

THE RELATIONSHIP OF PSI PHENOMENA TO VARIOUS STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS*

FRANCIS DANEST

We do not need to go as far back as Descartes to find one important source of the "poisoning" of our Western approach to parapsychological matters, namely Mesmer and all that has come to be associated with his name and adventures. His doctrine, methods and achievements appeared to be rich with so many possibilities that in many minds—either pro or con—they were and are still now felt to be a modern parallel to Pandora's box. Hoping to introduce a degree of clarity into the various perspectives that seemed to have opened up at the time, Puységur clung to the notion of energy transfer, while C. G. Clarus, favoring a psychological approach, defined the unconscious as an innate form of knowledge and also stressed the permanence of parapsychological faculties throughout mankind.

We know what happened to Freud. He was greatly embarrassed by psi phenomena, but the thoroughness of his observation would not let him ignore them completely. Thanks to C. Moreau's *Freud and Occultism* we understand something of the continuous ambivalence of his attitude in this respect. Being an observer of unquestionable honesty, though somewhat hampered by his hassidic sources, he could not underestimate the experiments of his pupil Ferenczi. Quite rightly, he retained the idea of a "telepathic nucleus" in the analytic situation. Jung's origins, on the other hand, were in a social sphere in which sectarian irrationalism disputed with a certain narrowness of mind. However, confronted as he was with an unconscious mind of uncommon quality and scope, he, even less than Freud, could not avoid these questions. And indeed he gave them a well known, positive answer.

All analysts who are concerned with parapsychology acknowledge

*Dr. Danest requested Pierre Janin to read his paper for him and to assist him in the discussion which followed his presentation.

their debt to Servadio. Within the confines of strict Freudian orthodoxy, he was the first to point out the importance of transferential or counter-transferential conditioning produced by psi events within the analytic field. We shall come back to this later on, for one of the keys to our problems may well be found in this relationship. Indeed, far more than other experimental settings which are severed from affective interrelation, analysis offers a most favorable ground for observation of psi events insofar as, when strictly conducted, it does not have to produce any radical change in the conscious field.

As regards the hypnotic induction of psi events, Ryzl's work is well known. However, as H. H. Keil noted in a recent article, some 95 percent of the successful experiments with his best subject, Pavel Stepanek, were conducted without the help of hypnosis, and it may seem doubtful whether hypnosis did have any influence at all in the remaining 5 percent. We may note here that Dierkens, whose work is specifically concerned with altered states of consciousness, remarked that the link between psi occurrences and the use of various induction techniques is extremely elusive. Along a parallel line let us recall that EEGs in meditative states show almost any type of wave, as Berger himself had already observed.

But we cannot, however, conclude that there is no more relationship between psi and altered states of consciousness than between psi and drugs. Along with other authors, H. Marcotte, who greatly developed some aspects of Warcollier's research, thinks that it would be impossible to obtain telepathic impressions without some altering of consciousness; to him, both phenomena are necessarily present at the same time. He believes this to such an extent that from the very beginning of his training courses in telepathy he will always "send" together with the target itself, some information which is intended to modify, however briefly, the receiver's state of consciousness. Back to my own analytic experience, it certainly is a fact that altered states of consciousness do appear during analysis—and, thus, most probably when psi events happen to take place—however slight and variable in quality, because of the muscular relaxation involved in lying down on the couch, and/or the relative exteroceptive sensory deprivation.

I do not feel there is any contradiction here between Keil's or Servadio's remarks on the one hand and Marcotte's or mine on the other hand. The fact that drugs or hypnotic induction are not particularly psi-conducive as such does not conflict with this other fact, that psi occurrences are definitely associated with altered states of consciousness, if we assume that in order to be able to express himself through psi, a subject is in need of some kind of permission; he must be

permitted to live in a state of consciousness which is "different," that is, not focused—out of habit and education—on the outer environment. It is not what we usually call a "normal state of consciousness." This is nothing more than a psychological consequence of the external pressure of social conditioning which tends to keep us as close as possible to the data of our sense organs and, correlatively, to push aside inner experience. I have thus come to think, mostly from actual experience, that there exists a particular level of experienced reality, a psychophysiological "tool" for meeting with the world around us which is different from and of far greater importance than that of mere sensation, namely that of what Marcotte calls the *sensorium*. It is also the level of intuition, a function quite as irrational as sensation but which, according to Marcotte, makes use of four dimensions (while sensation has only three), and, according to Jung, assembles and delivers to the present both the past and the future.

Marcotte's training techniques enable us to experience how deeply our ordinary perspective finds itself changed on that particular level. Time becomes quite naturally one of the functions of space (which seems to be coherent with modern representations in physics). To receive a precognitive message on a four-dimensional plane is to use a phenomenon which Marcotte calls "moirage"—which is to say that, by making a choice, here and now, among the various virtual channels of the future, one may actualize the potential energies which it contains while at the same time bringing home some of the corresponding information contents. The past on the other hand cannot, in fact, be made present, but it becomes possible, by a special technique of "sendings," to make use of its energies and thus to integrate it on an effective informative and functional register. We may note here that in a quite different experimental setting other researchers, such as Janin and Schmidt, recently claimed to have obtained some positive results in acting upon the past, and this of course should open fascinating (and perhaps disturbing) vistas should the validity of these first results be confirmed.

In my analytic practice, at any rate, this hypothesis of a psychological locus where the usual barriers of time vanish is rather clearly supported by several examples of psi occurrences. Note that these are probably made more frequent than in other situations due to the patient's and analyst's correlatively modified states of consciousness; in the former because he focuses on his inner experiences, in the latter because of the "fluctuating attention" he directs to the patient. In the following case it can be said that energies which had accumulated in the patient's past were used in the present to clearly manifest her choice

among the various possibilities of the future. Moreover, it also appears in this case that a difference in "tuning" between the patient and the analyst may have contributed to the setting off of the incident.

The case has been described in detail elsewhere. Let me recall here that the patient, a woman whose psi abilities were manifested for the first time at the age of five, had provoked through psi quite a number of dramatic events around her, including two deaths. Feeling violently guilty, struck with absolute forbiddance, she had been through several phases of melancholy which had been met with every possible form of therapy, including periods of analysis and psychotherapy. In the particular session I am now referring to I definitely think that it was some lack of recognition on my part which came to produce, along with extremely loud bangs, the failure of my entire electrical circuits. She had just come up with an offer of some electric bulbs to help with a better lighting of my office and of the flat in general, which was as much as to say that she wished to "light up my lantern" so that I could "see." (Humor didn't lose its rights in the event, for her job at the time was in the complaints department of the French Electricity Board!) Nothing could be found wrong with my circuits, and it never happened again; but—and this is an important point—the event was sufficient to restore the patient's openness of mind. It proved well enough that she *did* have an actual grip on reality. As far as altered states of consciousness are concerned, there were no visible changes in her, but for me the event was preceded by a light drowsiness.

Psychokinesis can indeed be regarded as a modality of telepathy, and this is Marcotte's view in the cases where some element or factor of misunderstanding or misknowledge exists between the agent and the percipient. At the extreme, this element could be the possibility that the target information is just not going to be received at all. Emergence in the conscious mind can then take a brutal and explosive form, liberating a large amount of that energy which seems to me to be recovered from the past. Needless to say, all this can happen only if the whole process is psychologically allowed to take place.

More generally, I have long been struck by the following fact: in all mental or psychological disciplines or techniques, whether religious or otherwise, there exists a locus or situation which gives rise to the sudden emergence into consciousness of the feeling of "being faced with a blank wall," of meeting with some sheer impossibility. In the Zen schools, which are perhaps the easiest to observe, this is the situation of meditation or of the Koans. In everyday life we find its exact parallel in moments of extreme urgency, when there suddenly emerges some expression or other of what is both vaguely and aptly called the "vital

instinct"—such moments, in other words, as will produce a sudden and brutal flow of energy into some archetype; moments also in which one may successfully call upon chance as upon some "Deus ex machina" who will produce the needed coincidence between the inner desires and the outer events.

I want to insist on this last remark: the psychological locus we are dealing with here thus appears to be also the location of chance or randomness, and we can understand Eddington's definition of randomness as "selective subjectivity." Where randomness appears there is a deep merging of physical and psychic phenomena, and this is the nucleus of the archetype, said by Jung to be "the touchstone in the structure of reality." Costa de Beauregard, taking up some elements of Minkowski's thinking, postulates that beneath the four-dimensional continuum or reality there co-exists an infra-psychic zone containing the representation of images, and therefore a kind of information that belongs *both* to the outer world and to our psyche.

In Jungian analysis, the various manifestations of synchronicity—those apparently "chance", acausal, though significant, relationships between inner and outer elements—often appear in the conscious mind in the form of images and visions, which are the type of information that is usually provoked by the sudden re-activating of one or several archetypes. But, and this is most important, the significance of such information must always be found within the frame of some particular psychological reality, most often an interpersonal one—in other words, in a transferential context. Western philosophy called this "unus mundus," a concept already found in Chinese thinking, as with Wang Fu Chich (1619–1692), and it naturally stands in some relation to the I Ching, as well as to various other divining techniques, where the role both of randomness and of the relationship between the subject and the diviner is also obvious.

Thus, this old and permanently maintained concept of meaningful coincidences leads us straight into the heart of contemporary psychology. Though we certainly do not intend to revive the ancient custom of observing the flight of birds, we may, nevertheless, observe that the random lines that birds form in space bear some relation to the graphic productions of the tyroscope invented by Pierre Janin. By the use of this randomly moving machine we might be able to obtain a repeatable scientific experiment in connection with the activating of archetypes in various ways, and thus to establish an experimental procedure in a context which is undoubtedly psychologically significant, for it includes the subject, his desires or hopes, at varying distances from the apparatus. It might become possible to crystallize

projective phenomena in a way that would be discernible and transmissible.

While we are on the flight of birds, but to go back to the role that modified states of consciousness play in psi events, let me describe a recent observation. In September last I was in Venice, my room overlooking the lagoon. One morning, I had been as usual exercising myself in precognition, after which the day had become foreshadowed by an anguished sense of death. In the afternoon there was a storm. Then the rain stopped, and I was gazing at the horizon through the open window in a state of general receptivity when all of a sudden I was surrounded by a whirling flight of birds. They flew in and out of my room, and at that very moment, in the midst of the racket they were making, everything seemed to collapse, the ground shook in violent waves and the chair I sat in began to move under me. It was 6.40 p.m. local time, and a few seconds after the event I realized it must have been an earthquake. (It actually was, and there were some casualties in Friuli that day.) More important to our subject, it was also at that moment that there suddenly emerged as from the flight of birds itself the image of one of my patients. I merely noted the fact, remembering my particular forebodings of the morning. Back in Paris, this patient told me that at that very same time, while he was gazing in the distance he had been struck by the repeated pattern of a flight of swallows. Simultaneously, without any recognizable cause he had been overcome by a sense of violent anguish and felt he had just seen me go by in his garden below; he sensed imminent death. He then suddenly relived an old war trauma that had left him for a time in a state of agnosia and partial aphasy. Such were his difficulties of expression and so confused was his vision that for a few seconds he thought his old trouble had started again. He also had a series of dreams after the incident; we need not describe them in detail here, but we can say that their meaning seemed to open out like the ripples in still water when a stone has been thrown in. Those dreams certainly contributed to a loosening of his rather rigid inner structures.

Giving this a closer look, I do not think that either the patient's or my own modified level of consciousness was of primary importance in triggering the synchronistic events. They accompanied the experience, and perhaps helped in the telepathy, but there is a network of relationships that spreads far over and beyond the telepathic sending itself, particularly as concerns the psychological significance implied. Quite generally, such elements of significance in the analytic situation elude the deterministic channels and may appear, as we just showed, in a telepathic communication. The qualitative realm probably belongs to

a wider reality which spreads into dimensions that our one-sided minds have become used to strike out of the picture. By not recognizing this reality we may come up against the most violent constraints; conversely, it is probably when we place ourselves in a state of consciousness which is different from the usual one that we become able to perceive and accept its existence. If a psi event occurs then, the role played by this altered state, therefore, appears, as was earlier suggested, to be *essentially a permissive one*.

I would like to point out here that there is a risk in posing different "states of consciousness" by themselves; the risk of implying a linear and statistically definable hierarchy of such states, out of which all marginal or unclassifiable elements will be fatally excluded. Imagination in general, exceptional inner dispositions that do not fit into the linear series, especially those associated with creative dynamics, may be left out along with everything that ultimately refers to, belongs to or stems from the qualitative "otherness" of each individual person. This is why it is so difficult in analysis to make a clear, "mathematical-like" statement of what is observed, and I incline to think it must be the same with "psi" states in their relation to the various states of consciousness.

Moreover—and this will be the second aspect of my remarks—what is perceived as an altered state of consciousness may, in fact, be the very shifting from what could be called the "informative realm" to the "significant realm." The very frequent distortions of the psi "messages" certainly seem to point that way. Such distortions were noticed by many researchers, among them Marcotte when he was studying the techniques of ocular reeducation, Ehrenwald when he examined Warcollier's experiments or the research of Otto Poetzl and Hoff, and Luria at Moscow University. Now, distortions in telepathy are similar to the ones that take place in the various agnosias and are mentioned in all contemporary studies on the subject, including the very recent ones by Hecaen, which followed those of Katz and Sperry. Agnosias are caused by left-hemispheric impairment. The left hemisphere of the brain is used for abstract, analytical and logical thinking, a plane that may be considered as continuous from a quantitative point of view and as discontinuous from a qualitative one. Conversely, the right hemisphere would underlay all the global, intuitive and emotional ways of thinking, such as those which are at work in artistic creation. Thus, any element which is being taken up by the right-hemisphere type of brain activity must necessarily appear as "distorted" in the strict informative perspective of left-hemispheric activity. In other words, the distortions which regularly occur in psi "transmissions" definitely seem to point to some kind of interplay between the two halves of the brain.

More precisely, I can say this: having closely surveyed and pondered over the observations of fifteen years of analytic practice, I have come to think that a new topical approach may be called for in neurophysiology. Reporting on the case of a woman whose state of general anesthesia amounted to a living death, while she in fact experienced a different and perfect form of consciousness, Jung, who was able to ascertain the phenomenon in detail, did not exclude the possible existence of some other mode of consciousness, far removed from that of ordinary life and perhaps located in the spinal cord. This would fit in with the fact that in the "sensorium" of telepathy the parasympathetic system appears to predominate over the orthosympathetic. Let us go further: Ehrenwald, in a very credible way, relates the reticulum to the "screening function of the Bergsonian filter, of what Freud described as the Reizschutz, protecting the ego from being flooded by stimuli from the id." Now, we also know that the two hemispheres of the brain are joined by the fibers of the corpus callosum. It thus appears that, because of the afference, in the corpus callosum, of the fibers in the "archaic brain," the "memory circuits" at this particular level (the corpus callosum) must be subject to a phenomenon which, for lack of a better term, I propose to call a "to-and-fro movement." I understand it as an exchange of a quasi-vibratory nature, probably with a neuro-hormonal or an electrical carrier. As a result, meanings emerge to consciousness without having necessarily been processed through the classical circuits of the cortex.

But—and this is another aspect peculiar to the phenomenon—this merging of opposed functional events does not follow, as was initially believed, a Hegelian process: by this I mean that there is no rationally describable "synthesis" of the conflicting "thesis" and "antithesis" for such a rational "synthesis" would ipso facto be a production of the left hemisphere only. More likely the phenomenon finds its expression in a different psychological reality, a kind of "third place." Meanings would thus be conveyed through qualitative leaps in information contents, which the cortical level's second hand recording would then analyze and perceive as modifications in the state of consciousness. Simultaneous participation in this "third place" of the inner *and* the outer reality—a condition which is essential to the emergence of psi phenomena—would also make it the place where the unconscious naturally opens to or meets the conscious mind; a place where the function of time would radically differ from that which it has in left-hemispheric consciousness, and in which simultaneity could flourish exactly as it does in all observed examples of synchronicity. It

should also be the exact level of the "letting go" of oriental techniques. We have noted this many times during Marcotte's training courses in telepathy: at the very moment of our giving up all desire to find the clue, in this instant of total impossibility, just when we had the impression of acting in an entirely random way, the target was received with maximum precision. Note that on that same level of simultaneity, in this so-to-say "contracted" state of the here-and-now, we actually come upon the entire field of psychosomatic relationships with their specific laws. It is this "contraction" which was defined by Janet as a "lowering of the mental level."

Reverting now to the therapeutic value of analysis, it seems that the same simultaneity between inner and outer reality is sufficient in itself to ensure the emergence of a new awareness. This fits in with the earlier-mentioned case history where, when inner energies recovered from the past were used in the outer present, the result was a decisive step in the patient's self-awareness. Generally speaking, I believe that throughout analysis there is, so to say, an "infiltration" of psi phenomena, or to be more precise and to keep to Freud's "nucleus," of telepathy. This is no infantile regression, no form of magical thinking with its desire for absolute power, but, on the contrary, the expression of a truly different topical reality. With patients who are particularly gifted in telepathy I have noticed the exclusive predominance of dreams that used either Jungian, Adlerian or Freudian symbolism, according to the "sendings" I had been consciously making, while they certainly knew nothing of my initial make-up nor of the system of interpretation I chose to apply to each particular case. So, although Servadio's position is a perfectly accurate one, I think it is rather too limited, unless we admit that the transference reality itself is also a telepathic phenomenon.

In other words, when we reflect on psi occurrences in analysis we come up against a kind of reality in which the constraints, while still owing much to Freud's classical reality principle, cannot be entirely referred to it. I find more satisfaction in the Jungian theory of synchronicity whenever the multiple meanings usually conveyed by psi phenomena have to be accounted for, and in spite of the fact that the idea of synchronicity has been often and strongly criticized. Particularly interesting, in my opinion, is the "psychoid" notion of the archetype in its hybrid nature, both physical and psychic. As we know, the archetype creates an acausal and meaningful relationship of synchronicity where the subject and the environment are indissociably linked together. If we are to avoid false problems in the phenomenology of psi, I think it is both important and highly desirable that we

should never forget the multi-dimensional aspect of these significant experiences. In spite of all that has been said on the subject, the reality they refer to lies opposite to that which magical thinking aims at. As such it certainly will remain for a long time broadly open to exploration and discovery.

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DISCUSSION

SARGENT: First of all, I am very, very unhappy indeed about what is said of drugs. I had cause to review the literature on drugs recently and I concluded that there was really very little indeed that was methodologically sound. If we talk about psychedelics, I know of only

one study that's by Van Asperen de Boer. As for stimulants and depressants, I know of about three, I think. So I think those comments are premature; I think they're wrong. And the second point that I want to make is that I really see this synchronistic episode as a beautiful example of what Stanford calls "active agent telepathy." And the fact that the patient thought he saw Dr. Danest is obviously a hallucinatory factor. It's just the sort of thing which Gurney suggested was going on when he had active agent telepathy in crisis cases. We have a hint that possibly Dr. Danest used precognition to know about the earthquake that provoked a feeling of death or anticipation in that respect. There is some suggestive evidence that he may be using psi there. It seems to me very compelling that he was using active agent telepathy to his patient and I just don't see how that is synchronistic at all. I think the synchronistic theory, once again, is a cop-out, not an explanation.

JANIN (for DANEST): Dr. Danest says about the drug question, that he speaks of his own experience. This is the first point. And the second point is that he spoke of what he read about drugs in European literature. I think that Dr. Danest suggests about synchronistic events that it must be a difference in the outlook you adopt on things more than a difference in the objective reality of the event. I mean, your non-synchronistic interpretation is an interpretation. Also, Dr. Danest refers to his own lived experience of the synchronistic events.

SARGENT: My point is that experience isn't much of a substitute for an actual experiment. I mean, you've got a classic correspondence between this active agent telepathy and other situations when no synchronistic phenomena appear to have occurred, as in crisis apparition cases.

JANIN: Dr. Danest says that this might call into question the whole problem of telepathy.

BRAUD: There is some lawfulness in synchronicity in that Carl Jung argues that synchronicity occurs only in an archetypal context. I was wondering if there might be ways of activating archetypes artificially or if you believe, as Jung himself did, that these cannot be influenced but should be allowed to occur spontaneously.

JANIN: Dr. Danest's feeling is that you cannot artificially activate archetypes. It is psychologically very dangerous.

HONORTON: I was particularly interested in the discussion of possible ways of crystallizing projected phenomena that would be discernible and transmittable, and I'd like to mention briefly a procedure that

we've been working with on an exploratory basis that was intended for another purpose but seems to show this kind of effect. We wanted to complete the psychic circuit, if you will, and include the subject (the receiver) in the process of selecting the target that would be used for the session. We used the subject's alpha rhythm to trigger a random number generator which in turn would select the target picture. Now, in this experiment we were not successful in getting good telepathic transfer between the subject and the target, but what we observed were dramatic examples of targets being generated which were very specifically relevant to the subject's life at that time. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this was a young woman who was a research assistant working for a medical pain researcher whose name was Dr. Wolf. She did not like him; she came to the laboratory for the experiment complaining about him. The target that was generated through this procedure was Lon Chaney as the Wolf Man.

JANIN: There is quite an agreement between Dr. Danest and you. He finds it quite normal that your alpha-triggered random process should have selected the relevant postcard.

SERVADIO: I think Dr. Danest is absolutely right when he says that my approach (in my first works) is somewhat limited. Yes, it is limited, but it makes sense. You see, also in the cases that you have reported, it is quite clear that there was a transference/counter-transference situation and that the patient made an appeal to you saying implicitly, telepathically or otherwise, "Now look, you have certain kinds of problems, but I have my problems which combine with yours, so please look onto my side." And you did so, in fact. Now, I think that this kind of approach makes more sense than synchronicity. I tried my best to study synchronicity but I think it is really one of those cases where you find a very nice word to cover things that are not understood very well.

DANEST: I don't think it's only a wonderful word, but I know it's a big difficulty for orthodoxy. I know that, because there are many critics of the process of synchronicity.

EIHRENWALD: One of the reasons we have a clash between the psychoanalysts and the experimental group is that we are still under the impression that psi phenomena have all to be thrown into one basket and that the predisposing and conditioning factors which are conducive to psi should be the same in both laboratory experiments and under conditions of everyday life or in the psychoanalytical situation. I deny that. We must make a distinction between the telepathic transmission, for instance, of neutral, indifferent, totally

uninteresting material—e.g., Rhine's Zener cards—and the dramatic experiences which occur in spontaneous incidents, in the psychoanalytic situation and the numinous phenomena Jung talks about. If ESP experiments succeed sometimes in the laboratory it is because there is a minor flaw in the Bergsonian filter. The numinous experiences of the dramatic type Dr. Danest talked about reach out for closeness and intimacy. There is a need for communication; there is something dramatic going on. It is fruitless to try to compare the two cases because, like apples and oranges, they are two different classes of things. On the contrary, the gap between them is as great as that between the fish mousse which we had today for lunch and the bass swimming in the water. One is denatured, deboned, "de-ontologized," if not a laboratory artifact. The other is a living whole, it has the immediacy of a true holistic experience. One is conscious, the other, usually, unconscious.