

BEYOND PARAPSYCHOLOGY: THE USE AND THE MEANING OF PSI PHENOMENA

EMILIO SERVADIO

Parapsychology's start was confused and confusing. We can hardly forget that its matrix was spiritualism. The latter moved along two lines of approach. One was a strong belief in human survival after death. The second was the hope that some phenomena—mainly manifested by exceptional persons—could some day give the actual demonstration of the aforesaid belief. Nay, for many of the first spiritualists, evidence in this respect had already been reached and they were, in fact, somewhat scandalized when some people dared to express a different opinion.

In spite of the fact that some philosophers and men of science contended that a certain amount of paranormality could be found, sooner or later, in every human being, the parapsychological pioneers were almost exclusively interested in rare subjects and in exceptional phenomena. Even those scientists who manifested a skeptical view about spiritualistic statements were keen participants of mediumistic sessions. They were mainly looking for extraordinary subjects even when they were studying—in their laboratories or elsewhere—such phenomena as telepathy or clairvoyance.

However, a difference of attitude was soon established. The first experimenters were more or less emotionally "involved" in the performances and, if we read their reports nowadays, we cannot refrain from wondering how some of them could at times, when attending a mediumistic seance, abandon their usual attitude of men of science as easily as one can leave an overcoat before entering the dining room. Nevertheless, the attitude that slowly prevailed was that of obeisance to the scientific method according to the classical, Galileian or Newtonian paradigm. The starting point was a general admission of the existence of strange phenomena that were on the fringe of those usually recognized by physics, psychology, physiology and science in general. The second point was the conviction that such phenomena had to be studied in a scientific manner, i.e. with the same detached attitude of the geologist who examines a curious stone. "Objectivity" was the watchword. Para-

normal phenomena were "objects," strange and rare as they might have been, and could therefore be investigated by scientifically-minded "subjects," with the use of scientific methods.

But *could* they? First of all, it became apparent, due mainly to the development of the quantitative approach, that in a certain way, those few old pioneers who believed in the existence of some paranormal possibilities, tenuous and latent as they may have been in every creature, were pretty right. But the main revolution was the overcoming of the subject-object paradigm in modern science. It is hardly necessary to mention here Heisenberg and the "principle of indeterminacy" (1926) and all the rest that followed. In the psychological realm, everybody knows nowadays that even in the administration of the simplest test, a particular rapport is established between the psychologist and the person who is being tested. In psychoanalysis, the recognition of the transference-countertransference interlock as part and parcel of the whole analytical relation has been made long ago. In parapsychology, a similar recognition has been slower, in spite of the views that have been expounded by some workers in the field, such as Lawrence LeShan, Jule Eisenbud, John C. Poynton or Elmar Gruber. At the 1971 Conference of the Parapsychology Foundation I strongly emphasized the necessity of taking most seriously the idea that parapsychologists should look into themselves with the same keen attention and zeal they develop when looking into the subjects of their studies.

Some time ago I wrote a paper, "Mysticism and Parapsychology," in which I tried to show that the "objective" approach to psi phenomena presented by many mystics was possibly the wrong one and that, perhaps, such phenomena were "at home" at the mystical level, whereas they still appear "unfamiliar" to us. I am wondering about the aims and the conclusions that might be reached by considering the psi phenomena of Saint Theresa of Avila or those of Saint John of the Cross, in a so-called "objective" way. And, of course, I wonder what advantage could come to our knowledge by the study that such eminent parapsychologists as Karlis Osis and Erlendur Haraldsson have made of Sathya Sai Baba. I am rather inclined to think that for the above-mentioned saints, and for the modern saintly man, the "phenomena" in question were and are quite "natural"!

The aforesaid examples could be enhanced by other ones. With a few exceptions, the same attitude ("our task has simply to be the study of the phenomena") has been shown by parapsychologists towards Yoga, Zen, Tibetan Buddhism and other doctrines and/or schools of thought, that aim at self-realization and assume the existence of a metaphysical Reality. Their tenets, doctrines, practices, rituals are largely *terra incog-*

nita for the majority of parapsychologists, who observe the effects and the processes, but do not look for their frames of reference, even less for their causes. They seem to avoid, or to shun, the very idea of an "explanation." Some time ago, a prominent parapsychologist told me that he was absolutely certain about some ESP phenomena that were presented by an Italian monk. He was nonplused and angry when I simply retorted "So what?"

I have asked myself sometimes to what extent the majority of parapsychologists have reflected about the very concept of "psyche" that is silently assumed by the discipline in which they operate, just as it appears in the words psychology, psychoanalysis, etc. In 1941, in a little book titled "The Myth of the Mind", a man by the name of Frank Kenyon contended that the very idea of a mind, or psyche, was preposterous, and that future generations would simply laugh at such a pseudo-concept. It is quite well known that contrary to Kenyon's expectations, the opposite has occurred, and that the essence and priority of a psyche has been defended and supported by prominent scholars belonging to different scientific disciplines, such as Sherrington, Eccles, Penfield, Sperry, Pribram, Charon, to mention just a few among them. Curiously enough, due probably to my ignorance, I have not found any such staunch defense of the concept in the parapsychological literature, although some of the above mentioned authors (such as Eccles, Pribram, Charon) have shown an interest in parapsychology as a side-line to their main research fields and theoretical views. In a psychoanalytic review, four years ago, I did my best to show that Freud himself believed in the "reality of the psyche," an expression that C. G. Jung has used as a title for one of his books. Could it be that some parapsychologists are afraid to show their acceptance of a concept that did not scare Freud, Jung, or—to mention one of our great pioneers—F. W. H. Myers?

My vindication of psyche as an immaterial entity goes much further. For several years now, the concept of "transpersonal" has gained momentum in the psychological realm and has had important reverberations in theoretical parapsychology. Among the few who have seriously considered the implications of transpersonal psychology for what concerns our search, W. G. Roll presents the psi field in a clear and uncompromising way, with his contentions about field consciousness and what he calls the psi structures. But long before him, in a chapter of *Awareness*, Eileen J. Garrett had written regarding what she felt when she practiced as a sensitive subject: "I have an inner feeling of participating, in a very unified way, with what I observe—by which I mean that I have no sense of I and any other, but a close association with, an immersion in, the phenomena. The 'phenomena' are therefore not phenomenal while they

are in process; it is only after the event that the conscious mind . . . divides up *the unity which, after all, is the nature of the supersensory event*" (italics are mine). Roll, as we know, purports that the psyche as a whole overcomes the empirical boundaries of the bodily Ego and permeates other "objects," psychical as well as physical, with which it becomes in turn permeated, whereby an indivisible continuum is established. Psi phenomena, according to Roll, are the outcome of processes that take place "inside" structures, not "between" structures. A French author, Francois Favre, wrote in 1976 that the very term ESP introduces a questionable and probably wrong assumption, that of a "psi transmission." ESP, he says, "is an interpretation, not a definition"; wherefrom an innumerable quantity of works has developed, regarding the different, objective kinds of psi transmission. "All perfectly useless," he says.

Summarizing what I have considered so far, I am compelled to state that the original idea of the parapsychological pioneers, who hoped to establish parapsychology as a science, with its well classified objects and abiding by the classical scientific requirements, has brought us to an *impasse*. This is no denial of what parapsychology has obtained and achieved in about a hundred years. We all know that much has been demonstrated, that many wrong assumptions have been ruled out, that many processes and mechanisms of ESP and/or PK have been classified. But all in all, we cannot be too proud of the results. In my considered opinion, to hope for a unifying theory that will some day encompass the whole of parapsychological phenomena, is futile and vain, if we should go on along the rails of a so-called "objective," scientific approach, that has already shown its shortcomings in several—much more official and academic—disciplines.

In this respect, and at this point, I would like to state that in my opinion, the so-called psychotronics promoted and stressed by Czechoslovakian and Russian researchers, has gone exactly the wrong way, trying to "squeeze" psi phenomena even more into a downright materialistic box, and refusing to pay any attention to a "psyche" which could have some independence from neuro-anatomical and electrophysiological bases. This, by the way, looks like the n^{th} repetition of an old mistake. We all remember how in the last century—and in *this* century, at that—several people have tried to assess, to measure, to capture the presumptive "fluid" of magnétiseurs. In recent years, some candid researchers have believed that the Kirlian photographs were revealing the existence and the essence of some preternatural—but not immaterial—aspect of human personality; the "aura," the "bioplasma," or other emanations. This persistence in trying to put immaterial entities in tangible and solid

containers reminds one of an old sarcastic saying, i.e., that the participants in certain spiritistic séances were, in fact, staunch materialists, because they wanted everything materialized, even the spirits!

But if, as I have contended, the above-mentioned way (I mean, the positivistic-psychotronic way of approaching and defining psi phenomena) is the wrong one, what could then be the *right* one? In this respect, I have to move into a quite different conception of things, of reality and our relationship with the phenomenal world.

May I quote, first of all, some illuminating lines from a book with which, possibly, not many parapsychologists or scientific researchers are acquainted nowadays, namely, the *Tertium Organum*, by P. D. Ouspensky. In my opinion, this book is one of the most important philosophical texts that were composed in the first part of this century. *Tertium Organum* was written around 1918–1919 in Russian and was published in English in 1920. The paragraphs I am about to quote are taken from the third American edition of 1955. Here they are: “There exist visible and hidden causes of phenomena; there exist also visible and hidden effects. Let us consider one example. In all textbooks on the history of literature we are told that in its time Goethe’s *Werther* provoked an epidemic of suicides. What did provoke these suicides?

“Let us imagine that some ‘scientist’ appears, who, being interested in the fact of the increase of suicides, begins to study the first edition of *Werther* according to the method of exact, positive science. He weighs the book, measures it by the most precise instruments, notes the number of its pages, makes a chemical analysis of the paper and the ink, counts the number of lines on every page, the number of letters, and even how many times the letter A is repeated, how many times the letter B, and how many times the interrogation mark is used, and so on. In other words he does everything that the pious Mohammedan performs with relation to the Koran of Mohammed, and on the basis of his investigations writes a treatise on the relation of the letter A of the German alphabet to suicide.

“Or let us imagine another scientist who studies the history of painting, and deciding to put it on a scientific basis, starts a lengthy series of analyses of the pigment used in the pictures of famous painters in order to discover the causes of the different impressions produced upon the beholder by different pictures.

“Imagine a savage studying a watch. Let us admit that he is a wise and crafty savage. He takes the watch apart and counts all its wheels and screws, counts the number of teeth in each gear, finds out its size and thickness. The only thing that he does not know is *what all these things*

are for. He does not know that the hand completes the circuit of the dial in half of twenty-four hours, i.e., that it is possible to tell time by means of a watch. All this is 'positivism.'"

Later in the same chapter, Ouspensky states: "The positivistic scientist finds himself in the presence of nature almost in the position of a savage in a library of rare and valuable books. For a savage a book is *a thing* of definite size and weight. However long he may ask himself what purpose this strange thing serves, he will never discover the truth from its appearance; and *the contents of the book* will remain for him the *incomprehensible noumenon*. In like manner, the contents of nature are incomprehensible to the positivistic scientist. But if a man *knows* of the existence of the contents of the book—the *noumenon* of life—if he knows that a mysterious meaning is hidden under visible phenomena, there is the possibility that in the long run he will discover the contents. For success in this it is necessary to grasp the *idea* of the inner contents, i.e., the meaning of the thing in itself."

Some years ago, in an article that was published in the *Parapsychology Review* (1976, 7, 1, 26–28) I rather boldly contended that in nature there are two totally different kinds of thinking, with many intermediate degrees of course, but of basic contrary essence. One of these would be a universal, non-conscious, timeless, spaceless thought, representing the inner face of nature. This could also be called, and has been called by thinkers and philosophers, Absolute Being, Unconscious with a capital U, Total Awareness, Brahman, etc. It would be the essence beyond manifestations. The other would be external, individualized thinking, concentrated in this or that animal or human daily consciousness, a point from which everything else would appear as "other," as an "object," including single bodies, personality, states of mind and all the so-called "phenomena"—including those that we call "Paranormal."

Along centuries and millennia, long before the time when the study of the outer face of nature was assumed to be the only legitimate and dignified one, many seers and sages have shown that the inner side of nature and the thinking that is proper to it were, by far, for them the true ways of experiencing reality and moving psychologically into it. Strangely enough, they were quite often involved, in one way or other, with those occurrences that, in times to be, were to be called "paranormal"!

It is quite true that no great seer, or saint, or initiate, either in the East or in the West, has given any particular importance to those phenomena. Nevertheless, the *Weltanschauung* that is typical of many traditional, ancient texts contains, so to speak, a complete interpretation of them. Some Christian mystics saw in such phenomena either natural

or divine or diabolical manifestations. This was obviously a transposition and a restrictive way of expressing something that was, at the bottom, quite reasonable. But in the Vedantic tradition, in some of the *Upanishads*, a complete assessment of paranormal occurrences can easily be found. In a rather simplified and synthetic way, the following scheme seems to adequately summarize the whole conception.

Beyond every form that appears there is a basic "presence-consciousness." Every appearance is a symbol of the One, which is primarily an inner consciousness of the Being, of which everything that we perceive is a refraction. At the highest point of realization, when the awareness of the One is reached, the categories and limitations of space, distance, time, duration, causes and effects, singleness and plurality, etc., are bypassed. The consequences of the complete overcoming of duality can be manifested in the phenomenal world: ESP, creativity, so-called intuitive knowledge, solid objects that move in "sympathy" with a particular yogi, healing of bodily ailments, objects that "magically" appear or disappear. All this becomes possible in a way which we cannot provoke at will, even if we can make it easier and control it to a certain extent. Fundamentally, they are phenomena that confirm the true nature of Being and reveal its universal identity.

This Vedantic way of considering what we call the "paranormal" does not rule out a scientific, empirical approach. Nevertheless, I am inclined to admit, following the Italian philosopher and essayist Giulio Cogni, that "the supernormal is the profound normal of Nature as a whole and that it gives the best possible evidence of the fundamental truth of the vision of the world as taught by Yoga and Vendanta."

It seems to me that the "intermediate levels" of thinking between the two extremes of the positivistic attitude and the total merging into the inner face of nature have much in common with the so-called "altered" or "different" states of consciousness, about which so much has been written and experimented on in our recent psychological and parapsychological years. I myself have written a paper on the subject. It was reprinted in 1977 in one of my books. A few points seem worth attention, namely:

- 1) some of the aforesaid "states" are probably less different from one another than somebody may have thought (e.g., sleep in the REM phases, hypnosis, meditative states and trance);

- 2) in parapsychological research, a particular attention was given to possible "psi-inducing" states, much less to what such states actually are *per se*, independently of the fact that they could, or could not, be favorable to the production of psi phenomena;

3) in particular, that most researchers have investigated the aforesaid states adopting the classical, experimental approach, without thinking too much about an unavoidable fact, i.e., that such an approach is bound to find the same limits that the old experimental psychology has always found.

Of such limits I tried myself to give a description some years ago, in an article concerning mediumistic states (*Parapsychology Review*, 1976, 7, 1, 26–28). It may come to mind—I wrote, more or less—that perhaps our approach is wrong; that maybe we have insisted on trying to understand mediumistic states from “outside,” as it were, instead of considering them from the “inside.” However, it has to be admitted that a parapsychologist trying to get a grasp of a mediumistic state by using the so-called “third ear,” or through a well-intentioned identification, could not have great hopes of obtaining a real understanding of what is going on in the mind of a trance subject. But what about the subjects themselves? Well, it can safely be said that, so far, not much has been obtained even from those who were seriously trying to comply with certain requests. Many times, when a medium comes out of his or her deep trance, he does not remember a thing. If the medium has gone into a not-so-deep trance, he will tell us that he felt somewhat “dreamy,” or something similar to a mild intoxication and, at the most, that he had felt a different way of relating with objects, as if the distinction between subject and objects had lost a good deal of its customary aspects. Really, such descriptions do not take us very far and, moreover, they are not typical of mediumistic states. A person who refrains from day-dreaming, or experiences a very superficial sleep, or drowsiness, would tell us more or less the same things.

My article went on as follows: “Having reached this rather frustrating point, we are bound to try some quite different approach, to start from a reconsideration of mediumistic states as different ways of contacting reality, which compels us to review our definition of what reality is for most of us.”

I concluded the paragraph with a question, namely, if “other ways of perceiving and dealing with reality could not represent respectable, important, perhaps altogether preferable alternatives?”

In one of my previous remarks, I showed some perplexity regarding our attempts, so far, to label several of the so-called “altered” or “different” states of consciousness. I want now to point out that these attempts are far from being “new,” even if some people may think otherwise. In one of the most profound of the traditional Vedantic texts, the *Mandukya Upanishad*, it is said that there can be four different states in the manifestations of the Brahman-Atman, namely:

- 1) the waking state, with "wide possibilities of outer knowledge of everything that is in the world";
- 2) the dreaming state, which is or can be an inner way of knowledge;
- 3) the sleeping state, which is unity of being, pure presence, pure undifferentiated knowledge, inner luminosity;
- 4) regarding the fourth state, I may only quote the lines of the *Upanishad*: "Invisible, unapproachable, beyond definition, unthinkable, undescrivable, sole selfsufficient Self, in which all manifestations are dissolved . . . This is the Fourth State, according to the Sages."

In the opinion of the already mentioned Italian scholar, Giulio Cogni, a more or less pronounced abandonment of the waking state (he calls it "a more or less intense, more or less recognizable trance") is the general premise of all psi phenomena. Cogni contends that trance can be compared to "putting one's own head under the water." He also writes: "conscious *attention*—that is, the phenomenon of the individual soul—slows down and leaves the center. The psychological essence of trance is absolute distension; he who is in trance becomes similar to things, completely passive and alienated. He who enters into trance *literally loses his own soul*, according to the saying of the Gospel: and, thereby, gains life eternal; in fact, it gains that immortality that everybody expects in vain for the particular, individual soul, whereas it is philosophically beyond doubt that no kind of immortality can be the lot of a particular soul, which by definition is limited, partial, and therefore dependent on time and on becoming."

It really seems that even the most down-to-earth and committed parapsychologists can reach a point in their search, where they are compelled to give up all efforts to "explain" the paranormal along the lines of so-called objective, scientific observation. Those who are not a priori attached to an "all or nothing," Galilean, positivistic approach to such or such parapsychological enigma have often been able to give some attention to other approaches, different from those of positive science, and identical, ultimately, with those I have expounded on at some length up to now. Towards the end of a masterly work on precognition, a book titled *Paranormal Foreknowledge*, Jule Eisenbud gives his readers a fine example of what I have just pointed out. In fact, he writes as follows: ". . . When I am tempted (as I sometimes am) to cede to Time all the intractable mystery that the profoundest minds of centuries have accorded to it, I feel somewhat secure in at least having left a place in the compound theory for a still obscure X-factor. I am aware, moreover, of a strong inclination to believe that we may never fathom the ultimate mystery of such a factor so long as we remain imprisoned within conventional logic (and our penchant for mechanical models)—or fail to

learn to translate into some set of communicable signs and symbols that ineffable unity and timelessness that mystics of all ages claim to have experienced directly."

It seems to me that such a paragraph by a brilliant psychoanalyst and parapsychologist like Jule Eisenbud should not be underscored by any open-minded researcher in our field.

Summarizing, I assume that in parapsychology, experiments or observations in the classical sense, as advocated by Galileo or Claude Bernard, are simply not possible or, at the most, insufficient and leading us nowhere. Parapsychology has always got something that can be considered arbitrary. Psi events always show an irreducible association of objective descriptions and subjective applications; hence the relativity of its assessments and of its interpretations. Psi events have transtemporal, transspatial and transpersonal characteristics. This is why they cannot be contained within an objective, rationalistic box. However, it has to be declared that parapsychology, besides disproving a lot of superstitions and false beliefs, has painstakingly examined and underlined many correspondences and analogies that have been intuitively perceived by many seers, poets and artists of all ages.

What will be, then, the future of parapsychology? Frankly, it is a question of changing or dying. If psi events cannot be located against the background of a purely scientific philosophy of nature, we have to go back to the approach of the Vedanta, of Yoga, of Zen, or, to quote some Western sages, of a Plotinus, of a Pico della Mirandola, of the neoplatonists in general, i.e., to a philosophy of nature that does not rule out imagination, self-realization, creativity, universality, and identity. Therefore, two things can happen. If the objective-materialistic approach, with its psychotronic, hyper-reductive aspects, will prevail, parapsychology will become a bloodless entity, a skeleton. If a renovated philosophy and a different frame of reference are adopted, parapsychology could have an important role in the torpedoing of the old ideological containers, a torpedoing that is visibly in progress and that seems typical of a revolutionary aspect of our present culture. It could really promote a spiritual, not spiritualistic, exploration of the so-called paranormal. The latter alternative will prevail if we accept that nowadays parapsychology faces a no-way issue and that its future depends only on our ability to carry out its complete transformation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cogni, G. *Io Sono Te*. Milano: Casa Editrice Ceschina, 1970.
 Cogni, G. *Ahamannam—Io Sono Cibo*. Roma: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1982.
 Eisenbud, J. *Paranormal Foreknowledge*. New York: Human Sciences Press, 1982.

- Jung, C. G. *Wirklichkeit der Seele*. Zurich: Rascher Verlag, 1933.
- Kenyon, F. *The Myth of the Mind*. London: Watts, 1941.
- "Raphael" (Translator) *Mandukya Upanishad*. Roma: Edizioni Asram Vidya, 1976.
- Ouspensky, P. D. *Tertium Organum*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1955.
- Roll, W. G. "Psychical research in relation to higher states of consciousness." In John White (Ed.) *The Highest State of Consciousness*. New York: Anchor Books, 1972.
- Servadio, E. "Coscienza alterata e coscienza iniziatica." In *Passi Sulla via Iniziatica*. Roma: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1977.

DISCUSSION

BELOFF: Well, first may I say it's impossible to listen to Dr. Servadio without being well aware all the time that he brings to bear in what he says a lifetime of experience, knowledge and wisdom which must command the respect of us all. I can say more than that, but I agree with a great deal of what he says, in particular with the idea, which I share with him, that psi phenomena have something to do with the mind, with the spirit. It is a bloodless caricature of the field to try and convert it, as has been attempted in the psychotronics you mentioned in Eastern Europe and some of our Western theories, into some kind of quasi-material force. But having said that, I have certain very strong differences in my approach from his, because in his paper he again raises this apparent conflict which came up in Elmar Gruber's paper, the conflict between the participatory approach, eked out with references to these various mystical disciplines, which can lead to a more profound understanding than our Western idealogical approach can give us. What he failed to stress was that there are enormous dangers in abandoning the very contribution of being the most distinctive thing that the SPR and Western tradition has offered to the study of the paranormal, which is precisely the scientific method and the objective approach. And I think that there is always liable to be a certain confusion between the question of what is the nature of the phenomena themselves, about which we can speculate endlessly, and the method we've got to go about establishing the objective existence, the evidentiality of what we report and so on. It seems to me that the one thing doesn't commit one to the other. I mean Dr. Servadio could use Ouspensky to show that the scientific approach was really a sort of superficial, rather pedantic kind of positivistic approach that is in fact a caricature of what should be meant by a serious scientific study. Don't let us be misled by this sort of caricature into saying, therefore, that we can drop our safeguards, that we don't need them anymore. Documented reports and careful recordings and witness, we need all these things. Because we've got to tread very carefully, we may be misled by our own delusions, by our own beliefs, our own

wishes and so on. These one hundred years have taught us we've got to be awfully careful about this. It seems to me that tremendous dangers open up for the whole field if, at this stage, because of this kind of talk and because of our own doubts about the values of the scientific method, all this is just going to be dropped carelessly. I think the whole field would regress again to what it was when the SPR was founded.

SERVADIO: Thank you very much, Dr. Beloff. I think I am technically in agreement with all you said. I realize very well that the description by Ouspensky was a caricature of the positivistic approach. In my own talk I pointed out that the scientific approach has its great merits. I realize also the danger you pointed out, that is, that some people would just abandon a certain line of study and approach and go into a vague mysticism of some kind, completely abandoning the scientific field. But, I think that in this sense some saints gave us the great example, because they were mystics and at the same time very practical people. Just at lunch I was quoting the example of St. Theresa of Avila, who was certainly a great mystic, but she could really pull up her sleeves and work with the workers and aid them to build the seventeen convents that she founded. So she could stay very much on the ground, besides being an ecstatic and having all the mystical experiences that she relates. All in all, I don't think there is any great difference because I have stressed more than once the great importance of parapsychology as a science.

RONEY-DOUGAL: My question is difficult to ask in a way because I'm not too clear myself exactly how to formulate the questions. When I first started working, I worked at great depth with the people who were acting as the participants in the experiments. We saw psi successes as being in some way milestone markers in their own development as human beings, in their spiritual development, one could say. But on the other hand, I'm not too sure what relationship psi ability has to spiritual development, because there are many psychics and mediums who as human beings are no better than anybody who is totally non-psychic. And there seems to be a paradox here. You talk about the great mystics and the great saints who show intense psychic abilities, the Yogi, Sai Baba and so on. And then you have the mediums and some psychics who as human beings are not more spiritually developed than anyone else. Some of the people who work in depth in experiments do show clearer mental or spiritual development than others and yet some don't. There seems to be a confusion here for me, anyway. Maybe you could clarify it.

SERVADIO: Yes, I think I can. In the article that was published in the *Parapsychology Review* I tried to make a distinction between a medium and a mystic and an initiate. The medium can be a nobody—as a per-

sonality can even be a criminal. But let's call the medium just a person like anybody else. The medium opens doors without knowing what these doors are and what is behind them. Sometimes nothing happens, nothing comes through the doors. Sometimes many beautiful things come and sometimes very nasty things come. This is more or less the mediumistic state. Not all mediums are like that. Eileen Garrett was very exceptional in this respect. Although she was called a medium, she was much more than that. But many mediums are of this kind. The mystic is somebody who believes in a supreme entity, in God or Jesus Christ, and tries his best to get perfection in himself and sometime to reach paradise. So this puts him in a different ethical category vis à vis the usual medium. Then there is the initiate. The initiate thinks that this entity is not outside somewhere in heaven or in some particular place outside of himself, but it is mainly in himself as a sort of spark that can be augmented, whereas the mystic projects his inner sun outwards and venerates or adores it. The initiate works along several lines—meditation, yoga and so on, just to kindle this original fire that is within himself in order to become a god himself.

SARGENT: I would like to agree with John that the Ouspensky quote is rather unfortunate, because it is attacking a straw man. No scientist would behave in the way that is given in Ouspensky's example, so it's unfortunate. But I don't think that anybody is doing what John seems to think they are trying to do. That is to say that science is something nasty that the dog brought in and we'd like you to take it away now so that we can go back to the 16th, 17th century kind of prerationalistic magical thinking or something like that. What many people from different viewpoints have been trying to stress during this conference is that there are really limits on how wonderful science is. And there are doubts about what science is. There are doubts about the conceptual foundations of science. If I hear this word "objective" again, I am going to get very angry because what becomes increasingly plain from the studies of sociology and philosophy of science is that science is not objective and this standpoint really can't be maintained. And even if it were, that itself would be an interesting problem because true objectivity is arguably founded on a philosophical basis of alienation which is an ethical stance to take in looking at the world. There is an observer and an observed and you have driven a wedge between the two. If you decide to opt for that way of working and interacting with the world, that's an ethical choice. You decide to pursue that way of looking at things. I think there are doubts that the matrix of science is what it pretends to be. I think the more one works with science, the more one realizes what huge wedges of subjectivity and conventionalism are inherent in its the-

ory and in its practice. And I think also that we must realize that science is a tool that one can use and there are other tools. Charley Tart gives us an example illustrating this problem. He once asked his students which do you think is the better, more versatile tool, a hammer or a screwdriver? They took a vote and half the students voted for the hammer. Then a bright spark got up and said "It depends on what you want to do with the tool"—and I think this is the point. You know, I am very glad that science has made it possible for me to go upstairs and turn my television on and watch cricket from Australia. This is a great boon in my life. However, it also concerns me that a failed B movie actor can blow me to smithereens tomorrow morning by pressing a button. There are many things that concern me in my life where science is not the right tool for dealing with problems and where it actually takes attention away from the development of the pursuit of knowledge, from ways that might get us somewhere. The classic complaint is we have built a fantastic technology and we don't know what to do with it, so we sit in the pouring acid rain wondering what we are going to do now. And science cannot and will not do anything about these problems for us. Science can not grapple with problems of meaning. I think that's the problem we have, that is what we want to know and the title of Dr. Servadio's paper really brings this home. If we're going to deal with the meaning of psi phenomena, which has got to be a subjective and intersubjective issue, then we are going to have to turn to other academic and intellectual disciplines to be able to do that.

SERVADIO: You know, Carl, you are a rather exceptional kind of scientist, perhaps because you are a parapsychologist and a psychologist as I am, and this is why you have developed your lines of thought in this particular way that you pointed out. I agree completely. I know only too well that true scientists nowadays are not the scientists at the end of the last century, but I don't know if they are in the majority even nowadays. And perhaps in my country we are a little backward in this respect. I know many people who just have the old mentality, you know.

VON LUCADOU: Well, I want to come back to the problem of positivism. I think that positivism looks to you to be an evil thing. But I think this is a little bit misunderstood because when Heisenberg developed quantum mechanics, he used purely positivistic methods. He did not use mysticism, but he got a result which was very interesting for some mystics because they had said the same thing probably long before. The advantage of Heisenberg's results was that he could show that his findings were rather certain and that one could rely on them. But with the findings of some mystics you are not sure you can rely on them. You probably may believe them or you may not believe. I think that the task of pos-

itivism of modern science is to get more certainty in things and not to suppress philosophers and to say that their findings do not make any sense. I think there are two paths in the search for knowledge. There's one path, for instance, for mystics who will learn about the world in a more intuitive way and another for scientists who will probably try the same, but with another tool. I do not see any competition. I do not think that one is better than the other. Both have their own rights and I do not like it that positivistic science is regarded as less useful for getting knowledge of our world.

SERVADIO: It never came to my mind to think that the positivistic, objective attitude is evil in itself. It is limited if the one who adopts it thinks that is all he can do and there is no other tool. I think that Carl Sargent put this forward very well. You see, the positivistic scientific attitude, the objective attitude, has brought a great many good things to humanity, but also many evil things. Why? Because of the general neglect of other aspects of reality. If a certain look had been given to other aspects of reality there would possibly be less evil in this world. But this doesn't mean that the positivistic attitude per se is evil—it is irresponsible, many times.

VON LUCADOU: I think that mysticism or pseudo-spiritualism is similar to evil in some contexts. I'm not sure whether they have more knowledge and more experience of the world, because I find that those physicists who have developed quantum mechanics have given the basis to talk on problems which are very interesting and which go beyond physics. But if we did not have this basis, we couldn't say anything.

SERVADIO: Yes, I quite agree with that. And I also agree with what you said that in the spiritual realm there can be evil forces, evil attitudes. We know that, but this would take us a long time to discuss, because the fact is that we live in a world of duality. Put it any way you like, we are divided on a scientific level or on a spiritual level and the great aim of true mysticism is to bypass this duality and achieve unity, as I tried to put forward in my paper.

SARGENT: I think there is a book that summarizes many important points of these discussions and that is Paul Feyerabend's *Science in a Free Society*. I think the point about the scientific epistemology is that it is one of many. Most people would admit this and most scientists individually would admit it. It's the collective of scientists that represents the problem, because when they start forming groups you do get suppression of other disciplines and there's no question about that. I think that is the problem. Certainly one is not going to be burnt at the stake for insisting that the world is not the center of the universe any more. But people like Alfred Wegener and Paul Kammerer got on the receiving end of nasty things.

There was the suppression of publication of Velikovsky's work and the so-called Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal which suppressed the Starbuck material, and so on. Science is dangerous precisely because it is the dominant epistemology. Any epistemology that gets dominant tends to start suppressing the rest, unfortunately. Hence, Feyerabend espoused intellectual anarchism, because it is the most free society that one can imagine, different epistemologies have reasonably equal access to resources. It is not that science is a terrible wicked thing, it is perhaps no more terrible or wicked than anything else. But the scientific epistemology tends to be repressive, because it is overly dominant and the imbalance needs to be corrected, I think.

MCCAUSLAND: I started with a couple of doctors a few years ago an Association for New Approaches to Cancer. I have seen enough in my work in the last twelve years to realize that healing is real and that the mind is real. How can we demystify healing and use it for helping people to help others? You said in your paper that you were talking about the use of psi. These things are part of the paranormal and we are actually going to start using them in the near future.