PHILOSOPHY AND THE UNPREDICTABLE

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It seems to be inherent in the nature of human beings to try to make sense of what goes on; what goes on in their own lives and deaths, what goes on in the collective life of the group to which they belong, what goes on in the world at large. In these attempts to understand what is happening lie the roots of philosophy.

I shall be using the word in two ways, general and particular. In general, it will indicate a view of the world held in this or that time or place or culture pattern, an accepted interpretation of the nature of things. In this interpretation many factors will interact; experience, tradition; symbolism; some degree of science; beliefs about law, honor, loyalty and custom and about what they imply in codes of conduct, permitted or tabooed; observations of natural phenomena; and neat, satisfying, often unarguable theories as to how such phenomena are brought about; for instance, that the sun rises because Phoebus Apollo has begun to drive his golden chariot over the sky, or because the sun itself is a great ball of fire that daily encircles the earth.

In a particular sense, I shall use the word philosophy to indicate the carefully linked intellectual structures set up by the founders and followers of various schools of thought from classical times onwards, incorporating in their data the scientific concepts of their own epochs, and all too often taking it for granted that those concepts are immutably valid, will not, cannot, must not be modified, let alone changed. (Yet change they did, sometimes to disappear as completely as the elegant Pythagorean universe of "circling planets singing on their way," Joseph Priestley's theory of phlogiston, and the 19th century belief in "the ether.")

I shall hope to make clear as I go along, in which sense I am using the key word. Of course, its meanings tend to overlap, so that a world-view may crystallize into a philosophy, or a philosophy decay into an assumption whence grows a view of the world. And, equally of course, a mythology—inherited or developed as need arises—will interlock with both; witness the results over the last 150 years or so, of the powerful different mythologies that have proliferated from the ideas of Rousseau, Darwin, Marx, John B. Watson the behaviorist,

and Freud (most ingenious of all, this last, in its exploitation of the great principle known to coin-tossers as "Heads I win, Tails you lose").

Parapsychological phenomena fit fairly easily into the intellectual patterns of most pre-literate cultures, where *all* events that cannot otherwise be explained are ascribed to the wills of a myriad gods or spirits, discarnate or embodied; whether from the ultimate Godhead, or from human spirits alive or dead, the spirits of animals, totemic or individual, the spirits of trees or rivers—like "Tiber-Father Tiber to whom the Romans pray"—the spirits of whirlwinds and singing sands and most terrifying of all the spirits benevolent or evil, which are at once everywhere and nowhere.

Ill-luck, sickness, death itself are attributed to their activities. The parapsychologist can sometimes trace in incidents ascribed to them the workings of the unconscious mind. Thus, a branch may fall on your head in the forest because suggestion has made you accident prone, liable to wander in places where they often fall. You may develop rheumatism, or a high temperature, or eczema, because some psychological stress—a curse, an ill-wishing, a sense of guilt—is finding expression in bodily terms.

Even odder things may happen to those who do not *automatically* dismiss them as impossible. Witness the curious case of levitation reported by the late Mr. E. A. Smythies C.I.E. while working as Forest Adviser to the Government of Nepal.[1] Briefly, what happened was that a young Hindu orderly, named Krishna, who had failed to carry out his annual sacrifice to the tutelary spirit of his home village, was observed by Mr. Smythies himself, by a Mahomedan bearer, and by several frightened Nepalis, to be raised some two feet from the ground while in a cross-legged sitting position (from which jumping is physically impossible) and repeatedly bumped up and down on the hard floor of his hut. The light was good, the room was bare, the explanation given by his fellow-workers was that he was being punished for his negligence. I can see no reason to reject the report, but intellectual reluctance to accept disconcerting facts. Whether this curious instance of psychophysical interaction arose from an intolerable sense of guilt on Krishna's part, or just possibly from some telepathic impression received from the village priest remains open to question.

Worst of all, you may even die as the result of a curse; and this, of course, can happen to suggestible people everywhere, even in industrial cultures, as has been shown by the work of Dr. J. C. Barker[2] in my own country, and in the United States by W. B. Cannon[3] and by investigations of "hexing" carried out by Joan Halifax Grof.[4]

Dr. Barker's study, *Scared to Death*,[5] arose from a long corre-

spondence on the subject in the *British Medical Journal*. He cited a large number of cases from all over the world in which sheer fear brought about by suggestion seemed to have killed people. He carefully examined instances resulting not only from the direct suggestion inherent in a curse, or in the discovery that a powerful tabu had inadvertently been broken, but from the irresponsible remarks of fortune tellers, and even from a patient's overhearing and misinterpreting medical observations. The description he gives of the physiological processes at work may be summed up, very roughly, as the effects of acute fear on the sympathetico-adrenal system. Fear triggers off the secretion of adrenalin, which supplies extra strength for "fight or flight." But you can neither fight a curse, nor fly from it, and the "continuous outpouring of adrenalin" leads to "a disastrous reduction in blood pressure resulting in death."

Now primitive interpretations of such phenomena do at any rate recognize that they occur (a recognition often withheld by 18th century philosophers and 19th century scientists, because they could not fit events of this kind into their neat working models of the universe). These early interpretations moreover sometimes provided right, if inadequate, reasons for what had been observed. A curse, an overt and terrifying expression of malevolence, *can*, as has been shown, bring misfortune upon its object, if he or she believes that it will do so. This is true, irrespective of the *way* in which it works, the complex interactions between psyche and body that are involved. What we do not yet know is whether such malevolence can be telepathically transmitted. Evidence either way is difficult to find and if found to establish.

Right or wrong, however, the belief that every inexplicable event must result directly from mental causes, from the exertion of some will, does at any rate provide simple and plausible explanations for all that goes on. Such a belief may both produce and interpret what look like paranormal phenomena, and it will seem reasonable, and strengthening to minds awakening to our strange, spontaneous and often unpredictable world. However grotesque or terrible that belief may be in itself and its results, it will give some psychological shelter from the unexpectedness of winds and lightnings and comets, death and the unplumbed deep.

Because beliefs of this kind give a measure of security, it feels unsafe to depart from them. If you have always taken it for granted, as the Aztecs did, that tomorrow's sunrise depends on your tearing the hearts out of the proper quota of living human sacrifices today, you will be running a great risk if you stop doing so. The whole world may be dark, night may last for ever, and it will be your

fault. Better be safe than sorry, so you go on capturing and killing prisoners, and the sun continues to rise. Q.E.D. This particular closed circuit of theory and practice was broken down by a conquering nation which maintained that murder was wrong and human sacrifices were diabolical. And the sun continued to rise.

This grotesque, horrible, backward-rationalized piece of human ingenuity grew up in one fairly sophisticated culture, and was deliberately abolished by men of another. What has, rather too suddenly, been destroying much simpler beliefs and assumptions among primitive communities over the last 70 years or so has been the impact of scientific technology, with a mode of thought based on experiment and buttressed by statistics. Yet in many instances, the old working philosophy, with its curious symbolic imagery, may survive for a while in odd, thought-provoking juxtaposition with the new. In our own culture I have known an educated woman, a university lecturer in literature, to be exact, to whom unpleasant precognitions usually presented themselves in auditory fashion as the hooting of owls or the croaking of carrion crows. She therefore proposed that these two species of birds should be exterminated because they "brought bad luck." The premonition was identified with the symbol through which it was formulated. This is exemplified in a rather less surprising context by a curious incident reported by Ronald Rose, whose study of psi among Australian[6] aborigines was made with the help of grants from this very Foundation. Crisis telepathy, among these people, is often mediated by an image, seen or heard, of some tribal totem. It was in this way that Earl Ferguson, an aboriginal who worked as an engine driver on Australian Railways, received a message. During a rest period, he was sitting with two white fellow workers on the veranda of a small hotel when he saw his totem, a rooster, come onto that veranda, whence it was shooed off by the waitress on her way indoors. He told his companions that it was his totem (*Djurabeels*) and that he was going to get some bad news. They of course poohpoohed this as "blackfellow talk." The waitress then came out again saying there was a long distance telephone call for "a dark fellow called Ferguson." Answering it, he was told of his grandmother's sudden and unexpected death. Here primitive imagery jostles modern technology; the brain trained in railway engineering, the ancient tribal symbol, the long distance telephone, and the telepathic hallucination of the waitress and the two white railway employees. Rose mentions in this connection, that his informant told him it was not uncommon on such occasions for other people to "see" a totem creature, and to believe it an actual animal.

The practical function of imagery in spontaneous ESP needs to be examined in very much more detail than I can give it here. I shall deal more fully later with its role in working out theoretical explanations. Imagery plays a very large part in determining the average human's view of the world in general, and of his own particular experience in it, normal or paranormal. You have only to look at such metaphorical expressions as light and darkness, high and low, cool reason and stifling emotion, to realize this fact. To some extent, moreover, everyone *has* to think in accordance with the imagery of his own time and place, and to communicate his experience in these terms. Thus "breaking the ice" is only valid in a climate where it freezes, and "he's not on my wave length" is only comprehensible in an age familiar with radio.

Was it for this reason that the most learned and acute thinker, Augustine of Hippo, could only conceive of paranormal cognition in terms of a message delivered by some supernatural agency? "It is by the operation of angels", he wrote,[7] "that one who is dead says where his body lies, and where he wants to be buried. God allows this for the consolation of the living." He also attributed to an angelic messenger what happened when a young man he knew in Milan dreamed that his dead father told him where to find the receipt for a debt already paid, for which a claim was being made on the estate. He duly found it. St. Augustine noted, too,[8] the case of a monk who sent word to a lady who wished to consult him "that the following night she would see him in a dream; and so she did, and he gave her the information she wanted. The apparition was not a bodily presence but an image caused in the mind of the lady *by an angel* [my italics] and the monk could only have known it was going to happen by his gift of prophecy." He observed in general, by the way, that "the images of friends seen in sleep are rarely the souls themselves, but phantasms seen because of our previous associations of thought," instancing the fact that "not I, but my image, appeared to Eulogius the rhetorician in Africa, and expounded to him an obscure passage from Cicero."[9]

Some 1300 years later, Daniel Defoe, writing under the pseudonym of Andrew Moreton, was still preoccupied with the idea that extrasensory perception was brought about by messenger spirits. In his *Secrets of the Invisible World Disclos'd*,[10] he remarked that "some people are for reviving all into Fancy, Whimsy or the Vapours" while others "will have it that every Apparition comes from the Devil." He suggested that precognitions arise because "some intelligent Being who can see into Futurity" conveys "Apprehensions into the mind" by way

of "a certain Correspondence between our Spirits, embodied and cased up in Flesh and Spirits unembodied," but he would not have it that these messengers were "the spirits of the dead come to revisit," since his view of the nature of things was that of the Puritan, for whom the belief in Purgatory, a postmortem state of purification and growth, had been abolished, and the souls of the dead were either in heaven, whence they would not wish to return, or in hell, whence they could not get out. No, such messengers were not the dead (though they might choose to put on their likeness) and not necessarily either angels or devils, but perhaps "a fourth class of Spirits," possibly "inhabitants of the planets with bodies made to suit conditions there," whose business it was to transmit information. Here we are not far from the modern concept of benevolent beings from outer space descending from unidentified flying objects to give us arcane knowledge and rather platitudinous advice.

It may seem odd, incidentally, that what is called "ufology" should have arisen now, in spite of the fact that over a hundred years of development in telecommunication has provided us with such useful (though sometimes dangerously misleading) analogies in which to think of psi phenomena. Already in the 19th century people were talking of "the bush telegraph," and, more personally, of receiving messages by "inner telegrams"; and the invention of radio, and even more of television, has made it possible for the mind to accept, without boggling, the fact that a man's voice can be heard and his image can be seen far away from his actual body, which remains at a single spot in time and space.

It may well be, however, that the analogy of the messenger-boy system is attractive because it is so much easier to *visualize*. True, Laurens van der Post's Kalahari Bushman[11] can accept quite simply the idea of a mind-to-mind communication, when he says he is making puffs of smoke from his fire not as a code of signals but to attract the attention of his friend miles away, who, seeing them is alerted to "think my thoughts." More sophisticated groups, however, anxious to discover *how* the process worked, might interpret such activities as rituals undertaken to compel spirits to convey messages. Again the idea of a "world soul" was well known to many educated people, both at the time of St. Augustine and at the time of the Renaissance and after, and the possibility that information might be conveyed through it to individual selves was probably as familiar then as the modern notion of the collective unconscious whence paranormal cognition may well up, is today. But these concepts are rather abstract, whereas the messenger hypothesis explains phenomena in a concrete,

satisfying, common sense way; and to many people, in the short view, simple, satisfying, common sense explanations are much more welcome than complex ones, as Voltaire found when he laughed to scorn the proposition that the marine fossils in the Pyrenees showed they had once been under the ocean. Any sea shells found there, he said, were obviously cockle shell badges dropped from the hats of pilgrims on their way from France to the shrine of St. James at Compostella.

The contrast between abstract concepts and concrete imagery as a way of receiving, patterning, and expressing experience, and as a way of thinking and reasoning about it appears in philosophy in both senses of the word, that is, as an intellectual structure and as a world view. This contrast occurs not only at different times and places and levels of sophistication, but in different cultures. Thus, for instance, English speaking people, trained to accumulate facts before making inferences or formulating hypothesis, trained to argue from cases to generalizations, from concrete to abstract, often find it difficult to adapt themselves and their methods of thought to the French and German systems of arguing from abstract principles to concrete instances. And *vice-versa*.

As a result of his study of the electrical activities of the brain, Dr. W. Grey Walter, of the Burden Neurological Institute of Bristol, has suggested[12] that these differences also occur in individuals, and are to some extent genetically transmitted, though they can be modified by upbringing and schooling. Plainly, visualizers do in fact approach experience in different ways from abstract thinkers. This holds good in specialized, as well as in more general groups. Thus, even among "sensitives" it is possible to distinguish between those chiefly aware of apparitions and those chiefly aware of a "sense of presence," between those who perceive symbolic or veridical hallucinations, and those with formless intuitions. Vivid examples of this occurred in experiments conducted by the late Mr. Whately Carington,[13] in which subjects were asked to guess, sketch, and send in a copy of a drawing being shown in his study on one particular night of a series. Some of them would reproduce the actual lines and curves of a drawing, a geometrical diagram as it were, without realizing what the object portrayed was. Others reproduced the *idea* of that object (and in some cases further ideas associated with the original one) without much detailed correspondence with the drawing itself.

Differences of the same kind occur, Dr. Grey Walter maintains, among scientists. Experimental scientists tend (like himself) to think in visual terms; theoretical scientists do not. What is more, the two

groups often find one another incomprehensible, cannot understand the workings of one another's minds. It is interesting that Sir Francis Galton, as early as 1880, noted not only that "mental imagery was unknown to the scientists of his acquaintance" but also that "they didn't believe other people experienced it." Presumably they were all of the theoretical sort, more interested in classification than in the data classified.

It looks then, as if every one of us were born, not so much, in the words of Gilbert and Sullivan, "a little Liberal or else a little Conservative," as a little Platonist or else a little Aristotelean: a little Platonist, for whom reality consists primarily in abstract ideas, particularly those involved in mathematics, or a little Aristotelian, for whom reality consists in what we can see and hear and measure, and in what we can deduce from our findings.

This divergence can be traced in different schools of thought in every age and all over the world, Taoist and Confucian, Hindu and Islamic, Thomist and Scotist, Realist and Nominalist, Idealist and Materialist. The variety is endless, the field so enormous that I can only hop about in it like an observant parrot. What does have to be remembered continually though, is that whatever the tenets of a school, the very fact of its existence means that a pattern of interlocking ideas has been set up (whether those ideas are generalizations or theoretical concepts). This pattern will appeal, *as such*, to abstract thinkers, who will incline to defend the system (because it *is* a system) against the intrusion of new facts, or new interpretations, that seem to spoil its perfect polished symmetry. Thus Hume, convinced that miracles could not happen because they were "against the laws of nature," refused to believe that the psychosomatic cures at the cemetery of St. Médard had taken place, because he thought them miracles. He refused to admit any evidence for them, however trustworthy, because of this *a priori* decision. Again, in a rather milder way in our own time, I have heard Bertrand Russell maintain, against the argument of Aldous Huxley just returned from one of the early conferences at Le Piol, that if extrasensory perception ever did occur, of which he was extremely doubtful, it happened so rarely and so unpredictably that no scientific law could be formulated about its manifestations, and that *therefore* it was unworthy of scientific attention.

Despite their divergences though, there is one way in which philosophies worked out before the rise of industrialism seem to me to differ from their successors (at any rate until fairly recent times). Setting aside those few thinkers who conceived the whole universe as "a fortuitous concourse of atoms," these older philosophies for

the most part assumed the existence of a First Cause, a living invisible source of the changing world and the immortal stars, whose quiet will was working everywhere. Thus, though the old gods were discarded as such—far shooting Apollo, Athene young and virginal and wise, ox-eyed Hera, lustful Zeus transforming himself into a bull, a shower of gold, a swan—the idea of *consciousness* was never ruled out, consciousness which could affect the behavior of men, of animals and of objects. Although the image of the automaton had come into being with Daedalus' bronze robot figure that fought the Argonauts, and the Colossus defender of Rhodes, no one had begun to use it as an image, a working model, or a preconceived idea either of the universe or of the nature of man. That did not happen until the industrial revolution had got well under way. Even Robert Boyle writing in the 18th century of the body as "an hydraulical-mechanical engine" did not include the mind in this definition. And so long as the *fact* of consciousness was recognized, and with it the existence of selves perceiving both the world and their own being, there was room to admit the fact of paranormal cognition; even though no mechanism had been discovered to account for its workings, no physical organ seemed to be involved in its transmission or reception, however much people all over the world tried to attribute the psi function to the pineal gland, the "third eye." This is, in fact, sensitive to light, indirectly in mammals, directly in some other species, and appears to control the processes of reproduction. Insofar as voluntary chastity seems to conduce to ESP, and frustration—including sexual frustration—to psychokinesis, the "third eye" may be relevant to the physiological side of psychical research; but the connection does not seem to be very close.

In the heyday of European classical civilization then, mechanomorphism, the image of the machine as a philosophical model, had not yet come into being. Both Plato and Aristotle recognized, without any painful exercises in mind-boggling, the fact of consciousness and the existence of paranormal cognition. This was thought to occur most frequently and vividly in "fools, idiots and melancholy persons" —"fools" by the way, indicated the illiterate and "melancholy persons" introverts or "people with the power of recalling the soul from outer objects into itself." (Incidentally, though extroverts appear to do better in the experimental field, I have long had a suspicion that introverts may, in fact, produce the greater proportion of spontaneous psi-phenomena; it would be interesting to know if this is, in fact, the case.)

The ancient University of Alexandria, founded in 323 B.C. and

closed down in A.D. 529 by the Emperor Justinian because its teaching had become not only Gnostic but definitely anti-Christian, formulated some fascinating ideas about ESP within the framework of Platonism and Neo-Platonism. It was here that Philo the Jew wrote in the first century of our era of three sorts of significant dreams, those that came direct from God, those in which the individual mind was "linked with the world soul" and those in which that mind used its own system of symbols (like the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker). It was here that Plotinus, two hundred years later, discussed the world soul indwelling nature, and the "sympathy" it induced in all things, and it was probably from this tradition that the Islamic thinkers Alkindi, Avicenna and Averroes drew some of their ideas. Before the barbarian invasions overran the great civilization of Rome, educated men of different religions and philosophical affiliations could examine without panic the phenomena of extrasensory perception. Among Christians were the great bishop Synesius, who regarded divination as "a noble pursuit," and Augustine, who has already been quoted. Cicero distinguished between what he called intuitive and deductive divination (spontaneous phenomena and those deliberately induced by psychosomatic techniques). Plutarch hazarded that all divination was a natural power, at its lowest ebb in the autumn. Pliny, in his natural history, maintained the existence of such things as a "healing touch" and a "magical force" which could act at a distance. Galen, the doctor, believed in precognition—and had precognitions himself. It is worth noting that all these observations sprang from men who had to deal with the objective world. Synesius and Augustine were bishops, and so administrators; Cicero, a lawyer and a statesman; Plutarch, a biographer-historian; Pliny a man so passionately concerned with natural science that he sailed into the doomed Italian coast to investigate that eruption of Vesuvius which buried Herculaneum and Pompeii; Galen, a physician involved in treating sick people (he had a part time job as doctor to a team of gladiators, as well as his ordinary practice). They were not blindfolded against day-to-day happenings by too closely woven a network of theory.

It was long before Europe was settled enough to think again at leisure. The ideas, as well as the power, of the barbarians came flooding in, and men's minds stood to the defence of what had already been achieved, rather than to the examination of fresh data. In the newly established empire of Islam, however, philosophers were looking again at mathematics, metaphysics, and extrasensory perception. As early as the ninth century, Alkindi was writing a treatise on clair-

voyance and divination in dreams, in which he firmly believed, remarking that what we should call paranormal cognition "came through" most easily when attention was withdrawn by sleep from the outer world. This was translated into Latin some time after 1085, when Christian scholars made their way to Toledo, newly recaptured from the Moors, to study their intellectual achievements. Also translated were the work of Averroes, who formulated in his own terminology, something like Jung's idea of the collective unconscious; some long lost Aristotelean writings; and the work of Avicenna.

The Italian Thomas Aquinas, founder of the school of philosophy so powerfully revived by Maritain and others in our own era, was enormously stimulated by the new impact of Aristotle's argument, and, in spite of much opposition, set about integrating its findings with those of Catholic theology, with its insistence on the importance of created things and the significance of matter both in itself and as a means to the knowledge and adoration of God.

As has been seen, the Platonic tradition had been transmitted by the University of Alexandria through the work of Plotinus and later thinkers; and it had proved very easy to slip from the theory that abstract ideas were more significant than material things into the gnostic theory that all abstractions, seen as "spiritual realities," were good, and *all* material objects evil; and further, that the whole process of creation was a fall from spirit into matter, from which the soul must struggle to be free. (This idea, which has been presented in a contemporary context by Dr. Arthur Guirdham, is also implicit in much Eastern philosophy, ancient and modern.) As the psi-function belonged to the spiritual world, then logically a man in whom it appeared must surely have an "intense purity of soul," as Avicenna argued[14] in connection with prophecy.

Thomas Aquinas had worked closely with Albert the Great, one of the earliest mediaeval observers of nature in itself, and he agreed with him that "a certain disposition and physical temperament are needed for natural prophecy," which existed, he maintained, in various animals as well as in humans. It could, moreover, arise in men who had neither sanctity, nor charity, nor even a good moral character.

Although he taught that "there is nothing in the mind that was not previously in the senses" (a statement that could only have been made by someone who thought primarily in sensory images) he did not —indeed, as a Christian, he could not—deny the existence of the mind itself, and his work is a most useful background for psychical research. Invaluable are its emphasis on fact, its power to reserve judg-

ment, and its sturdy refusal to accept such neat oversimplified theories as Avicenna's doctorine of the Two Truths. This asserted that philosophy and theology (or as it might be nowadays, quantity and quality, reason and intuition, thought and feeling) were intrinsically different from one another and independent of one another, and could never be reconciled, each remaining supreme in its own sphere. If this were applied to parapsychology, of course, it might mean that the experimentalist and the student of spontaneous phenomena could never have anything to do with one another, or interrelate their conclusions.

Thomist philosophy was the basis of the great 18th century work[15] in which parapsychological observations were related to scientific findings on the one hand and to theology on the other. This was written by Prospero Lambertini (later Pope Benedict XIV), a genial and brilliant polymath of great scholarly integrity. Born and bred in Bologna, long a lively university center of science and medicine, he became an ecclesiastical lawyer, worked for some years as Devil's Advocate, and published in the 1730s a very close and detailed study of what went on in the legal processes for the beatification and canonization of saints. These processes involved a most punctilious evaluation of the evidence for what were claimed to be miracles. In this connection, he examined very closely what was then known—which was a good deal more than you might think—about psychosomatic disease, the effect of suggestion, and the existence of psi, then called "the preternatural." He accepted this as a fact, to be taken into consideration without fuss, observing that it seemed to happen in mammals and even in fish; that in humans it welled up more often in sleep than in waking life, more often in the illiterate than in the scholarly (because, he said, the sleeping self is not distracted by external events, and the illiterate are not distracted by many ideas). He noted too that minds not wholly taken up with "internal passions or external occupations" were more likely than others to receive preternatural impressions. It is a great pity that the section of his book dealing with such subjects has never been translated into English. He wrote of course in Latin, which was still in his time an international language. His work was the last for many years in which parapsychology was studied as a part of general knowledge, as something clearly recognizable in itself which could be both distinguished from, and related to other subjects.

For much of Europe, though, philosophical development was proceeding along very different lines. After the glowing revival of neo-Platonist ideas at the Renaissance there arose Descartes, for whom

mathematics was the primary mode of thought, the supreme discipline; Descartes, whose theory cut the living self into two parts, the ghost and the machine. The ghost was of course an eminently rational one, founded on the proposition that "I *think*, therefore I am"; "I *think*" not "I perceive," or even "I feel." There was little room for the psi function here. And in England it was squeezed out altogether by Locke and Hume. Berkeley might have considered it, had it been formulated in appropriate philosophical or theological terms. In the intellectual climate of his time and place however, the subject fell under such headings as Superstition, or Old Wives Tales, with which the Age of Reason could have no truck. As thinkers began to compare the created universe to a clock Divinely made, wound up and set going in the remote past, the image of mechanism surfaced yet again. In the course of time, the ghost was exercised from the machine, the Creator was dissociated from the clock as an unnecessary hypothesis, and the totality of things was conceived as a vast automaton, framed and modified and changed by the bludgeoning of aeons of chance. Thought, perception and feeling, all alike, were seen as "epiphenomena," byproducts of physiological activity.

The Romantic Movement, with its ghosts and werewolves and doppelgangers, its violence and its terrifying mystery, redressed the balance to some extent in the general literate public, whose craving for the "occult" is paralleled in our own time, also, perhaps, as a reaction against too much purely mental activity, self insulated on the one hand from the raw material of experience, and on the other from value judgments of any kind.

The Romantic Movement could not, however, be called a philosophy in either of the senses in which I have used the word. It was, like contemporary occultism, more concerned with exploiting some of the subject matter of psychical research than with psychical research itself. In many learned circles, the idea of consciousness as an epiphenomenon persisted, and it is not quite dead even today. It was taken for granted in the work of Pavlov and in the doctrines of behaviorism, it is alive in the arguments of Professor Hansel and Professor Skinner (of "rato-morphic" fame) and it is implicit in all reductionism. There is no room to consider psi in such connections unless it is envisaged—as Professor John Taylor[16] sometimes seems to envisage it—as a form of electromagnetic energy, as yet unidentified, which provokes reactions as automatically as a tap just above a crossed knee provokes a jerk.

Other currents of thought, however, have long been running, other thinkers have arisen, both inside and outside the scientific field. The

patterns they have originated are all on the whole less rigid, less inclined either to ignore or to exclude the data of parapsychology. Bergsen's *L'Evolution Créatrice*, with its concept of an *Elan Vital*, originating, indwelling, and urging onward the development of life and consciousness revived in an unfamiliar form the belief in a non-physical First Cause, and, in consequence, the possibility of non-physical secondary causes. Significantly, Bergson became a President of the Society for Psychical Research. *Elan Vital* can of course look to Christians like a new name for the Holy Spirit, The Giver of life; and *L'Evolution Créatrice* seems to have played a part in inspiring Bergson's compatriot, Teilhard de Chardin, in his great attempt to construct a modern synthesis of knowledge. In the course of this he broke down Descartes' curious teaching—logical, of course, in terms of his limited premises—that animals could not feel, because having no *thinking* souls they *could* be nothing but automata. He believed in "a psyche running through all matter," and ascribed to all living creatures some degree of awareness (and here his biologist friend Julian Huxley agreed with him.) In man, who has language as a stimulant and a tool of thought, consciousness is reflexive, and concerns his own identity as well as the world. He knows that he is, and he knows that he knows it. Paranormal cognition can bring him data to be examined and understood, as well as impressions to be registered and impulses to take action. He, the perceiving self, is both involved in and detached from what he perceives. He can think about it. He can try to interpret it. He can use his free will to decide what to do.

Once this is realized, it is hard to maintain the idea of consciousness as an epiphenomenon, though the habit of taking it for granted may be hard to dispel. In 1920, Frederick Pollock,[17] the great international lawyer, was writing to Oliver Wendell Holmes saying that "he had no patience with the idea;" that "experience in consciousness is the only thing we know at first hand"; and that "to regard thought or consciousness as a by product abstracted out of its own content is a ludicrous muddle." In 1929, Sir Arthur Eddington[18] maintained that "Mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience; all else is inference." In 1940, Sir Charles Sherrington[19] wrote of "the 'I' as a cause within our body. The I . . . is directly experienced. It is the self." In 1962, Sir Cyril Burt[20] affirmed the truth that "there can be no observation without an observer," acknowledged that this meant "reverting to a frankly dualist theory" of mind and body, and asked why not, if it fitted the facts. In 1965, Sir John Eccles, the brain specialist,[21] (who had earlier observed that the brain is just such a

machine as a ghost might operate) "faced a fundamental mystery" in disbelieving that "my conscious experiences are *nothing but* the operation of the physical mechanisms of my brain." In that same year, Sir Cyril Hinshelwood[22] noted that "what remains utterly incomprehensible is how and why the brain becomes the vehicle of consciousness." The eminent neurologist Lord Brain, Sir Alister Hardy, and many others agreed. In fact:

> Brain, Bergson, Sherrington, Eccles and Burt
> Rescued poor Psyche from out of the dirt
> Removed all the traces of past inebriety
> Capped her and gowned her with proper sobriety
> And presented her thus to the Royal Society.

In spite of all this, however, a fundamental confusion of thought recurs in our time, as in all times, like a decimal in a sum with threes in it. Consciousness *may* no longer be conceived as an "epiphenomenon", but it is over and over again identified with energy. Although it is easier now for those who frame philosophical systems to admit that parapsychological data exist, this seems to be largely because modern discoveries in quantum physics provide an analogy for them. Now, as has already been noted, analogies are extremely useful in enabling the mind to accept unfamiliar facts, but extremely dangerous in causing confusion between the simile and the reality. It is possible that electromagnetic activities subserve some paranormal processes (particularly, perhaps, that of psychokinesis) just as waves of light and sound subserve the processes of sensory perception. But sensory perception is not identical with light or sound waves, and extrasensory perception is not identical with electromagnetic activities. Both modes of perception have to be received and realized by the perceiver.

I may seem to be overstressing this matter of the perceiving self, but there is so much confusion in this field that the point has to be reiterated up to the edge of boredom. Thought about it tends to be so muddled that I have even heard a speaker adduce Heisenberg's uncertainty principle as a proof of human free will.

This paper is in the main a retrospective sketch of past interaction—or lack of it—between philosophy and parapsychology in the widest sense of each word. I am sure that others will be dealing in detail with the fascinating hypotheses worked out over the last thirty years or so by, for instance, Arthur Koestler, C. D. Broad, John Beloff, H. H. Price, Lawrence Le Shan—and many more for whom psi phenomena seem to emerge from a deeply and delicately interrelated universe, a quivering web of synchronicity.

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DISCUSSION

NICOL: I understood you to mention early on the cases of Dr. Barker in The Welsh Disaster. Is that right?

HAYNES: I mentioned the cases of Dr. Barker, but I didn't mention specifically the case of the Aberfan Disaster. But I think it's extraordinarily interesting.

NICOL: Barker's cases are impressive, but these collective experiences, when people tell us they have dreams or other impressions of what is going to happen, very often they concern some major disaster such as the sinking of the Titanic. I wondered recently, how many people have dreamt of disaster to the new airplane "Concorde." We haven't heard anything about them and there's been no disaster so far. If one of them has a bad landing, will there be a flood of stories about people who have had these prophetic dreams? Some of the cases we hear about are probably genuine, but there are other

instances we don't hear about. If I may mention your very distinguished ancestor, Thomas Henry Huxley, he was once traveling on the continent when he woke up apparently one night to hear a voice saying, "Don't go to Nuremberg." He went to Nuremberg. Nothing happened.

HAYNES: Regarding the points you made, one by one, first of all, in both New York and London, there exist Bureaux of Premonitions to which people with premonitions are asked to write. I don't know whether either has reported on its results. I should very much like to know if it has. That is point one. As to disasters to the Concorde, don't you think there might be a little wishful thinking about it by those of us who don't like noise? As to my great grandfather, these things can come in any kind of way. Perhaps he thought somebody was going to take him around Nuremberg and show him all the tortures including the Iron Maiden, and he wouldn't have liked that one little bit.

BERENDT: I can report a case where a person had a premonition about an airplane accident which would happen through hijacking a plane from Lebanon to London. In the same phone call he told something about a group of children and when I asked him what he meant by "a group of children," he said "this is always something bad when I see it ahead." And he continued about another flight accident. I asked him, "Is this a hijacking too"? He waited for a moment and then said, "No, this is no hijacking. This is something else." This was in February, 1974. In the beginning of March there was a hijacking of a plane going from Beirut to London, which was stopped at Amsterdam airport; people got out and the plane was exploded on the ground. On the very same day—and this was the reason that these things weren't mentioned so much in the press—there was a terrible airplane disaster near Paris, where a DC 10 came down with the loss of more than three hundred people and it came out finally that it was not an explosion, but it was a technical hitch with a door which opened during the flight. So this man was correct in both cases on the same day it happened. There was one other point in it, that he mentioned a name to me about a place in Sinai, Kantarrah. I thought that would be the place where the accident would happen. Actually, what happened was that the second plane was a Turkish plane and the name of the plane was "Ankara," so you have here some symbolism or some likeness in the acoustical area. This is only to make clear that these happenings were reported all at the same time, when I got the phone call from the paragnost Mr. D.

Chen. Directly afterwards I phoned Professor Rothschild and he put it down in writing too. The accidents were actually one week ahead. The paragnost usually is not able to say when things have happened, do happen, or will happen, so the time lapse may sometimes be very great, even up to six months, a year or more, as shown in cases we have from the Society for Psychical Research, about six and seven years even. In this special case, nothing happened within about two months time or more, but in the third month, in the month of May, there was a case in Israel where about twenty children, who had been hostages, were killed in a school.

BENDER: Just allow me to tell you about an extraordinary case of prediction the Freiburg Institute is just checking. It was published in 1951, but we did not notice it. Now it came to our attention, and we checked the authenticity of the material. In August, 1914, a Bavarian soldier wrote two letters to his family in Bavaria, from Alsatia, and he told his family that his unit captured a French civilian and this French civilian was an extraordinary man, somewhat crazy. He told them that Germany will lose the war. It will last four years. Italy will declare war on Germany in one year. We have the letters. The first letter was written the 24th of August and the second letter, the 30th of August. Then he continued, this unknown civilian, "after the war, revolution will break out in Germany and everyone will become a millionaire, but they throw the money out of the window." Then, the French visionary continues, "In '32, a man will emerge from the lower levels of the population. This man will become a dictator. There will be no law, no justice, and he has an extremely terrible strict regime and many people must die." Please note the exact years. In '38, one prepares for war and a war breaks out. This war will last five years. Italy, in this war, will be on the side of Germany, but many German soldiers will lose their lives in Italy. Then it continues, in '45, the war is lost. The man—the symbol, the swastika, will disappear and terrible judgment will break out. Then Germany will be split into two parts. The occupational armies will rob it but they conflict with each other. It's an extraordinary prediction and our work is to make sure that the letters are genuine—and they are!