

BAGGALLY

WILLIAM

WORTLEY

TELEPATHY, GENUINE AND
FRAUDULENT

William Baggally

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W. W. Baggally

Telepathy, Genuine and Fraudulent

PREFATORY NOTE

My friend, Mr. W. W. Baggally, an experienced investigator of supernormal phenomena, has set down some of his experiences in connexion with the subject of Telepathy, and I heartily commend his book to the public as the record of a careful, conscientious, and exceptionally skilled and critical investigator. It would be difficult to find anyone more competent by training and capacity to examine into the genuineness of these subtle and elusive phenomena, which yet are of the utmost importance in the development of psychological science. Telepathy, or the direct action of mind on mind apart from the ordinary channels of sense, opens a new chapter; it is not a coping-stone completing an erection, but a foundation-stone on which to build.

OLIVER J. LODGE

PART I

GENUINE TELEPATHY

Sir William F. Barrett, one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, more than forty years ago tried some experiments which led him to believe that something then new to science, which he provisionally called "thought transference" and which is now known as "telepathy," really existed.

At the first general meeting of the Society, on the 17th July 1882, he read a paper entitled "First Report on Mind Reading."

Since that date the Society has carried out a great number of experiments which tend to show that telepathy is a scientific fact. The evidence for its existence is twofold – that which can be gathered experimentally, and that which arises spontaneously. To the first category belong those experiments in the transmission of the images of drawings or diagrams by means of an effort of the will of a person known as the *agent* to the mind of another person designated the *percipient*, when the transmission is carried out otherwise than through the ordinary channel of the senses. To the second category belong those hallucinations of seeing a person at the moment of death or at a crisis, evidence for which has been obtained abundantly by the Society for Psychical Research and has been embodied in the work *Phantasms of the Living*, and in the *Census of Hallucinations*— a report on which appeared in the *Proceedings* of the Society in 1894.

There are several theories to explain the action of telepathy. The first compares it to wireless telegraphy. On this hypothesis it is supposed that it is due to ethereal wave action: – Thought causes motion in the brain cells of the agent, the cells then impart motion to the surrounding ether in the form of waves which impinge on the brain cells of the percipient and give rise to a corresponding thought to that which started the ethereal wave motion.

This theory offers great difficulties. An opponent to it points out that "A wireless message is transmitted by a succession of single ethereal wave impulses produced by the electric sparks at the starting station and received by the coherer at the receiving station, whereas a diagram to be transmitted would require a number of brain-waves produced simultaneously and arranged in the form of the diagram."

Another mode of putting the matter recently advanced is that the agent does not transmit his thought, but that the percipient reads clairvoyantly what is in the agent's mind.

There is also the spiritualistic theory. It is asserted that an external entity, or spirit, conveys the images or thoughts from one mind to another.

Another theory is that telepathy takes place in the subconscious mind, and that the subconscious mind of the agent is in communication with the subconscious mind of the percipient by means of the universal mind underlying all things and of which individual subconscious minds form part.

Not one of these theories has been accepted as proved by the Society for Psychical Research. In cases of spontaneous telepathy it is now generally believed that the appearance of a person at the time of death or at a crisis is not caused by an objective bodily ghost, but arises from a telepathic impact from the agent formulating itself into his image in the mind of the percipient.

In the case of two persons seeing an apparition at the same time, this may be due to the two percipients receiving each, separately, a telepathic impression, or there may be only one percipient who telepathically impresses the hallucination on the mind of the second person.

I will now proceed to relate some cases of telepathy which have come under my personal observation. My first experiment in the transmission of images of drawings and diagrams took place in the rooms of the Society for Psychical Research in May 1902. A private lady, Miss M. Telbin, acted

as percipient, and I acted as agent. There were present at the time Mr. J. G. Piddington, Honorary Secretary of the Society, and Mr. Thomas, the then Acting Secretary.

During the first experiment Miss Telbin, who was a stranger to me, sat with her back towards a large opaque screen. In front of her stood a small table upon which rested a crystal ball. She was asked to gaze at the crystal and to describe any vision that might appear to form itself therein. I may parenthetically remark that the object of crystal-gazing is to concentrate the mind and to withdraw it from outward influences. The vision seen in the crystal does not exist objectively, but only in the mind of the seer. On the other side of the screen, entirely hidden from the view of Miss Telbin, sat Mr. Piddington and myself. This gentleman proceeded to take from a box, which was behind the screen and on the floor between his and my chairs, various articles, and to hand them silently, one at a time, to me. I then concentrated my thoughts successively on each article. Miss Telbin gave an account of what she saw in the crystal, and Mr. Thomas, who sat in such a position that both Mr. Piddington and myself were hidden from his view, took notes of what occurred.

The first article handed me was a *Windsor Magazine*, on the cover of which there was an engraving of Windsor Castle. I concentrated my thoughts on this engraving, and Miss Telbin then gave a description of the vision that presented itself to her mental view.

She first observed that she could see trees on the left side of the picture, and cottages also on the left, and that there was water.

These details were correct so far as they went, but the subsequent details that she gave were incorrect, and the experiment was abandoned as a failure. I then replaced the magazine in the box from which it had been taken, so that Miss Telbin had no opportunity of seeing the magazine during the experiment nor after.

Other experiments were being tried when Miss Telbin spontaneously said that she had had a vision of Windsor Castle.

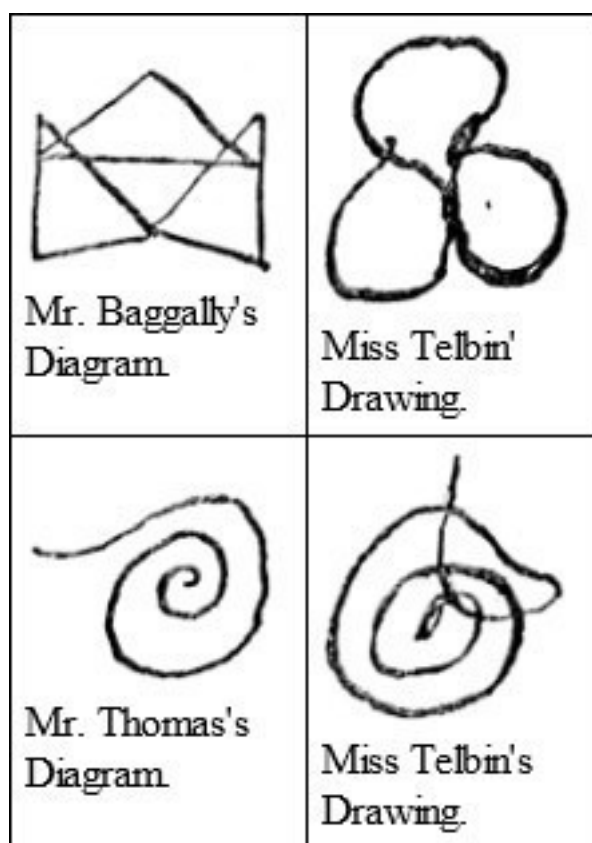
This experiment may be regarded as a case of deferred telepathy.

Another experiment with the same lady, in which simultaneous double telepathy occurred, is of better evidential value.

Miss Telbin again sat with her back to the screen, and instead of the crystal a piece of paper and a pencil were placed on the table in front of her.

This time Mr. Thomas and I sat behind the screen hidden from her view, and Mr. J. G. Piddington took notes. Mr. Thomas and I acted as simultaneous agents. We each held a small piece of cardboard with a diagram on it known to the agent viewing it, but not to the other agent. These diagrams belonged to the Society for Psychical Research and had not been seen by Mr. Thomas nor by me previous to the experiment. They were in a box which was at our feet behind the screen. We each took a diagram from the box, taking care that we did not see each other's diagram.

We concentrated our minds on our respective diagrams, and Miss Telbin drew her impressions on the piece of paper in front of her. The following drawings show the results: —



At the time that Miss Telbin got the impression of the diagram with three sections, she made the remark that it looked like three leaves.

The correspondence between the drawings and the diagrams is very great, and difficult to account for by chance.

The following points have to be considered. First, that Miss Telbin only made two drawings and not many from which two might have been selected in which there was a resemblance to the diagrams. Secondly, that Mr. Thomas's diagram was correctly reproduced although in a reversed position (the reversal of a figure sometimes happens in experiments in telepathy). Thirdly, that my diagram of three triangles, although not reproduced in the form of triangles, was drawn correctly as regards there being three sections, and that the relative position of the sections was given correctly. Fourthly, that Miss Telbin had not previously seen any of the diagrams, and therefore the chances against her being able to hit upon any diagram which was then being used were very great. Fifthly, that the chances against her being able to hit upon two diagrams simultaneously were even greater.

The explanation that the result might have been due to collusion between the persons experimenting of course cannot be entertained, at least by myself, who was one of the experimenters.

It was not possible for the percipient to see through the large screen which was behind her, and there were no mirrors in the room in which the small diagrams could have been reflected. No word was spoken to give her the slightest clue. These two successful telepathic experiments led to further ones at a distance between this lady and myself.

It will be of interest to insert here an account of an experiment in telepathy, similar to the one I have just described, between two agents and one percipient, which Sir Oliver Lodge carried out in the year 1884.

When the experiment was tried with Miss Telbin, Mr. Thomas, and myself I was not aware that Sir Oliver Lodge had already tried an experiment of a like nature.

Sir Oliver Lodge's Account

"My own first actual experience of thought transference, or experimental telepathy, was obtained in the years 1883 and 1884 at Liverpool, when I was invited by Mr. Malcolm Guthrie of that city to join in an investigation which he was conducting with the aid of one or two persons who had turned out to be sensitive, from among the employees of the large drapery firm of George Henry Lee & Co.

"A large number of these experiments had been conducted before I was asked to join, throughout the spring and autumn of 1883, but it is better for me to adhere strictly to my own experience and to relate only those experiments over which I had control.

"Most of these experiments were confirmations of the kind of thing that had been observed by other experimenters. But one experiment which I tried was definitely novel, and, as it seems to me, important; since it clearly showed that when two agents are acting, each contributes to the effect, and that the result is due, not to one alone, but to both combined. The experiment is thus described by me in the columns of *Nature*, vol. xxx., page 145, for 12th June 1884: —

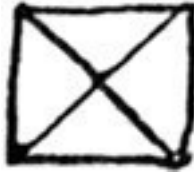
"An Experiment in Thought Transference

"Those of your readers who are interested in the subject of thought transference, now being investigated, may be glad to hear of a little experiment which I recently tried here. The series of experiments was originated and carried on in this city by Mr. Malcolm Guthrie, and he has prevailed on me, on Dr. Herdman, and on one or two other more or less scientific witnesses, to be present on several occasions, critically to examine the conditions, and to impose any fresh ones that we thought desirable. I need not enter into particulars, but I will just say that the conditions under which apparent transference of thought occurs from one or more persons, steadfastly thinking, to another in the same room blindfold and wholly disconnected from the others, seem to me absolutely satisfactory, and such as to preclude the possibility of conscious collusion on the one hand or unconscious muscular indication on the other.

"One evening last week – after two thinkers, or agents, had been several times successful in instilling the idea of some object or drawing, at which they were looking, into the mind of the blindfold person, or percipient – I brought into the room a double opaque sheet of thick paper with a square drawn on one side and a St. Andrew's cross or X on the other, and silently arranged it between the two agents so that each looked on one side without any notion of what was on the other. The percipient was not informed in any way that a novel modification was being made; and, as usual, there was no contact of any sort or kind – a clear space of several feet existing between each of the three people. I thought that by this variation I should decide whether one of the two agents was more active than the other; or, supposing them about equal, whether two ideas in two separate minds could be fused into one by the percipient.

"In a very short time the percipient made the following remarks, every one else being silent: 'The thing won't keep still.' 'I seem to see things moving about.' 'First I see a thing up there, and then one down there.' 'I can't see either distinctly.' The object was then hidden, and the percipient was told to take off the bandage and to draw the impression in her mind on a sheet of paper. She drew a square, and then said, 'There was the other thing as well,' and drew a cross inside the square from corner to corner, saying afterwards, 'I don't know what made me put it inside.'





Reproduction.

"The experiment is no more conclusive as evidence than fifty others that I have seen at Mr. Guthrie's, but it seems to me somewhat interesting that two minds should produce a disconnected sort of impression on the mind of the percipient, quite different from the single impression which we had usually obtained when two agents were both looking at the same thing. Once, for instance (to take a nearly corresponding case under those conditions), when the object was a rude drawing of the main lines in a Union Jack, the figure was reproduced by the percipient as a whole without misgiving; except, indeed, that she expressed a doubt as to whether its middle horizontal line were present or not, and ultimately omitted it."


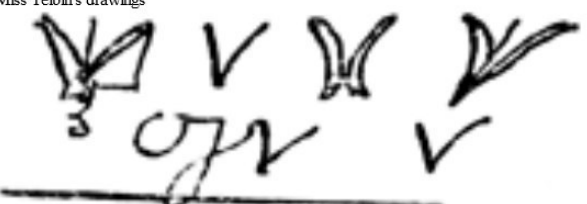





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As I have said, the two successful telepathic experiments which I have described, and which took place in the rooms of the Society for Psychical Research, led to further experiments at a distance between Miss Telbin and myself.

<p>At 7 P.M. I drew the following diagram</p> 	<p>At 7 P.M. Miss Telbin's drawings</p> 
<p>At 7:10 P.M. I fixed my attention on a flower</p> 	<p>At 7:10 P.M. Miss Telbin obtained several incorrect scrawls, but amongst them one under which she had written the words</p>  <p>"First impression"</p>
	<p>At 7:20 P.M. Miss Telbin's drawings were — First impression</p> 

It was arranged that we should sit on certain days in the week, and that at a fixed hour I should act as agent and transmit to her my thoughts, she being at the time in her residence in West Hampstead, and I in Kensington. The distance between these localities as the crow flies is four miles. The result of our first sitting, which took place on 20th May 1902, is shown on the preceding page.

There was no possibility that the agent or the percipient could have copied the drawings, as the letters embodying them that we wrote to each other were posted on the evening of the same day and received by the first post the following morning, having crossed in the post.

Telepathy was clearly indicated in this experiment.

We continued trying experiments for some months after, but did not get such good results as at the beginning. On one occasion, however, we obtained a successful negative result. I was not feeling well, and did not fix my attention on any object. On the following morning Miss Telbin's letter said, "I could get nothing from you last night." It was, to say the least, curious that she should not have received an impression on the only night that I had not attempted to experiment.

On another occasion, when Miss Telbin was in London and I in Folkestone, I arranged to transmit to her the impression of a diagram on a certain day at 8 p.m. It chanced that on that evening there was a performance at the theatre, at which my wife wished to be present. I therefore decided to telegraph to Miss Telbin that I would be unable to try the experiment that night, but after a good deal of hesitation I changed my mind, and thought that I would endeavour to transmit the impression of the diagram on my way to the theatre. The letter that I received from Miss Telbin the next day was to this effect: —

"I got a good deal of writing last night which was illegible, but amongst it I read the words 'going out' and 'rain.'"

Now this may be a mere coincidence, but it was strange that the words "going out" should correctly represent the idea that was in my mind during a great part of the preceding day. I had much worried, hesitating whether I should telegraph or not.

The result appears to indicate the transmission of my mental state. The word "rain" represented correctly the state of the weather at Folkestone, but, as it often rains in England, this was of no evidential value.

In regard to spontaneous telepathy I may bring before the reader two cases which I personally investigated, the percipient in the first case being a gentleman who belonged to a circle which regularly met for the study of psychic phenomena, and of which circle I was a member.

The percipient, Mr. John Polley, gave me an account of his vision as follows: —

"At a séance held within sound of Big Ben on 8th May 1901, there were present Mrs. E. V. M., Mr. Thomas Atwood, and myself. As Mr. Atwood resumed his seat after delivering an address (about 8.30 p.m.) I became aware of a vision which presented itself as being some five feet distant from me, and displayed part of the interior of a room, namely, that part where the stove stood. The fire in the stove was small and dull, and close beside it was an overturned chair. In front of the fire was something that looked like a fire-guard or clothes-horse, but this was not clear to me. Playing, or climbing over this article, was a child, who fell forward, and when it regained its feet I noticed that its dress was on fire. I made no reference to the matter at the time, as I had an impression that the vision might be connected with some occurrence in the family of Mrs. M., and I was averse to mentioning it for fear of awakening sad memories. Shortly afterwards the whole vision was repeated, and this time I had an uncontrollable impulse to speak. Upon describing what I had seen for the second time, I was much relieved to hear that the matter was not recognized as being connected in any way with the sitters. I may mention here that the child appeared to be about three years old, and, judging from the style of dress, I described it as a girl, although the vision would apply equally to a boy, as at that early age the short clothes worn by both sexes would be very similar.

"Next Thursday morning, 9th May 1901, upon awakening, I described to my wife the events of the previous evening's séance. On the evening of the same day, namely, Thursday, 9th May, I was out with a friend, and upon my return home at 11.50 p.m., my sister, Mary Louisa Polley, who resided with me at the time, made the remark, 'I have a piece of bad news for you.' 'Well,' I replied, 'what is it? Let me know.' And she answered, 'Brother George's little son, Jacky, has been burned to death.' Like a flash I realized the connexion of the sad event with my vision of the previous night. I then asked my sister, 'How did you know this, and when?' She replied, 'Mr. Fred Sinnett told me when he came over to see us this evening.'

(Signed) "John Polley"

I obtained from the other sitters at the séance the following statement: —

"At the séance held on the evening of Wednesday, 8th May 1901, at which were present Mrs. E. V. M., Mr. Thomas Atwood, and Mr. John Polley, we, the undersigned, testify that Mr. John Polley gave to us a description of a vision of the burning of a child which he saw at this séance.

(Signed in full) "E. V. M.

"Thomas Atwood"

I personally interviewed Mr. John Polley's wife and sister and received a written statement from each confirming Mr. Polley's account.

A local paper containing an account of the inquest on the child states that the accident took place on Tuesday, 7th May, and the child was taken to a hospital immediately and there died. The father of the child wrote to me as follows: —

"Dear Sir, – In reply to your inquiry respecting my late son, John Frederick, I beg to say that on Tuesday, 7th May, my wife went out to do some shopping, leaving my son, aged two years and two months, in a bedroom with another brother aged seven. Whilst the elder brother was getting some toys to play with, the deceased thrust some paper in the fire, pulled it out again, and set fire to his clothes. Some neighbours took him to the Children's Hospital, Paddington Green, where he passed away on Wednesday, 8th May, at 11.45 a.m. No intimation of this was given by myself or any member of our family to my brother, Mr. John Polley, until a friend of the family called at my address on Thursday, 9th May, between 1 and 2 p.m., when we informed him of the sad loss that we had sustained, and he told us that he intended calling on my brother that evening, and we asked him if he would communicate the news to my brother and sister who reside at Church Street, Stoke Newington. Of course, Sir, you know I am antagonistic to your views, but my brother has told me it is for the interests of science. If this is so, I take great pleasure in its furtherance. – Yours sincerely,

(Signed) "Frederick George Polley"

In the above case it appears to me that the vision of the burning child which Mr. John Polley saw arose out of a spontaneous telepathic impression, either from the mind of the father of the child to his brother's (Mr. John Polley's mind), or from the mind of one of the persons who was cognizant of the sad event.

In regard to the second case of spontaneous telepathy to which I have referred, I cannot do better than to give the account of same as it appeared in the *Journal of the Society for Psychological Research* of June 1912: —

"The following case of a reciprocal telepathic impression occurring to two persons at the same time has been communicated to us by Mr. W. W. Baggally. Both Miss Emma Steele and Mr. Claude Burgess, the lady and gentleman concerned in the case, are known personally to Mr. Baggally.

"Miss Steele writes as follows: —

"16 and 17 Sillwood Place,

"Brighton, 13th March 1912

"Mr. Claude Burgess, who is an invalid, had been staying at my private hotel, at the above address, for some months. He left on 15th February to take up his residence at No. 10 Belgrave Place, Kemp Town, Brighton. In the interval between the date of his leaving and the night of the 5th inst., when I had the remarkable dream (if it can be called a dream) which I am about to relate, I had not seen Mr. Burgess, and nothing had occurred to cause me to think particularly about him.

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