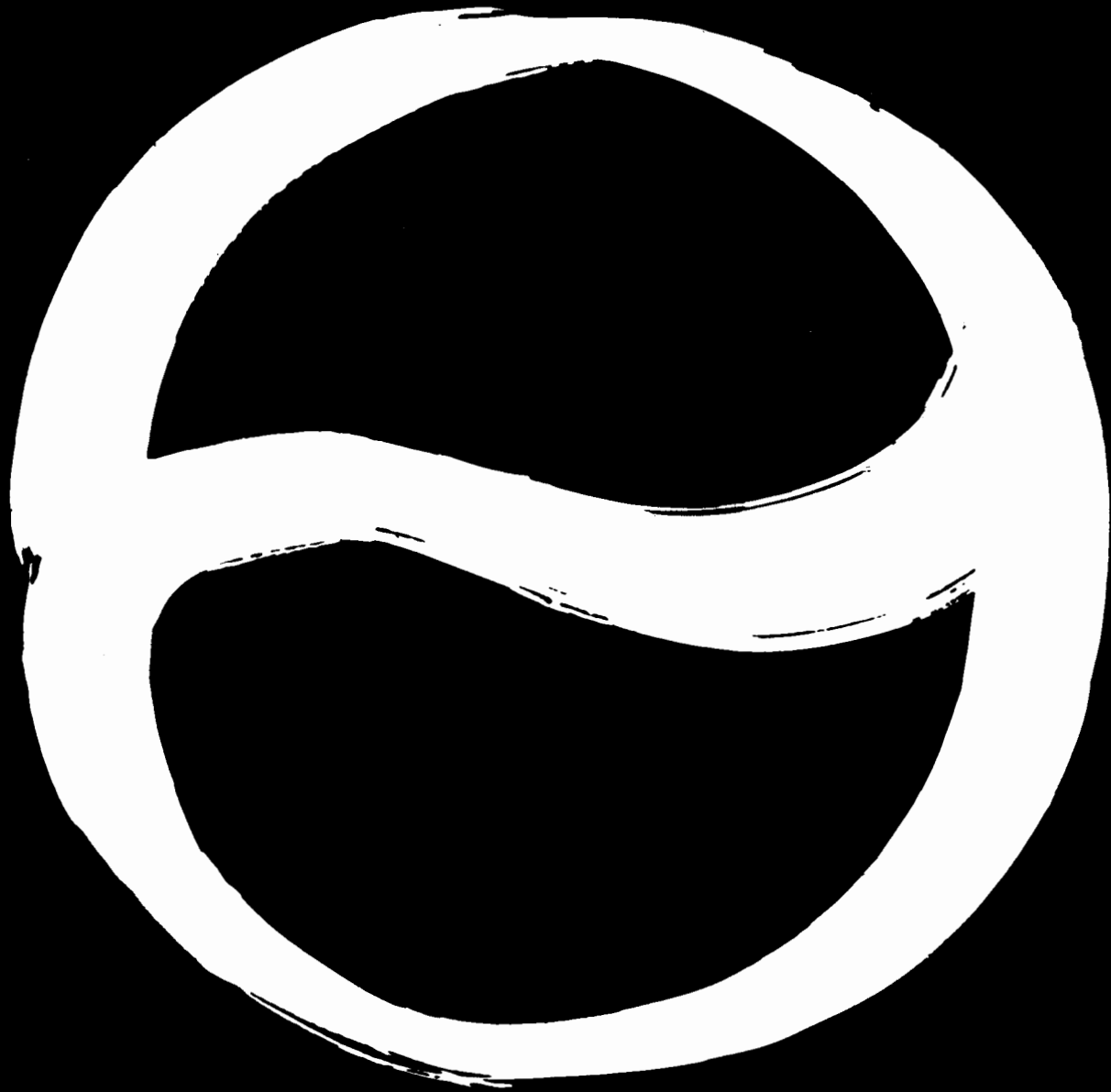


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Faith, Reason and Evidence

In Religion, Science, and Psychical Research

Michael C. Perry

The Venerable Michael C. Perry is the Archdeacon of Durham, England, and the editor of the Christian Parapsychologist. He has written several books, including The Easter Enigma (1959), the Resurrection of Man (1975), and The Paradox of Worship (1977). This paper was originally presented as a lecture to the Unitarian Society for Psychical Studies meeting at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, April 14, 1981.

Many people nowadays misconstrue the nature of faith. Like the Red Queen in *Alice through the Looking-Glass*, they think it means believing as many as six impossible things before breakfast. Three of the six that we Christians are supposed to believe are (1) that within man there is something—call it mind, call it soul, call it spirit—which makes him akin to divinity; (2) that this cannot be destroyed by physical death; and (3) that the departed and ourselves are not in incommunicable isolation from one another.

If we are men and women of reason as well as men and women of faith, then these beliefs are not simply three random early morning impossibilities. There must be some evidence for them. It was, I suspect, the hope of finding evidence for what had formerly been purely a matter for faith that motivated those Victorian worthies who began the Society for Psychical Research a hundred years ago. It was certainly what impelled Reginald Lester to start the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies (as it is now called) and to take as its motto those words from *2 Peter* 1.5 — "to faith add knowledge." And it was the same question about evidence behind belief which led George Whitby—that able philosopher whose loss we so much mourn—to belong both to the SPR and to the CFPSS and to found the Unitarian Society for Psychical Studies. Though he is no longer with us in the flesh, we salute his memory.

The men behind the foundation of the SPR were beginning to get tired of the old sterile debates between faith and unbelief. They thought they might be able to resolve them by using a new tool which had in their century been used in other areas of thought and had led to quite staggering gains in knowledge and understanding. That tool was not simply evidence. Evidence had appeared about thirty or forty years previously with the ad-

vent of Spiritualism which was still in its early flush and arousing intense interest at all levels of society. What distinguished the psychical researchers from the Spiritualists was that Spiritualism was a religion and treated the evidence in a way characteristic of, and appropriate to, a religion. The founding fathers of the SPR believed that they could the better solve the enigmas of human potentialities, human powers, and human survival with the tool of scientific method. Their first manifesto set out their aim, which was "to approach these various problems without prejudice or prepossession of any kind, and in the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned inquiry which has enabled Science to solve so many problems, once not less obscure nor less hotly debated."

The scientific optimism of late Victorianism was in full flood. Provided inquiry was exact and unimpassioned, progress would be assured. Physics had just about completed its electro-magnetic explanation of the nature of reality, and there were going to be no surprises round the corner as the proud nineteenth century sailed majestically on towards its conclusion.

How wrong can you be? We all know what happened to science as the Victorian certainties gave way to that whole new and entirely unanticipated world of relativity, of quantum mechanics, the Uncertainty Principle, the statistics of probability, and of the still unfulfilled search for a unified Field Theory. Science has never been the same since the secure base of nineteenth-century thinking was shattered into as many pieces as the indivisible atom. And the attitude which characterized these great discoveries was far indeed from unimpassioned. Let me read you two or three sentences from *Physics and Beyond* by Werner Heisenberg (1971), whose Uncertainty Principle did so much to revolutionize the scientific thinking of this century. He had reached a crucial point in his calculations:

When the first terms seemed to accord with the energy principle, I became rather excited, and I began to make countless arithmetical errors. As a result, it was almost three o'clock in the morning before the final result of my computation lay before me. The energy principle had held for all the terms, and I could no longer doubt the mathematical consistency and coherence of the kind of quantum mechanics to which my calculations pointed. At first, I was deeply alarmed. I had the feeling that, through the surface of atomic phenomena, I was looking at a strangely beautiful interior, and felt almost giddy at the thought that I now had to probe this wealth of mathematical structures nature had so generously spread out before me. I was far too excited to sleep (p. 6).

That catches, I think, the sheer numinous awe that came upon those men whose discoveries changed the very structure of scientific thought. Science is not a matter of sitting down before the facts as a little child, without prejudice or prepossession. It is making bold (and sometimes mind-bending) adventures of the imagination, and seeing where another and different set of prepossessions to the currently acceptable ones can get you. But prepossessions there must be. When the possibility of a new set of them comes upon that man of genius who is able to conceive of them, then comes the painstaking work of seeing whether his hunch will lead to a model of the universe which hangs together in a logically satisfying way—and there, too, in the concept of precisely what *is* meant by “logically satisfying,” there are bound to be prepossessions. Within scientific discovery there is a subtle blend of faith, reason, and evidence. The imagination, the heart, and the mind are all involved.

What is more, a new scientific theory does not take over from an old one simply because some new evidence has turned up which makes the old one untenable. It is nothing like as simple as that. What generally happens is that we begin with a situation in which the old, accepted, view of things is satisfying to everyone. But then, at off spots or on odd occasions, there crop up new and troublesome data which don't fit. They do not, however, overthrow the established theory. What happens first is that they are simply ignored. Perhaps they are artifacts of a badly-designed experimental set-up. Perhaps they are just errors in measurement. Perhaps they are the results of unknown or uncontrolled independent variables. Perhaps they will just go away if we don't worry them.

And, often enough, they *do* go away. If they were accepted, they would call into question the rationality of the whole of the rest of the scientific structure. Never mind that a belief in the rationality of the structure of scientific thought is an article of faith. It is an article of faith without which the whole of the scientific enterprise would founder. So, rather than call into question the 99.9 percent of human experience which is given understandability and rationality by scientific explanation, we ignore what won't fit in.

This is not at all unusual. The history of science is littered with the debris of unexplained facts which have

found no logical resting-place within any overall view of the universe. It is simply impossible to recast the whole of science to fit one or two knobbly observations. If we try to do so, if we bend the structure at that place, then it warps out of true so much in another place that we simply have to let it straighten itself out again. The attempt has created more anomalies than it solves. That is why we have to live with a residue of the unexplained. We can find page after page of unexplained facts (for example) in the *Fortean Times* or the *Bulletin* of BUFORA (The British Association for Research into Unidentified Flying Objects). And, whatever our niggling sense of unease, most of us don't recast our philosophy to allow ourselves to believe in the spontaneous combustion of human beings, or in the surveillance of our planet by intelligent creatures from outer space. We just shrug our shoulders and get on with the job of interpreting the 99.9 percent of our experience which is interpretable within existing scientific paradigms.

But then the awkward phenomena multiply, and it becomes necessary to fit them in, because the success rate of the existing theory is falling too far below the acceptable 99.9 percent. At first, this means adjusting the old theory to fit them. Remember the geocentric view of the universe? If you believed, with Ptolemy, that the earth was the center of the universe and that the sun and stars moved round it in circular orbits, you found that the more accurate your observations, the less satisfactory your theory. So you saved the appearances by saying that there must be little orbits superimposed on the main ones. When even this didn't do, and the little orbits had to have pimply excrescences of sub-orbits, it was like that verse that pointed out that

Great fleas have little fleas
Upon their backs to bite 'em,
And little fleas have lesser fleas
And so *ad infinitum*.

The appearances were saved, but only at the cost of a theory which was beginning to be more complicated than the data it sought to set in order.

At that stage, when the old theory can be tinkered with no longer, there is need of a quantum leap forward. A bold and imaginative thinker throws aside the presuppositions which once seemed so self-evident and yet have led us into so many difficulties, and starts from a fresh perspective—not without prepossessions, but with a new set of starting-points. There is a Copernican revolution.

And it works! There is a period of intense confusion, when the old and the new co-exist. There are innumerable rearguard actions by those who can't see why the old ways can't be adapted a bit more and a bit longer, and who can't see reality from the new standpoint. But in the end, the new theory wins. Partly it wins because its explanation covers a wider field than the old theory did. Partly it wins because it leads to predicted results which are confirmed by experiment. But partly it wins because it seems a more elegant and satisfying theory than the old one. And elegance belongs more to the realm of faith than to that of evidence.

Mind you, it never lasts forever. For all we feel that the new formulation is perfect and that it affords us in-

sights into the structure of reality that our forefathers had been denied, the inevitable happens. No scientific theory seems to be endowed with immortality. So the whole process starts up again. For all that Alexander Pope was able to say that

Nature, and Nature's laws, lay hid in night;
God said, "Let Newton be!" and all was light,

within a century or two, Hilaire Belloc could make his riposte:

It did not last; the Devil roaring, "Ho!
Let Einstein be!," restored the *status quo*.

The relation between faith, reason, and evidence in the history of science is a subtle and changing one. Evidence needs interpretation, and interpretation involves faith. Sometimes (as in the epicycles which temporarily shored up the Ptolemaic theory of an earth-centered universe) the faith which is exercised is faith in a bad theory which has really had its day. Often, faith is faith in a brilliant and elegant new idea which strikes its discoverer with the force of a great revelation. And, often, that brilliant new idea has not got the experimental verification it needs, and yet it seems so *right* that its discoverer cannot doubt that when the experiment is done, the result will bear him or her out.

We are on dangerous ground here. A scientist's faith in the validity of his or her new idea may be so overwhelming that it seems quite legitimate to him or her to cut a few corners here and there. That is what happened in Mendel's pioneering experiments in genetics. The theory was so elegant, yet the results did not exactly accord with it. They were almost right, but not quite. Mendel did not know enough about statistics (nobody did at that time) to realize that results on biological material had a wide spread of deviation from the norm and that his figures were well within what would have been expected. So they were ever so slightly doctored to make them absolutely irresistible. It was only a generation or more afterwards that statisticians showed that the published results of Mendel's experiments on his pea seedlings were just too good to be true.

By then, genetics was an established science, and the fudging had done no harm. But if the hunch is not a correct one, what damage can be done by giving way to temptation! Is this what happened in the case of Dawson and the Piltdown Man? Is this what happened in the case of S.G. Soal? When he carried out his experiments in the 1940s on Basil Shackleton and claimed that they proved the reality of precognitive telepathy, people were so amazed at his change of view that they exclaimed "Is Soal also among the prophets?" But Betty Markwick (1978) has now shown that he had doctored his data-sheets and that the scores he claimed were spurious.

Soal did incalculable harm to the still-fledgling science of parapsychology, because there is as yet no generally-accepted world-view within which our kind of data might fit. His action means that for many years to come, genuine data will be as suspect as doctored ones.

Why did he do it? In a fascinating article Anita Gregory (1980) tells us that

A pioneer engaged in truly novel investigation, then, may be far more likely to be tempted to stray from the rigorous path of literal truth for quite a variety of complex reasons... since he may become persuaded rightly or wrongly that he knows the truth which others are too stupid, ignorant or ill-meaning to recognize, he may succumb to the temptation of building spurious foundations to support what is deeply felt to be a certainty. He may consider that truer and firmer foundations are sure to be devised later, once the new vision is accepted (pp. 4-5).

Anita Gregory illustrates her thesis with examples from the work of Sir Cyril Burt, "a great man in his day, a man of prodigious intellect,... as learned and widely read as anyone is ever likely to be." Yet, she reminds us, "it seems that the evidence forces us to accept that he cheated and lied."

It is clear that there are times in science when faith, reason, and evidence jostle each other very uncomfortably. What, then, are we to do about it? Outlaw faith entirely from scientific thinking? Work towards the elimination of the personal equation?

No. That would prevent all scientific advance. We need to recognize that faith has its place in all aspects of life and that science is no exception. What we must do is observe at what point it enters the argument—not so that we can blackball speculation or explanation from then on, but so that we can say, "At this stage, we begin to deal with an hypothesis held on faith. It may turn out to be a useful working hypothesis, but if our faith proves to be misplaced, it is open to us to find a better one—if we can."

After that long excursus, let us get back to the bearing of parapsychology on questions of religion. Can we hope, by bringing parapsychological data to bear on questions of religious belief, to add knowledge to faith, and to be possessed of certainty where before we could only offer opinion?

If we are to pursue this question, we need first to look at the data, and then at their interpretation.

It is difficult enough to be sure of the data. In the whole of science, you will find no more sophisticated set-ups than you get in experiments to test psi capacities. That is because experimenters have three things to guard against. The first are sensory cues. That does not mean *normal* sensory cues. They do not know the limits of hyperesthesia and so they have to take abnormal precautions to exclude it. Sam Weller, you will remember, said that his vision was limited because he only had a pair of eyes, not "a pair o' patent double million magnifyin,' gas microscopes of hextra power." His sarcasm would be lost on parapsychologists. Secondly, experiments have to exclude all extrasensory cues except the ones for which they are testing. Since they know next to nothing about the powers and limits of extrasensory perception, their task in this regard is about as near a definition of impossibility as we are likely to get. And thirdly, they have to guard against conscious or even unconscious fraud on the part either of the agent, or the experimenter, or of both in collusion.

The wonder is that there are any experimental data at all. But there are; because we know that nothing less than consistent data, honestly obtained, will do as a foundation. This is hard, because the repeatable experiment doesn't exist (whatever Charles Honorton or Carl Sargent, with the Ganzfeld, have to say). We don't yet know the full range of independent variables, each of which could completely scupper the repeatability of an experiment. So, suggestive results are obtained, and, since they are not repeated by the next experimenter, they remain to tease us, but not to enlighten us or to help us formulate a new and fuller vision of reality which takes account of them.

To those of us who are convinced that parapsychology is onto something and who wish desperately to get orthodox science to take notice of psychical studies, this is hard to take. But we have got to take it and we cannot risk those tempting short corners. One short corner I've spoken of already is the short corner of outright fraud. An even more tempting one is that of claiming more for the data than they will bear. Let me give you one warning example.

A week or two ago, a friend wrote to me to tell me about an amazing experiment conducted by Dr. Karlis Osis in America. Alex Tanous is a sensitive who claims to be able to indulge in out-of-body travel, and Dr. Osis asked him to travel in this way into a sealed room in which a picture was exhibited. Not only was he asked to describe this unseen picture, but there were strain gauges in the room which would be activated if anyone was physically present to look at it. My friend told me not only that Tanous had been "able to perceive precise details of 114 pictures concealed" in the room, but that "each time" he did so, the strain gauge showed that something was present in the room. Was this not proof positive that Tanous was able to project something out of his body which was able to look at pictures in a sealed room and affect a physical instrument there whilst he was doing so?

It sounded too good to be true, but I knew that Dr. Osis was a trusted and scientific investigator, so I looked up his paper. In it Osis and McCormick (1980) describe how Tanous was asked to project himself into a shielded chamber in which an optical image device displayed at random a series of stimulus pictures. He was then asked to guess the color (one of four), the quadrant in which the picture appeared (one of four), and which of five possible drawings was exhibited. A "hit" was counted if *any one* of these three aspects was guessed correctly. That meant that the probability of a hit was 55 percent. Out of 197 guesses, Tanous scored 114 hits, or 56.3 percent. The score was absolutely at chance level. Nobody expected it otherwise. The experiment was so arranged that hits should be about as frequent as misses. The whole point was not to see whether an unduly large number of hits was scored, but to compare the strain gauge readings on hits with those on misses. My friend who had told me that Tanous had been able, while "astral traveling," to guess the nature of 114 pictures "in precise detail" was about as far up the pole as he could get.

Nor was he much better on the significance of the strain gauge results. He had claimed that "each time Tanous

made a hit the concealed strain gauges recorded an increase." What Osis and his co-worker found was that the predicted effect (i.e., that the gauge should be activated more when hits were scored than when Tanous got the target completely wrong) did occur, though by no means each time—the score was only slightly above chance expectation, at no more than a five percent level of probability. Other, non-predicted, effects were observed at a greater degree of statistical significance. The whole experiment was suggestive rather than compelling, and Osis ended by reporting that "our interpretation must be very tentative."

The tentative nature of the interpretation had been completely lost on my friend. When I pointed this out to him, he told me that he had not seen the article in question but had relied on an account of it in a letter from an American friend of his.

I tell this cautionary tale to show how dangerously easy it is to claim more than the data warrant. Gossip is as fecund in this field as it is in other walks of life. Never accept a statement in parapsychology until you have checked it for yourself. You are quite likely to find that the will to believe has led your informant to exaggerate. We want evidence, not hearsay.

But even when we are sure of our data, we are far from out of the wood. When we come to interpret the data and to relate them to theory, we find the path is even more strewn with difficulties. It seems as if no two people can agree as to what the observed data *mean*. The cynic says that parapsychology is unique among the sciences in that it is the only field of scientific endeavor in which there has been no progress whatsoever in the last hundred years. We are still as unsure of the interpretation of the phenomena as our great-grandfathers were. That is untrue. Admittedly, their optimism about progress was over-facile. Admittedly, the great questions about human destiny remain as controverted as ever. One reason why this is so is that the lesser questions are getting well on their way to having acceptable answers. ESP, for example, is far more generally believed in nowadays than it was a hundred years ago. On December 20, 1980, the (London) *Times* published the results of its questionnaire on the paranormal. Out of 1314 respondents, 83 percent believed in ESP—51 percent thought it was an established fact and another 33 percent thought it a likely possibility. On the other hand, when it came to contact with the dead, the percentage of believers dropped to 38 percent.

This may be because, once we allow ESP, we can explain almost all the data concerned with contact with the departed in terms of ESP in this present world. Notice, however, that we can only do so if we put practically no limit on the powers of ESP between living agents (and, in ESP, we have to include not only telepathy and clairvoyance, but precognition and the picking up of latent material by paranormal means even though it has lain dormant for decades or even centuries). The "super-ESP" theory accounts for all the data without having to have recourse to the hypothesis that the human self survives physical death and can on occasion communicate from beyond that barrier. The only trouble with the super-ESP theory is that it has to assume paranormal powers so wide-

ranging as to be staggering—more powerful by an astronomical factor than anything that has been experimentally demonstrated. That is why Dr. Osis (1979) has described the super-ESP hypothesis as “that strange invention which shies like a mouse from being tested in the laboratory but, in rampant speculations, acts like a ferocious lion devouring the survival of evidence” (p. 31).

Why do people feel a need to bring in the super-ESP hypothesis rather than accept survival evidence at face value? Clearly, it is not a matter of evidence but of its interpretation—in other words, of belief. It is much easier for many people to believe in ESP between the living—even in ESP of a strength and range for which there is not a shred of independent evidence—than it is to believe in survival of death and communication thereafter.

Reneé Haynes (1980), that Roman Catholic lay person who has written a good deal about psychical research, has discussed in *Encounter* a new and engaging term for use in this context—the “boggle threshold.” The person who approaches the data already has ready-made assumptions to what he or she can and cannot believe. Up to a certain stage, he or she can accept the evidence of his or her eyes. But then, the mind begins to boggle, and thereafter the kind of defensive theory of which super-ESP is an example, takes over. Before you reach your boggle threshold, the *prima facie* explanation of the data satisfies you. Thereafter, you are allowed to be as devious as you like in finding reasons which seem good to you for insisting that things are not what they seem to be.

Where does your boggle threshold lie? Can you accept telepathy? Apparitions which are private to the observer? Apparitions which are shared by the bystanders? Precognition? PK? Poltergeists? Mental mediumship? Physical mediumship? Floating trumpets? Materializations? UFOs? Little green men getting out of their spacecraft and taking you to their leader? ‘Orrible’ airy spiders as big as Alsations running up and down the walls of the ward? All right, you have got to stop somewhere. But where, and on what criteria? And do the criteria bear any relation to the cogency of the data or the strength of the argument? The boggle threshold seems to be an entirely subjective matter. The average reader of *Psychic News* seems never to get as far as the threshold, and earth’s crammed with so many wonders that you stop marvelling at them. If you are a follower of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, you boggle before you begin, lest you be led astray by the apparent reasonableness of what you are being asked to investigate. Many people will accept any mental phenomena, but boggle as soon as the physical world is involved. Others will accept anything referring to this world, but as soon as survival is mooted, wriggle like a worm on the hook.

I start bogging at the idea of reincarnation. Twenty-nine percent of the *Times* respondents find no difficulty in the idea, but I do. Some of the evidence comes from experiments in hypnotic regression, in which patients under hypnosis relive alleged former lives. Some comes from observations of children who at the age of three or four reject their own families and tell stories of the families they used to belong to. When I look at the

evidence I find myself using the super-ESP hypothesis like mad. I find myself saying that reincarnation is theologically very suspect, empirically impossible to prove, and philosophically difficult to justify. Theologically I would prefer a series of lives in a series of future worlds to a regression to this world for a second time round. Empirically I can find a non-reincarnationist explanation for all the reported cases. Philosophically I don’t know what is meant by a “soul” which can detach itself from one body and be inserted into another with no memories (or few and fitful memories) of its former life. And so I do not accept reincarnation. Why? Because the evidence is not good enough? No. Because it lies on the far side of my boggle threshold. And my reasons for rejecting the idea begin to look suspiciously like the super-ESP theory looks like to the believer in survival; or suspiciously like the epicycles which shored up the Ptolemaic system of astronomy before the whole ramshackle edifice collapsed under the weight of the Copernican theory.

Perhaps what the reincarnation debate is waiting for is the genius who will come with a great quantum leap forward and will enable us to look at the data from an entirely new standpoint, from which our difficulties and our mental blocks will look nothing like so intractable as they do at present. If so, it is my hunch that this viewpoint will be even more novel to us than Copernicus’ viewpoint was to his contemporaries. In this regard, we may have been too timid by half in the kind of scenarios within which we allow ourselves to speculate. We may be simplifying the options intolerably if we limit them to extinction for all, survival for all, and reincarnation for all. Why should each of us (for we are all individuals and all different from each other) have to conform to the same option? Perhaps reincarnation is only necessary for some and not for all. Perhaps some of us find redemption through Christ in this world and can progress through the lives of the worlds to come hereafter, while others don’t and have to return for another chance? Or perhaps, just as our conscious mind is but the tip of the iceberg when we consider the total human personality, so also the total human personality in this incarnation may only be a small fraction of the Greater Self? If so, then perhaps different portions of this Total Self need to come to earth in separate incarnations till the whole has been exposed to the test of life on this earth and can then move on to fresh pilgrimages in its extra-terrestrial environment?

There is no end to the possibilities of speculation. Only those who refuse to boggle will be able to appreciate them all. Those who do appreciate them will have the far greater task of trying to make a rational choice between them. The scientist’s job is not over when he or she has made his or her theoretical construct, any more than Archimedes had nothing more to do after he had shouted “Eureka!” than to retrieve his bath towel. His or her next job is to devise tests whereby he or she can choose between alternative scenarios—preferably tests based on predictions which will be different on different hypotheses. We don’t seem to have got as far as that in parapsychology, because the repeatable experiment still eludes us, and without repeatable experiments we can’t make rational choices between

hypotheses. All we can do is to amass data and try and find a way of looking at them which makes tolerable sense.

So, then, do we end up in the morass of subjective judgment, with faith counting for more than reason or evidence? I hope not. I hope that we are open to the evidence—critically open, testing all things, never satisfied with any standard of evidence lower than the best, always ready to question—but, in the end, always open to look at the evidence as it piles up before us.

Often, that evidence will take us beyond our boggle threshold. If we are honest, we will then have to say that we suspend our judgment. We have an overall world-picture which it has taken us all our lifetime so far to build up and to test against the available evidence, and it holds together for us in a way which we find convincing. We are simply not prepared to abandon it on the basis of a few maverick observations which don't fit in. If we were to accept them at face value, it might relieve the pressure at that point, but only at the cost of creating bigger and more intolerable pressures elsewhere. So the odd and knobbly bits of evidence are filed, as it were, in the "pending" tray. We can't see where they go. We cannot say that they do not exist, but we cannot say that they are so crucially important that because of them we have to abandon all the sense we have so far made of the universe.

That is an uncomfortable predicament to be in, but anyone except the most obtusely self-satisfied person has been in it at some point or other. There is not one of us who has a philosophy of life, or a viewpoint on the world of phenomena, which adequately explains every facet of the observed universe. All of us see through a glass, darkly, and it is disingenuous to deny it.

If, however, the pressure mounts, and the evidence grows, we may find we have to do something about it. There are many people about today for whom the evidence for telepathy has grown so big and so pressing that they simply can no longer file "telepathy" in their pending tray. There are many for whom the evidence for survival has come into that category. There are many for whom the evidence for God is like that. Some of them have come to a conviction of the nature of man, his destiny, and his purpose in the mind of almighty God through the convergent pressure of many lines of evidence—human, scientific, mystical, yes, even parapsychological. Psychical studies may not add knowledge to faith, but they can point in the same direction, and help to make faith look a great deal more credible. Many of us started from a world of pure materialism, but were troubled by things which would not fit into that kind of a world-picture. Eventually, the attempt to ignore the oddball facts became too much; the attempt to fit them into the old picture became less and less convincing; the epicycles became more and more complicated and incredible, and, in the end, we had to come to our Copernican revolution. It had become intolerable for us to do anything otherwise. That is the way it happens in science, when a new idea takes over. That is the way it happens in parapsychology, when a sceptic is finally convinced. That is what happens in religion, where the phenomenon is known as "conversion" and the St. Pauls of this world

let a new apprehension of reality wash over them and engulf them, and they find release from the intolerable tensions of maintaining a discredited world-picture.

The new viewpoint will not be perfect. There are still difficulties in a parapsychological view, or a theistic view, or a Christian view. For example, I still bow before the mystery of reconciling my view of an omnipotent God of love with the fact of animal suffering, or undeserved and unredemptive human suffering. But the difficulties are less than the difficulty of ditching the whole scheme, because no other scheme will cover half the ground half as well.

So that is why I am a Christian parapsychologist. My overall world-view is one in which my Christian faith and the discoveries of psychic studies come together in a convergent way. Faith, reason, and evidence have produced their subtle amalgam. That does not mean that I have no more discoveries to make, and no more adjustments to look forward to. If I thought there were no points at which the mounting evidence might ever lead me to reconsider my present views, I would be highly alarmed. I have no wish to be intellectually ossified into a 1981 position with no chance of movement and none of growth. I am a man of faith, and I hope that my faith is a reasonable faith which has considered the evidence and has matured in the process; but I take great comfort in some words St. Paul once wrote to his friends in Philippi. It was not, he said, as if he had already attained or were already perfect. "This one thing I do," he wrote; "forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (*Phil.* 3. 12ff.). Hold to Christ; but always be on the move!

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The Role of Psychedelic Drugs in Contemporary Interest in Mysticism

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The photographer removes the exposed film from his camera and observes a blank surface. He immerses it in the developer and the hidden picture appears. In a parallel process psychedelic drugs catalyze and develop the hidden features of the human unconscious and with surprising regularity confront the ingester with the mystic sleeping in the depths of nearly all of us.

In a study I conducted, one hundred users of the LSD-type drugs filled out a questionnaire in order to compare their experiences under the drugs with their normal consciousness of reality. *All of them* reported the heightening of more than one of the seven characteristics constituting what Stace (1960) has called the "universal core" of mysticism whenever or wherever it has been found throughout the world. These characteristics are (1) An experience of unity; (2) Timelessness and spacelessness; (3) A sense of having encountered ultimate reality; (4) A feeling of blessedness and peace; (5) A sense of the holy and divine; (6) Paradoxicality; and (7) Ineffability. Yet few if any of my respondents had taken the drug with any religious intent.

My own participation in an American Indian peyote ceremony triggered an experience that was almost a classical reproduction of what Stace has termed the "introvertive mystical experience." Studies and experiences such as these have swept away my previous conviction that drugs could have no part in producing a genuine mystical experience. Furthermore, Grinspoon and Bakalar of Harvard Medical School have confirmed my conclusions in this matter in their recent excellent survey of the entire field, *Psychedelic Drugs Reconsidered* (1979). The final result of my investigations is my conviction that in

his basic aspect Man is a mystic. My contention is that the drugs have had an exceedingly important role in introducing many of us, though mostly young people, to our essentially mystical and psychical nature.

The keen-minded and perceptive social and scientific observer, Marilyn Ferguson, in *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (1980) confirms my own observations in this area. She describes the contemporary turning toward mystical religion as one of the present's very notable and heartening features. But she also makes the point that the reliance on the LSD-type drugs does not last. Rather they serve as a gateway releasing from the unconscious messages telling those who have never before experienced mysticism that they too are mystics. This has led to many turning their backs on the Judeo-Christian faiths in which they have been brought up, not to speak of numbers of atheists who have gone so far through the drugs as to "meet God," perhaps a somewhat embarrassing encounter! At the very least the experience has opened to such persons a wider vista acknowledged as "transcendent." Before their drug experiences these groups have tended to reject any great value in religion and to see mysticism as mere aberration. It is only the occasional church leader in mainline denominations who sees mystical experience as important to church institutions, much less has made any sustained effort to bring the cultivation of the mystical self into institutional activities. In an article in the *New York Times Magazine*, Andrew Greeley (1975) of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago cites a NORC survey in which a sample of 5,000 representative Americans reported the surprising fact that 40 percent of them had experienced mysticism, yet few of them had

consulted a clergyman about the matter. Apparently they had felt that religious institutions are out of touch with and would be hostile to those deep experiences that have moved them so profoundly. Unaware of the mystical roots of their own faiths they have become alienated from their churches and religious counselors.

However, a benefit to society—if a strong interest in mystical religion is a benefit, as I believe it is—has resulted from the widespread experimentation with the psychedelic drugs that occurred during the 1960s. In general this has not led to the swelling of the ranks of mainline churches and synagogues, it is true, but rather it has resulted in an upsurge of interest in Eastern cults and faiths that are more specifically centered on mystical experience. An example is the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), or Hare Krishna. The following information about this cult was obtained from Professor Gregory Johnson (1975) of the Sociology Department at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, who cites his own research, and a book about the movement by Stillson Judah (1974).

ISKCON was founded in New York City in 1966 by A. C. Bhaktivedanta, an ex-patriate Hindu businessman of about 70 years at that time. In 1967 he relocated the headquarters of the movement in San Francisco and since then has achieved some success in attracting youth from college campuses throughout the country. A dominant slogan is "Stay high forever!" and the method prescribed is through chanting in honor of Krishna, dancing, dieting, studying the Hindu scriptures, and working for the movement. Nearly a decade ago devotees were publicly visible in many large cities clad in saffron robes with shaved heads chanting, dancing to tambourines, and soliciting funds. Now it has founded, in West Virginia, a community called New Vrindaban, after one in India. In 1974 the movement claimed approximately five thousand members throughout the world and attracted nearly ten thousand to its annual "Juggernaut Festival" in San Francisco. About ninety-five percent of its members had first been introduced to a religious way of life through drugs, and most saw Krishna Consciousness as a way of preserving their values and improving on their drug highs. The movement forbids all drug-taking, thereby kicking down the ladder by means of which its devotees ascended. Recently it has been somewhat less visible, perhaps reflecting the drop of interest in LSD and hence the pool from which adherents are recruited.

Hare Krishna is just one of a number of movements, both those highly organized and others more loosely influential, that have characterized contemporary religious development. Swami Bhaktivedanta is only one of a stream of assorted gwasimis and gurus, some more and some less admirable, coming mostly from the Orient, to save America from materialism, though often themselves demonstrating the "conspicuous consumption" that would have amused Veblen (1931). And perhaps also they wish to match the swarm of Christian missionaries that flooded the East in previous generations.

Beside the surge of interest in the psychedelics in

modern times there are more continuing and subtle influences that have touched our culture over the centuries and although almost unnoticed still do so today. These influences are due to the use of psychedelics in natural form. There is no way of measuring the influence of groups of Indians in North and South America along with primitive peoples elsewhere who have ceremonially ingested psychedelics in plant form. They are not missionary minded and most, like the Huichol Indians in Mexico, like to keep to themselves. One has to seek them out and even then one may be rebuffed if one wishes to participate in a ceremony. The Native American Church consists of groups of Indians who have organized internationally to protect their legal freedom to preserve their centuries-old customs of worship through the use of peyote.

More ancient and yet more visible than these religions in their continuing influence on modern western culture has been the indirect influence of psychedelic plants used in the mystery cults by the ancient Greeks. Wasson, Hofmann, and Ruck (1978) have argued very persuasively that LSD in its natural form constituted the well known and powerful secret potion administered at the initiation of candidates for the Eleusinian Mysteries, a rite participated in by nearly all prominent Greeks and some Romans over two millenia. For example, those who have ingested LSD have sensed the mystical substrata behind the famous Allegory of The Cave at the beginning of the Seventh Book of Plato's *The Republic*. Aristotle's concept of *Katharsis* very likely originated at his Eleusinian initiation. Contrary to the abandon with which the Hippies often used LSD in the 60s, the Indians and also the Greeks have used psychedelic plants with much more respect and more restraint. Preparation for the Eleusinian initiation lasted for half a year and was a once-in-a-lifetime event. The Indian use of these plants is rare rather than frequent.

All mystics are aware of the fact that the mystical consciousness is so different from the consciousness of everyday affairs that only figures of speech can give one a hint of its nature to one whose mystical capacities have never risen to the surface. It was with this problem as well as that posed by his oath of secrecy with which Plato wrestled when he put into the mouth of Socrates the haunting and moving Allegory of The Cave. And certainly generation after generation of students who have confronted *The Republic* as one of the Great Books of Western culture have accepted the intellectual nourishment which in at least some will or has already come to flower in mystical form.

In conclusion may I say that those psychologists who wish fully to understand the religious agency of the psychedelics should seek out one of the rare legal ways to ingest them. In his chapter on mysticism in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* William James (1902) describes his self-experiment on nitrous oxide, the popular psychedelic of his day, and writes his conclusions in part as follows:

"...our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness whilst all about it, parted by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential

forms of consciousness entirely different”

Drugs are not the only way of piercing the screen. But it has been our lot to live just following a time when, more than any other single stimulus, it has been the psychedelics which have led younger Americans to an awareness of their essential mystical nature. I have related how the catalytic properties of the psychedelics have helped me to the conclusion that all human beings have mystical capacities within them.

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Saints and Psychics

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This is the first of what is planned as a regular feature of *Theta*. The series is an outgrowth of an ongoing study I am making of religion and parapsychology, starting from the assumption that there is a connection between mysticism and psi. I am examining the lives of the saints with a view toward noting the presence of any psi phenomena, and any special circumstances associated with it, that might shed light on its operation.

In the course of my reading I have noted that in the cases of saints of Christian origin, psi phenomena are considered as gifts of the spirit, and are to be used in carrying out the saint's religious calling; they are not viewed as ends in themselves.

Concomitantly, while working on a comprehensive subject bibliography of parapsychology, I chanced to read a few articles by or about mediums and psychics which made reference to the fact that they viewed their psi abilities in a religious context.

For some time I have wondered whether if in parapsychology we are not mistaken in pursuing psi phenomena as if they were ends in themselves. When psi occurs it is always within a context, and it seems to me we might do better if we tried to study certain psi-conducive contexts, rather than psi per se. Studying contexts may provide us with a better handle on what, when, and how psi occurs, and so take us a step closer to predicting when it will occur, and perhaps even to how to make it occur.

Gertrude Schmeidler (6), among others, has called for a longitudinal approach to psi; one that views the occurrence of psi within the context of —ideally—the whole of a person's life, but failing that, over a period of years or at least months. I think that the sense of vocation, as unfolded over an entire life span, is a potentially fruitful context within which to study psi.

Today the word "vocation" is associated primarily with the job by which one earns one's living, but it was not always thus. Webster's Third International Dictionary (7) gives several meanings of the word: "a summons from God to an individual or group to undertake the obligations and perform the duties of a particular task or function in life: a divine call to a place of service to others in accordance with the divine plan." Or, "a task or function to which one is called by God."

The modern writer who has written the most on vocation is C.G. Jung (3). He connects vocation with the development of personality, which he defines as "fidelity to the law of one's own being. . . a loyal perseverance and confident hope; in short, an attitude such as a religious man should have toward God" (pp. 173-174). He asks:

What is it, in the end, that induces a man to go his own way, to rise out of unconscious identity with the mass as out of a swathing mist? What. . . inexorably tips the scales in favour of the extraordinary?

It is what is commonly called vocation: an irrational factor that destines a man to emancipate himself from the herd and from its well-worn paths. True personality is always a vocation and puts its trust in it as in God, despite its being, as the ordinary man would say, only a personal feeling. But vocation acts like a law of God from which there is no escape. . . Anyone with a vocation hears the voice of the inner man: one is called. That is why the legends say that he possesses a private daemon who counsels him and whose mandates he must obey. . . The original meaning of "to have a vocation" is "to be addressed by a voice." The clearest examples of this are to be found in the avowals of the Old Testament prophets. . . (pp. 175-176).

This use of the word "vocation" implies a sense of destiny, or the view that the whole of a person's life is meaningful and purposefully oriented. It may be that this purposefulness, which encompasses an entire lifetime, may also constellate psychological factors that dispose those who are called to experience psi phenomena in the service of that calling.

Although the association between the religious life and psi has long been suggested in myths, folklore, legends, and in hagiographical and mystical texts, as well as on *a priori* grounds, and although I was personally attracted to the connection between religion and parapsychology in the early 1950s, I dismissed it as being too specialized an area of activity to be helpful to mainline parapsychological research. However, the upsurge of interest in mystical experience and meditation has removed the objection based on rarity, and because of what I have also read about a sense of vocation in psychics as well as in mystics and saints, I have been led to investigate the possible connection between religious vocation and the occurrence of psi.

In line with this study, then, in most issues of *Theta* I plan to present details of the lives of one saint or mystic, and one psychic or medium, with emphasis on the psi phenomena in each person's life, and whether there was

indeed a sense of vocation, and the connection, if any, between the two. I will begin with two I happen to be studying currently: Sri Ramakrishna, and the psychic, Joseph DeLouise.

Joseph DeLouise is a Sicilian-born psychic, a hair-dresser by trade, who now lives in Chicago. The only information I have on him comes from the book, *Psychic Mission* (1), which he wrote with journalist, Tom Valentine. According to the book, DeLouise—who does not accept money for his psychic impressions—specializes in precognition. In the Preface Valentine cites, in capsule form, five of DeLouise's predictions which he says are documented. (Each is described in detail in the body of the book.) They are:

1. The collapse of a bridge that sent cars plunging into the water and caused many deaths during rush-hour traffic.

2. A two-train crash, citing the name of the railroad and the vicinity of the collision, as well as describing the foggy conditions.

3. A mid-air crash between a small and a large airplane in the vicinity of Indianapolis, pinpointing the time of day and the number of passengers.

4. Seeing, in a crystal ball, the face of a drowning woman, describing her blond hair, and linking the tragic death to Senator Edward Kennedy a full six months before any such event happened.

5. Describing Charles Manson and Charles "Tex" Watson, two men indicted in the Sharon Tate murder case, months before police had any leads in the case, and then forecasting the date police would get their biggest break and other pertinent details (p. vi).

As the title of his book suggests, DeLouise has a sense of religious vocation in regard to his psi ability. According to Valentine:

Joseph, like many other psychics, is deeply involved with religion. He said, "I believe it is my destiny—my part in some overall plan—to demonstrate that psychic phenomena are a part of nature—God's creations." Joseph is convinced his mind operates on a higher plane of existence when it envisions a future event. He believes the human mind is "God's special creation," and that it therefore operates on levels existing with, yet somehow beyond, the physical (p. viii).

About the flowering of his vocation and the concurrent development of his psi ability, DeLouise says:

After struggling to be just like everybody else most of my life, I finally asserted some individuality and fully accepted that the mind is unlimited. With the doubt-barrier broken down I looked around for ways to improve my ESP.

One major difference between me and

others is that I receive strong psychic impressions. I believe one reason my mind receives these impressions is that I accept extrasensory perception as absolute fact. Many people disbelieve ESP's existence and clamp their minds shut. I don't think psychic ability and closed minds are compatible (p. 60).

He says that although belief in the supernatural was accepted in Sicily when he was growing up, he had his doubts as a child, and ignored what he now knows were psychic impressions. But, he adds, "Looking back, I can see how important those early years were in shaping my destiny. I believe I was destined to do what I am doing today. I didn't realize this destiny until I was nearly forty years old, probably because I was not ready for it" (p. 60).

This sense of "destiny" is an earmark of the experience of vocation as it is used in this series of articles, and the feeling of "not being ready" implies a potential for being ready, of being in the right time and space. In the case of Joseph DeLouise, it appears that his rightful place, the fulfillment of his sense of destiny, came to fruition in the development and use of his psychic ability.

About the mystic I have chosen—Sri Ramakrishna—there is no dearth of material. For the details of his life I have used the biographies, *Ramakrishna and the Vitality of Hinduism*, by Solange Lemaître (4) and *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*, by Christopher Isherwood (2). Hindus believe him to be an Avater, or divine incarnation. Lemaître writes:

Ramakrishna demonstrated a religious vocation, at once glorious and precocious, from his earliest childhood. It was an apparent ordinary existence, devoid of incident but accompanied by an intense inner life, in which his sublime destiny was to be developed to its final achievement. The spiritual ascent accomplished by the saint of Dakshineswar through a series of remarkable mystic experiences still amazes and stirs the world. . . (p. x).

Sri Ramakrishna was known as a "madman of God" in recognition of the fact that he spent half his life in a state of ecstasy. His theology emphasized faith in one God who had many names and forms. He said, "I have practiced all religions—Hinduism, Islam, Christianity—and I have followed the paths of the various sects of Hinduism. . . And I have found that it is the same God toward whom all are turned, along different roads" (p. 111).

Lemaître (4) writes that although he never learned to read or write, "This remarkable man is beyond the reach of any attempt at synthesis. . . He had every talent. . . His disciples have confessed their incapacity to know their guru in depth. . . How would it be possible to define this man who called himself ignorant and who knew all though he had learned nothing, who answered the most puzzling questions with a competence and a wisdom that filled the most eminent theologians with amazement?" (pp. xvii-xviii).

Worship was the keystone of Ramakrishna's life and he practiced it in every possible manner. Isherwood (2)

observes that the appearance of various psi abilities seemed to be associated with stages in the development of Ramakrishna's religious life. For example, in the course of following the tantrik form of sadhana "some extraordinary psychic powers came to Ramakrishna. . . He had not desired them, so they could do him no spiritual harm; and, after awhile, they left him. . ." (p. 101). It was during this period that he had a vision foretelling that later in his life many disciples would come to him for enlightenment. Subsequently, when disciples did in fact gather around him, he sometimes was aware in advance of their coming, or upon seeing them for the first time knew certain facts about them before exchanging any words. Before the coming of Rakhhal, who was to be a favored disciple, Ramakrishna is said to have had several visions of him. When Rakhhal arrived, unannounced, in the flesh, he was recognized immediately by Ramakrishna, and they began to converse as if they were old friends. Isherwood (2) remarks, "What is most strange is that Rakhhal, a teen-age schoolboy, was able to accept this relationship and enter into it as completely as Ramakrishna himself did. It is hard to explain Rakhhal's behavior without admitting that he and Ramakrishna actually did 'recognize' each other; that they recommenced an association which had begun in another life and time" (p. 179).

In addition to loving God himself, Ramakrishna devoted his time to teaching others—principally his disciples—to do the same. He had many apparent psi experiences involving them. In fact, Isherwood (2) notes that when he "was in an ecstatic mood, he would occasionally make some prophecy about the future of one or other of his disciples" (p. 128).

According to Isherwood (2) Ramakrishna was noted for his ability to transmit spiritual enlightenment to others simply by touching them. Worth quoting in full is the description given by Naren (later to be known as Vivekananda, most famous of Ramakrishna's followers) of his second visit to see Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna placed his right foot on Naren, who later described what he experienced as follows:

Immediately, I had a wonderful experience. My eyes were wide open, and I saw that everything in the room, including the walls themselves, was whirling rapidly around and receding, and at the same time, it seemed to me that my consciousness of self, together with the entire universe, was about to vanish into a vast, all-devouring void. This destruction of my consciousness of self seemed to me to be the same thing as death. I felt that death was right before me, very close. Unable to control myself, I cried out loudly, "Ah what are you doing to me? Don't you know I have my parents at home?" When the Master heard this, he gave a loud laugh. Then, touching my chest with his hand, he said, "All right—let it stop now. It needn't be done all at once. It will happen in its own good time." To my amazement, this extraordinary vision of mine vanished as suddenly as it had

come. I returned to my normal state and saw things inside and outside the room standing stationary, as before.

Although it has taken so much time to describe all this, it actually happened in only a few moments. And yet it changed my whole way of thinking. I was bewildered and kept trying to analyse what had happened. I had seen how this experience had begun and ended in obedience to the will of this extraordinary man. I had read about hypnotism in books and I wondered if this was something of the same kind. But my heart refused to believe that it was. For even people of great will-power can only create such conditions when they are working on weak minds. And my mind was by no means weak. Up to then, in fact, I had been proud of my intelligence and will-power. This man did not bewitch me or reduce me to his puppet. On the contrary, when I first met him, I had decided that he was mad. Why then should I have suddenly found myself in this state? It seemed an utter mystery to me (pp. 197-198).

Lemaitre (4) relates an experience of Ramakrishna's that in Western religious terminology is called "discernment of spirits." While meditating one day in the temple, suddenly he slapped a nearby woman who was also in prayer. He had "read the profane thoughts that were occupying her" (p. 76). Although everyone else who was present was outraged by his behavior, the woman involved championed Ramakrishna, saying that she had received the punishment she deserved, for her mind in fact had not been where it was supposed to be.

Regarding death, Ramakrishna is quoted as saying:

More than once, my vision intensified by meditation, I have stood at the border between the worlds and contemplated those two dwellings: life here and life beyond. . . and was there no death that divided them? Then free yourself from attachment to things; and immediately you will discover that life is ONE. That interruption in life that is called death does not exist (p. 118).

When Ramakrishna himself was dying, he summoned Naren to his bedside. They were alone. He gazed fixedly at his disciple and then passed into samadhi. According to Isherwood (2), then

Naren felt that a force somewhat like an electric current was taking possession of his body; slowly, he lost consciousness. When he came to himself again, he found Ramakrishna weeping. "Oh, Naren," he said, "I've just given you everything I have—and now I'm as poor as a beggar! But these powers I've handed over to you will make you able to do great things in the world. When all that is accomplished, you can go back where you came from" (p. 303).

It is said that "from that moment on, everyone knew that the Master was alive in his disciple" (2, p. 152).

F.R. Scatcherd (5), in a review of *The Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, by Swami Mahaverada (Calcutta, Advaita Ashrama), writes: "From his babyhood to the day of his death his life was one round of so-called miracles, supernormal happenings, seeing, hearing, and acting at a distance, without the intervention of the ordinary sense organs. . . I have met more than one staid Anglo-Indian official who had known Ramakrishna, and testified to his possession of strange supernormal faculties, as confirmed by personal experience" (p. 187).

Apparently Ramakrishna's calling was not so much to do something as to be something: a center of consciousness radiating in many directions and affecting others by both sensory and psychic means. The center of Ramakrishna's life was his love of God and in loving God he drew others to that love, sometimes in ways not mediated by the senses.

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Dejà Vu

Science and Psychical Research

R. J. Tillyard

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Dr. Robin J. Tillyard, F.R.S., Entomologist to the Commonwealth Government of Australia, was the most important proponent of psychical research in Australia for the ten years preceding his untimely death in an automobile accident in 1937.

In the 1920s publication of this article touched off a lively controversy in the pages of Nature, the prestigious journal of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Critics insisted that it had no place in a scientific journal. Tillyard, in his replies, took great pains to distinguish between psychical research and spiritualism, insisting that psychical research was a science. In one of his letters, Tillyard tells how this article came to be written:

"The editor of Nature asked me to write a review of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's book from a scientific viewpoint, and I said I would try to do it. After reading through the two volumes very carefully, I concluded that there was nothing scientific about the book. I do not care for merely destructive criticism, as I think that a badly written book is its own worst condemnation. Also I am not yet so far removed from youthfulness as to have forgotten what I owe to the talented author, for giving us, long ago, "The White Company" and the adventures of the immortal Sherlock Holmes. So I told the editor that I had decided not to undertake the task. He then suggested to me that I should write an "essay review"; that is, using the book as a peg, I should hang upon it a dissertation on a cognate subject of scientific interest, namely, psychical research. I accepted this offer, and chose the subject which has started this present discussion. Apparently it sufficed for some minds to draw the conclusion that, because my essay was hung upon a spiritualistic peg, therefore psychical research is the same thing as spiritualism! No doubt, if I had written an essay-review on the subject of evolution, hanging it upon a book on neo-Lamarckism, let us say, as a peg, the same type of mind would deduce that this indicated that evolution was the same thing as neo-Lamarckism!" (p. 587). (Quoted from a letter published in Nature, Vol. 118, Oct. 23, 1926.)*

**The History of Spiritualism. By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In 2 vols. Vol. 1. Pp. xiii + 342 + 8 plates. Vol. 2. Pp. vii + 342 + 8 plates. (London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1926.)*

The recent publication of two large volumes entitled "The History of Spiritualism" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is perhaps a suitable occasion on which men of science may once again turn their thoughts in a direction in which many more of them are probably interested than would be willing to admit it. Spiritualism is a cult, a faith, or perhaps even a full-blown religion, the central tenet of which is sufficiently well stated by Sir Arthur (vol. 2, p. 263) in the following words:

"A belief in the existence and life of the spirit apart from and independent of the material organism, and in the reality and value of intelligent intercourse between spirits embodied and spirits discarnate."

Spiritualism as a religion does not come within the confines of the subjects which a scientific periodical like NATURE may appropriately discuss. But right through the warp of Sir Arthur's book, though by no means carefully distinguished, and most certainly very unscientifically handled, runs the woof of psychical research, which is, or at any rate purports to be, the *scientific* study of what are called *supernormal phenomena*. These phenomena are of two kinds—(a) *physical*, such as telekinesis, or movement of solid objects without contact; independent voice, or the production of sound recognisable as that of the human voice and recordable objectively on a dictaphone; the formation of the substance known as ectoplasm or teleplasm; psychic lights and cold breezes; formation of structures invisible except by the reflection of ultra-violet rays; and so on: (b) *mental*, such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, automatic script, telepathy and other similar types of phenomena not involving the use of material objects.

Many years ago, when this question of psychical research was brought to his notice, Huxley replied, "Supposing these phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me." We are sorry to be obliged to have to record so unscientific a remark from so great a man, and even sorer to have to admit that Huxley's attitude is still that of the great majority of biologists at the present day. The opinion of any man, however great, or of any body of men, however influential, on a subject which they deliberately refuse to investigate, either because it "does not interest" them, or because of a preconceived idea that the phenomena involved are necessarily fraudulent, is really not worth much. It is a sad commentary on human nature that, even at the present day, when the reality of some at least of these phenomena has surely been put beyond the shadow of a doubt by the work of such men as Lodge and Richet, no scientific man can take up the study of psychical research without "losing caste" and undergoing either secret or more or less open persecution from his fellows. Truly, we have not got very far from the Middle Ages after all, and there is a very real danger that organised science in the twentieth century is taking its seat in the very chair from which it once drove the medieval church. "E pur si muove" applies equally to the movement of the earth round the sun or to the movement of a levitated table upwards against gravity without visible support. The former was no more incomprehensible and no less anathema to the medieval church than the lat-

ter is to-day to organised science. But the spirit of to-day is different from that of the past, and martyrdom no longer wins many converts. Modern Galileos may undergo persecution for what they hold to be the truth, but the modern world will soon forget them in the hurry and rush of modern life, and the truths for which they suffer will perish with them unless they can be presented in such a form as to appeal to the reason of mankind.

It is just here that a great danger lies. The history of the world is full of evolutionary failures; for every organism, Nature selects a path from which there is no turning back. The advance of science during the past seventy years has been definitely along the road to materialism. Though the pace has somewhat slackened and many an anxious glance is now being turned backwards, yet the impetus is still driving us forward mainly in the same direction. For hundreds of years mankind looked to religion to lead them along the right path. Now in the western world, their gaze is fixed on science. It is certain that, for the next hundred years at any rate, where science leads, there mankind will follow. Are we, the men of science, the leaders of mankind so absolutely sure of the path along which we are travelling?

Pilate's question "What is Truth?" has never yet been answered, and perhaps it never will be. It is, however, the duty of science to search diligently for truth and to leave no avenue unexplored in which it may be found. The broad highway may lead us to destruction, even if it appears well marked out and easy to travel upon. The neglected side-path, foul with mire and overgrown with noxious weeds, may be the real entry into the Promised Land, for which we are searching. But because of the foul mire, and because of the noxious weeds, organised science refuses to explore this side-path, in spite of the fact that a few brave spirits, more adventurous than the rest, a Crookes, a Lodge, a Richet, have penetrated into the thicket and returned to report both progress and promise.

The present writer cannot claim the experience either of a Lodge or a Richet in the study of psychical research. His interest in the subject is one of comparatively recent growth and arises chiefly from dissatisfaction with the adequacy of present-day biological theories to explain life in acceptable terms. He can, however, claim sufficient experience to be able to say, with both Lodge and Richet, that a clear case has been made out for psychical research, and that it is the duty of science to recognise the genuineness of the phenomena and to attempt to explore them. Fraud exists, and always has existed, in all branches of human affairs. It is even blatantly active in biology, to judge by the remarks passed quite recently by leading British and American biologists on the work and character of a certain Austrian professor. Let fraud and cheating be exposed, certainly, wherever it exists; but is that any reason for refusing to accept as a recognisable branch of science any subject in which fraud has been found?

It appears to the writer that the best avenue of approach for men of science to make on this subject is the study of the so-called physical phenomena. Either these are entirely fraudulent (that is, due to conscious or subconscious cheating on the part of the medium), or else they extend

the realm of physics beyond the boundaries explored at present. Take, for example, one of the simplest and most easily experienced of the physical phenomena, that of *cold breezes*, which generally precede any manifestation of greater energy in a séance. It has been maintained that this effect is purely subjective, that the sitters imagine they feel the cold owing to the tense situation created in the mental atmosphere of the séance room. In the National Laboratory of Psychical Research two very accurate thermographs have recently been installed. One of these is placed against the wall of the room, far from the sitters, while the other records the changes which occur in the temperature of the closed cage of the Pugh table in which phenomena occur during sittings with the medium Stella C. in red light.

Normally, when a number of people sit in a closed room, the temperature mounts steadily upwards; this is also the case for the temperature of the séance room as recorded on the wall during a sitting. But the record of the temperature inside the Pugh table shows a steady rise at first, followed by a fall during the production of supernormal phenomena...; there are also several marked sudden changes at points where special phenomena occurred. These careful experiments prove the objective nature of the cold breezes and present us with a purely physical problem, which is surely worth solving. It is not an extravagant hypothesis which finds an explanation for the production of "supernormal" physical phenomena in the withdrawal of heat from the circle of sitters, such heat being turned into some other form of energy, possibly of a kind not yet investigated officially by science!

The so-called "physical" phenomena of mediumship should be of interest to biologists as well as to physicists, because, if they are genuine, they offer an avenue towards the study of the control and manipulation of matter by mind which is at present unique in its character. The invisible operators who apparently control the

more striking phenomena of mediumship claim that they are able to draw out from the organism of the medium "psychic stuff," by the moulding of which they can produce at will the phenomena of independent voice, levitation, materialisations of portions of their personalities, and so on. We who have seen these things done under conditions precluding deliberate fraud are not fools, but in full possession of keen faculties. Every man who witnesses these phenomena and becomes convinced of their reality has only two choices before him. He can, as numbers have done, keep quiet and say nothing about it, thereby preserving the respect of his fellow-scientists and committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, namely, turning his back on truth when he has recognised it; or he can, like Sir Oliver Lodge, speak out the truth boldly and allow his reputation to drop in the estimate of his fellow-men. The writer ranges himself alongside Sir Oliver, well knowing what is in store for him in consequence. This article is a plea for a wider and more generous outlook on the part of science towards these phenomena. Science has nothing to fear from fraud; it need only go on applying its experimental method to any problem, and a solution will shape itself in time, either in the form of an overwhelming proof of the fraudulent production of the phenomena, or pointing towards the existence of genuine supernormal results.

The mind of man seems to have reached out so far in recent years that it has almost succeeded in exploring the entire limits of its own cage. Is it to rest in the belief that there is nothing at all outside that cage, or may it, so to speak, extend a cautious paw outside the bars and begin to feel its way towards a realisation that there may be another world outside? Psychical research may perhaps afford the only possible way of exploring the unknown territory outside the cage.

R.J. TILLYARD.

Reviews

RESEARCH IN PARAPSYCHOLOGY 1979: Abstracts and Papers from the Twenty-second Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association, 1979.

edited by William G. Roll

(Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1980. vi. + 232pp. \$12.00)

Reviewed by William S. Eisler

Mr. Eisler is the Clinical Instructor for the EEG School as well as Laboratory Supervisor of the EEG Lab at United Hospital, Port Chester, New York. He is involved in parapsychology in his spare time, both in teaching and conducting experiments.

Parapsychology, as the study of psi phenomena, has staked out as its field of inquiry phenomena involving the human mind; to date our objective has been to gain an understanding of these psychic events through physical observations and experiments. Especially this has been the case since the 1930s when J.B. Rhine began his work at Duke University. Rhine's aim was to gain scientific acceptance for parapsychology, and it was he who emphasized the objective, experimental approach while downplaying the experimental study of psi. At the time, this was the necessary and correct thing to do. However, fifty years later we do not yet seem to have earned the acceptance Rhine—and all the rest of us involved in psi research—so badly wanted, and a re-evaluation of our methods and assumptions has naturally arisen. The nature of parapsychology as a science has become a topic of renewed interest lately, and recent parapsychology, as reflected in *Research in Parapsychology 1979*, the proceedings of the twenty-second annual convention of the Parapsychological Association, seems to have focused largely on this important issue.

The volume opens with a symposium entitled "Psi and Scientific Method." Each of the four papers in this section challenges the way parapsychology has been doing business, urging parapsychologists to go beyond the materialistic methods of science which it has adopted and to take more account of subjective factors. Rhea White stresses the importance of the experimenter's involvement and enthusiasm in his/her experiments, citing the importance of feelings to psi. Michael Winkelman takes a philosophical perspective. Parapsychology challenges "normal science," but has used scientific methods and assumptions; Winkelman believes this will not work, that "science must build from *untested and untestable* assumptions" to advance. To Winkelman this is particularly true with regard to psi, whose non-material nature will require speculations that may go beyond scientific orthodoxy. Parapsychology's acceptance will require an ideological revolution analogous to that of Copernicus, and this new world view will not be built from existing scientific paradigms. In this, Winkelman takes issue with Thomas Kuhn, who would say that new

paradigms evolve from old ones by unifying data anomalous to science; psi phenomena lie *outside* science as it is presently constituted, and a rapprochement may not be possible without a radical shift in basic assumptions. The theme of the next paper, by John Beloff, is similar: "psi phenomena transcend the limits of scientific explanation," yet we are using scientific means to explain them. Obviously the tone of these papers and the fact this issue was raised to begin with reflect the growing doubts and frustrations of some parapsychologists. I did not attend this convention and do not know what impact these papers had, but I consider this an issue of the utmost importance to parapsychology at the moment. Parapsychology has tried to be a "scientific" field, and in truth it is, yet we have still not received acceptance from the scientific community at large. In the past we have blamed ourselves, looked inward, and tried harder, but there are now those who are expressing doubts about the adequacy of the scientific method to explore psychic phenomena, and are starting to look in other directions. How closely should we align ourselves with an objective scientific methodology? The debate engendered by this symposium should be a serious, lengthy, and far-reaching one.

This leads us, appropriately enough, to the second symposium, "Methodological Perspectives in Psi Research," which echoes some of the themes found in the first. Michael Grosso questions the transmission paradigm on which so many psi experiments have been based in favor of a group dynamic in which interpersonal relationships are the key factor. He urges parapsychologists to look at this more closely in their experiments. Ralph Locke writes about the use of imagery as a "relational process" through which healing can be effected. Charles Tart describes a model hypnosis experiment as a way of using altered states of consciousness to study psi. Rex Stanford questions whether successful psi experimenters are "Shamans or Scientists?," followed by W.G. Roll's description of "A Case of Haunting"—only in this instance it is a matter of whether experimenters can "haunt" their own laboratories, producing psychic effects. These papers are all by serious parapsychologists, and all indicate a concern with the subjective aspects of psi as a *methodological* issue in our experiments. The contemporary awareness of experimenter effects has had a large impact in intertwining subjective factors (e.g., experimenters' personalities) with our objective experiments, and in the future the importance and influence of the experimenter effect for parapsychology will have to be worked out. To what extent should we allow the experimenter effect to alter the design of experiments, and how far are we willing to go in using it as an explanatory counter-hypothesis? What are the implications of the experimenter effect for the experimental approach to psi in use in parapsychology?

The third symposium is entitled "Synchronicity and Psi," and also follows from the issues set forth previous-

ly. Parapsychology's search for a model of psi has led several researchers to C.G. Jung's theory of synchronicity, which, stated briefly, is the idea that ostensibly independent events may be linked by an "acausal" connection. Many coincidences can be viewed as synchronistic events. Alan Vaughan has been a proponent of the value of synchronicity; his paper here is an attempt to show that the physical universe is a reflection of consciousness in which all is connected by psi and synchronicity. In a provocative and wide-ranging paper, Barbara Honegger tries to link psi, dreams, and synchronicity with brain research on hemispheric specialization. In studying the relation of synchronistic events in dreams to those of real life she found that both appear to rely on a linguistic structure, and suggests that interhemispheric communication between the left and right language centers could be involved. In rebuttal to Vaughan and Honegger, Jule Eisenbud and Stephen Braude give papers disputing the validity of the synchronicity concept. Both stress that synchronistic events require someone's interpretation, and that this person's needs may be a crucial factor in this interpretation. Eisenbud adds to this the question of whether we are calling synchronicities acausal because they genuinely have no cause or because we simply don't know the cause. Synchronistic events could be psi-mediated, in which case they would have a cause, though not a physically tangible one. Synchronicities may reflect a psychic reality, with psychic causes no less real than the physical ones we are accustomed to dealing with. (Once again, we are up against the issue of subjective reality). The final paper in this section is by Hans Bender. In an article on the transcultural unity of poltergeist patterns he falls back on Jung's theory of archetypes to explain how independently-occurring poltergeist cases can reflect similar patterns. Bender finds this cross-cultural unity difficult to understand if RSPK is caused by a single agent, and suggests that poltergeists may be due to a psychic source independent of the agent's personality, i.e., the archetypes. If this is true, poltergeist phenomena should be viewed as symbolic messages.

The usefulness of synchronicity, or archetypes, may be a matter of individual choice, but I do want to point out that these papers demonstrate again the conflict and uncertainty of parapsychologists. The use of synchronicity to explain psi is an attempt to try something new, to break the old materialistic mold. In espousing an acausal relationship, synchronicity places itself outside the realm of current scientific thought. However, it may not be possible to deal with synchronicity on an experimental basis, and it remains to be seen how useful it will be in a practical sense.

Having in the first three symposia expressed some of parapsychology's controversies, most of the remainder of *Research in Parapsychology 1979* is devoted to just the kind of cautious research characteristic of the field. There are papers on Cognition and Psi; Macro-and Micro-PK studies; Spontaneous Case/Free-Response Methodology; a group of mathematical papers on Sequential Effects; Psi and Personality; Free-Response Studies; and Conformance Behavior. There were three

roundtables: a tribute to Gardner Murphy; a session on improving communication with other scientists; and a final group of papers on clinical approaches to psychic experience, dealing with the counseling of people who have psychic experiences they do not understand. There are a number of excellent papers; among those I consider most outstanding are Lendell Williams' and Max Duke's work on the qualities of successful targets and on openness and closedness in relation to psi; several experiments by Carl Sargent on experimenter effects; and William Braud's PK experiments with labile and inert systems.

There are four survival-related papers that might be of special interest to *Theta* readers. Pasricha and Stevenson compare their respective studies of Indian reincarnation cases and find there are far more congruent characteristics than dissimilar ones. These similarities are taken to suggest that the reports are reliable and that the reincarnation phenomenon is a genuine one. Scott Rogo reports on "The Poltergeist and Family Dynamics." In a haunting/poltergeist case characterized by footsteps, RSPK, and apparitions, Rogo had psychological profiles taken of the three family members. These tests show a pattern of repressed frustration and aggression on the part of all family members, and suggest that the source of the phenomena might have been interpersonal rather than due to a single agent. Another case is presented by Krieger, McCormick, and Luthman, who used psychics in a statistical evaluation of a haunting. Five psychics and five control subjects filled out checklists and floor plans based on their impressions of a reputedly haunted house. There were some individually significant results, but overall the results did not reach significance. The convention's only report on out-of-body experiences is by Osis and McCormick on their OBE experiments with Alex Tanous. They attempted to measure the physical effects of an OB projection by having Tanous go out-of-body to a location containing kinetic detectors, from where he was to engage in a perceptual task. There were more kinetic effects when Tanous was simultaneously successful on the perceptual test.

The section on macro-PK contains several papers of interest. In addition to the Osis-McCormick OBE study just described, there are two reports on psychic healing and two papers on some anomalous effects found in the psychic photographs of Ted Serios. Hoyt Edge attempted to replicate Sister Justa Smith's experiment with the healer Estebany, in which he was able to affect the activity of the enzyme trypsin. Edge found a small but significant effect on the trypsin worked on by the healer thus replicating Smith's results, but he did not find the effect in as strong a degree. Rauscher and Rubic did a series of experiments with the healer Olga Worrall in which she was able to affect the movement and growth rate of Salmonella bacteria. The chemical Phenol, when put in a culture of Salmonella, will ordinarily stop their movement; Worrall was able to inhibit this effect. She also was able to reduce the effect of a growth inhibitor on the bacteria. These experiments appear promising, and the authors intend to follow them up. One question is whether the healer's effect is on the chemical introduced or

on the living organism. Jule Eisenbud and J.G. Pratt present papers on some recently discovered effects in the psychic photographs of Ted Serios. Several pictures of real places contain slight distortions from the originals, such as "Cainadain" for Canadian." These errors provide further support for assuming the genuine psychic nature of these pictures.

A new feature at this convention was the introduction of "poster sessions" containing further experimental reports, and a section devoted to "Parapsychology and its Critics," in which Kelly, Akers, Rao, Rockwell, Stokes and others respond to some recently published criticisms of parapsychology. The dinner speech was given by neuropsychologist Karl Pribram but it was not printed.

Research in Parapsychology 1979 closes with the presidential address by John Palmer titled "Parapsychology as a Probabalistic Science: Facing the Implications." Palmer discusses parapsychology as a probabalistic science analogous to quantum physics, which he takes as his model. Seen in this light, replicable experiments should not be expected, nor are they necessary in a probabalistic universe. Several questions arise here, among them whether quantum physics is in fact correct: is the universe a probabalistic one, or is it that we fall back on probabilities because we don't know any other alternative? Although quantum physics may be an effective working model, is it in fact "real"? Einstein didn't think so, and I believe that we as parapsychologists should look more closely at this theory and its implications before accepting it. Can one really base a "science" on a probabalistic model? There are also some crucial differences between quantum physics and parapsychology, and I am not sure Palmer's analogy is a good one. Physics has an elaborate mathematical structure which allows physicists to make predictions with a certain probability. Parapsychology does not have this; we deal with phenomena which cannot be seen or detected in many of our experiments, much less predicted. Furthermore, most physics experiments *can* be replicated; if we have a problem in this I am not sure physicists would be too sympathetic.

Dr. Palmer's talk brings us back once more to the issues expressed at the start of *RIP 1979*: What is science, and what is parapsychology? This convention raises many issues. None of them will be solved quickly or easily, but one hopes that their resolution will lead to the advancement and acceptance of parapsychology in the future.

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ESP AND PSYCHOKINESIS:

A Philosophical Examination

by Stephen E. Braude

(Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979. xv + 283 pp. \$19.50)

Reviewed by Bob Brier

Dr. Brier is Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, C.W. Post College, where he also teaches parapsychology. His most recent book is on *Egyptology*.

Parapsychology has always had a closer connection with philosophy than any other discipline. This is because the phenomena studied do not fit in easily with our ordinary way of viewing the world and call for a revision of concepts. Psychokinesis seems to involve action at a distance, while precognition is almost inconceivable within our conceptual schema. The literature on parapsychology and philosophy has been growing steadily since the 1940s, the best of it appearing in the philosophy journals, which unfortunately are somewhat inaccessible to the layperson. Recently several anthologies of these articles have appeared, and this is certainly a service to those interested in the subject. One difficulty with the selections in these books is that they are usually written by professional philosophers in a way that the layperson may have difficulty following. *ESP and Psychokinesis* is different from these volumes. First, it is not an anthology but is the author's own survey and thinking on the subject. In addition, it is intended to be readable for the layperson.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I is itself divided into IA, "Conceptual Foundations," and IB, "The Data." Part IA deals primarily with the definitions of the phenomena studied by parapsychologists. One of the interesting points Braude makes is that the traditional definition of "precognition" as knowledge or awareness of a future event may involve unnecessary assumptions. While normally precognition is viewed as cognitive, a kind of knowing, Braude shows that it might merely be a paranormal interaction; something changes in the precognizer but it may not be that he *knows* a future event will take place. His conclusion about precognition is that "... a precognitive event produces a state of a *person* (p. 20)." I am not sure why Braude specifies that precognition is a state of a person exclusively, ruling out precognition in animals (which are nonpersons). This is probably just a minor slip.

"Conceptual Foundations" concludes with a lengthy discussion of repeatability in parapsychology, which is one of the most frustrating problems of the field. Frequently a striking result will be reported by one experimenter and when others attempt to obtain the same result under similar conditions, they fail. Braude quite properly points out that it is especially difficult in parapsychology to replicate an experiment as compared to other sciences. If the same subject is being tested it will now be his/her *second* time being tested and this may be a relevant variable. Further, the participation of a different experimenter can influence the results, since subject-experimenter interaction may also have an important influence on the test results. While Braude's analysis of repeatability is clear and well taken, he does not acknowledge adequately the real problem it is for parapsychology. While there may be good reasons why it is difficult to replicate findings in psi experiments, there is a *problem* with establishing the objective reality of phenomena which cannot be repeatedly exhibited. Indeed, I think this is felt deeply by most parapsychologists and perhaps was one of the reasons why in the 1960s there was so much interest in animal ESP. Here the hope was that perhaps dogs, cats, mice, etc., are psychological-

ly more consistent than humans and repeatability might be more easily obtained.

In his preface Braude states that one of the major goals of the book is that it "... be a source book for philosophers on the experimental evidence of parapsychology" (p. xi). Section IB, "The Data," does provide a great deal of information but it is more a discussion of the significance of the data than a mere presentation. There is a strong bias towards Schmidt's work while other important work such as animal psi is given brief treatment. A survey intended as a source book would have to be much longer, more inclusive, and less interpretive.

Part II, which is subdivided into sections A, B, and C, is the purely philosophical half of the book and it is here that Braude is really at his best. Section IIA, "Psi and the Philosophy of Mind," is a good, clear survey of recent work on the relationship between mind and brain. Discussion of the mind/brain problem was started by Descartes and has not been adequately resolved by philosophers since. Various identity theories attempt to show how a physical object such as the brain can correlate or have an effect on a non-physical object such as the mind. Originally behaviorists tried to claim that everything was physical, that there was no hidden mental life; all that there was was overt behavior. Few still hold to such a position; the main thrust now is toward correlating mental states with brain states. Braude emerges as a dualist, unhappy with the various identity theories, as well he should be. My own quarrel with his discussion is when he holds that mental states are not things. His position is that they are not independent quanta and do not come in chunks by themselves. Rather, they exist only relative to an interpreter, someone who possesses that inner life. While this all may be true, the same point can be argued for external life, and if that is true, then it is not clear why mental states can't be called things but external states can. It seems to me that mental states are things, but differ from other things in that they are not *physical* things; they are not located in time and space.

By far one of the best chapters in the book is IIB, "The Theory of Synchronicity." The basic principle of Jung's theory is that some events occur at the time by coincidence—they are not causally connected—but this coincidence has meaning. A famous example mentioned by Jung involved his analysis of a patient's dream. As the patient was telling of the dream of a beetle, a beetle began climbing up the outside of Jung's window, which was unusual for that place and time of year. Now, Jung wants to say that the dream did not cause the beetle to climb up the window; nor did the beetle climbing the screen cause the telling of the dream; there *is* no prior common cause of the beetle's climbing and the dream. Thus they are not causally connected, yet there is meaning to the coincidence. (Incidentally, I have never been able to see the *meaning* in purported synchronistic coincidences. In the beetle example, I simply can't answer the question, "What is the meaning of the coincidence?" The reason it appears as a coincidence is because of a *similarity*, but I do not see a meaning.) Obviously such a theory has relevance to ESP where there is not a clear causal connection

between a premonition of a plane crash and the actual crash, for example.

Most philosophers have rejected Jung's theory on a variety of grounds. Some feel it is not really an explanation, merely a confused description. Others say it is impossible to have acausal connecting principles. This latter route is the one closest to Braude's analysis. While many have rejected Jung's position, few have presented it so carefully and clearly as Braude and even fewer have analyzed it so thoroughly. His ultimate conclusion is that since synchronistic explanation is intended to explain why two events coincide, it is ultimately causal; it merely points to a cosmic cause or principle which is outside of normal causes.

Section IIC, "The Meaning of 'Paranormal'," is the final section of the book, but it would be better placed at the beginning, along with the other discussions of definitions. While it does not really lead to a final, conclusive definition of "paranormal," it does present a clear discussion of the early work on the subject, primarily that of Broad and Ducasse.

The book has a useful bibliography which gives the reader adequate leads to pursue the topics which most interest him/her, and concludes with a competent index.

To evaluate *ESP and Psychokinesis* one must understand the magnitude of the task. For years there has been a growing body of literature on philosophy and parapsychology and Braude has attempted to survey it all. Further, he has tried to write that survey so that it will interest both the layperson and the professional philosopher. Any defects that this reviewer has noted seem due more to the impossibility of the task than to inabilities on the part of the author. Braude is at his best when he deals with pure philosophy and the next logical step would be for him to produce a sustained, original piece on one of the philosophical topics discussed in the book. I certainly look forward to reading such a work.

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE PSYCHIC

by David Marks and Richard Kammann

(Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1980. 232 pp. \$15.95; \$7.95)

Reviewed by Emilio Servadio

Dr. Emilio Servadio is a major pioneer of both psychoanalysis and parapsychology in his native Italy. In 1937 he co-founded the Italian Society for Parapsychology and since 1962 he has been president of the Psychoanalytical Center of Rome.

The title of this book is misleading. The two authors have definitely *not* investigated the personality of remarkable subjects, such as D.D. Home, Gladys Osborne Leonard, or Eileen J. Garrett. They have instead ex-

pounded the "fads and fallacies" (to quote the title of a book by Martin Gardner, who has written the Foreword) of people and performances that either *pretend* to belong to the realm of psychic research, or that have nothing to do with it, or that do not represent a "stand or fall" proposition, insofar as the legitimacy of parapsychology is concerned.

An example of the first class is represented by the two chapters dedicated to Kreskin and his alleged "mental powers." No serious parapsychologist, as far as this reviewer knows, has ever considered Kreskin otherwise than as a very entertaining stage-performer. Therefore, the supercilious attempts by Marks and Kammann to disprove his paranormal endowments correspond (parapsychologically speaking) to what in Italy is popularly called "the smashing of an open door" (by the way, one of the last sentences of the second chapter is: "Kreskin does not really want to be tested as a psychic." Hear, hear!).

More than eighty pages of the book describe the case of Uri Geller and the spreading of what the authors call "Gelleritis." Needless to say, the idea does not come to them for a moment that Geller, like many other people in the history of parapsychology, could represent an admixture of trickery *and* true phenomena (as was the case, e.g., with Eusapia Palladino, or with Rudi Schneider). Moreover, they seem to ignore completely all the recent work that has been done with many "metal benders" all over the world (Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Japan, Italy, etc.). To them, every case of the sort goes under the caption of "pathological science."

More acceptable chapters of the book are the first and the last. In the former ("The Growing World of the Occult") one can find some justified criticism of the present widespread and uncritical beliefs in the supernatural. The last one ("The Art of Doubt") contains very useful information and warnings regarding the necessity—for anyone who purports to be a serious researcher—to be on guard against self-deception, illusory correlations, wishful thinking, etc. Also, in this reviewer's opinion, the two Appendices, which are in the same vein, ought to be carefully read by cautious parapsychologists.

The most convincing findings in the history of parapsychology (including those quoted in the recent SPR pamphlet by Francis Hitching) are not even mentioned in these pages. At the end, in the list of References, one looks in vain for the names of Beloff, Bender, Bergson, Braude, Cadoret, Ehrenwald, Eisenbud, Fisk, Freud, Honorton, Humphrey, Johnson, Morris, Murphy, Nash, Osis, Osty, Palmer, Pratt, Rao, Roll, Schmeidler, Schmidt or West—to specify only a few among many noted and respected parapsychologists. The References do include, however, two books of "confessions" by a swindler (Fuller), the first (1966) so-called scientific "evaluation" of ESP by Hansel, *The Magic of Uri Geller* by the professional conjurer and self-appointed parapsychologist, James Randi, and even a science-fiction book by the well-known von Däniken. . . No further comment seems necessary.

ESP and Parapsychology: A Critical Re-Evaluation

C.E.M. Hansel

(Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1980. v + 325 pp. \$16.95; \$8.95)

Reviewed by Emilio Servadio

Many readers will remember Professor Hansel's earlier book (1966), "ESP: a Scientific Evaluation," which was widely praised by skeptical opponents of parapsychology, while some parapsychological experts pointed out its faults and misapprehensions. This new book is undoubtedly more valuable, although all serious parapsychologists will obviously reject such conclusions as "After 100 years of research, not a single individual has been found who can demonstrate who in Professor Hansel's mind, is an "independent investigator." To him, clearly enough, the many hundred investigators who have admitted that ESP has been demonstrated are all in some way "dependent" (on *what?* — one might ask).

The new sections in Professor Hansel's book comprise research behind the Iron Curtain, experiments performed with special machines, the alleged "Geller" phenomena, dream research, and a few more. Surprisingly enough, such important parapsychological areas as the Ganzfeld techniques in ESP studies, or the use of strain-gauges in PK investigation, have not been explored.

Among the subjects that have been aptly questioned by the author are some of the Targ and Puthoff experiments in remote viewing, or the first phase of dice-throwing at Duke. But one wonders why Hansel has repeated, without any after-thought, his criticisms of Pratt's experiments with Pavel Stepanek, completely disregarding Pratt's replies to his previous attacks. The performances of some extraordinary subjects (e.g., Harribance) are also ignored.

A strong point in Hansel's evaluation is his request for ever more caution and precision in experimental settings and in the assessment of results. Of course, this is a recommendation that all scientifically-minded parapsychologists address to themselves: but Professor Hansel's criticisms and warnings thereabout are justified, and should be gracefully accepted.

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THETA FORUM

In the Winter/81 issue of *Theta*, Dr. Douglas M. Stokes presented a criticism of my latest book which deserves an answer. The review does not correctly represent my intentions, nor the content of the book.

Flim-Flam! was intended for the layman, not for the informed scientist. The chapter on the Cottingley Fairies is clearly stated to be intended to enable the reader to recognize how similar to this fraud are the idiocies that are subsequently dealt with. Dr. Stokes, a parapsychologist himself, should be aware that the astral "space voyages" of Ingo Swann and Harold Sherman are highly regarded by scientists at SRI, and dowsing is accepted as genuine by many otherwise responsible academics. These are but two of the phenomena covered in my book that he says professional parapsychologists do not take seriously. Certainly, leading parascientists have touted "psychic surgery" and the Bimini Road as genuine, though the reviewer writes them off as "obviously foolish claims."

My "praise of (my) own bravery" referred not, as Stokes says, to the Cottingley Fairies matter still believed by literally millions, but to my boldness in telling readers of such matters as the Broomhilda Group at SRI and the incredible exposures at that think-tank made public here for the first time. Even a casual reading makes this clear.

As for Stokes' statement that I expose "weak and ludicrous claims" and thereby make it seem as if I have "demolished the field of psychical research," I would ask him to present me with better claims than I have examined—for I could find none.

Edgar Cayce does look silly, as Stokes admits, when I discuss "a few specific examples" of his "more spectacular failures," but I do so for lack of any successes to examine! Contrary to what Stokes says, the failures—with their inevitable and hilarious rationalizations—prove a great deal about Cayce and those who profit from belief in his "powers."

And how can Dr. Stokes tell readers that the work of Russell Targ and Harold Puthoff "has never been regarded as an example of the finest work in parapsychology"? Surely, they have been extolled as the very paragons of integrity and experimental finesse! My charges against these two are based, not upon "remarks" nor "interviews" with "persons present during . . . experiments" but upon hard data, documents and correspondence with witnesses and authorities who in some cases came to me so that the truth might be told.

If my claim concerning the "gismo" used by conjuror Ted Serios in his experiments with Dr. Jule Eisenbud, is a "facile overgeneralization" then why have parapsychologists failed, in the years since that *wunderkind* hit the headlines, to ask Serios to perform under controlled conditions? Could it be that the Parapsychological Association is just too embarrassed to confront an obvious farce?

On that same note, will the PA now look into the Targ/Puthoff situation as outlined in my book? Before

the publication of my book, responsible officers of that organization agreed to look into what Dr. Stokes refers to as "very serious charges" but I have heard not a word since. . .

By nit-picking at what he believes are my errors of logic and fact, while ignoring the gross blunders of the psi-merchants, Dr. Stokes attempts vainly to expose what he sees as my lack of scientific knowledge. Obviously, he has not read my comments on the Schmidt tests carefully. He will see, upon re-examination, that he has assumed far different points from those I make, and well-known statisticians have affirmed my observations.

When I labelled Targ and Puthoff's method of selecting targets in the Geller tests as "fairly acceptable" I was taking into account the general standards used in those tests. It certainly was the most acceptable of all their items of protocol—though I admit that I was overgenerous in such a designation.

However, contrary to Stokes' assumptions of my ignorance, I have been aware of the Kelvin Scale of temperature since my school-days, and I am sure that the evangelist I quoted as saying that things were going to get "seven times hotter" did not have that scale in mind, since he referred to the Fahrenheit scale in his comments. In that system, "seven times hotter" has no meaning.

Putting the cart before the horse, Dr. Stokes refers to my calling "significant psi-missing results" "negative results." Not so—the parapsychologists, discovering negative results, have chosen to call them "psi-missing" when they are sufficiently dramatic. Unless negative results are among the expected and announced outcomes of an experiment, "psi-missing" is not acceptable as positive proof. That is an elemental fact, not subject to dismissal—except in parapsychology. Negative results are negative results, regardless of ingenuity, a quality in full supply among parascientists.

The reviewer objects to my use of "proves" when referring to the VERITAC tests, yet if these tests proved anything, it was that properly conducted psi tests indicate no ESP powers in the subjects. Of course I am aware that one cannot prove a negative—but that onus is not upon me. It is upon the parascientists to prove a positive case.

I hear many suggestions that excellent proof is merely awaiting my examination. If there is better evidence than that which I have presented in *Flim-Flam!* by all means let us see it. Schmidt offered to let the skeptics see his experiments, and for three years since that time, we have heard nothing from him. . .

I have never "asserted that (I have) debunked the entire field of parapsychology" as claimed by Dr. Stokes, nor has that been my intention. I examined the evidence presented for psi and showed that it was wanting to the point of triviality. My book has informed the public of the large-scale deception they have been subjected to—and the parapsychological community has yet to answer my exposures.

Their silence says a great deal.

May we hear from them?

James Randi

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I will respond to Randi's points one at a time:

(1) I evidently identify a smaller subset of the parapsychological community as "serious parapsychologists" than does Randi. That "serious parapsychologists" would not promote the claims relating to the Bimini Road, or-gone energy, N-rays and the like is, in my conceptual system, an *a priori* truth, as my definition of what it is to be a "serious parapsychologist" includes a disinterest in these topics. Hopefully, Randi is equally erroneous about who are the "leading" parapsychologists.

(2) Mr. Randi asks me to present him with better claims than those he has examined. As he asserts that Schmidt refuses to let skeptics examine his experiments (a fact which would greatly surprise me if true), I would recommend any one of a number of lines of research that have appeared in the serious parapsychological journals, such as the work of Honorton, Broughton, Palmer, Braud, Sargent, Stanford or Morris (among others). I do not claim that each experiment performed by these investigators is perfect and unassailable (few scientific experiments are); indeed, I have criticized many of these studies myself in a series of reviews of the *Research in Parapsychology* series (Stokes, 1977b; 1978a; 1978b; 1979; in press). Rather I propose these studies as worthy of attention. The critiques of these studies that have appeared have thus far largely come from within the parapsychological community itself. The organization which Mr. Randi represents, the highly misnamed Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), has been strangely reluctant to examine this evidence. Perhaps, to borrow a phrase from Randi, CSICOP's "silence says a great deal."

(3) I am not one of the foremost backers of the work of Messrs. Targ and Puthoff, and I do not wish to be placed by Randi into the position of defending their work. Indeed, I have been one of their most vociferous critics within the parapsychological community, beginning with a review of their book *Mind-Reach* (Stokes, 1977a). I am by no means alone among parapsychologists in being unimpressed with the rigor of these experiments. While some self-professed parapsychologists may have, as Randi claims, extolled these studies as the "very paragons of integrity and experimental finesse," I do not believe that the more responsible spokesmen for the field have done so. Incidentally, I feel that Mr. Randi is to be commended for his revelations about this work; if true, they are a great contribution to the field of parapsychology.

(4) With regard to the (obviously weak) Serios work, I was not arguing for its validity (I have in fact criticized it in print on several occasions), but was rather objecting to Randi's not-so-subtle implications that all parapsychologists would tolerate such excessively loose conditions as those employed in the Serios investigations.

(5) Mr. Randi's comments regarding the Schmidt experiments are too amorphous to rebut.

(6) With regard to the Kelvin scale issue, Mr. Randi himself states on page 239 of his book that "the term [seven times hotter] has no meaning." A careful reading of the text will show that the idea of using the Celsius and Fahrenheit scales originated with him, not with the evangelist.

(7) Many parapsychologists do anticipate possible psi-missing results and routinely employ two-tailed tests to analyze for them. Randi's use of the term "negative results" to describe significant psi-missing is misleading as it implies that such results are consistent with the hypothesis of chance coincidence, which they clearly are not. Use of such a verbal sleight-of-hand technique is more appropriate in a magic act than in serious scientific discourse.

I am in more agreement with Randi than he might expect; in fact, we probably agree on more issues than we disagree on. I do, however, continue to object to Randi's debunking weak and ludicrous claims and then asserting that he has demolished the field of parapsychology. Randi should either pay attention to the serious research mentioned above or else insert a qualifying remark into his critique to the effect that he is merely debunking a few fringe claims of ostensible psi phenomena but that there exists a body of more serious research on the subject about which he is not commenting (and essentially suspending judgment). It is difficult for the cautious observer to regard the case for or against the existence of parapsychological phenomena as a closed one. However, Randi apparently wishes to arrive prematurely at a decision on parapsychology and to curtail this most interesting and important area of human inquiry. I find Randi's assertion in the last paragraph of his letter that he has never claimed to have debunked the entire field of parapsychology as simply, for lack of a better word, amazing. For in the next sentence he betrays his position when he states that he has demonstrated that the evidence for psi is "wanting to the point of triviality." But is not this evidence in essence "the entire field of parapsychology?" Randi does parapsychology a service by disposing of many of the weak claims that are erroneously associated with serious parapsychology and often serve to discredit the field. However, he does parapsychology a greater disservice by implying that these claims are in fact the most serious evidence for psi. Hopefully, the discerning public will not be taken in by the shell game of this master magician.

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