a high-class medium. When Richmond and I learned that she was to give a séance in New York, we decided to attend it. At that séance the materialized spirits . . . looked so much like living persons that Richmond suggested that we grab one of them and find out. I prevailed on him not to do so, for my connection with such an act would hurt my standing in the Society for Psychical Research." Since Mr. Rinn did not become a member of the Society until 1897, it is difficult to see how his standing could have been hurt by his action 11 years earlier. This is just one of his innumerable attempts to make the S.P.R. and/or A.S.P.R. appear in a poor light.

2. P. 72. Mr. Rinn claims to have met Dr. Hyslop in 1888. "In the course of conversation we found out that we were both members of the Society for Psychical Research . . . This fact led to our working together in psychic investigations for many years." This is indeed a curious statement, since Dr. Hyslop himself did not become a member of the Society until 1891, nor Mr. Rinn, as we have already pointed out, until 1897. It is also curious that, since Mr. Rinn and Dr. Hyslop "worked together in psychic investigations for many years," not a reference to the former appears anywhere, as far as we have been able to ascertain, in Dr. Hyslop's voluminous writings.

⁴ Throughout the book Mr. Rinn repeatedly states that he was a member of both the British and the American Societies for Psychical Research. On p. 15 he says he joined the American Society in 1885, after having heard a lecture given by Sir William Barrett; a search of the membership lists of both societies discloses, however, that Mr. Rinn first joined the (then) American branch of the S.P.R. in 1897 — a discrepancy of only 12 years! He was never at any time a member of the English Society, and remained a member of the American branch for only four years, that is, until 1901, at which time his name ceased to appear in the membership list.

3. The author's accuracy in dealing with the problem of Mrs. Piper is exemplified in the following. P. 73. "After a short test he [Hodgson] felt that Mrs. Piper's alleged powers merited examination by the leaders of the society in England. Accordingly Mrs. Piper was brought by Dr. Hodgson to London, where a series of tests of her powers was made. Although no formal report was issued, members heard remarkable stories of the powers of Mrs. Piper, which in 1890 revived the waning interest in psychic research." This paragraph seems to be almost entirely a dream production on the part of Mr. Rinn. The "short test" referred to was actually over two years of continuous observation on the part of Professor James and Dr. Hodgson. In 1889 Mrs. Piper went to England (Dr. Hodgson stayed in America, Mr. Rinn would have found out, if he had troubled to ascertain the facts). Mr. Rinn then intimates that it was the "remarkable stories" which circulated about Mrs. Piper which in 1890 revived the "waning" interest in psychical research, and states that no formal report was issued. Actually, of course, in 1890 there appeared the massive paper by Myers, Lodge, Leaf, and James on the results of Mrs. Piper's English series.⁵

4. P. 133. Mr. Rinn states that neither he nor Dr. Hyslop had made Dr. Hodgson's acquaintance until Dec. 4, 1895, at which time they went to hear him deliver an address before the Society for Psychological Research. If this be so, then Dr. Hyslop must have been suffering from a painful loss of memory when he wrote in his Obituary of Hodgson that their "acquaintance began in 1889 soon after I came to Columbia University and it soon ripened into a warm friendship."⁶

5. P. 134. The author again states that he and Dr. Hyslop made Dr. Hodgson's acquaintance for the first time in 1895 at his lecture before the Society. Rinn then quotes Hodgson as saying, in answer to questions from the members: "It's impossible for me to answer your questions here. You'll get the whole story before long when my report is issued." Dr. Hyslop is then quoted as saying: "I don't know, Doctor, if you have formulated any theory about Mrs. Piper's powers, but my friend Rinn here, who knew Washington Irving Bishop, has expressed the opinion that Mrs. Piper's powers may be similar. If we could witness a test by Mrs. Piper, we might be able to obtain valuable information." To this, Dr. Hodgson is said to have replied: "When I get back to Boston, I'll try and arrange a séance with Mrs. Piper which you can both attend." This alleged

⁵ *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. VI, 1889-1890, pp. 436-659.

⁶ *JOURNAL A.S.P.R.*, Vol. I, 1907, p. 14.

conversation⁷ is of course ludicrous since not only was Dr. Hyslop well acquainted with Dr. Hodgson's theories about Mrs. Piper's phenomena through the 1892 report⁸ and close personal contact, but he had himself already had a sitting with Mrs. Piper three years earlier, in 1892.⁹

6. Pp. 134-137. Mr. Rinn at this point goes on to describe in detail a sitting with Mrs. Piper that Dr. Hodgson arranged for himself and Dr. Hyslop. It is alleged to have occurred "late in 1896." Mr. Rinn was "not favorably impressed [with Mrs. Piper] because of her thin lips and rather hard, shrewd face." Needless to say, all the participants in this sitting, with the exception, of course, of Mr. Rinn, are made to appear in the worst possible light. Mrs. Piper's fingers "began writing on the pad but the sentences were disconnected and meaningless, although Dr. Hodgson guided her hand and interpreted many of the sentences. Some names were given piecemeal, often in a tentative form that made no sense. The writing 'eb-s-t-gl-nm-thl' was interpreted by Dr. Hodgson as meaning 'Billings.'" At the end of the sitting Mr. Rinn explains to Dr. Hodgson and Dr. Hyslop that the whole affair was nonsensical. "Dr. Hodgson did not invite me to any more séances with Mrs. Piper. Wishing to have the endorsement of Professor Hyslop, [however], he invited him to many of her séances." Actually, it can be proved that no such sitting ever took place. Dr. Hyslop, as stated above, had his first sitting with Mrs. Piper on May 20, 1892. He writes in his Report (footnote 9, p. 298): "So far as I am aware, I never saw

⁷ The volume is liberally studded with lengthy conversations (quotation marks being used) alleged to have taken place between the author and Hodgson, Hyslop, Prince, and others. Mr. Rinn's memory is indeed remarkable, for he recalls, after so many years, not only their exact words, but also their very facial expressions! We learn, for instance, on p. 203, that Hyslop's face "flushed and then turned pale" when Mr. Rinn "felt too kindly toward him . . . to expose his ignorance" in the case of a conjuring trick. Possibly, however, Mr. Rinn in 1902 used a wire recorder and color motion picture film, by means of which he refreshed his memory when the need arose. In another passage, appearing on p. 294, Dr. Hyslop is quoted as having said, at a meeting in 1910 before the Brooklyn Philosophical Association, "We believe pretty well in the powers of Mrs. Piper, and I think the members of the English branch of our association do, too, but they are too aristocratic to say so." It is really straining our credulity to the breaking point to ask us to believe that Dr. Hyslop would refer to the English S.P.R. as a "branch" of our Society! This, and the delightfully naive remark about the "aristocratic" attitude of the English investigators, sounds more like the phantasy of a man who started his career at the age of 15 as a wholesale grocer than the utterance of a university professor.

⁸ "A Record of Observations of Certain Phenomena of Trance," by Richard Hodgson. *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. VIII, 1892, pp. 1-167.

⁹ "A Further Record of Observations of Certain Trance Phenomena," by James Hervey Hyslop, *Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XVI, 1901, pp. 4-649. (A full account of all his Piper sittings between the first one, May 20, 1892, and the last in the series, in 1899, is given.)

Mrs. Piper again or had any communication with her till I went out to Arlington Heights on December 23rd, 1898." Possibly, however, Dr. Hyslop was suffering from still another painful attack of amnesia at the time of writing this report, which would account for his "forgetting" that he had gone up to Boston with Mr. Rinn "late in 1896" and taken a sitting with Mrs. Piper! If the objection be raised that possibly Mr. Rinn was guilty merely of an innocent lapse of memory as to the correct date of the sitting, and not of making up "an awful whopper," we can again refer to Dr. Hyslop's report. Between December, 1898 and June, 1899 he had 12 sittings with Mrs. Piper, all recorded in detail. None remotely resembles the "Rinn sitting," nor was Mr. Rinn present at any. Finally, it was not Dr. Hodgson who invited Dr. Hyslop to have sittings with Mrs. Piper, but Dr. Hyslop who requested them of Dr. Hodgson. Dr. Hyslop writes: "The sittings which form the subject of my present report were arranged for in the following manner. I had written in August (1898) to Miss Edmunds [Dr. Hodgson's secretary] for them, but had concealed myself under the pretence of wanting them for some one else. Of this I was very careful, but Mrs. P. was absent on her vacation and the plan fell through. After Dr. Hodgson's return to this country I wrote to him for sittings" (footnote 9, p. 298).

There would be nothing to gain in pointing out further examples of Mr. Rinn's inability to distinguish fact from fiction. Two instances of his curious processes of reasoning, however, will be given for whatever light they may shed on the conscious and unconscious *needs* which motivated the production of this volume. The first is trivial and amusing in its childish petulance; the second can hardly be characterized by a word less strong than "disgusting."

(a) In 1922 Dr. Prince went to Nova Scotia to investigate, at the invitation of the proprietor of several Halifax newspapers, some alleged poltergeist phenomena occurring in a house near Antigonish. In his report¹⁰ Dr. Prince says: "Many statements and acts have been attributed to me in certain papers, and thence have become widely disseminated, which have no foundation. There have even appeared purported interviews with me which never took place." Dr. Prince's final conclusion was that the phenomena were due to normal human agency. Mr. Rinn devotes pp. 395-399 to quoting some of these newspaper stories, and then says: "Dr. Prince proved his incompetence in his investigation." Apparently Mr. Rinn cannot stomach it if anyone other than himself gives a negative verdict in the case of alleged psychic phenomena!

¹⁰ "An Investigation of Poltergeist and Other Phenomena Near Antigonish," by Walter F. Prince, *JOURNAL A.S.P.R.*, Vol. XVI, 1922, pp. 422-441.

(b) Pp. 291-292. In 1921 Houdini is said to have heard from Francis Martinka, the owner of a magic supply company, that Hereward Carrington had bought luminous paint from the shop in 1910, when he was managing Palladino's sittings. Houdini is quoted as saying: "You'll do me a favor, Martinka, by putting that statement in writing. Some day, when I write a book on my experiences with mediums, I may wish to use it to show up Carrington." In March of that year, Houdini showed Rinn a letter from Martinka which contained the statement he had made about Carrington, signed by Martinka and by two witnesses to his signature. Hereupon Mr. Rinn draws the conclusion that Carrington is a "faker," saying: "I wonder what reasonable explanation Carrington could give for buying luminous paint while he was acting as manager for Eusapia Palladino, considering that it was sold only to *crooked mediums*" (italics the author's). It hardly need be pointed out here that there are a number of perfectly legitimate uses for luminous paint in the investigation of physical mediumship, and to impute dishonesty to an investigator solely on the grounds that he quite openly buys such paint in a well-known magic supply shop is too childish to warrant further discussion.

There is of course a constant need for thoughtful, rational, and constructive criticisms of the theories, methods, and results of parapsychological research. So far, as has often been pointed out, such criticisms have come from the researchers themselves—from men and women of the calibre of Mrs. Sidgwick, Miss Alice Johnson, Frank Podmore, Andrew Lang, W. F. Prince, and Gardner Murphy, to mention but a few. There is no excuse, however, for the shoddy display of eccentric reasoning, emotional bias, and lack of knowledge of the basic problems of the field which is exemplified by Mr. Rinn's volume. It is indeed a mystery to this reviewer that any publishing house, however obscure, could have accepted such a manuscript. It is the practice of reputable publishing houses to submit manuscripts to "readers." One of the tasks of such a reader is to check supposedly factual statements for accuracy. If the "Truth Seeker" Company had seen fit to do this, the present reviewer might at the moment be enjoying a cross-word puzzle instead of pondering on the psychiatric and psychoanalytic implications of a mind so incapable of dealing with problems in an honest and realistic way.

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