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DEAR SIR,

Of parapsychologists it may now be said: "Cet animal est très méchant: quand on l'attaque il se défend." Parapsychologists are by no means so numerous as their critics, but they are now asking editors to see that books in the field are reviewed by persons informed about parapsychology. I wonder if you would send out for review a book on, say, the genetics of schizophrenia to a parapsychologist. Almost certainly you would not. Then is it not fair to ask that the reviewer of a book on parapsychology be able to draw to the attention of readers the deficiencies of a book as well as its merits?

Professor Hansel's book, *E.S.P.: A Scientific Evaluation*, equipped as it is with some bibliography, tables, figures, and a laudatory foreword by Professor Boring, appears to be a scholarly and accurate guide to parapsychology. In fact, however, it is riddled with errors and biases of which it will only be worth while to point out a few.

In the first place, I draw attention to the foolishness of saying that the four experiments criticized by Hansel are "crucial" to the case for E.S.P. This is Hansel's judgment, not that of parapsychologists. The case for investigating E.S.P. rests on a large number of observations and experiments and would hardly be weakened at all by the demolition, if Hansel had accomplished this, of the four experiments which he selected for attack.

Secondly, Hansel first published his criticisms of these experiments in the specialty journals and was answered there. Not satisfied with where these answers left his critiques, he wrote a book taking his case to laymen. That his book is addressed to laymen is quite clear from its style and various pejorative phrases (e.g. "Salad Days at Duke University"), and explanatory comments, such as those telling the reader what a superscript numeral means. If a reviewer has not informed himself about the reports

in the specialty journals and if he finds Hansel's position congenial he can easily persuade himself, as you seem to have done, that a sound authority has finally disposed of parapsychology.

Hansel constantly reproaches parapsychologists with inattention to detail, carelessness in their reporting, and similar offences. But his own book contains numerous errors of names, places, and details, which, if one wielded his own weapon, would destroy his book utterly and deprive us of some of its helpful features. For example, in describing parapsychological experiments conducted in Prague with the subject Pavel Stepanek, Hansel makes nine errors of details in the space of 22 lines. Surely he can never have read the original reports of these experiments, and if so what right has he to refer to them as an "act" put on by the subject Stepanek? On the other hand, if he has read the reports he is far more guilty of lapses of memory and carelessness with details than any parapsychologist he criticizes.

Since you give attention to the Pearce-Pratt series in your review of Hansel's work and evidently believe Hansel to be a reliable guide to this experiment, permit me to inform your readers that this is far from the case. Hansel printed in his book a diagram of the lay-out of rooms for this series of experiments which was so inaccurate as to be almost fictional. Although Hansel said he could not obtain plans of the buildings at Duke University, I had no trouble in doing so, and with these as a help I went over the main site of the experiments myself. If I had not had Dr. Pratt's personal testimony that Hansel had also visited the site, I would have had difficulty in believing that he had, so inaccurate are his statements and his plan. Room 311 could under no circumstances have been used for inspecting the cards on Pratt's desk as Hansel surmises Pearce did. Nor could any other room in that hall, with the exception of one room somewhat down the hall which was then assigned for research. Is it to be supposed that its occupants would not notice someone standing on a chair peering through the transom into another room? The window of Pratt's office to the hall with clear glass was actually two inches higher than Hansel says it was. It could not have been used except by a very tall man or one standing on a chair. (Hubert Pearce, the subject under suspicion, is not a tall man.) The room with the trap door was used for only one of the four series of experiments.

Hansel himself seemed to realize that in the end it all boiled down to the honesty of the participants, and he called peevishly for a statement from Pearce, without saying whether such a statement would alter his (Hansel's) convictions on the matter. So I obtained and published a firm denial of cheating from

Pearce (1). In short, it is most unlikely that Pearce could have cheated (because of the physical features of the rooms used), and it is even more unlikely that he did cheat.

Yet it is not quite impossible. And no parapsychologist suggests that it was impossible for him, or for many other tested subjects, to have cheated. But if parapsychology has reached the point where fraud by experimenters and subjects is the only alternative to acceptance of E.S.P., then it has come a very long way indeed.

This brings me to the freedom with which accusations of fraud are thrown around when parapsychology is discussed. Sober scientists very rarely impute fraud to other scientists, both out of respect for colleagues and a fear of the laws concerning libel. Why should parapsychologists be required to produce a fraud-proof experiment when other scientists are not? Why should they have to put up with unpunished accusations of fraud? If it is replied that this is necessary because the claims are so extraordinary, I say that this is precisely the point where the unfairness comes in. What if Hubert Pearce, for example, did not cheat? Surely a grave injustice is being done in that case, as well as in the cases of the other subjects and experimenters so casually accused of cheating, if they also did not cheat. Certain phenomena seem to be occurring which, according to the theory of materialism, ought not to occur. Surely this means that something may be wrong with the theory. But we remember sadly that (in the eighteenth century) after the French Academy of Science declared that meteorites could not exist a number of European museums removed specimen meteorites from their exhibits.

Your lack of familiarity with the specialty literature of parapsychology appears also in your praise of Mr. Trevor Hall's book, *The Spiritualists*. Mr. Hall's book reads smoothly, and the uninformed reader can easily be beguiled into thinking he has before him an accurate analysis of the conduct of Sir William Crookes in the Florence Cook sittings. It is only when one knows evidence omitted by Mr. Hall that one becomes aware how often his speculations advanced on one page are a few pages later accepted as established fact and used as the foundation for further conjectures.

Mr. Hall's surmises about Sir William Crookes are largely based on the testimony of two lovers of Florence Cook (Anderson and Bois), both of whom were shown to have told quite different stories at different times (2). As for the "mass of circumstantial detail" which Anderson claimed to recall (after an interval of 56 years), the fact is that his description of the house in which he claimed to have first known

Florence Cook was quite inaccurate. A banister which figures in one scene of Anderson's memories simply did not exist, and other details were equally false. I am certainly not here defending Florence Cook or Crookes's report of his sittings with her; I am merely insisting that critics of parapsychology should adhere to standards of accuracy as high as those they require of parapsychologists.

Fortunately, a field belongs to its investigators rather than to its outside critics. New and better experiments (none of them fraud-proof) are going forward and adding to the evidence for E.S.P. The Parapsychological Association, the international organization of the scientifically-trained professional investigators in the field, now has almost 200 members from 23 countries. Its membership is slowly increasing. May I suggest that you invite some of its well-informed members to assist you in the appraisal of books in the field, just as you obtain expert assistance in reviewing books in other fields? I will be happy to provide a list of the membership for your convenience.

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DEAR SIR,

Professor Eysenck says that he has been impressed by the lawfulness of certain events occurring within runs, such as "the fall-off of scores, *which is reported again and again*" (italics mine). I can find no evidence for any such fall-off in scores during E.S.P. tests.

In the early work at Duke University, the DT tests, in which subjects guessed the cards in the pack reposing on the table in front of them, revealed a "U" curve with scores tending to be *highest* at the end of the run. In other tests the published data shows no decline during the run (see for example J. B. Rhine's *Extra-Sensory Perception* (1934) and *J. Parapsychology*, **1**, 141). If we consider the so-called conclusive tests and other experiments discussed in my book, Shackleton's hits, according to Soal, were randomly dispersed over the score sheets. Mrs. Stewart displayed a decline effect in the first column of 25 guesses on the sheet and an incline in the second column. In the case of Glyn Jones, Soal reported that the hits