PSYCHIC UNITY: A MEETING GROUND FOR PARAPSYCHOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

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Professor E talks excitedly, taking this opportunity to speculate on a topic of great interest and importance for the field of archaeology. This wiry, good natured archaeologist, soundly grounded in a rigid academic background, begins the exposition. "The issue is diffusion versus independent invention," he explains. Indeed a central issue in anthropological discourse, Dr. E is referring to a long-term debate over the cause of parallel cultural traits in regions of the world that have had no known contact. For example, how is it that there are many overlapping cultural traits between archaeological sites in both Mesoamerica and China, cultural artifacts such as complex calendars with identical names for many of the years? One obvious explanation, Dr. E carefully notes, is cultural contact and various elaborate schemes have been constructed to explore this hypothesis. Still, there is no clear evidence to show that there was any opportunity for the diffusion of cultural information via direct or indirect contact between the two cultural groups. Perhaps then it was independent invention, a concept that is poorly understood, but which remains highly intriguing in the anthropological literature.

From another domain of scholarship, folklore, we find more examples of cultural parallels that lack any clear causal explanation and which have stimulated the curiosity of many social scientists over the years. Vladimir Propp (1928), for example, provided a detailed structural analysis of a Russian folklore genre referred to as "wondertales." He observed a consistent pattern in the function of characters in the progression of the narrative and identified identical sequences of functions. Later studies of American Indian folktales by Allan Dundes (1964) and African tales by Denise Paulme (1963), identified the same structural characteristics, despite vast distances and apparent spatial isolation of the three cultural groups.

The texture of these examples is reminiscent of parapsychological reports. Take, for example, a remote viewing experiment in which a

young woman sits in a quiet room and describes her impressions of a distant friend's physical surroundings. Her description is structurally analyzed by comparing it with the physical characteristics of her friend's location. After many trials, the descriptions are found to correctly match the locations, despite the fact that there was no form of conventional information transfer operating. A cultural parallel has occurred within a laboratory setting. The use of statistics allows us to conclude that the results are beyond those expected by chance—a factor that is more difficult to ascertain in the spontaneous cases previously mentioned.

Various explanations have been put forth to identify the causes of cultural parallels such as those of the Mesoamerican/Chinese calenders, the Russian/Native American Indian/African wondertales, or remote viewing experiments. These include cultural ecology approaches, which give environment a determining role in shaping culture, the sociology of group approaches, epitomized in Durkheim's collective consciousness, a concept which is developed within the framework of group activities, and psychic unity approaches, which explore common features of human consciousness that transcend physical boundaries. This third group of perspectives is explored in detail here as it reflects a particular genre of theory, running across the disciplines of anthropology, folklore, parapsychology and psychology.

I am not arguing that cultural parallels such as the wondertale can be accounted for by parapsychological explanations, or *vice versa*. Such an approach would work against the interpretative framework that will be developed here. Rather than entering into a search for one causal explanation, I will entertain a sense of aesthetics, probing the textual relationship that exists between accounts and interpretations of cultural parallels and psychic unity. In so doing, the mode of presentation engages in a process of cross-disciplinary juxtaposition. Through such an analytical and stylistic dialectic, one finds a reading of individual texts married to a synthesis of discourse. The perspective adopted here is epistemologically relative, each theory or text being treated as an interpretation and not as a dogmatic truth. Despite methodological and theoretical differences underlying various conceptualizations of the psychic unity problematic, the common thread is a principal of constraints; common calendars, folktales and remote viewing experiences are the result of restrictions which operate upon thought, providing limits to human psychological and sociocultural variability. Pertinent to this observation is a discussion of the utility inherent in a search for law-like causal explanations in the exploration of human consciousness.

Schools of Thought

Unilinear Evolution. To explore the concept of cultural parallels as evidence of shared mental processes, our analysis of the anthropological literature begins with the school of unilinear evolution. Representative of this cadre were Edward Tylor (1958), Lewis Henry Morgan (1877), George Lawrence Gomme (1892) and Andrew Lang (1901), scholars who traced the stages of human development as though it were a linear progression. These "armchair" anthropologists argued that culture (singular) evolves through a series of stages, ranging from savagery at the nadir to civilization at the zenith. Central to studies of culture for the evolutionists was the Comparative method, employed to support the theory that sociocultural systems observable in the present bear varying degrees of resemblance to extinct cultures (Bee, 1974). By selecting out elements of the cultural repertoire, such as games, riddles and magical practices (Tylor, 1958), that exist in both "savage" and "civilized" groups, evolutionists "proved" that certain phenomena, originating under a set of causal conditions, continue or "survive" even when the original conditions no longer exist.

Within the school of unilinear evolution, analytical emphasis was placed on similarities rather than differences between various cultural groups. To account for common traits found in various parts of the world, the evolutionists developed the concept of "psychic unity." It was reasoned that because all men have the same origins, their mode of thinking must be similar; as such, independent invention explained the occurrence of common traits in varying parts of the world. As noted by Lang (1893), in his discussion of widespread similarities in myths, for example: "Similar conditions of mind produce similar practices, apart from identity of race, or borrowing of ideas and manners" (p. 22).

Historical Particularism. The cultural evolutionists came under great fire from scholars such as Franz Boas, both for their philosophy as well as for their method. The school of historical particularism emerged, its proponents arguing that many cultures exist and that their unique developments are based on unique historical circumstances. Under special scrutiny was the evolutionists' use of the Comparative method to "prove" their claim of "psychic unity." Boas argued that the evolutionists manipulated cultural artifacts, pulling them out of their unique cultural contexts in order to support the unilinear evolution schema. Arguing that anthropology needed a more rigorous methodology, Boas focused on the transmission of cultural traits as a result

of diffusion over a limited geographical area. While he rejected the occult undertones of "psychic unity," however, Boas did not rule out certain universal patterns of human psychology to explain cultural parallels. Rather, he employed the concept of "limited possibilities" (Erasmus, 1950), in which similar logical, natural, or physical limitations operate on the development of traits and customs.

Boas (1959) equated the problem of cultural parallels with the independent development of homologous forms in genetics, arguing that cultural parallels are in fact more probable. In his own words: ". . . It may be admitted that it is exceedingly difficult to give absolutely indisputable proof of the independent origin of analogous cultural data. Nevertheless, the distribution of isolated customs in regions far apart admits of the argument that they were transmitted from tribe to tribe and lost in intervening territory . . . There are individual cases of inventions or ideas in lands far apart that cannot be proved to be historically connected" (p. 252–53).

Reflecting on the sphere of psi research, we find ourselves on analogous ground regarding the independent invention/diffusion argument. Investigations making a claim for the paranormal argue that information transfer between one individual and another is possible without sensory interactions. While a variety of criticisms have been leveled against this interpretation (see Child, 1987; Kurtz, 1985), the most frequently sounded argument is that of sensory cueing, whereby the explanation for matches between a remote viewer's description and the target site, for example, is attributed to some form of direct or indirect contact. Like the independent invention/diffusion controversy, however, this view fails to account for many careful observations that rule out conventional information transfer.

Psychoanalysis. While the preceding overview reveals a glimmer of interest in the cognitive dimensions of psychic unity, we find only passing interest in any conceptualization of human consciousness. With the development of psychoanalysis, we find the issue of cultural parallels moving into the realm of depth psychology. Originating with Sigmund Freud (1939, 1961) and developed by scholars such as Ernest Jones (1965), this view argued that cultural phenomena, such as given folklore genre, represent manifestations of unconscious drives and wishes, shared by all people. Such psychic commonalities, which limit man's variability, explain the cross-cultural recurrence of dramatic narratives such as the Oedipal myth.

Developing what almost reads as myth itself, Freud (1939, 1961) argued for a historical core upon which to build the collective basis of neuroticism, of which the Oedipal myth was seen as a collective pro-

jection. Very simply stated man, according to Freud's historical interpretation, originally lived in small hordes, each under the domination of a strong male. All females were the leader's property; the sons were driven out of the horde by the jealous father figure who would not compete for the affections of his wives. The sons formed small communities on the outskirts of their father's domain. Eventually they joined forces and killed the father, a man whom they resented, yet also admired. Their admiration led to guilt for what they had done. Rituals were established to pay homage to the deceased father figure and social sanctions were instated against incest. Consciously, the ego was unable to cope with the guilt, which led to its repression at the level of the id.

A common memory image of this shared historical event, according to Freud, has been stored in the collective unconscious "memory-traces" of all people, projected in the form of a common myth. Central to his conceptualization of a collective consciousness, Freud (1939) described these "memory traces" in the following way: ". . . there exists an inheritance of memory traces of what our forefathers experienced, quite independently of direct communication and of the influence of education by example. When I speak of an old tradition still alive in a people, of the formation of a national character, it is such an inherited tradition, and not one carried on by word of mouth, that I have in mind . . . If we accept the continued existence of such memory traces in our archaic inheritance, then we have bridged the gap between individual and mass psychology and can treat peoples as we do the individual neurotic" (pp. 127–128).

Freud's influence can be clearly read in the parapsychological literature, both in terms of psi's apparently unconscious nature, as well as in the conceptualization of collective memories. Tyrell, for example, postulated a two-stage process in the acquisition of psi information. At the first stage, information is retrieved by the unconscious mind, although Tyrell does not spell out the mechanism by which this occurs. The acquired knowledge is then brought into consciousness with the assistance of "mediating vehicles" such as imagery and dreams. J. B. Rhine, too, argued for an unconscious interpretation of the psi process, noting that subjects are typically unable to distinguish psi information from chance guesses in the forced-choice paradigm. Considering the free-response program, an interest in unconscious dimensions inherent in the acquisition of psi information was a catalyst for the development of the altered states approaches to psi, including the Maimonides dream studies and the successful ganzfeld technique.

On another level the formulation of memory traces, though in a somewhat different guise, can also be traced in the parapsychological

literature. Roll (1966), for example, proposed that localized impersonal memory traces of mental and physical events are contained in objects. The memory system of an observer can then interact with the quasi-physical memory trace, accounting for cases of psychometry; normal memory, according to this view, may be thought of in terms of brain psychometry. Still, in terms of a concept of cultural parallels, Roll's formulation falls short, for it predicts that a subject would have little success on an ESP task if the target were not in close proximity.

The formulation of "memory traces" is inherent in Carl Jung's development of the "collective unconscious." Jung (1959) noted that: ". . . I have chosen the term collective because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a supra-personal nature which is present in every one of us" (p. 4).

Jung discussed myth as a collective representation of archetypes, mosaics of energy and dynamic forces within the collective unconscious, that are revealed to us through fantasies, dreams, works of art and myths. These expressions of imagery provide a means of acting out unconscious dramas; because all men have the same unconscious images, Jung expected the co-occurrence of common myth themes and structures among various cultural groups at different points in history. Like Freud, he also postulated that individuals retain memories of the entire history of humankind.

The concept of a collective consciousness has been considered by many researchers hoping to explain reports of extrasensory perception. Stokes (1987) reviews a number of nonlocal theories, those which "postulate the existence of a group mind as a real entity, and thus abolish the absolute boundary between separate, isolated individual minds" (p. 156). William James, for example, formulated the notion of a "cosmic consciousness," a forum for the merging of individual minds during mystical experiences. Price (1939, 1940) argued that the occurrence of telepathy between minds ruled out any construction of a plurality of minds. He framed his interpretation by suggesting that biologically meaningless information in normal waking states is repressed. This psychological mechanism, it was argued, could be relaxed during unconscious states such as dreaming or trance possession. For Tyrell (1953), the human personality is made up of a hierarchy of selves. At the level of the unconscious, "the midlevel centres possess in some degree both the qualities of selfhood and of otherness from self" (p. 119). Collaboration between the midlevel components of sep-

arate minds is considered to be an explanation for telepathy. Carington (1949) articulated a worldview in which the universe is composed of atomistic mental events (cognita), related by the laws of association, a formulation which he felt could account for telepathy. Individual minds, according to this view, are nothing more than clusters of highly associated cognita. An associative link is established between two ideas, A and B, if the agent happens to be thinking of cognita A at the same time that he is exposed to cognitum B. A percipient should be aware of an agent's experience if she thinks of A, which will call up the association B. The more connecting ideas shared by the agent and the percipient, the more likely a transfer of telepathic information. Stokes concludes his review of the collective mind theories of psi by noting that: "Obviously, if telepathy exists, human mind can no longer be thought of as entirely separate objects and one person's conscious mind may be thought of as part of the unconscious mind of another person" (p. 163).

The now popular conceptualization of morphogenetic fields articulated by Rupert Sheldrake (1981) is of relevance at this point, for it provides a model of nonlocal collective memory that has been used to account for cultural parallels that emerge in the form of both myth and psi. In a paper addressed to the Society for Psychical Research in 1982, Sheldrake articulated the situation in the following manner: "Most people take it for granted that memories are somehow stored inside the brain. The idea that experiences leave traces or imprints in brain tissue has a long ancestry. Aristotle expressed this idea in terms of the analogy of the impressions left by seals in wax. From time to time the analogies have been updated, the latest being provided by the optical technique of holography.

"In spite of the fact that there is very little evidence for the existence of memory traces, and in spite of the philosophical difficulties raised by any mechanistic theory of memory, the trace theory is rarely questioned. The main reason seems to be the lack of a plausible alternative. If memories are not stored inside the brain, then how do they persist?"

Essentially, Sheldrake argues that form, development and behavior of living organisms are shaped and maintained by specific fields as yet unrecognized by any science. These morphic fields are molded by the form and behavior of past organisms of the same species through direct connections across both space and time. Learning of a new skill, for example, is easier for others over time, due to the increasing formation of the nonlocal field.

Various experimental tests of Sheldrake's recent theory have been undertaken in the last several years, and it is at this point that we are

taken into the realm of folklore. In one study (Kernan, 1983), Sheldrake commissioned a Japanese poet to give him three very similar rhymes: a real Japanese nursery rhyme, a poem of his own, and a gibberish rhyme. People in America were asked to read the rhymes and to see which was easiest to memorize. The results showed that the real rhyme was the easiest and the nonsense rhyme the hardest, results expected by Sheldrake's theory. Further tests (Sheldrake, 1986), also confirming the theory of morphic resonance, involved the learning of Hebrew words taken from the Bible; half of the words were common and half were rare. Each of the words was also rearranged into meaningless anagrams. Students were shown one word at a time and asked to write its meaning in English, also estimating their confidence in the word's meaning. While their guesses for all words were wrong, their confidence ratings for the real words were higher than for the scrambled words and twice as strong for the common words as for the rare words.

Of course, there are limitations to Sheldrake's approach. For one, not all empirical tests carried out by the British scholar have provided unequivocal support for the morphic resonance hypothesis. Further, it has been argued that Sheldrake's results are not an indication of any nonlocal field, so much as they are suggestive of the fact that some words or rhymes are more readily learnable than others, hence their initial popularity (Blackmore, 1985). While this argument has bearing on Sheldrake's interpretation, it does not take us away from the notion of some form of psychic unity.

Returning to Jung in this exploration of psychic unity and cultural parallels, we find that he was influenced by the work of Austrian biologist, Paul Kammerer, who began early in the 20th Century to collect examples of unexplained clusterings of events, which he termed seriality. This he defined as "a lawful recurrence, or clustering, in time and space whereby individual members of the sequence—as far as can be ascertained by careful analysis—are not connected by the same active source." Such acausal patterns, according to Kammerer, are analogous to an underlying harmony of nature.

Jung introduced the idea of meaning into the pattern suggested by Kammerer, formulating his concept of synchronicity. He recounts many examples of meaningful coincidence, the most famous perhaps being the case of the golden scarab: "A young woman I was treating had, at a critical moment, a dream in which she was given a golden scarab. While she was telling me this dream I sat with my back to the closed window. Suddenly, I heard a noise behind me, like a gentle tapping. I turned round and saw a flying insect knocking against the windowpane from outside. I opened the window and caught the creature in the air

as it flew in. It was the nearest analogy to a golden scarab that one finds in our latitudes, a scarabaeid beetle, the common rose-chafer (Cetonia aurata) which contrary to its usual habits, had evidently felt an urge to get into a dark room at this particular moment" (p. 22). Once the synchronicity had occurred, the patient reportedly moved rapidly through her analysis.

The concept of synchronicity, used to account for cultural parallels such as myth and symbol, has also been employed to aid in an interpretation of psi phenomena. In reviewing Jung's book, *Coincidence and Fate* for the *Journal of Parapsychology*, Frederick Knowles (1953) articulates the attraction: "This work suggests that the spontaneous phenomena heretofore studied by parapsychologists may be only a fraction of a very much larger field of coincidence phenomena awaiting exploration and experimental demonstration. The other phenomena may be more common than those which parapsychology has covered so far."

Conceptually, psi experiments may be mapped on to the synchronicity formulation with relative ease. Put simply, they are designed to operationalize meaningful coincidences within a laboratory setting, under conditions that can be evaluated to rule out the probability of chance explanations. Aesthetically represented, what we are seeking is a highly unlikely though objectively meaningful overlap of two complex systems in some measurable degree of harmony. Jung himself used the concept of synchronicity to account for psi results, including large-scale displays of macro-PK, an interpretation which was expanded upon by Hans Bender (1977) in his address to the Parapsychology Foundation.

While the synchronicity interpretation has been embraced to account for cultural parallels, it has also been attacked on several fronts. Heading up the empirical phalanx are psychology of probability scholars, who have shown clearly that people are notoriously bad at estimating the likelihood of an event (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). On an operational front, various writers have questioned the acausal assumptions that are explicit in Jung's formulation. Braude (1980), for example, argues that "There may still be some way of formulating a theory of meaningful coincidences. But so long as we must explain why the events occurred nonfortuitously, our explanations will be causal explanations" (p. 28). In seeking to understand the dynamics of cultural parallels, Jung, like his genre cohort, was implicitly guided by a quest for law-like relationships in his study of human consciousness.

Structuralism. French structuralism, originating in the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, provides yet another approach to the cultural parallels and psychic unity problematic. As was the case for both Freud and

Jung, myths reflect a hidden logic which is not conscious in the minds of cultural actors, but which can be decoded by an outside analyst. The meaningful and unifying structures of mythology surface, according to the French scholar, through the analysis of myths in the same way that unconscious thought emerges into consciousness through psychoanalysis. His goal was to transform fairy tales into science by discovering structural laws of myth. Where Freud sought to analyze dreams in order to reconstruct individual history, the structural approach addressed the reconstruction of cultural history (Kurzweil, 1980). Myths, according to Levi-Strauss (1967), reflect an intellectual process by which deep-rooted contradictions within a given system of cultural values or norms are transformed, via cultural codes, into more tractable forms that allow contradictions to be encompassed and/or problems resolved (Kronenfeld & Decker, 1979).

Such transformations, which are common to all people, are representative of psychic unity. In stating that "it is in the last resort immaterial whether in this book the thought processes of the South American Indian take shape through the medium of my thought, or whether mine take place through the medium of theirs" (p. 13), Levi-Strauss is arguing that many codes can lie behind any one message and that any code which one human mind can find in a message is there for any other human mind to find. Georges and Dundes (1963) expand on this point when they argue for the universality of folklore genres and their structural-formal features. Any cultural modifications of myth, legend, tale, riddles, proverbs and songs are variations on basic structures that are rooted permanently in human thought, expression and imagination (Ben-Amos, 1976). Likewise, Kurt Ranke (1967) suggested that there are fundamental human needs to which the primary forms of folklore are responses. Because they are psychological rather than social or cultural, Ranke sees folklore genre as universal forms of human expression.

The structural approach is both atemporal and ahistorical. Identification of common cultural codes involves a context-free analysis, in which the intrinsic intelligibility of structures is independent of "all sorts of extraneous elements." The concept of codes, which use familiar sensory data, including natural elements, heavenly bodies, etc., is used to suggest that symbolic cultural products must be decoded to reveal deeper psychic meanings. They are put together based on implicit rules, whereby additional meaning is placed on them, corresponding to the way words acquire additional meaning from their place in an utterance (Honigman, 1976).

To analyze the meaning of myths, one must consider them as prod-

ucts of relationships, not as isolated units. To achieve this goal, Levi-Strauss broke each myth down into short sentences in order to catalog them; functional meanings could be produced from these short sentences only when combined with other such units into bundles.

To best comprehend this, we may consider a linguistic distinction made by Levi-Strauss, this being the dichotomy between synchrony and diachrony. Here we are concerned with langue (the language system) and not parole (individual speech). Despite conventional use of the term, diachronic is not related to time; rather, it considers changes within a system. An analogy with a chess game was drawn to illustrate this point by Saussure (1959), a structural linguist whose work had a major influence on Levi-Strauss. He described the history of a given language as represented by the game—a synchronic state of the language is represented by a given configuration of the board. Diachrony represents successive changes in the state of the board.

Utilizing this framework, we see that relations of bundles may appear diachronically at remote intervals, but when organized together, they may also be considered as synchronic. To understand the way in which bundles of relationships are linked together to encompass a cultural problem is distinct from any focal concern with the sequential ordering of myths. In fact, meaning can be read between myths of the same type from different cultures and from different historical time periods.

Like Freud, Levi-Strauss argued that the universality of mental processes is illustrated in the Oedipus myth. While different versions of the myth exist, spanning several thousand years, Levi-Strauss analyzed them as one system which provides insights into the nature of human resolution to contradictions between life and death, nature and culture. Bundles of relationships were balanced across the various versions in a fashion resembling that of a musical score to be read as a series of constituent units. A horizontal reading of the units would serve, according to Levi-Strauss's method, to structure the telling of the myth; the myth's meaning would be revealed in the vertical columns. In the Oedipus myth, a common feature in the first column was the "overrating of blood relationships"; an inversion of this, namely the underrating of blood relationships, was represented in the second column. The third column refers to monsters, and the fourth reveals a common meaning for the names in the myth, namely: "difficulties in walking straight and standing upright" (Levi-Strauss, 1963). The fourth column helped to explain the first column, revealing a concern with man's self creation as opposed to the origin of man born from man and woman. A three-dimensional chart was proposed to organize the two dimensional charts so that it would be read diagonally. If all myths could be

so charted, Levi-Strauss argued that a structural law would emerge that would provide orderly analysis from existing chaos (Kurzweil, 1980).

Levi-Strauss's work has been highly stimulating in the anthropological literature, providing a framework for addressing the issue of cultural parallels. To the best of my knowledge, however, there have been no attempts within the parapsychological literature to explore the deep structures that have been articulated by Levi-Strauss. Several areas for potential analysis include the early cross-correspondences as well as contemporary free-response protocols. Like dreams and myths, such materials would provide a doorway into the unconscious processes of individuals who have been separated across time and space.

An Interpretive Forum for the Cultural Parallels Discourse

In this paper, I have focused on the problematic of cultural parallels and psychic unity as it has developed across several academic disciplines. In so doing, the various formulations will now be considered as a whole in an attempt to make sense of the parts. Here we are engaged in a process of reading interpretations into the various views which have been articulated in the scholarly literature. Beyond this, the texts are seen within the context of a larger referential frame; a critical analysis which considers political and economic factors that have tacitly influenced the making of the text, as well as the field of social practices and relationships, will be embraced. The aim of interpretation is not simply more interpretation; rather, it addresses fundamental problems of human existence—aesthetic, practical and theoretical (Rabinow and Sullivan, 1979). The psychic unity/cultural parallels problematic provides us with an especially useful forum for interpretative discourse, because the subject matter has not been amenable to any clear form of empirical certainty.

Inherent in conceptualizations of psychic unity is an emphasis on human affinity rather than diversity and complexity (Clifford, 1985). Common to each of the preceding formulations is a principle of constraints; common calenders, folktales and remote viewing experiences are the result of restrictions which operate upon thought, providing limits on human psychological and sociocultural variability. Each subtext or interpretation can be seen in light of stratigraphic conceptualizations, in which humans are a composite of biological, psychological, social and cultural factors (Geertz, 1973). People are analyzed as though they were made up of layers which can be peeled off one by one, each complete and irreducible in itself and each distinct from the successive

layer. Beneath the layer of cultural influence one finds functional and structural regularities of social organization. Further down is the psychological layer and below that the biological foundations that link human life.

Such an approach epitomizes a search for general laws to account for psychic unity and cultural parallels, identifying uniformities which are predictable in nature and which can tie the pieces of the human puzzle together. Each view aims to identify truth in the course of analysis, although such an approach, while popular in academic literature, has its limitations. French philosopher Michael Foucault, for example, has argued for the relative and socially constructed nature of truth. Every society, according to Foucault, has its regime of truth, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the instances and mechanisms which allow one to distinguish true from false statements, the means of sanctioning each, the procedures and techniques which in the acquisition of truth are accorded value and the status of those from whom one accepts that which is true.

In our own society, truth is related to that which has recognizable structure and order and which can be explored within the framework of scientific rules and expectations. Politically speaking, the value attached to the identification of order in nature can be seen as an expression of attempts to assure the perception of order in society. Social control can be maintained as long as the hegemony can sustain the illusion that such a construct pervades all of life. The very language and style of presentation in scholarly discourse are subject to control based on cultural values and norms. In an effort to address the psychic unity problematic, scholarly texts have sought to identify law-like relationships, despite the spontaneous and seemingly uncontrolled occurrence of cultural parallels. While a search for truth has led the various scholars to formulations such as psychic unity, limited possibilities, collective memory, hierarchy of selves, deep structures, etc., it has been a search that is guided, indeed shaped, by implicit cultural guidelines. In structuring the cultural parallels problematic within the framework of constraints, each text has imposed an order on spontaneous phenomena that reflects a hegemonic construction of society. The articulation of truth is based on constraints at the level of scientific discourse.

The point of this discussion is not to argue the right or wrong of the psychic unity problematic, or of any specific interpretation. Nor is it an argument against the utility of scientific discourse. Rather, an interpretative dialectic offers a framework for critique of the preceding conceptualizations—making explicit, though by no means complete,

the social and political factors that shape scholarly discourse, no matter what its subject matter. While we are never free of social constraints, we can at least be clear about their role in shaping our conceptualizations of scientific truth. In the spirit of Nietzsche's existentialism, we must break the tablets before we are free to understand the broader spheres of reality.

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DISCUSSION

NEPPE: I enjoyed that paper. I thought it was very interesting, very worthwhile. You commented about the Sheldrake theory and about nursery rhymes and biblical elements. Even positive results in those circumstances is a reasonably good proof of Sheldrake theory. I have always found this a rather remarkable misconception. The idea of using aspects of Hebrew does not prove the Sheldrake theory. It may be that words have not become common language because they are not linguistically appropriate. These may be less easily acquired than words which are in common language. We do not know how those words have come into language. I do not think that nonsense syllables are equally learnable. Just to put into perspective the reason why I am making this point: it is actually as one of the *New Science* award winners for ideas of testing the Sheldrake research. I am firmly convinced that the only real test of the Sheldrake hypothesis is the one that I put

forward which relates to a rather complex idea pertaining to lignocaine-induced kindling and this has never been tested mainly because it is going to require a great deal of money, something of the order of $100,000. Until that is done there is probably no available test that has been presented which will test this hypothesis. I am not sure if mine will test it either, because it has inherent within it a link of physiology and pathology. The Sheldrake hypothesis is based on physiological phenomena and it might not extend towards a pathological model. So if it does test it would be very nice. If it does not, it doesn't disprove the hypothesis.

I mention this at length not necessarily because of the Sheldrake hypothesis, but because these points are inherent within the frame work of everything you are saying. As I see it, one of the problems of scientific methodology in this whole area has been an attempt to find certain facts, link them to other facts and either call these things causal or acausal. For example, when we look at biological models we find, very commonly, the Gaussian distribution curve. This reflects the limits within which biological and psychological phenomena occur. Nowhere in any of these theories pertaining to synchronicity, and to acausal or causal realities of any sort, does one find any kind of limit. It is expected that these will occur under all circumstances. And this to me is unbelievable. It is like saying light will occur when there is darkness, because there are laws pertaining to light, but that there are no limits to it. I can not accept this. I think that one needs to have some kind of physiological or biological distribution, testing almost at a dose response kind of level.

SCHLITZ: I think the paper addresses your criticism of Sheldrake's theory. I think there are other examples of experimental tests designed to look at his theory. They are probably not subject to the criticism you are raising. There is crystal formation, for example, or reaction time, things that do not involve psychological kinds of interpretations.

NEPPE: The problem with crystal formation is that one has implicit hypotheses based on what should and should not be occurring. At this point in time we are assuming that certain things should not be occurring by chance and yet they are occurring. Possibly there are other laws relating to why these are occurring.

ISAACS: I had two problems with the evidence for the Sheldrake hypothesis. One was that it looked to me as if there was a decline effect with repeated testing, which to me is highly suggestive of placebo or psi effect. Essentially what we are doing is driving the experiment with the experimenter's psi. It seems to me that the problem with Sheldrake's whole position is that if we have independent evidence for

the existence of psi, why do we need morphogenetic fields? You could explain most of the morphogenetic field experiments on the basis of psi. And yet he is trying to explain psi on the basis of morphogenetic fields. It seems to me highly questionable as to which cart comes before which horse. Secondly, the data simply look as if there is an experimenter effect which fades out when the experimenter gets bored with the experiment. That is highly suspicious, because he is talking about what should be stable effects which build up accumulatively over time. That is not what I see in the data that I am familiar with.

SCHLITZ: Well, Rupert should be here to defend himself. My position is not to argue the right or wrong of his interpretations.

HARARY: Just two quick questions. You talked about psi's apparently unconscious nature and about this being the justification for the altered states approach to psi, which helps you get at this unconscious information. I think that, in light of the remote viewing work, if we are dealing with unconscious information we are dealing with it in a completely different way that suggests that you can actually deliberately access that unconscious information and make it conscious. So it is not a totally unconscious process. The other question I wanted to get at has to do with Freud and the idea of the Oedipal myth. Is it a myth? When you try and determine why this idea seems to pop up here and there, you find that it is possible that some other phenomenon is operating, for example, seduction theory. Maybe there really was a lot of incest in Freud's time. Maybe sons and mothers were getting together and maybe little girls were being seduced by their fathers. Maybe that was going on and Freud chose to interpret his patients' discussion of this as a psychologically symbolic situation when in fact it was real. Perhaps it was really going on and they were telling Freud about their own real life events. If we try to link together a lot of different things and then say "there that explains it," Sheldrake included, I am not sure that it really does explain it and that we have not totally missed the point.

SCHLITZ: As to your first question, I think that you are right about the idea that there is more to the psi process than the unconscious. Clearly that is true. One of the things that has pervaded my experimental history has been a message that was posted at the Institute for Parapsychology when I worked there some years ago. Basically it was that we can spend all the time we want designing carefully constructed experiments, we can employ the most sophisticated statistical techniques that we want to use, and we can recruit the most gifted participants both in terms of experimenters and subjects, but we must not forget that what we are doing in this experimental design is setting the stage

for a miracle to happen. Whether or not one can argue for the conscious basis of psi, there is still a tremendous amount of what goes on in the laboratory that appears to fit this sort of unconscious scenario. In many cases people are having psi experiences without recognizing that that is psi information versus any other form of information that is coming through. In terms of the Oedipal myth there would probably be a lot of controversy about your interpretation of the historical base of it. There is a tremendously long historical precedent for the Oedipal myth in many different cultural groups that do not have the same set of cultural values that we have here. So the question is why does this sort of taboo pop up cross culturally and historically and can this simply be explained by the incidence of a taboo in Western society? I think this myth is richly cross cultural.

HARARY: Isn't it likely that if it pops up so often in human experience there is really something going on there and it is not just people making up stories and passing on myths? Incidently, seduction theory is far from my interpretation of Freud. Actually, the theory has received wide attention in the professional literature.

SCHLITZ: But my point is that the inhibitions that Western society places on that kind of conjunction, as it were, is a bias of our Western framework. It is not necessarily shared by societies all over the world or through history. I accept that there could be an historical basis to it.

HARARY: We would have to see if the Oedipal myth comes up in societies that do not have incest taboos in order to respond to that. Do you, by the way, personally believe that encouraging psi effects to manifest in the laboratory is like chasing butterflies in the dark?

SCHLITZ: Yes, I think it is a fair metaphor.

HARARY: So in other words it is unconscious?

SCHLITZ: I don't know that I would say that chasing butterflies in the dark means it is unconscious, but I think that when we set the stage for this magical event to happen, we cannot be sure it is going to happen.

HARARY: But why do you think it is magical and a miracle? That is what I do not understand. It seems like such an extreme and grandiose point of view.

SCHLITZ: I understand your position because I am familiar with your writings on this topic, but I think that any time I have done an experiment, any time anyone I know has done an experiment, there is this sense of apprehension that it may not yield results. This is especially true when you are working with something like the free response ganzfeld type of technique, which takes a tremendous amount of time. You could spend a year working on an experiment which will have absolutely

no payoff in terms of the statistical outcome. We simply do not know whether we are going to get it or not.

HARARY: But is that the will of the gods or is that explainable according to mainstream psychology?

SCHLITZ: To collapse that to psychological variables, "Well, you weren't motivated enough, you weren't charged up enough" or whatever, I think misses the richness and the idiosyncrasies of psi phenomena themselves.

HARARY: But are there capricious gods determining whether given experiments will work or are there in fact tangible psychological processes at work at the core of the phenomena?

SCHLITZ: In a given situation it may be that there was a telepathic link, one group to the next group, so that the person is able to access this information somehow. It could be (and this would not be a psi hypothesis) that given the limited range of possibilities in an environment people solve problems in the same way. I think that that would be what a conservative kind of person would suggest as an explanation. It is also possible that you could employ some kind of psychokinetic explanation, in that one person is influencing another person's behavior to replicate their own. I think that all of those are possible.

ISAACS: It seems to me that your paper, looked at from a very bottom line perspective is saying that either it is psychic unity which involves physiological and psychological parallelism because of similar structures in situations, or else that it is saying that we can perhaps explain the phenomena by psi. Yet at the same time your paper did not say maybe we could explain it by psi. It seemed to put all of these factors in and say that there is no way of actually experimentally testing any of this, so let's just stir it all up together and produce a hermeneutics-style view of it, with lovely long sentences and complex grammar and then we think we understand what is going on. So what does it give us at the end?

SCHLITZ: I was waiting for that question. I think that what I was embracing was a playfulness. I think juxtaposing different types of perspectives, can create in us a new framework for seeing our own work. It can suspend those traditional ruts that we find ourselves in. I think that that is one value of comparing what we are doing with other academic disciplines, other areas that sort of fit, but do not directly fit. The reason I made my qualification about not explaining these cultural parallels from a psi definition is because I think we are going to get ourselves into trouble by doing that. Rather I would really hope that we can just keep this sort of interpretive framework, use it playfully and hope that it will help us to have more insight into the spontaneous

nature of how psi events occur. What I am not offering here is a guidebook on how to go into the laboratory and induce cultural parallels. Here are some potential examples of spontaneous cases that have been explored for the last 100 years in the anthropological, psychological, folklore literatures, but which have not been considered in terms of their relationship to psi. It may be that this kind of interpretive reading of the different texts can be stimulating for reformulating our perspective. In terms of your sort of discomfort with the hermeneutics, you are certainly not alone.

STANFORD: Marilyn was just explaining why she did not attempt to bring in a psi explanation of some of these parallels that she has been discussing. The matter has been alluded to by a number of panelists. However, I would suggest that there is a much more fundamental and probably important reason for not doing that. I just do not understand how you can explain something by using something for which we have no scientifically demonstrated explanation. Once we get that and test it and demonstrate that we have something there, then it seems to me that we can talk about explaining another body of findings that we have not been traditionally concerned with in parapsychology. Until we reach that point we had better stay at home and prove our theories before we try to explain anything with what is essentially a negatively defined construct at this stage.

SCHLITZ: I agree with that. In terms of Julian's point about his frustration with the hermeneutics, I think that what happens in a hermeneutic perspective is that we have what in anthropology is called the crisis of representation. You cannot trust that any of the information you are getting is an accurate representation of what reality is and so by maintaining the sense of interpretation rather than explanation we are keeping ourselves open. We are also potentially subjecting ourselves to nihilism, in that we do not have an explanation and none of it fits within an explanation. I would hope that there must be something in between. We can maintain our convictions in our theory-laden research, but we must recognize that there are all of these other possible explanations for similar kinds of phenomena. I strongly agree with your point about not explaining an unknown with another unknown.

NEPPE: Just a short final comment in relation to the Sheldrake theory and then I will ask my question. The short final comment is one Julian raised, the issue of ESP and PK as an explanation. This is why in fact my lignocaine-induced kindling hypothesis is the only one that I think is feasible. I deliberately went into almost a psi proof kind of experiment. Everything else can be more easily explained by psi.

KRIPPNER: Can you just give us the outline of that experiment?

NEPPE: Basically, the kindling phenomenon is a rather complex physiological one whereby stimulating a particular area of the brain in a subthreshold way does not evoke responses, but over a period of numerous stimulations (particularly using lower animal models such as rats) one gets a gradation of seizure responses. The idea here would be to see whether or not one could induce kindling using a relatively naive kind of chemical substance which has been demonstrated to induce kindling in individual rats across different geographic environments. I considered whether or not one can increase the potentiality in terms of inducing this. I went into a great deal of detail about why this is apparently ESP and PK proof. I am not criticizing the Sheldrake theory. I think it has a lot of potential within certain limits. This clarifies my own perspective.

I want to talk now about a different issue. I have not heard the term "systems theory" brought up here. It seems to me that what we are really talking about is at what level does one talk about these phenomena. Does one talk at a biological/psychological, familial/social/cultural psi kind of level? I coined the term biopsychofamiliosociocultural approach. It probably has left out the psi. The point about it is that the Oedipal myth, might well be just a myth. I am not sure if there is such a thing as an Oedipus complex in the first place, whether it was not a fabrication of Freud and his age. One fits that within the framework of psychology and then one tries to fit it within the framework of culture. Within the area of apparent psi I had the same dilemma with my work on olfactory hallucinations. Apparent subjective paranormal experiments had far more olfactory hallucinations of a very peculiar kind than a normal control group. Does one interpret this as saying there is a certain psychological variable? Does one say this might be genuine psi? Does one say that this is cultural? It seems to me that a lot of what one is talking about here depends on a particular conceptual framework.