

PONTIFICAL URBAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Philosophy

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL STATUS OF EXTRA-SENSORY  
PERCEPTION (ESP): THE EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES OF J.B.  
RHINE AND J.G. PRATT

EZEANYINO M. Nkechinyelu, D.D.L.

Dissertatio ad Doctoratum in Facultate Philosophiae

ROME, 1997

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*Thanks immensely,  
dear Prof. Andreas Resch,  
smkechi  
04/06/97*

PSAW 87



1997. 46

(B 3103)

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ROME, 1997

*Vidimus ac typis edendam approbavimus.*

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*Imprimi potest.*

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*Decanus Facultatis*

Romae, die 22 May, 1997.

*Imprimatur:*

Con approvazione ecclesiastica  
Dal Vicariato di Roma, die 22 May, 1997.

### **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the HOLY SPIRIT, the Source of all wisdom,  
and to all lovers of Wisdom.

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**Acknowledgement**

Everlasting praise, honour, adoration and thanksgiving to the Wisdom of God for inspiring, sustaining and bringing this adventure to its present stage.

I thank especially my parents, Mr. Bertrand O. Ezeanyino and Mrs. Louisa O. Ezeanyino, for their cooperation with God in bringing me into this world, and for their loving parental care and inspiration.

I am gratefully indebted to the many people who have contributed directly or indirectly to the success of this work, especially to Rev. Mother M. Chilota Elochukwu, the present Superior General of the Daughters of Divine Love Congregation for her support and encouragement. To my moderator, Prof. Juan José Sanguinetti, the correlators, Prof. Gianfranco Basti, and Prof. Godfrey I. Onah, my most profound gratitude for their patient guidance, openness, availability, incisive and constructive observations and criticisms which have been indispensable in the shaping of this work. Their encouraging attitude has been very sustaining.

My sincere thanks to Msgr. Anthony O. Erhueh, who is God's instrument for providing the most desperately needed materials for the work. Special thanks also to Rev. Fr. Anthony Adewale Ojo and Rev. Fr. Augustine Akubueze for their immeasurable contributions towards the success of this work. To my Daughters of Divine Love Sisters of the Italian Region, especially those in Rome, I say, "may God bless all your individual and collective sacrifices on my behalf".

I am very grateful to all those who generously granted me interview on the topic and its related issues, especially Prof. Reinhard Neudecker, S.J., of the Biblical Institute, Rome; Prof. Andreas Resch, C.Ss.R., of the Pontifical Lateran University, Academia Alfonsiana, Rome; and Dr. Enrico Marabini, obstetrician/gynaecologist/parapsychologist in Bologna, all in Italy.

To my many friends and well-wishers who have supported me all through the period of research and writing with their prayers and encouragement, I say, "Thank you very much". Mentioning your names individually will be an unending task, but be assured that God knows you all, and I know you too. May God bless and reward each and every one of you abundantly.

Sr. M. Nkechinyelu Ezeanyino, D.D.L.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1 Choice of Topic

Knowledge in the ordinary sense of the word implies the acquisition of new information. And to acquire information demands that there be two parties involved, that is, the subject capable of acquiring the information, and the object which is the information to be acquired - the knower and the known. Acquisition of knowledge is essentially an immaterial activity in the sense that the object known is not annihilated by that fact, or changed into the knowing subject, but that it involves the intentional possession and interiorisation of the content of the information, while the known thing still remains itself. In other words,

*the object exists in the subject in a new way, which is not a material mode of being, but an immaterial one ..., and intentional, insofar as such an objective presence always refers to the material thing. The proof of this is that we cannot observe the intentional presence of color in a subject, as the blue color in a flame is observed. The intentional presence is an unobservable and absolutely private fact: seeing is not seen, is not heard, is not touched, and no other subject outside the knower can experience it.<sup>1</sup>*

Information could be acquired through different means, and this warrants the different categorisation of knowledge into ordinary, sensitive, intellectual, intuitive or scientific knowledge. Acquisition of knowledge is typically a human activity, although some animals could be seen as capable of acquiring knowledge, whether by instinct or by conditioning, but nevertheless in a manner adapted to their nature. But we say that it is a typically human activity because man has been endowed with all the prerequisites for the acquisition of knowledge properly so called.

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<sup>1</sup> Juan Jose Sanguineti, *Logic and Gnoseology*. Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1988. p. 201.

Man, being a composite of body and soul, the material and the spiritual components, enjoys the privilege over and above all other creatures, of all the faculties necessary for the acquisition of all types of knowledge. This privilege belongs to him because of his spiritual nature, the soul, which embodies the powers of mind or intellect and will, through which man's immaterial or spiritual activities are accomplished. But it is specifically to the powers of the mind or intellect that the function of the acquisition of knowledge belongs. As a human activity however, the mind works in conjunction with the body, especially through the senses - both external and internal - in acquiring knowledge. In this case, the senses have the duty of supplying the mind with the raw material out of which knowledge is fabricated. Naturally and humanly speaking, without this material, that is, the information from the external world, no knowledge which is strictly defined as human, could be possible.

However, there is a discipline, parapsychology or psychical research, that takes us outside our normal and ordinary understanding of the processes of acquiring knowledge. From the studies, researches and experiments performed under this discipline, it has been alleged that man's mind is not necessarily limited by the senses or the physical aspect of man in the acquisition of knowledge. Hence parapsychology proposes another kind of knowledge which is acquired through means other than sensory, and that is *extrasensory perception or knowledge*. The consequence of this proposal is that the mind of man could after all extend over and above the boundaries of space and time within which man lives and operates, in some of its activities.

This work is an attempt to examine the nature of this human/spiritual faculty in some of its alleged activities that defy the influence of the material nature of man. It is believed that these activities are possible because of the psychic or paranormal powers of the human mind. That through these powers, minds could communicate meaningful and very useful messages among themselves on the one hand; and that external objects and events could affect minds, transmitting equally meaningful and useful information which are being cognised and deciphered by the mind, on the other hand.

This is the aspect of those activities known as psychic cognition or mental knowledge.

There are other psychic activities where it is believed that minds could affect external objects, thereby causing their spontaneous movement or paranormal manifestations. This is the case of poltergeist manifestations, levitation of objects or persons, et cetera, and they come under the general name in parapsychology known as psycho-kinesis (PK). Our enquiry, however, will be restricted to the cognitive aspect of these powers, that is, to extrasensory perception.

## 2 Motivation and Aims of the Study

Our interest and curiosity in this research was awakened by our prior study of the phenomenon of witchcraft, particularly by the definition of witches as,

those that possess the inherent, psychic power to send out their spirits invisibly, or through lower creatures, to harm others or do havoc to other persons.<sup>2</sup>

And a further definition says,

a witch, according to the Ibibios (of Nigeria), is a man or woman who possesses an inherent preternatural malignant power that enables him or her to see non-corporeal things like spirits, see beyond the limits of time and space, transform himself and other things into anything desired, fly in the air with a broom stick or ride on cobwebs, pass through solids, abandon his body in a non-material shape at

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<sup>2</sup>J. Omosade Awolalu, and P. Adejumo Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: Onibonje Press and Book Industries Nig., Ltd., 1979, p. 247.

night, do harm to people at a distance without any physical contact.<sup>3</sup>

From the above definitions, one could gather that those powers enable them to do whatever harm they intend to do, and that, even at a distance. Moreover, the fact that they are alleged to be capable of *seeing* beyond the limits of space and time, raised big epistemological questions in our minds. Such questions include: How could a human being see beyond space and time? What type of seeing is implied here? How is action at a distance possible? In a word, what type of phenomenon is actually involved in this type of belief, if at all it is a veritable belief?

Our first reaction to such beliefs was that they reflect people's illusory way of thinking, or at best, an exaggerated mode of explaining away people's fantasies and illusions. But then we decided to heed the words of A.G.A. Bello who advised that

philosophers had better take the evidence of yogis, prophets, mystics, witches, etc., more seriously. For if the sorts of things they claim happen really do, it may require more or less radical changes in our conceptual framework. There is of course need for scepticism, since fraud and charlatanism abound, especially concerning phenomena which are not amenable to easy verification or falsification, observation or experiment. It would be naive to think that yogies, prophets, witches, etc., throughout history have been talking trash; or self-conceited.<sup>4</sup>

Further research however, revealed to us that the said phenomenon of witchcraft is just an aspect of the extraordinary powers of the human mind.

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<sup>3</sup> Gaul P. Okon, *The Phenomenon of Witchcraft Among the Ibibio People of Nigeria*, Doctoral Dissertation, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana. Rome: 1984. p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> A.G.A. Bello, Reviewer, "Individuality and Reincarnation" by M.M. Agrawal in *Philosophy and Social Action*, Vol. V11, No. 2, April-June, 1981. p. 46.

We therefore thought it a worthwhile venture to look into those powers, so that we may perhaps be able to discover if not all, but at least some, of their manner of operation. It is our belief that such a venture will contribute to a better and deeper understanding of the nature of man, over and above the fundamental question of the possibility of knowledge without the aid of the known senses, or the type of knowledge that is oblivious of space-time limitations.

It has been the view of the empirically, and scientifically minded, that is, those for whom all reality including those of mind - thought and volition - have strictly empirical explanation, that such extraordinary manifestations as are attributed to witches and the like, are nothing but superstition or magic, and so they are irrational. Besides, the positivistic trend in philosophy claim that we should not qualify anything as knowledge except that which is given to us through sense-experience. Consequently, for both lines of thought, there is no metaphysical reality strictly speaking. If it happens then that there are actually some extraordinary powers of the mind, and that these powers really have the effects such as are alleged in the phenomenon of witchcraft, it may help to highlight the fact that reality is after all more than material; and that man is more than his bodily aspect.

Having established the fact that the mind of man comprises different faculties or powers, with special reference to the psychic powers, we intend to examine the modalities of the operations of those powers so as to discover the ways in which they could be meaningfully employed. The popular belief that witchcraft is possible because of man's alliance with the devil,<sup>5</sup> that is, that it is occult in nature, or that it is superstitious, will lead us into the clarification of the occult, magical and natural/normal uses of psychic powers. In other words, it is our hope to examine some of the different applications of psychic powers. This we believe, will help not only to clarify the preconceived, negative notions about psychic powers - that they are influences from the spirits of the dead, the demons or simply fraudulent

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Geoffrey Parrinder. *Witchcraft: European and African*, London: Faber and Faber. 1963. p. 11.

displays; but also to stir up positive thinking and evaluation of those powers.

The knowledge of the various ways the powers could be used will help us to expose some of the manipulative and strictly occult uses to which they could be applied. It is our belief that this will enable people to be on their guard against tricksters and agents of the devil, as well as enable them appreciate and benefit from the genuine services of those in whom the powers are operative. No era in history needed such knowledge more than this our present age with all its sophistication, affluence, disillusionment and quest for marvels.

We also hope that the work may be capable of opening the vista of dialogue between philosophy and parapsychology, an area of co-operation that is very little explored yet.

### 3 Limits of the Study

The phenomenon described as extra-sensory, because it is not within the reach of the field of physical observation, will, no doubt, present a lot of problems or limitations. Problems in the sense that for the empirically oriented mind, the discussions will be nothing less than non-sensical, or at best a futile venture, since reality and whatever explanation that could be offered for it could not go beyond the material, verifiable level. But for the metaphysically oriented mind, such discussions could make interesting adventure. This is because enquiry into the immaterial aspect of reality is usually more involving and problematic, but at the same time more exhilarating. Hence it becomes a Herculean task trying to present the discussion in a way that may make some sense to people of the former mentality.

The limitations of the human element, that is, a discussion by the human intelligence, which, by the fact of its human nature is limited, will equally present themselves. Hence we are not guaranteeing a conclusive and

exhaustive presentation, but will try to make an inquisitive excursus into the seemingly absurd. After all, Bertrand Russell said,

philosophy, if it cannot answer so many questions as we could wish, has at least the power of asking questions which increase the interest of the world, and show the strangeness and wonder lying just below the surface even in the commonest type of daily life.<sup>6</sup>

If, therefore, we succeed in at least agitating many or some minds to further debate, we will have achieved part of our aim.

It should be borne in mind also that our research will be limited to the actions of incarnate beings, that is, those of living, human beings, and not to those of discarnate ones like the believed apparitions or manifestations of the dead to the living. And as the discussion will centre on the activities of the immaterial component of man, there will be the problem of adequate choice of words that will convey the essential explanation of psychic phenomena and manifestations. However, we hope that parapsychology will supply the proper terminology for them.

### 4 Methodology

The method of research will be both expository, analytical and comparative. It will be expository and analytical for the fact that the nature and processes of the two main phenomena that are involved, that is, human knowledge and psychic abilities, especially psychic cognition, should as much as possible be exposed and critically examined. And for a better comprehension and appreciation of psychic phenomenon, the magical and the esoteric phenomena which are pseudo-psychic, but are often presented and mistaken as psychic, should also be equally exposed. Only after this is done, will the comparative process between the sensory and paranormal or psychic

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<sup>6</sup> Bertrand Russell. *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1980. p. 6.

ways of knowing be initiated. This will eventually help us to determine the epistemological status, if any, of psychic cognition.

## 5 Sources

The sources, as would be expected, are as varied as the different aspects of the research demand. We have carefully selected works on the general theory of knowledge, philosophy in general, and philosophy of mind in particular. Besides, works on parapsychology or psychical research have been extensively consulted. But given the large quantity of literature available on the subject, we have restricted ourselves to the most salient and critical, written by both parapsychologists and interested enquirers.

We started with the general literature on parapsychology, to specific writings of Joseph Banks Rhine, especially the books in which he set out his programme and methods of research, as well as the preliminary results of his work with the Duke University group.

Among the general works is the *Handbook of Parapsychology*, which was edited by Benjamin B. Wolman, with Laura A. Dale, Gertrude R. Schmeidler, and Montague Ullman as associate editors. The book is a collection of essays comprising the history, development, methods of research, and all the various aspects of study on psychical phenomena made so far in psychical research from the early mesmeric period till the 70s. It equally treats the controversy that has surrounded the discipline of parapsychology from the time the struggle to give it a scientific status started. Besides, the place of parapsychology among other human and scientific disciplines like religion, philosophy, psychology, medicine, biology, et cetera, and the relationship between them are also treated in that book. Another book that equals this one in terms of information and critical character is *The Elusive Science, Origins of Experimental Psychical Research*, by Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh. The Rhines themselves (Joseph and his wife I. ouisa) wrote an "Afterword" in this book.

The most important of Rhine's introductory works is his monograph, *Extra-Sensory Perception*, which was first published in 1934, but later reprinted in 1964. In this book, Rhine analysed the general paranormal physical phenomena of psycho-kinesis (PK), before concentrating on the cognitive or subjective phenomena of telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition, the phenomena the study of which are to occupy him in the whole of his psychical career. In it also, he critically reviewed all prior experimental efforts made so far in parapsychology by his predecessors, as well as the existing literature on mental phenomena. After this he presented his and the Duke group's experimental methods and the results they achieved.

A perfected version of this monograph is found in another work, *Extra-sensory Perception After Sixty Years: A Critical Appraisal of the Research in Extra-sensory Perception*, co-authored by J.B. Rhine, J.G. Pratt and others, originally published in 1940, and reprinted in 1966. All the appraisals and criticisms met by the first book were carefully taken into consideration in this one.

We have also consulted some books of references like *The Great Books, the Great Psychologists*, as well as philosophical and parapsychological journals, besides other books of general interest like books on the occult and the magical.

## 6 Division of the Work

The work consists of five chapters, besides the general introduction and conclusion. Included as part of the research results are three appendices made up of the results of two interviews we conducted, and a personal testimony of a psychic with regard to the reality of psychic faculty.

Chapter one, which is a survey of the general notion of knowledge and the subject of knowledge, consists of two sections, A and B. In section A, we tried a definition of knowledge by contrasting it with belief, as well as an examination of the different kinds of knowledge. Various theories of the

ways of knowing be initiated. This will eventually help us to determine the epistemological status, if any, of psychic cognition.

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Chapter one, which is a survey of the general notion of knowledge and the subject of knowledge, consists of two sections, A and B. In section A, we tried a definition of knowledge by contrasting it with belief, as well as an examination of the different kinds of knowledge. Various theories of the

truth-value of knowledge are also treated so as to determine or establish when claims to knowledge could be justified. Section B is an exposition of man, the subject that knows, and his knowing faculty, the mind or intellect.

Chapter two is on Extra-sensory Perception and the historical survey of the development of the discipline known as parapsychology from the 1776 Mesmeric period to the present day. In order to avoid the confusion that may arise from equating any extra-ordinary manifestation with genuine extra-sensory phenomenon, we tried to distinguish the magical/occult phenomena which are based on the manipulation of natural forces, from the natural psychic manifestations.

Because our research is based on the studies of Joseph Banks Rhine and his Duke University group, we devoted the third chapter to the examination of those studies. We looked into some details of their research efforts and results on the cognitive or subjective phenomena that are strictly referred to as extra-sensory phenomena, such as the phenomena of telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition.

In chapter four, we examined psychic faculty as an integral part of human nature. This was done by first determining the nature and functions of psychic faculty. As part of man's intellectual faculty, it is seen to function within the framework of the psyche, by obeying some psychological laws of suggestion and auto-suggestion. The relationship between the sensory and extra-sensory functions of the intellectual faculty was also treated in this chapter.

Chapter five is a re-appraisal of psychic research which starts from its status as a controversial enterprise, to some of its implications and values. Psychical research is seen to have some implications not only for philosophy with regard to the understanding of man and his nature, but also for ethics or morality. In effect, the development and utilisation of the psychic faculty could be either for good or for evil, although it is naturally meant for good use. The question of whether or not extra-sensory perception is human knowledge is not left out in this chapter. Before concluding the chapter we

## CHAPTER 1

### HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

#### Introduction

Aristotle, in his book *Metaphysics*, tells us that all men, by nature, desire to know; which is the sign of their love for sensations; in fact even if they (the sensations) are not useful, they are desired for their sake, especially those of sight. Since not only for acting, but also even if we do not intend to accomplish any act, we still prefer seeing, I should say, to every other form of feeling. Just for the main reason that, among the sensations, it makes us to know things and reveals to us a lot of differences.<sup>1</sup>

That man by nature desires to know is an incontestable truth, seeing that his primary preoccupation right from the cradle of his existence, is to comprehend both himself and the world in which he, either by design or by chance, has found himself. The effect of this his inquisitiveness is evident in the intellectual and technical progress he has made so far and, is still making, in the fields of Arts and Sciences, in his bid to conquer and subdue the world as well as improve on the quality of his overall life.

Although this urge has been part of man's nature, and the idea and experience of knowing have been his inseparable companions, the express critical reflection on the nature and processes of knowing did not receive particular attention in the history of philosophy until the modern period. In other words, the question of knowledge and how we know was subsumed in psychology and logic in the ancient and medieval periods, but it acquired an autonomous and pre-eminent status in the modern period, with specific attention on man's faculty of knowledge. This implies that reflection on reality which is the object of philosophy could not make much sense without reflection on the subject that confronts reality and his faculties. The

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. 1, 1, 980a, 20-25.

importance of knowledge about knowledge stems from the fact that man comes to understand himself better by understanding the nature and reliability of his knowing or intellectual powers. This seems to be a very important aspect of knowledge because on it depends the reliability of what man could claim to know in reality. It therefore became a duty incumbent on man, which he embraced wholeheartedly, to elucidate the meaning, scope, and processes of knowing, in order to guarantee the truth of his reflection on reality.

In this preliminary chapter therefore, the attention should be directed to the concept "Knowledge" in order to establish its nature, kinds and theories of its Truth-Value already propounded by philosophers on it. Besides, the subject of knowledge, man, and the instruments he utilises in the acquisition of knowledge, that is, his mind will also be examined. Hence the chapter is divided into two Sections, A and B, relating to the two points under consideration : Knowledge and the Subject that knows. In section A, we shall try a definition of knowledge as well as examine the different types of knowledge, while section B will be devoted to the examination of man as the subject who knows, and to his knowing faculties.

## Section A

### 1.A.1 Knowledge: A Definition - Knowledge and Belief Contrasted.

The word "knowledge" or the verb "to know" is one of the most difficult and ambiguous to define. This, we think, is because the act of knowing is not a purely empirical act, and it is an act that involves a human person in his bodily and spiritual nature. Moreover, knowing, as an act could only be described through its effects rather than be defined. Because of the difficulty inherent in proffering a definition of knowledge, some philosophers prefer to contrast it with belief. According to H.A. Pritchard, knowledge is, in essence, indefinable and it differs essentially from belief, because to know is not to have a kind of belief, neither can belief, no matter how convincing, become knowledge. For belief to be reliable, it has to be based on

knowledge, that is, one has to believe only what one knows. And to claim to know something implies being in a state of mind which is infallible.<sup>2</sup>

This distinction is for him self-evident on the grounds of personal knowledge, that is, he believes that people clearly recognise when their act is that of knowing or believing. However, this is an assertion that ordinary common sense will find absurd. Epistemologically, to say that no belief will ever turn out to be knowledge is to postulate that beliefs could neither be true nor false which is not the case. One's belief is true if what one believes in is real and false if what one believes in is an illusion or a fantasy. Belief or knowledge claims could be supported either by our perceptual or empirical experiences which could be direct experiences or through testimony, but which are however good reasons for believing or knowing. This means that whether as belief or as knowledge, it must be true or rational. Our perceptual experiences are derived from reality and not from fantasies or illusions, that is, they have their foundation in reality.

Knowledge is related to belief in the sense that it (knowledge) entails belief. We, at the same time, know and believe what we know. Though belief is not knowledge, some beliefs may be based on some prior knowledge. For example, the belief that fire burns is usually based on prior experience either directly or indirectly of fire. To distinguish belief from knowledge demands some philosophical reflection, and so introspection alone or personal knowledge is not enough.

Besides, Pritchard is making the sense of certainty, which is closely connected to knowledge, to depend solely on the subject in his "special state of mind which is infallible". But even experience teaches us that man's subjective mental states are liable to change. For example, it may happen that I was, at one time, convinced of knowing that a particular road is shorter to my destination than the alternative, only to discover later that I was wrong. This points to the fact that knowledge is not just a question of mental attitude.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H.A. Pritchard, "Knowing and Believing" in A.P. Griffiths. (ed.). *Knowledge and Belief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1967. pp. 2 & 63.

A. J. Ayer is also of the view that any claim to know should not be based on the knower's mental state alone but must take into account the truth of the statement itself. To be convinced that something is true does not automatically make it true.

The statement is true if, and only if, what it states is so, or, in other words, if the situation which it describes is as it describes it. And whether the situation really is as it is described is not to be decided merely by examining the attitude which any one who considers the statement has towards it, not even the person who considers it knows it to be true.<sup>3</sup>

It has to be clearly stated therefore, that the certainty of knowledge needs an object of knowledge on which it will be justifiably grounded. Moreover, knowledge or cognitive consciousness is always of something, hence the two poles in the act of knowing - the subject that knows, and the object that is known must be adequately taken into consideration. Besides, although belief "depends on knowledge for the evidence which supports it", the fact remains that there are some beliefs that are very strongly upheld, and exercise enormous influence on the believer's life without their having any supportive justification from knowledge as such. Whatever the case may be, knowledge cannot be confounded with belief. Belief is, in itself, a kind of knowledge if it is based on reality and not just on mere opinion or speculation as we have mentioned earlier on.

In our attempt to proffer a description rather than a definition of the concept 'knowledge' or better the verb 'to know', we would choose to first of all distinguish the two senses inherent in it. In the first sense, the verb 'to know' has the connotation of awareness; while in the second sense, the connotation is that of ability. While the phrase 'knowing that' represents the former, the phrase 'knowing how' stands for the latter. In the first case, we may know that something is the case, or that something is what it is or

<sup>3</sup> A. J. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1980, p. 19.

appears to be, or that something is what it is said to be; in other words, we are aware of those facts. In the second case, we may know how to cook, play the piano, swim, et cetera, that is, we are capable of doing such things as enumerated above. For the purpose of this work, our attention will be concentrated on the first sense of the verb, which is 'knowing' as awareness.

## 1.A.2 Kinds of Knowledge

Knowledge as earlier on stated is always knowledge of something. That something could either be things - physical and non-physical, or truths about things. Our knowledge of non-physical things most of the time however involves analogy. In this sub-section, it behoves us to examine different possible ways, according to philosophers, through which knowledge could be acquired.

### 1.A.2.1 Knowledge by Acquaintance

Knowledge by acquaintance is the knowledge we acquire through direct and immediate awareness of the sense-data of an object of knowledge, not the real physical object, according to this theory. When I am acquainted with the sense-data which constitute the external appearance of the pen with which I am writing here and now, for example, I am acquainted with the pen as hard, black in colour and of a certain length, but not the pen as an object. Here begins the problem with this empiricist view of knowledge by acquaintance. How could one claim to be aware of something without knowing that it is of a certain kind? We choose to suspend our observations till the end of the section.

Not only by sense-data, but also by memory do we acquire knowledge by acquaintance. Through acquaintance by memory, we remember, know and are in contact with our past. According to Bertrand Russell, when we remember our past experiences, either things we had seen, heard, touched, or things that had made some impressions on us in one way

or another, we are always aware of what they are. In other words, we become acquainted with our past experiences through our memory.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to memory, we also have acquaintance by introspection, in which case we become aware of being aware of things. By introspection, we are conscious of the fact that we are the subject of our conscious activities. In other words, we are acquainted with our activities as ours and not as someone else's. Russell made the knowledge of man's emotions depend on acquaintance by introspection. "This kind of acquaintance, which may be called self-consciousness, is the source of all our knowledge of mental things".<sup>5</sup>

Sensible qualities like whiteness, hardness, et cetera, which are closely found in the particular objects and are abstractable therefrom are also known by acquaintance. These qualities are the abstract universals which form part and parcel of our knowledge.

There are a lot of puzzles to be solved with regard to this kind of knowledge. When we talk of knowledge by acquaintance through sense-data, are we not talking of simple sensation? Could there be knowledge strictly speaking on the level of mere sensation? Sensation being a characteristic of all living organisms, could we say that animals and plants equally acquire knowledge by acquaintance? Mere sensation is just the starting-point of the process of sensitive knowledge which culminates in the assimilation of the sensible form by the perceiver - an immanent activity - at which point he is said to have acquired the knowledge of the object. Moreover, the nature and process of this so-construed "direct and immediate awareness" seem to be the secret reserve of he who knows by acquaintance. Knowledge by acquaintance, as it is propounded here, seems to make knowledge an exclusively personal affair.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980, p.26.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

### 1.A.2.2 Knowledge by Description

Physical objects like the real pen with which I am writing now are known by description; as also individuals and places not previously seen. Description therefore is of the concrete, particular or definite existent in question, and this is "definite" not "ambiguous" definition. Definition could be definite or ambiguous depending on whether the object is described with a definite or indefinite article "the" or "a". We know something by definition without having been acquainted with it, that is, we may know that there is something called 'the flying eagle' or somebody called 'Theodore' or some place called 'Timbuktu' with some properties pertaining specifically to them without having seen them or been there. We use words - particulars (proper names) and universals (common names) - with which we are already acquainted to describe things we are not yet acquainted with.

We shall say that an object is 'known by description' when we know that it is 'the-so-and-so'; that is, when we know that there is one object, and no more, having a certain property; and it will generally be implied that we do not have knowledge of the same object by acquaintance.<sup>6</sup>

This type of knowledge is based on knowledge of some truths, that is, the words with which we have been acquainted with. In other words, any proposition we make about any physical object, present or absent, must be made up of the words with which we have been acquainted.

The proponents of this kind of knowledge, Russell for example, see it as an antidote to the privatisation of knowledge, that is, allowing knowledge to be just a matter of one's private experience as in the case of knowledge by acquaintance. Description allows for the knowledge of both experienced and the not-yet-experienced things and facts, since it utilises words alone. The implication of this is that one can claim to know even imaginary and non-existent things provided that one has the proper words with which to describe them, and provided the description belongs to them and not to other

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

things. Does this not seem absurd even from the common person's notion of knowledge?

However attractive these kinds of knowledge (Knowledge by Acquaintance and by Description) may appear, the fact still remains that they are both tied up to classical empiricism and phenomenalism for which knowledge is a matter of successive impressions and ideas, or rather patterns in our minds, without reference to actual, existing material objects; basing knowledge on the data of immediate subjective experience.

### 1.A.2.3 Intuitive Knowledge

Knowledge is intuitive when it is an immediate grasp of the object of knowledge. Another name for it is insight. In intuition,

...the knowledge arises either from the direct contact of a power with its object or the direct intellectual grasp of a proposition whose terms are seen to be necessarily related.<sup>7</sup>

Intuitive knowledge therefore has as its objects certain concepts like that of existence, self-evident necessary truths and basic contingent statements derived from deduction. This is the type of knowledge which Henri Bergson would describe as "entering into the object". S.E. Frost interpreting this assertion writes that for Bergson,

to know the universe in its fullness, one must live in it and apprehend it by "intuition". A man cannot know a river by merely sitting on its banks; he must jump into it and swim with its currents. We must immerse ourselves in the universe to understand it.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> William A. Wallace. O.P., *The Elements of Philosophy: A Compendium for Philosophers and Theologians*. New York: Alba House, 1977. p.112.

<sup>8</sup> S.E. Frost, Jr., Ph.D. D., *Basic Teachings of the Great Philosophers*. Revised Edition. New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1989. p. 51.

Many modern philosophers regard intuition as the most certain means of acquiring knowledge since it has nothing to do with the senses as its doorway to knowledge. It is the type of knowledge that is immediate and not discursive, that is, non-inferential. Because of the non-inferential nature of intuition, it is taken to refer to statements about the individual's psychological states. It is only the individual concerned who has a privileged access to these states. Can this refer to the Augustinian theory of illumination, that which St. Augustine described as 'inward vision'?<sup>9</sup> Intuition as immediateness of vision is the function of the human intellect.

If intuitive knowledge is immediate, an insight, and non-inferential, how then can it be validated since it is in essence personal; the mind grasping its object without any sensory mediation? In other words, can doubts about it, in any way be resolved? The above mentioned perplexities notwithstanding, intuition has been of great advantage to many great people in literary, scientific, political, and especially artistic spheres. It is, we believe, one of the pointers to the fact that the human intellect can grasp essential truths without aid from the senses, and hence to its spiritual nature.

### 1.A.2.4 Sensitive Knowledge

As the name implies, this is the knowledge acquired through the senses which are both external and internal. The external senses are those of sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste; with their respective organs of eyes, nose, nerve-endings, ear and tongue. Each of them specifically adapted to their particular objects or sensibles that affect them. That is to say, the sensible of smell affects the nose and no other sense organ, so also is sound for the ear, and so on. At this stage, we are only in the area of simple sensation. Sensations are caused by stimuli outside our bodies and so they are passive experiences. This means that the external senses, being adapted to various sensible qualities, have no choice but to be affected by their respective sensibles. According to Etienne Gilson, sensation is the

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by Henry Chadwick, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. p.209.

apprehension of the sensible qualities of colour, odour, taste, sound, et cetera, which affect our sense organs.<sup>10</sup>

Besides the five external senses, there are also four internal senses, namely, the central or common sense, imagination, estimative power and memory. These are so named because of the different functions they perform in the co-ordination of sensations before they qualify as perceptions, and hence as knowledge. While the external senses are passive as to the reception of sensations, these internal senses are active as to the co-ordination of sensation. This means that it behoves the internal senses to make conscious and distinguish between sensations; to store up the impressions and reproduce them later even in a fantastic way; interpreting the impressions as to their functional meaning; that is, their usefulness or otherwise; and finally storing up these experiences to recall them when the need arises; and these in the order in which they are enumerated. In other words,

common sense gathers and unifies the data which the external senses perceive separately,... The fantasy" (imagination) "conserves the data gathered by the common sense and reproduces it even when the objects are absent, and can also reassemble them in a manner different from how they are found in reality. ... The memory reposes to the consciousness data obtained in the past, conserving their temporal connotation: memory is the faculty of the past, ... The instinct or estimative gathers things under the aspect of utility, or under harm or risk.<sup>11</sup>

Man acquires knowledge of the concrete qualities of individual material, physical objects which are the formal signs through which the objects themselves are known. In other words, the sensations we receive

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Etienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*, Translated by Mark A. Wauch, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986, p.171.

<sup>11</sup> Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology. Man: An Impossible Project?* Rome: Urbaniana University Press, Reprinted, 1991, p. 55.

from external objects, through the external senses, directly describe our perception of objective phenomena, by which we could assert that we have seen such and such a thing, for example, in the case of seeing. The knowledge we acquire through the senses however, is still imperfect and partial since it is the knowledge not of the essence or the real nature of things, but of their particular qualities.

#### 1.A.2.5 Intellectual Knowledge

Although we acquire authoritative knowledge of particulars through the senses, the acquisition of what Aristotle refers to as wisdom or the 'why' of things demands a higher faculty.<sup>12</sup> And this faculty is the intellect through which we acquire intellectual knowledge of the why of things. The intellect exhibits two operations in the act of knowing: firstly, that of grasping the form of its object; and secondly, that of knowing itself as that which knows - self-consciousness. In intellection, the universal aspect of the objects are known by the process called abstraction.

To abstract means that the human intellect has the capacity to bring the whole infra-human, sensible cosmos from the grade of sensible existence to the grade of intelligible existence, that is, to the grade and mode of existence of the intellect which abstracts. ... Here lies the primordial creative power of the human mind, that spiritualizing force so aptly termed by St. Thomas Aquinas as active, operative, creative intellect (*intellectus agens*).<sup>13</sup>

This statement from Bogliolo summarises both the working and the nature of the human intellect. The intellect in knowing explores the realm of the completely immaterial field of forms, itself being an immaterial faculty or entity.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1, 981b, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Louis Bogliolo, *Philosophical Anthropology*, vol. 1. Shillong-India: Sacred Heart Theological College, 1984, p.49.

The intellect has as its object the intelligible just as the senses have the sensible as their objects. These intelligibles are abstracted by the agent intellect from the material already supplied by the senses, or from experiences and this is what classical philosophy calls the "quiddity" or the "whatness" of the objects. This is the formal object of the intellect. The intelligible species having been abstracted, it is impressed on the passive intellect, thereby informing it and resulting in the knowledge of the object. There exists here an intentional relation between the intellect and the being of the known object. D.W. Hamlyn tells us that according to Thomistic Epistemology, the intellect is distinguished as active and passive according to the mechanism of concept formation. He writes:

The active intellect abstracts the universal or species from the phantasma, and this is imposed upon the passive intellect as a concept, which is then verbalized. Concepts thus exist only as the result of an abstraction of the universal aspects of things, ....<sup>14</sup>

In effect, the active intellect supplies the passive intellect with the materials - the concepts - for thinking: knowing and thinking being the discriminating capacities of the human intellect. Formation of concepts is the specific function of the intellect in this type of knowledge. While the senses are concerned with particularities, the intellect is concerned with universalities.

### 1.A.3 Some Theories of the Truth - Value of Knowledge

The question of justification and hence of the truth-value of knowledge is an indispensable element for any claim to know to pass as such. And as mentioned earlier on, this is one of the aims or duties of the discipline we refer to as Epistemology. Since according to D.W. Hamlyn, knowledge embodies two important characteristics, namely, that what a person claims to know should be actually true, and that the person has good

<sup>14</sup>D. W. Hamlyn, "Epistemology, History of" in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. 3. London & New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press. 1967, p.15.

reasons for believing that what he knows is true.<sup>15</sup> That means that what one claims to know must be an objective reality, and he must be in a position to know it. There arises the need to find out in what the truth of both the object of knowledge and our claims to knowledge consists. It is therefore necessary to examine some of the basic theories of justification which will serve as our paradigm for consenting or otherwise, an epistemological status to extra-sensory perception (ESP).

In their efforts to justify claims to knowledge, philosophers of different intellectual orientations have propounded varied theories such as: The Rationalist-Idealist, the Pragmatistic, the Coherence, the Correspondence and the Realist-Adequation (*Adaequatio*) theories of the Truth-Value of Knowledge. It should be noted at the onset, that for a theory to be reliable, if it is not to lead us to scepticism, it should be based on something other than thought itself. In other words, it should be grounded in objective reality since knowledge consists in a relationship of thought to reality. Our preoccupation in the ensuing sections is to determine how the above theories agree or otherwise to this basic conception of knowledge.

#### 1.A.3.1 The Rationalist-Idealist Theory

According to this theory, something is true if it can be conceived clearly and distinctly by the mind; and if its opposite cannot be conceived by the knower. René Descartes tells us that

... it is certain we will never admit falsity for truth, so long as we judge only of that which we clearly and distinctively perceive; because, as God is no deceiver, the faculty of knowledge which He has given us cannot be fallacious, ..., the minds of all have been so impressed by nature as spontaneously to assent to whatever is clearly perceived, and to experience an impossibility to doubt of its truth.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>D.W. Hamlyn, *Sensation and Perception*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963, p.193.

<sup>16</sup>René Descartes. *A Discourse on Method: Meditations and Principles*, London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., Reissued. 1992, p. 181.

For the rationalists, the truth of a proposition depends entirely on the mind that conceives it; thus making truth subjective. The consequence of such a theory especially on the ethical sphere, cannot be over-estimated. The power of the mind to conceive clearly and distinctly is never disputed, but the mind conceives either self-evident truths or the nature of things, the truth of which will eventually be referred to something outside the mind. Secondly, the truth of judgements are known because they qualify to be necessarily true, that is, the judgements, respecting the consistency of the concepts with which they are enunciated, correspond with the unity of being upon which they are enunciated, and not because their opposites cannot be known. Aquinas testifies to the fact that the knowledge of both something and its opposite is not only possible but also unavoidable. "... knowing a form is compatible with knowing the forms that are incompatible with it; indeed knowing a thing entails knowing its contrary".<sup>17</sup>

### 1.A.3.2 The Pragmatistic Theory

The pragmatists' interest as centred on the practical and the useful also colours their notion of truth. Not only are true propositions to serve our practical purposes, but they should also be liable to verification. William James, an American pragmatist philosopher opined that the practical value of ideas depends primarily on the practical importance of their objects. Although these objects are not always important to us, that is, we do not need them always, nevertheless there is need for us to have a general stock of their ideas, which are regarded as 'extra truths', in case situations arise when they would be needed. These 'extra truths' should be stored up in our memories for eventual use. So much as we use them, so much does our belief in them grows more active. So an idea is 'true because it is useful' and 'useful because it is true'. It is true because it could be verified and useful because this verification is achieved in experience.<sup>18</sup> James is understood to mean that truth is that of ideas which are ideas of objects that

<sup>17</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1, q.76, a.6.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. William James, *Pragmatism, A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, New York: Longman's, Green and Co., 1928, pp. 203 - 4.

are judged to be of practical value to us. The accumulation of such ideas in our memory makes the stock of our 'extra truths'. And the more we draw from our stock of these ideas and utilise them, the more our confidence in them is being strengthened. Consequently, the verification of the truth-value of these ideas depends on the practical function they perform for us in our daily experiences and exigencies.

The fruitful or useful consequences of any idea or proposition are the criteria for guaranteeing its truth-value; in which case, there is no ontological foundation of truth. This means that the object or reality as it is does not matter much but just its idea does, and such an idea is true only if the object which it stands for or represents is of practical value. And the practical value of such an object depends on the subject who judges it so. In which case, an idea that is of practical value to me may or may not be of practical value to another person. The theory therefore exalts 'doing or having' at the expense of 'being'. My refusal or inability to allow a true idea affect or make meaning in my life, that is, 'work', for instance, renders the idea untrue. It seems this is what the pragmatists want us to understand and believe, hence relativising the truth-value of ideas, and consequently of the objects that the ideas represent. 'To be true' therefore is equivalent as 'to be useful'.

However, the pragmatists recognise as absolute and unconditional truth, those relations among mental ideas in so far as they are principles or definitions; for example, '2x2 = 4, or white is different from black'. They are unconditional because they eternally apply to individuals of their kind. These are logical and mathematical principles.

### 1.A.3.3 The Coherence Theory

This theory teaches that a proposition is true if, and only if, it is consistent within a system of other propositions; that is, if it is coherent or agrees with others in the same system by their logical connection. In other words, the truth of any proposition or statement depends on its being logically deducible from the others in the same system.

The Coherence theory of truth was propounded by the rationalist metaphysicians like Leibniz, Hegel, Bradley; and the logical positivists like Hempel and Neurath, who found in mathematical and scientific methods, a bedrock for all matters relating to reality. Theirs is an analytic method whereby the truth of any statement depends on its internal relation within a system. The theory, according to its proponents, is based on the a priori reasoning of mathematics and metaphysics.

This theory, no doubt, has a lot of implications for philosophy in general, and for the theory of knowledge in particular. In the first place, it gives us only the criterion of the truth or falsity of statements, that is, the reason for saying that they are true or false. This means that once we could verify that a statement coheres with other statements within the system, then it is true, otherwise it is false. This is a mere criterion for truth, according to coherentists, which does not tell us anything about truth itself. The question, "what is truth?" could not be answered from this point of view. Even this criterion contains within itself an inherent contradiction. To justify the truth of a statement in terms of another statement presupposes that the later statement is judged to be independently true, otherwise it could not validate the former. Secondly, it takes no cognisance of the fact that the truth of statements could be known from the meanings of the words that compose them. This is true of analytical statements which their truth-value depends on the analysis of the meaning of the concepts that compose them. Such statements like: "the whole is greater than the parts"; and the a priori mathematical statements which are derived from axioms, for example, " $5 \times 5 = 25$ ". The truth-value of such statement depends on the meaning of the concepts 'whole' and 'parts' in the former, and '5, multiplication sign and 25' in the latter. There is a relation between meaning and truth which has not been recognised by the coherentists. Do the proponents of this theory want us to believe that two or more false statements, by the mere fact of their coherence, automatically become true? Moreover, statements could be true irrespective of their being recognised as true or not. This means that the truth-value of statements does not necessarily depend on the subject, just as the truth of the existence of reality does not depend on whether the subject recognises that it exists or not. Coherence according to this theory, is always with other statements and not with facts or realities of experience. For

example, when someone makes an empirical statement 'it is raining', and someone else looks out of the window to verify whether it is actually raining or not, the looking out, according to the coherentists, is taken to be a judgement or another statement. Hence, it is not the fact of the actual rain that is taken into consideration. In which case, it has nothing to do at all with reality as such.

#### 1.A.3.4 The Correspondence Theory

In order for a belief to be true, it must correspond to facts about things outside the belief itself. According to Bertrand Russell, "... truth consists in some form of correspondence between belief and fact", for "In every act of judgement there is a mind which judges, and there are terms concerning which it judges"<sup>19</sup> This is the focal point upon which this theory is based.

It is a theory that reckons with the act of judging by human mind. Judgement as an active synthesising and interpreting of different and diverse sensible and intellectual apprehensions, could either be true or false depending on whether or not the intellect is alert to all the data it received, and all the internal processes that go into the making of the synthesis and interpretation of the data. If the judgement corresponds to the data, then it is said to be true, otherwise it is false.

From the above exposition therefore, it becomes more appropriate to say that propositions, or better, judgements, rather than beliefs are better instruments for the criteria of truth. This is because, not everything that people claim to believe corresponds to concrete facts. Facts are taken to be 'states of affairs' or 'what actually is the case'; as the facts of the objective world and of first principles which exist independently of the knowing individual. This theory seems to reiterate or mirror the Aristotelian/Thomistic teaching that truth is 'adaequatio rei ad intellectum - the correspondence of the thing to the intellect'. But it could be and has been susceptible to misinterpretations and manipulations in the hands of

<sup>19</sup> Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 70 & 73.

rationalists and phenomenologists with their notion of intentionality. Hence the need to examine the Realists' theory of the Truth-Value of Knowledge.

### 1.A.3.5 The Realist/Adequation Theory

As with the forementioned theories, the principal concern of this theory is to determine in what true knowledge consists. Its main point of departure is the fact that the act of knowing involves the whole being of man: body and soul; with their respective faculties - the senses and the intellect. Although sensitive knowledge, properly called, is acquired through the senses, both external and internal; purely human knowledge goes beyond the senses to the intellect, by virtue of which knowledge becomes a spiritual act.

The intellect, in the process of knowing, exhibits two operations: that of abstracting the universal form or essence from the phantasma already supplied by the senses; and that of being conscious of itself as that which abstracts. The first of the operations could be taken to be first reflection - whereby the intellect becomes conscious of the being of reality; and the second as second reflection - whereby it becomes conscious of itself as the actor: self-consciousness. Within the framework of these operations of the intellect, enters the notion of intentionality of true human knowledge; hence the Realists' - Aristotelian/Thomistic - view that the intellectual act is an intentional act. In the intentional relation of the subject and the object of knowledge hinges the truth-value of knowledge.

What characterizes intentional relation ... is the relation of adequation (self-assimilation) of the intellectual act with the being of the known thing, a relation which constitutes the truth of the concept and the enunciation (judgement) produced by the intellect through its double operation (apprehension of the essence and the formulation of judgement.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Gianfranco Basti, *Filosofia dell'Uomo*, Bologna: PDUL, Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 1995, p. 204.

These processes have been discussed on our section on 'Intellective Knowledge'.

It is appropriate and useful at this point, for the sake of clarity, to distinguish between the two senses of intentionality as used by the philosophers of the realist orientation on the one hand, and those of the phenomenological orientation on the other hand. In the realist sense, intentionality is the act which is directed towards existing things. The autonomy of the act and the object is always respected. Both knowing and thinking are intentional acts because they are always directed towards something. In the phenomenological sense, on the other hand, intentionality is an act which is directed towards an objective (ideal) content/concept of consciousness. It is the phenomena that disclose themselves to consciousness as 'things-for-us' and not as 'things-in-themselves'. This is a mere 'intending' or direction towards the psychical impression of consciousness. In order for reality to reveal itself in pure experience, all presuppositions of experience should be bracketed-off. In which case, there should be no contact with reality as such.

It is not within the limits of this work to delve into the analysis of the many implications of the phenomenological sense of intentionality for the theory of knowledge, like the total neglect of the first operation/reflection of the intellect, and the perspectivity of knowledge and hence of truth. Suffice it for us to say that while for the phenomenologist, knowledge is founded transcendently on the consciousness and self-consciousness of the subject, it is founded instead on the intentional relation between the subject and the object, in the realist sense. The truth-value of knowledge depends, therefore, on the adequation of the thing to the intellect, through intentionality and the consequent enunciation of judgement with regard to the assimilated essence.

### 1.A.4 Conclusion: What Is It That Makes Knowledge Human?

There has been as varied an opinion as there are different schools of thought in philosophy. There are the nominalists, the materialists, the sensists and the positivists, for whom knowledge is, in the last analysis, purely sensory - no room for the intellect. David Hume for example, takes

knowledge to be mere sensations and associations of sensations. But can simple sensation qualify as knowledge? The rationalists and the idealists on their part, ably represented by Plato, and Descartes, not to mention Immanuel Kant, see knowledge as purely intellectual, the senses therefore being of no consequence as far as the acquisition of true knowledge is concerned.

But the big question is: if knowledge is to be called human or man's act, as distinct from the act of man; and if man is taken to be not only bodily but also spiritual - the senses and the intellect belonging to one and the same man - how then does the dichotomising of an action that is supposed to be properly his, intelligible?

Both Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas agree that human knowledge is such when both the senses (external and internal) and the intellect are involved. The process of knowing however is ignited by the senses which, as we saw in sensitive knowledge, are adapted each to its proper object. While the senses gather the particulars in the objects, the intellect extract the universals or those essences or forms that make every existent what it is and not something else. It is at the level of the acquisition of the essence that the object could be really claimed to be known. Because of the preparatory role of the senses for the acquisition of knowledge, it is said that there is nothing in the intellect which has not first been in the senses. "It was Aquinas' view that there could be no knowledge without sense experience, for nothing could be in the intellect that was not first in the senses (*nihil in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu*)".<sup>21</sup> This seems to be the interpretation of Aristotle's view that the intellect, before it is supplied with the materials for thought, is like a clean slate on which nothing has been written.

...thought is in a sense potentially what is thinkable, though actually it is nothing until it has thought. What it thinks must be in it just as characters may be said to be on a

<sup>21</sup> Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Philosophy, History and Problems*, cit., p. 195.

writing-table on which as yet nothing actually stands written: this is exactly what happens with thought.<sup>22</sup>

Just as matter is the foundation for the incarnation of the human spirit, so are the senses for the intellect in the process of human knowing. However, the primacy of the intellect over the senses follows the same analogy as the primacy of spirit over matter with regard to the human person.

Human knowledge therefore is an immanent act by which the subject possesses the form of the object in an immaterial way. It involves the elements of intentionality, interiority and exteriority. Intentionally, while the subject is enriched by the immaterial possession of the object, the latter is not by that fact diminished or substantially/ accidentally changed. On the other hand, the aspect of interiority points to the fact that the act of knowing belongs to living beings and is rooted in the spiritual nature of the beings. Because it is a spiritual activity, it is radically different from any other kind of motion in matter. It is therefore an activity that comes from within the being of man and so does not come to him from the outside as heat that affects the body from outside the body itself. While intentionality and interiority refer to the conscious subject of knowledge, exteriority refers to the object. It affirms the fact that knowledge is always of something other than the knowing subject; an object which the subject, at the end of the process of knowing, is said to possess intentionally.

In human knowing, one becomes aware not only of his conscious acts or internal dispositions, but also of himself as the subject that knows, that is, he becomes equally self-conscious.

Granted the relationship between the senses and the intellect in the acquisition of knowledge, could it then be that the intellect is bound by matter for the acquisition of knowledge? Could there be other forms of knowing not involving the senses which will qualify as human? The answers to these questions may surface when we must have explored the nature of the

<sup>22</sup> Aristotle, *On the Soul*, III, 4, 429b, 30 - 430a, 2; Cf., St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.84, a.3.

human mind, and that is the task we shall set ourselves to in the following section.

## Section B Man And His Mind

In this section, the nature of man, the protagonist of knowledge, is to be examined. While for the philosophers of the Platonic tradition, man is principally soul, the body being only the prison of the soul and the instrument for the soul's purification, for those of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, he is a physical substance. This simply means that man is a composite of body and soul and that there is a substantial unity between these two component parts, thus seeing man as a concrete, particular existent. In Aquinas' own words:

This particular man comprises this soul in this flesh and these bones, and as such comprises soul and flesh and bones, for whatever is essential to every member of a species is essential to the species.<sup>23</sup>

This unity is evident in all his activities especially in the areas of cognition and volition. In this unity lies his substantiality, the union of two principles - matter and form, in classical terminology. Expressing this unity, Bogliolo writes:

The spirit contains the body, informs it with itself, and gives to it existence and activity. But it is also true that the human spirit is essentially an incarnated spirit, destined to give form to a body, to make of it a delicate instrument of spiritual functions.<sup>24</sup>

In effect, all of man's activities, one of which is knowledge, involve the whole man.

<sup>23</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.75. a.4, ad 3.

<sup>24</sup> Louis Bogliolo, *Philosophical Anthropology*, cit., p. 38.

In order that man should utilise his whole self in accomplishing himself, he has been endowed with various organs and faculties which pertain to his body and soul respectively. This is why the analysis of man as a sensitive and thinking being becomes pertinent to our inquiry.

### 1.B.1 Man - A Sensing Being

Sensation is the principal characteristic which distinguishes animate from inanimate beings. It is a sign of being alive, thanks to the spiritual component of animate beings which is the soul. The soul should be seen here as the principle of life in all living beings. According to the Aristotelian teaching, the soul is of various kinds depending on the different levels of life. Such levels include the vegetative, specific to plants; the sensitive, pertaining to animals; and the intellective, proper to human beings. Hence we can talk of the vegetative, the sensitive and intellective souls. Man however embodies the three levels of life: vegetative, because he grows and reproduces; sensitive, since he responds to stimuli; and intellective, for he is capable of spiritual activities like thought and volition.

Looking at man as a sensing being, one discovers that his response to external stimuli is made possible by his possession of corporeal nature which is endowed with external sense organs as instruments. Such organs are of five different types comprising the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and nerve-endings found all over the body. Each of the organs is adapted to a particular or specific type of sensation: the eye for sight or vision, the ear for hearing, the nose for smell, the tongue for taste and the nerve-endings for touch. Because the senses are so adapted, they undergo what Aquinas described as spiritual immutation, that is, they receive intentionally the forms of physical objects that affect them. In his own words

...spiritual immutation takes place by the form of the immuter being received, according to a spiritual mode of existence, into the thing immuted, as the form of colour is received into the pupil which does not thereby become colored. Now, for the operation of the senses, a spiritual immutation is required, whereby an intention of the sensible

form is effected in the sensile organ. Otherwise, if a natural immutation alone sufficed for the sense's action, all natural bodies would feel when they undergo alteration.<sup>25</sup>

Each of the senses is being spiritually immuted only by the forms of their specific objects and not by others, hence they perform specific functions in man's process of knowing and interacting with his physical environment.

Besides the external senses, man also possesses the internal senses without which the process of perception, leading to the acquisition of sensitive knowledge, will not be complete. There are four internal senses, namely, the central or common sense, the imagination or fantasy, the cogitative sense or instinct and the memory. The section on 'Sensitive Knowledge' has examined the nature and functions of these internal senses. Man's perceptual power depends on the proper functioning of both the external and internal senses. With these, man is able to acquire sensitive knowledge as has already been discussed above.

### 1.B.2 Man - A Thinking Being

The reference to man as a thinking being is an indication of a higher nature in him other than the sensitive nature. The possession of an intellectual soul by man makes such appellation plausible. Thought is an activity peculiar to man and the faculty of that activity is the mind.

That man is a thinking being means that he possesses mental processes or states that are properly his. The most basic of all these processes or states is that of self-consciousness or the possession of the "I" thought. In self-consciousness, man is aware not only of his thoughts but also of himself as the subject that thinks. Besides the "I" thought, man thinks thoughts about existents both as real, possible and imaginary. Man's thought embraces both particulars, universals, the present, the past and the future. Apart from thinking thoughts about the self and existents, man also thinks thoughts about thoughts. In other words, he can think thoughts about

<sup>25</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q.78, a.3.

thoughts of other minds, that is, he can pre-empt what other minds are thinking with regard to his behaviour or attitude in his communication with them. Thoughts about thoughts we take to be analogous to the common expression of "reading between the lines".

Probably, the contemplation of the limitlessness of man's thought must have induced Aristotle to see the mind as the potentiality for whatever is thinkable. According to him,

... in every class of things, as in nature as a whole, we find two factors involved, a matter which is potentially all the particulars included in the class, a cause which is productive in the sense that it makes them all (the latter standing to the former, as for example an art to its material), these distinct elements must likewise be found within the soul.

And in fact thought, as we have described it, is what it is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things: this is a sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colours into actual colours.<sup>26</sup>

Man does not just think abstractly and privately. His thoughts are made manifest by means of words or signs - a form of language, specialised, which are expressive and specifically human. Perhaps someone may object, that animals also have signs or languages with which they communicate among themselves. It therefore follows that thought could be attributable to them too. To this objection we can reply, using the words of Jonathan Bennett that

... firstly, our languages have larger vocabularies than theirs. ... Secondly (and this is more important), the so-called vocabulary in nonhuman signalling system consists of whole utterances (analogous to our sentences) rather

<sup>26</sup> Aristotle, *On the Soul*, Bk. 111, 5, 430a, 10-17.

than of separately meaningful parts of utterances (analogous to our words)<sup>27</sup>

This means that although animals have signs with which they communicate among themselves, and even with human beings, through which they make their needs known to human beings, they do not have universal ideas, which are the fruits of human intellect, as men have. In effect, the complexity and speciality of man's language manifest the ingenuity and nobility of his mind or intellect.

Moreover, man's expression of his thoughts through language is done intentionally or with purpose and not mechanically or programmed, so to speak, as in animals. This means that apart from man's ability for complex and meaningful structuring of his language to express his thoughts, such language is usually accompanied by some psychological underlay in terms of intentionality and purpose. In other words, man's thought is not only abstract, but is also directed towards the object of thought and with an end in view. Man's numerous and gigantic achievements are undoubtedly products of his thoughts. Intentionality and purpose render the language flexible and adaptable as circumstances permit. Is this not in itself, a great manifestation of the ingenuity of man as a thinking being?

### 1.B.3 The Nature of the Mind

The debate about the nature of the mind follows closely on that on the theory of knowledge. This is not surprising since the problem of thought is inseparable from the problem of mind. Among the opposed views are those of the materialists for whom all reality is nothing but matter and hence a hypothesis about anything immaterial is not only impossible but also inconceivable. Any discussion about the mental is therefore, not only unnecessary, but above all futile. Another view is that held by the rationalists for whom the mind is a purely immaterial substance, completely independent

<sup>27</sup> Jonathan Bennett, "Thoughtful Brutes" in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*. Supplement to Volume 62. New York: September 1988. p. 201.

of the material body for its intellectual functions. This view is very prominently triggered off by the Cartesian dualism for which man is a composite of two separate and independent substances of thought (mind) and extension (body). It has its root though in the philosophy of some ancient Greeks like Parmenides, Anaxagoras and Plato, for example, for whom the mind is the highest reality that exists, and the architect, that is, the controlling force and animator of the whole of the material universe.

If man were to be, and he truly is, the substantial being made up of matter and form - body and soul, how could any of the above views be upheld without contradiction? To answer the dualists, Adler writes:

I wish only to add that, on purely philosophical grounds, the dualism of mind or soul and body does not stand up. It denies the unity of the human being. It makes us a duality of two independent substances - as independent as a boat and the person who is rowing it. Either of these can cease to exist without the other ceasing to exist. They are existentially distinct and separable, as our own mind and body are not. If they were, we should be left with the inexplicable mystery of why they were combined - why the human mind should have any association with a human body.<sup>28</sup>

All those however, who acknowledge the existence of the mind, and have tried to examine its nature in the history of philosophy like Descartes and Aquinas, agree that it is a spiritual faculty which is characterised by thought and volition.

Though the mind is an immaterial faculty, it is nevertheless inseparable from the material component of the human person, the body, in and through which it operates. On the other hand, the mind or intellect, though it needs the body or brain for its conceptual thought, yet it is not

<sup>28</sup> Mortimer J. Adler, "Minds and Brains: Angels, Humans and Brutes" in *The Great Ideas Today*, Part 1. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1982, p. 7.

bound totally to matter or by matter in its spiritual activities, or as regards the origin of its activities because it is consistent in itself and has operations all its own.

The principle of intellectual operation which we call the soul, is a principle both incorporeal and subsistent. For it is clear that by means of the intellect man can have knowledge of all corporeal things... It is impossible for the intellectual principle to be a body. It is likewise impossible for it to understand by means of a bodily organ; since the determinate nature of that organ would impede knowledge of all bodies... Therefore the intellectual principle which we call the mind or the intellect has an operation *per se* apart from the body. Now only that which subsists can have an operation *per se*.<sup>29</sup>

The mind therefore, because of its power to know or have knowledge of all bodies cannot contain anything bodily or material and so could not be hindered in its operations by anything bodily. The sublimity of the spiritual nature of man is made manifest in all his technical, artistic, scientific, poetic, et cetera, works.

#### 1.B.4 The Operations of the Mind

The problem of the operations of the mind is intrinsically related to that of mind/body or mind/brain relationship. This is because the mind being a faculty of the human soul, and the soul being the vital principle of the human body, so any reasonable discussion on the functions or operations of the mind must take into account the whole constituents of the whole man, the possessor of the mind. The mind exhibits powers which are non-rational as well as rational. The non-rational powers, mainly used on the perceptual level include the nutritive, the appetitive, the sensitive, the imaginative and the rememorative powers. These powers function both in the lower and

<sup>29</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1, q. 75, a.2; Cf. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 111, 4, 18-28.

higher animals. Besides, the human mind specifically possesses rational powers which are cognitive, calculative (reasoning) and conceptive (abstractive) in their operations. These powers are known as intellectual because the mind employs them in all its aspects of intellectual knowledge. The mind equally possesses the power of volition which is exhibited through the will. This power confers the status of autonomy to man with regard to his actions, and so of responsibility as well. The powers of intellect and will characteristically belong to man and so set him apart from all other living beings.

Man's intellectual faculty comprises two powers which are distinguished by the process of knowing. Because the intellect before it knows anything is in potency of receiving the forms of sensible things, it possesses a passive power which Aristotle, and latter Aquinas called the passive intellect. This passive intellect is in potentiality to the universal being, being as such, that is, all that is intelligible. It only passes from potentiality to act when the active power (active intellect), through the process of abstraction, has converted the sensibles into the intelligibles thereby making the object known. The active intellect is the power of understanding. As light is necessary for sight, so is the active intellect for understanding.<sup>30</sup> Because of these rational powers of the mind, man stands out as the only animal that thinks conceptually besides thinking perceptually.

The mind as part of the human person, in its operations utilises the brain or bodily dispositions as instrument. In other words, our bodily dispositions influence our intellectual powers as well as our non-rational ones. Such bodily dispositions include our internal sensations of joy, sadness, pain, et cetera, and all those dispositions which are connected with emotion. The influence is explainable from the fact that man as a unity of matter and form, lives in and experiences with his whole nature. However, it has to be pointed out here that the nature of this influence is an indirect one. That is to say, the nature of the relationship between the mind and the brain is analogous to that of the relationship between the intellect and the senses.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 111, 5, 430a, 10-15; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1, q. 79, arts. 2 & 3.

Just as the senses cannot force the intellect to pass determined judgement on the received sense-data, so also the brain cannot force the mind to work in a determined way on the supplied information. Though neuroscience has uncovered the structural complexity of the brain that influences man's mental activities, yet the ulterior mode of the process of such influence still remains in the dark.

John C. Eccles, a neuroscientist, was of the opinion however, that there exist innumerable mental acts of which their neurophysical connection is not known.

Not only that the correlation of many mental events with neurophysiological ones are not known, but it is possible also to establish or verify that cerebral activities do not give rise to conscious experiences and vice versa, because for many psychical phenomena there has been no known adequate neuronal processes.<sup>31</sup>

This could imply that the mind is not a prisoner of the body or brain for the execution of its functions, whether that of intellection or of volition.

The role of the mind in paranormal phenomena, especially those of the psi-gamma (ESP - Extra Sensory Perception), has been the point of discussion for both psychologists, parapsychologists and neurophysiologists. Because the phenomena has been nominated "extra-sensory", it could be logical to think that the mind, as a spiritual faculty devoid of any material composition, could be the point of reference for the explanation of such phenomena. Armando Pavese, a medico-parapsychologist has even hypothesised that the mind or psyche is the seat where paranormal phenomena, both the cognitive (extra-sensory perception) and the psychophysical (psycho-kinesis) find their motivation and actualisation.<sup>32</sup> Whether such a hypothesis is plausible or not still remains to be verified.

<sup>31</sup> Guido Cimino, "John C. Eccles, Mente" in *Novecento Filosofico e Scientifico*. Volume 111. Milano: Marzorati Editore. 1991, p. 187.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Armando Pavese, *Manuale di parapsicologia*, Monferrato (AL): Edizioni PIEMME, 1989, p. 198.

## CHAPTER 2

### EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION

#### 2.1 Introduction

Psychic phenomena could be said to be as old as man himself, for the simple fact that the psyche forms an indispensable part of human nature. Its manifestation has been interpreted in various ways down through the ages, depending on the cultural orientation and intellectual development of the epoch in question.

For man in ancient civilisations, before the advent of modern science, psychic phenomena are normal occurrences. They found explanations for them in mythical thought in which all their religious, cultural, social, ethical and pedagogical life have their meaning and development. The non-manifestation of these psychic phenomena would rather be a pointer to an unusual omen. This is simply because for him, the spirit pervades and acts in and through every object both animate and inanimate. This all-pervading spirit is what K.C. Anyanwu referred to as the *life-force*, when he was describing the basic assumption of African Philosophy.

The fundamental assumption of African Philosophy is that every existing thing or reality is a life force or that every reality possesses life force. As a result, everything has something in common by virtue of life force... In the universe of force, nothing is lifeless<sup>1</sup>.

Because of this inter-relatedness of beings, it is taken for granted that they influence or affect one another reciprocally. The two basic principles which emerged from this assumption and which were and still are extensively utilised are, first, that 'like produces like', or that 'like affects - acts on like',

<sup>1</sup> K.C. Anyanwu, *The African Experience in the American Marketplace*. Smithtown, New York: Exposition Press. 1983, p. 62.

and secondly, that 'the things that have been once joined together always maintain their linkage even when they had been separated', or that 'the part acts on or affects the whole'. The first principle was extensively utilised in what is called *imitative magic*, like using somebody's image or photograph in causing injury or evil on his person. It is alleged that rain makers and hunters also utilise imitative magic, with their appropriate rituals, to achieve their desired goal. The second principle is used in *sympathetic* or *contagious magic* in which some belongings of the victim, like pieces of hair, clothing, and so on, are used to impose the magician's or sorcerer's will on the victim, for example in what is termed love magic. It is believed that whatever magical act that is performed on the part of anything or the belonging of a person automatically affects the thing or the person concerned. *Sympathetic magic*, it is said, presupposes the image of the world as a net-work or system in which everything is related to everything else.<sup>2</sup>

Besides this basic assumption that the universe is a single system with parts connected to one another like a net, there is also another assumption, that extra-terrestrial beings, the spirits of the dead and diabolical spirits for example, or mysterious, impersonal forces, intervene in the life and activities of humans. This seems to be the most widespread belief which has given rise to different types of religious, magical and occult practices. These practices will be examined later in this work. Whether these same principles could be operative in the phenomena of telepathy, where it is alleged that minds communicate with minds, and of clairvoyance, where minds are said to affect physical objects, is yet to be examined. Because of this basic view of reality, psychic anthropologists "have described the phenomena as elements of the culture without attempting to judge their reality"<sup>3</sup>. However, with development in civilisations and the progress in scientific research, such phenomena are no more matter-of-fact affairs.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Maria Teresa La Vecchia, *Antropologia paranormale*, Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1995, p.15.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology: The Science of Psiology*. Springfield, Illinois, USA: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1986, p. 8.

Such beliefs are however not only found among the so called ancient cultures and illiterate people, but also among the educated and elite of the society among whom are medical doctors, physicists, psychologists, theologians, et cetera. A survey of the modern society and the multiplication of occult societies, which count among their adherents, men from all walks of life, would testify to such assertion. These beliefs have, in most cases, originated from the people's cultural, religious and social backgrounds, which at times breed superstitious mentality. This is an indication of the influence of environment on people's belief systems. Some beliefs are held superstitiously when people believe that an event has no rational explanation or that it does not follow the natural course of things and so must be explained only by mysterious means. To say that such beliefs could, in most cases, have paralysing effects in the lives of people would not be much of an exaggeration. If we take belief in witchcraft for example, it has been alleged that many people have suffered, and many are still suffering from various psychosomatic illnesses which at times lead to the death of the sufferer. The paralysing effect of our example above was brought out clearly by Bolaji Idowu when he wrote:

when I speak of witchcraft, I am referring to that which is so disturbingly real as to affect the life of Africans in every work of life. And by Africans I mean not only the 'illiterates' who carry on with their traditional customs intact, ...; I mean also 'educated' men and women in the civil service, in the mercantile houses, well-known politicians, university professors, university graduates and undergraduates, medical doctors, imams, ... To most of the persons in these categories, witchcraft is an urgent and very harassing reality; it is a diabolic, soul-enslaving presence.<sup>4</sup>

This is just a sample of the beliefs which people could hold superstitiously. What of belief in the efficacy of amulets, or the bad luck that could be

<sup>4</sup> E. Bolaji Idowu, "The Challenge of Witchcraft" in *Orita*, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies, IV/1 June, 1970, p.6.

connected with the number '13' or a 'black cat'. Although Idowu was writing about the African people as his point of reference, it is an empirical fact that superstition is a universal phenomenon which is found among people of all cultures and races. Pier Luigi Baima Bollone narrated the case of Fr. Johann Gassner who believed that every sickness was a sign of demonic possession and so deserved no other curative method than exorcism.<sup>5</sup>

But why is man easily given in to superstition? Several reasons could be adduced, one of which is ignorance, in the case of preliterate people. Besides ignorance which is a superficial reason, there is the deep-rooted, strong and persistent need in man to transcend his human incapacities which manifest themselves in his need for self preservation, love, good health, prosperity and general well-being. Hence man is always searching for ways and means of answering to his needs. 'Clever'<sup>6</sup> people in the persons of mediums and magicians therefore capitalise on these basic yearnings of man, thereby multiplying their seemingly prodigious acts, to the amazement and satisfaction of those who are vulnerable to the mysterious. This has given rise to the manifestations of various types of psychic abilities which are in most cases magical or occult in origin. There is therefore the need to examine these phenomena, in the light of parapsychology as a discipline, to sieve out if any, the phenomena that could be called parapsychic in the strict sense of the word.

In this chapter therefore, we are to examine the discipline that has the onus of scientifically studying such phenomena, with the view to contributing to the wealth of human knowledge and development. In order to achieve this, we have to make a survey of the historical development that led into the growth of Parapsychology as a scientific discipline. If growth is a gradual

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Luigi Baima Bollone, *La Scienza nel Mondo degli Spiriti*, Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1994, p.162. That some beliefs could be held superstitiously does not rule out the possibility of real diabolic influence in the lives and activities of people, otherwise occultism and all that it entails would become an empty word without any authentic significance.

<sup>6</sup> Especially in the sense of being quick-witted in cornering or deceiving people. But it also needs somebody who is skilful and intelligent to be quick-witted in this sense.

and continuous process, then the science of Parapsychology would be seen to have undergone, and continues to undergo such process. And if the process is not to be extinguished, there is need for continuous effort in researching and discovering new fields of interest, since the mystery of man can never be completely apprehended by any single science. But before entering into this historical arena, we have to, first of all define the field of the psychic phenomena which is the object of inquiry of the science.

## 2.2 Extra-Sensory Perception (ESP) - A Definition

The term 'Extrasensory Perception' was actually coined by J.B. Rhine in 1934, as a title of one his works.<sup>7</sup> Before then, different nomenclatures like Supersensory Perception and Extrasensory Cognition were in use. Rhine found these terminologies not distinctive or neutral enough as to streamline the proper area of activity. In its present form then, the term is used to designate all forms of perception that have no connection with any known sensory apparatus. In other words, in any extrasensory phenomenon, there is no known physical intermediary as in the case of sensory or sensitive perception. It is therefore defined as, "knowledge of or response to an external event or influence not apprehended through known sensory channels".<sup>8</sup>

Since it is the perception that comes extrasensorially, it is said to involve communication between spirit and spirit, or rather, between mind and mind, without any mediation from the perceptual senses. That is to say, it is a direct or suprasensible interspiritual communication. It is alleged that this type of communication takes place through what F.H. Myers, one of the pioneers of psychical research, called the subliminal or ultramarginal consciousness - that which is below the threshold of normal consciousness.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Rhine J.B., *Extrasensory Perception*, Boston: Branden 1964.

<sup>8</sup> Laura A. Dale and Rhea A. White, (Compilers), "Glossary of Terms Found in the Literature of Psychical Research and Parapsychology" in Benjamin B. Wolman, Editor. *Handbook of Parapsychology*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company. 1977. p. 926.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. F.H. Myers, *La personalità umana e la sua sopravvivenza*, vol. 1, Roma: Enrico Voghera, Editore, 1909, p. 34.

This is that part of the "I" that ordinarily remains hidden, for according to the same Myers, the I that is manifest is just an aspect of the main "I" which reveals itself now and again within the limitations and exigencies of the organism which is man.<sup>10</sup> With this subliminal faculty, man is said to be able to perform certain psychical activities like telepathy, which is the perception of thought or event at a distance without the help of any known external sense. The notion here is that the proper, personal, human spirit is at work without any external interference. Not only can mind affect or communicate with mind, but mind can equally affect physical events or objects as well, as in the case of psycho-kinesis which is known as the action of mind on matter.

Besides the hypothesis of the subliminal 'I', there is that of messages being received in dreams, especially in the state of almost total passivity, for example, in the state of deep trance or sleep. The old atomists believed that the messages or perceptions were received by the dreamer or medium through the effect on his body, of the atomistic metal images emitted by either the human beings or the objects involved. C.B. Nash told us that "the philosopher-scientist Aristotle suggested that divination was accomplished by waves analogous to those propagated in water or air"<sup>11</sup>, which when triggered off, continue their movement and action irrespective of their initial force. Aristotle was correcting the atomistic notion of the source of perception or dream when he wrote:

As, when something has caused motion in water or air, this moves another and, though the cause has ceased to operate, such motion propagates itself to a certain point, though there the prime mover is not present; just so it may well be that a movement and a consequent sense-perception should reach sleeping souls from the objects from which Democritus represents emanations as coming; that such movements, in whatever way they arrive, should be more perceptible at night, ...; and that they shall be perceived within the body owing to sleep, since persons are

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> Carroll B. Nash. *Parapsychology: The Science of Psychology*, cit., p. 11.

more sensitive even to slight internal movements when asleep than when awake.<sup>12</sup>

Aristotle is of the opinion here that sleeping state favours the reception of extra-ordinary messages more than the waking state, since the person is not engaged in active thinking, but his mind is derelict and passive and so is susceptible to all types of impressions. Because of this state too, the phenomenon comes spontaneously and to both the wise and the foolish alike. In other words, unconscious state is the most vulnerable to alien perceptions and movements.<sup>13</sup>

Whereas psychical research embraces both the phenomena of extrasensory perception, psychokinesis (PK), spiritism and the survival question, especially at its initial stage, our research will be limited only to extrasensory perception strictly so-called. As a "mental response to a state outside of the individual without sensory stimulation"<sup>14</sup>, and the state could be mental or physical, extrasensory perception exhibits three major types to which we shall devote more attention. They are: telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition. Psychokinesis will be touched inasmuch as it contributes to the elucidation of the phenomenon under consideration. All of the above phenomena employ the mind in their operations, and because the information which they gather is about external objects or events, they are described as perception; in like manner, because the information are believed to be received through nonsensory mediation, they are called extrasensory. Attention is drawn to these phenomena either through reported personal, spontaneous, psychic experiences which could be empirically verified, or through observed physical effects.

In the form of spontaneous psychic experiences, the perception is said to be in the form of *impressions* whereby one is alleged to get the information of either an impending event or a contemporaneous one. And this impression may prompt one either to act, by embarking on a journey or a

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *On Divination in Sleep*, 464a, 6-16.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 464a, 17-23.

<sup>14</sup> Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology: The Science of Psychology*, cit., p. 76.

visit for example, or by forecasting the event. This is a sort of intuition which is said to eventually materialise. It could also be a kind of presentiment, or an emotion of depression in the case of a tragic event. Impressions are not usually accompanied by imagery.

Secondly, messages are believed to come in form of dreams which may be realistic or unrealistic. We often hear cases of people who affirm that their dreams usually come true and those who say that theirs do not come true. Dream messages are categorised among those phenomena known in psychical research as precognition, that is, the prior perception of an event before it actually occurs. The case of the dream of Julius Ceasar's wife concerning the imminent death of her husband is thought to be a typical example of precognition. Armando Pavase sees as telepathic intuition, the case of the victory of Christians in the battle of Lepanto in 1571, October 7, 17 hours, which Pope Pius V foresaw, and was confirmed fifteen days later by a messenger who brought the news of the victory.<sup>15</sup> We would rather categorise this as precognition, since it was not communication between mind and mind as telepathy is understood, but rather between mind and event. It was a case of foreseeing future event. Dreams always carry mental images with them.

Again, hallucination is another means of spontaneously having paranormal experiences. It could be in the form of auditory or visual hallucination, although there are more reports of the latter than the former. Imagery accompany hallucination just as in dream, only that the former takes place in a waking state or when one is half asleep and half awake, or rather dozing. In order to discover authentic psychical experiences, it is necessary to distinguish the hallucinations of a sick person from that of a sane person. The apparitions during hallucination are alleged to be usually vivid and the episode is remembered by the perceiver. This is for the sane person. Those that are the result of sickness are said to be usually bizarre and forgotten. Automatism, acting out a message or automatic writing without being conscious of what the person is doing, is also seen as an instance of

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Armando Pavase, *Manuale di parapsicologia*, Monferato (AL): Edizioni PIEMME, 1989, p. 14.

spontaneous psychic phenomena. Nash was of the opinion that night-time, the person's home and bed-room are favourable conditions for spontaneous psychic experiences. Waking rather than dreaming state also favours contemporaneous psychic experiences. Precognition instead is more frequent in dreaming state when our control over our cognitive activities is weaker, and hence the knowledge will come spontaneously to consciousness.<sup>16</sup> These are said to be conditions under which spontaneous psychic phenomena could be manifested.

As to the nature of extrasensory perception or psychical phenomena in general, they are first and foremost, not any recognisable physical process, and so believed to occur irrespective of time-space limitations. All the hypotheses both from the ancients and physicists point to the fact of no known physical causality with regard to psychic experiences. The supposed causes varied from unknown cosmic forces, to those of magnetic fluid theories. The last of these hypotheses, as we shall see later, was extensively employed by the mesmerists.

Secondly, only living creatures have been found to manifest psychic abilities. That it is an activity of animate beings implies that one of the parties concerned, the subject or the agent, must be alive. While the subject here refers to the percipient, the agent refers to the sender of the information. These abilities on their part, depend on the genetic heritage of these creatures. It has been alleged that psychic abilities are not an exclusive reserve of human beings. Certain animals like dogs, cats, and rodents in general also manifest either clairvoyant or psychokinetic abilities.<sup>17</sup> This however, is not an argument that concerns us in this research.

Thirdly, the phenomena are by nature extrasensory-motor and unconscious in origin. This characteristic points to the fact that they are not the results of the percipient's conscious or active participation. As has been seen earlier, passive state favours the experiences more than active state, and

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Carrol B. Nash, *Parapsychology: The Science of Psiology*, cit., pp. 136-137.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. J.B. Rhine, "Extrasensory Percception" in Benjamin B. Wolman, Editor, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 169.

this applies more to spontaneous psychic experiences. It has been alleged however that they could be volitionally affected in experiments by the subject who may decide to or not to identify the targets. In other words, the subjects' mental attitude could influence the experimental results.

Though it is the nature of extrasensory perception to take place without the mediation of any known sensory apparatus, J.B. Rhine and J.G. Pratt are of the opinion that its perceptual process is similar to that of sensitive knowledge for the simple reason that it involves a sort of interaction between the subject (the perceiver) and his environment. According to them,

the field of study was found to be concerned with some kind of *systematic* interaction (however unknown and non-physical its nature) between the subject and the objective environment, a form of communication between the individual and his surroundings. In ESP and PK there has been discovered a *system* of reaction, one that parallels the sensori-motor exchange with which the individual most commonly interacts with his physical world.<sup>18</sup>

Because of the variety and complexity of all these phenomena, attention will be given to the magical-occult phenomena, with the aim of clarifying the field that belongs to parapsychology.

### 2.2.1 The Magical-Occult Phenomena

In order for us to have a balanced, and perhaps, more objective view of the nature and sources of psychic powers, a brief excursus into the art of magic and the occult is necessary. This is for the simple reason that while it could be possible for some people to naturally exercise their extraordinary psychic powers, it could equally be possible that the majority of the so-called 'extraordinary' gifted people perform under the influence of occult forces.

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<sup>18</sup>Rhine, J.B., and Pratt, J.G., *Parapsychology: The Frontier Science of the Mind*. (Revised Edition). Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1962, p. 52.

This does not however detract from the fact that there may be, and have actually been, and will continue to be, people who, under the influence of grace, and by God's special design, manifest extraordinary psychic powers. Hence we have the threefold division of people who could be said to possess and exercise psychic abilities, namely, those who exercise it by nature, those who manipulate the forces and laws of nature to exhibit it, and those who exercise it under the influence of grace. This clarification is equally deemed necessary in order for us to keep within the bounds of those phenomena that could be the object of scientific investigation for parapsychology. Again, and most important of all, it is hoped that we could be able to shade some light on the techniques and practices of the occult, however little it may be. The psychological and spiritual harm that the occult causes to modern man, under the pretext of answering to his deep-seated desires to extricate himself from his feeling of alienation, and so regain some equilibrium in his life and activities cannot be over-emphasised.

When we talk or hear of the word 'magical', the idea that readily comes to mind is the unexplainable. It carries with it a sense of mystery and awe, especially when it is concerned with what anthropologists and ethnologists refer to as 'black magic' - that which is intended for evil. Because of the seemingly complexity and secretiveness that surround the techniques and practices of magic, it (the term 'magic') often elude clear and distinct definition. But,

in broad outline it can be said that magic is a belief and practice according to which men are convinced that they may directly affect natural powers and each other among themselves either for good or for evil by their own efforts in manipulating the superior powers.<sup>19</sup>

From this definition, it implies that man's conviction that he could control superior forces to his own benefit gave rise to magical practices. And because the aim of such practices could be for either good or evil, magic has

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<sup>19</sup>Mariasusai Dhavamony, *Phenomenology of Religion*, Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1973, p. 31.

been classified into black and white magic. While black magic is intended to be for evil, that is, causing harm to people or an individual, white magic is meant for good, that is, for protection or healing, as the case may be.

J.B. McAllister was of the view that Albert the Great equally distinguished between praiseworthy and evil magic. This he did in his commentary on St. Matthew's gospel with regard to those who think of the biblical Magi as magicians. According to him, the Magi belong to the group of those who practise praiseworthy magic, and to think of somebody as a magician is to see him as a great man, a magus. This great man knows everything about the necessary things, and employs the forces of nature to achieve marvellous results. Those who practise evil magic, on the other hand, have recourse to demons to be able to manipulate and dominate the forces of nature.<sup>20</sup> But Aquinas on the contrary, believed that magical effects are caused neither by heavenly bodies nor by the images or words used on natural things, but rather by demons with whom the magicians are in league. He reiterated the thought of William of Auvergne that magical marvels could not be accomplished by mere human beings. William attributed magical marvels to divine intervention, and to such marvels he enlisted the drying up of springs, preventing thieves from stealing at certain places, et cetera.<sup>21</sup>

Whatever be the case, we call that 'magical' anything or art which has to do with the manipulation of forces, be they physical, human or extra-terrestrial forces, the techniques of which are known only to the magician, and which are strictly and secretively guarded.

We have to note that magical practices are generally ritualistic in nature and are, in such manner, recognised as magical. They are voluntarily asked for and engaged in as part and parcel of the people's cultural and religious beliefs; and the magicians, the shamans or priest-magicians of the

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Joseph Bernard McAllister. *The Letter of Saint Thomas Aquinas: De Occultis Operibus Naturae: Ad Quemdam Militem Ultramontanum*, Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press. 1939, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p.61.

arctic regions, the Melanesians and the Polynesians, for example, are recognised as such. Moreover, there are some magical practices which people perform for the sake of entertainment. These culturally approved or recognised practices however are not of much relevance to the paranormal phenomena which is the object of our enquiry. Of more interest is the magical-occult practices that are widely practised, and which have given rise to the religious sects, an explosive phenomenon of the technological age.

Occultism which is a "term for various esoteric theories and practices for attaining hidden powers"<sup>22</sup>, on the other hand, is being engaged in by many individuals for different reasons, especially for economic reasons. Many present-day self-acclaimed 'prophets' and 'messiahs' find the practice of the occult very lucrative. They believe that the secrets of the world of the spirits and that of the unknown forces of the universe were well known to ancient civilisations. And so they strictly apply themselves to the study of such ancient writings as found in Hinduism and Buddhism, for instance, in order to develop the higher powers of their minds, for the acquisition of the super-knowledge of those worlds. The practices of the occultists yield manifestations of the phenomena akin to paranormal ones. The activities of the Indian Swami or religious (sect) leaders reveal many phenomena that could be described as magical on the one hand, and as paranormal on the other hand. For example, Nicolino Sarale brought out samples of the activities of the Swami, Bhagava Sri Sathya Sai Baba, simply and popularly known as Sai Baba, and the Swami, Sri Ganapathi Satchidananda. Besides their preaching, healing and prophetic acumen, they were noted for their ability to materialise objects like golden bracelets, necklaces and earrings from their hands, which they gave to their faithful followers as gifts for good fortune, or simply as souvenirs.<sup>23</sup>

Even more mysterious are the externalised perceptible manifestations of something whose existence originated in the mind of its creator by virtue of that person's incredible

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin B. Wolman, Editor. *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 929.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Nicolino Sarale, *Cristianesimo e religioni*, Roma: Edizioni VIVERE IN. 1989, p. 138.

powers of concentration, visualisation, and other, more occult efforts of mind. In Tibet, where such things are practised, a ghost of this kind is called a *tulpa*.<sup>24</sup>

Of much interest among these magical-occult sects is the Theosophical Society, an esoteric sect founded by the psychic Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1821-1891), with the co-operation of Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), in 1875. The principal aims of this society are: the study of man's occult faculties, the mysterious laws of nature, ancient religions and divination; and the formation of a nucleus of human 'universal fraternity' which will embrace people of every belief, colour, race and sex, without any distinction. It is seen as the supreme religion which worships 'super-consciousness' as its god. For the theosophists, man is a god in potency because of his capacity to develop this vibrant power - the 'super-consciousness', by which he would be capable of manifesting multiple personalities at will.

Although Blavatsky was said to possess psychic powers by nature, which she started manifesting from the tender age of eleven, she became fascinated by the occult practices of the 'Superior Brothers' or the custodians of the supreme truth of the spirit, whom she met in England during one of her many, long and restless journeys in search of super-knowledge. She got initiated into the cult and was given the assignment to gather initiates, hence her reason, the supreme imperative, for founding the theosophical society. It was alleged that the occult powers which Blavatsky acquired from the 'superior brothers' or the 'mahatma', as she called them, were used for reading of other people's thoughts, transmission of mental images, writing correctly in the Latin language which she never studied, and altering the weights of persons and things.<sup>25</sup> Unlike the mediums who perform in the state of trance, she was said to be performing at will, that is, whenever and as she pleases. Besides, she could produce raps and apport

<sup>24</sup> Carroll C. Calkind, Project Editor, *Mysteries of the Unexplained*, Pleasantvill, New York/Montreal: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1982, p. 176.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Pier Luigi Baima Bollone, *La scienza nel mondo degli spiriti*, cit., p. 240.

any time she chose.<sup>26</sup> This implies that magical-occult phenomena are manifested voluntarily and on purpose.

Theosophy externally looks like a religion since it pretends to be spiritualistic in outlook, but it is deeply and essentially a materialistic system. It demands of its devotees only blind faith and so admits of no intellectual justification. Theosophical sects could be very deceptive both from the religious and scientific points of view. From the religious angle, it presents itself as spiritual phenomenon while it is not. This is not surprising however, because it is characteristic of occult societies, as we shall see later, to dress themselves in religious robes so as to look attractive to prospective disciples. They are equally deceptive from the scientific point of view since some unsuspecting scientists, parapsychologists in this case, could easily mistake their occult phenomena for genuine psychic ones. Parapsychologists therefore should be attentive and quick to spot out such counterfeit phenomena. Interestingly enough, it took the London Society for Psychical Research, in 1884, to uncover all the fraud and crookedness with which Blavatsky had lived and deceived the world for many years, thanks to the revelation made by some members of her society.<sup>27</sup>

### 2.3 The Science of Parapsychology - Historical Development -

As has been mentioned earlier in this work, man by nature desires to know. He acquires this knowledge through varied means like from his cultural and social environment, which includes among others the family and

<sup>26</sup> For a detailed study of the occult powers of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, see the following books: Giovetti P., *Helena Petrovna Blavatsky e la società teosofica*, Roma: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1991; Sinnet, A.P., *La vita straordinaria di Helena Petrovna Blavatsky*, Roma: Astrolabio, 1980.

<sup>27</sup> It was a couple, Mr. & Mrs. Coulomb who were dismissed from the Indian branch of the society in 1884, who made Blavatsky's correspondence to Mrs. Coulomb public to the press. In that letter, Blavatsky confessed to Mrs. Coulomb that tricks play a big role in her so-called psychic manifestations. This information then induced the Society for Psychical Research to set up a committee to investigate the allegation. The report of the committee described Bravatsky as a common trickster. Cf. Pier Luigi Baima Bollone, *La scienza nel mondo degli spiriti*, cit., pp. 246-247.

traditions. The bulk of his knowledge also comes to him through the experience of living as a human being. Later in his life, he may be opportuned to receive formal education, in which case, the manner and method of imparting and acquiring the knowledge becomes more organised. In all these various ways, man is utilising his reasoning faculty but at different levels. In the first stage or level, which is the level of informal acquisition of knowledge, the intellect absorbs all the information as they are without serious questioning. Things are as they are and should not be otherwise. At the second level, the intellect gradually develops the questioning or critical attitude as to the what and how of things. Here begins the first step into scientific knowledge.

Our discussions so far on extrasensory perception have remained on the rudimentary stage of speculations on what it is and how it works. It still remains at the level of ordinary or informal knowledge. When we therefore talk of parapsychology as a science, it is necessary to explain what it means for a body of knowledge to belong into the whole realm of knowledge that is recognised as scientific. In other words, to shed some light on the nature of science and the criteria for a discipline to be considered a scientific one.

Science, according to the ancients, precisely in the Aristotelic - Thomistic tradition, is seen as a perfect knowledge. It consists in the knowledge of things through their causes. This is a broad and classical notion of science which specifies that it is a body of knowledge that traces the order of things as well as the reasons behind this order, an enterprise that goes in search of regularities and laws in nature as a starting point for deduction. Science in this sense is more deductive than inductive since it proceeds from first principles and ends up in application to particular situations. Genuine science should then lead us to the causes or reasons for things, in the method of syllogistic reasoning from the general to the particular.

In a more restricted and modern sense, science is seen as an organised body of knowledge, still in search for the reasons for things, but based on observation and experimentation, and this is mankind's heritage from Galileo Galilei and his contemporaries. The knowledge that issues from

this procedure is demonstrative, that is, from the inductive process of reasoning from particular and observed cases to the formulation of general laws or hypotheses. The classification of scientific knowledge into particular sciences is based on this modern notion of science. The particular sciences, like mathematics, physics, psychology, and so on, therefore have as their objects particular areas of reality as their field of investigation. It is for each of these sciences to develop its particular methods of enquiring that should be appropriate to achieving its goal.

Every science seeks certain principles and causes for each of its objects - e.g. medicine and gymnastics and each of the other sciences, whether productive or mathematical. For each of these marks off a certain class of things for itself and busies itself about this as about something that exists and is ... of the sciences mentioned each gets somewhat the 'what' in some class of things and tries to prove the other truths, whether loosely or accurately. Some get the 'what' through perception, others by hypothesis;...<sup>28</sup>

In the fields of particular or experimental empirical sciences however, observation, experimentation and control, in a laboratory environment are indispensable elements in their being justified as systematic and rigorous disciplines. And a laboratory environment requires an appropriate institution in which facilities for experimentation will be available. Besides, the development of science demands researchers who will work with interest and perseverance so as to sustain and favour the progress of research.

These criteria hold however in those areas of investigation that deal with empirical and objective facts and reality. But when the investigation is on the intentional or conscious aspects of human life, those aspects that involve man's spiritual nature, the methods of positive empirical science become inadequate. This is because the conscious nature is the specific reserve of the individual and no empirical science has been able as yet to

<sup>28</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1064a, 1-9.

penetrate into that nature with empirical methods. It is possible that inferences could be drawn by observing the external effects of that nature, but the conclusions will always remain probable. This difficulty applies to all of man's psychic life, and hence the difficulty of continuous repeatability of psychic phenomena in the laboratory.

Science could be speculative or theoretical when its aim is just to acquire the demonstrative knowledge of its object, and practical when it aims at acquiring the knowledge in view of doing something, that is, the knowledge that is directed towards some practical activity. But whether as speculative or practical, every scientific knowledge is based on or starts from experience, from which it discovers its principles or working hypothesis to its desired goal.

Science moves around the sphere of experience, whence it extracts its fundamental principles, and further develops itself beginning with these principles, through demonstration - that is, reasoning applied to scientific questions, in order to obtain a totality of related propositions which are the conclusions of sciences. Therefore, experience, principles, demonstrations and conclusions make up an organic whole, a being of reason of a logical nature, which is science in the objective sense.<sup>29</sup>

It is from this objective standpoint that we shall be looking at parapsychology as a science. But what is parapsychology?

The term 'Parapsychology' has been seen by some to be synonymous to psychical phenomenon itself. This tendency manifests itself in the definition which Reginald Omez gave it. According to him, Parapsychology is

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<sup>29</sup> Juan Jose Sanguinetti, *Logic and Gnoseology*, India Bangalore: Theological Publications, 1988, p.295.

a word used to denote psychological events which seem to go beyond the normal, recognised, everyday activities of the psyche, providing evidence which seems inexplicable except in terms either of the intervention of some entity other than ourselves or of the play of some function other than our known faculties and the senses recognised by contemporary physiology.<sup>30</sup>

This is no doubt a very indistinct type of definition since it has not brought out the nature of parapsychology as a discipline. However, the term owes its origin to William McDougall, who pioneered experimental psychology in England in the 19th century. It is a term he coined in order to streamline the field of psychical research which hitherto had a broader connotation, comprising both the parapsychical and paraphysical fields. The parapsychical field consists of extrasensory phenomena strictly so called, which is the mental response of the subject or percipient to a state or thing outside his mind without the use of any known sense organs. It exhibits three different types of phenomena namely, telepathy or the mental response of the percipient to the mental state of the agent known as mind communication or mind reading; clairvoyance or the mental response of the percipient to a physical effect or event outside of itself; and precognition or the mental response of the percipient to a future event. This is seen as a form of prediction of future event or events. Paraphysical field, on the other hand, is that of psychokinesis (PK) which embraces the phenomena that are believed to occur due to the mental influence of the subject or percipient on physical systems without the aid of any known motor organ like the hands and feet. Such phenomena include the levitation of heavy objects like tables, the causing of acceleration or retardation of a physical object that is already in motion, the causing of a moving object to change its course, or of a falling object to fall on a desired side. In these and the like phenomena, it is alleged that the will power of the subject or the psychic is at work. Parapsychology therefore is to be specifically concerned with the parapsychical phenomena. More recently, Carroll B. Nash has come out with a more modern

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<sup>30</sup> Reginald Omez, *Psychical Phenomena*, 2nd Printing, New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1959, p. 14.

terminology known as 'Psiology', with the title of his book, *Parapsychology: The Science of Psiology* (1986). According to him,

psiology may be a better term than parapsychology because it is considerably shorter and because it does not draw attention to the psychological aspect of psi to the complete neglect of its physical aspect.<sup>31</sup>

In this case, it seems that Nash wants to revert to the significance of the old terminology which is psychical research but with his own invented terminology. If this interpretation is correct, then the term parapsychology still stands at an advantage of being a more restricted one as McDougall conceived it.

As a science, parapsychology is an attempt to delve into the metaphysical arena with empirical method. By so doing, it challenges the scientific materialism of the 19th century, which professes not only the mechanistic view of the world, but also a materialistic view of mind. It poses this challenge using the same tools by which such scientific arrogance triumphed. It has to be recalled that the materialist theory of mind identifies the mental processes with brain physiology. Because psychical phenomena has fascinated men of different ages and cultural-religious beliefs, this discipline counts among its adherents, men of diverse professions. They include, astronomers, physicists, psychologists, philosophers and medical practitioners alike, from both Europe and America. The names that readily come to mind include, the Cambridge Greek Scholar, W.H. Myers, the Cambridge physicist, Henry Sidgwick, the French philosopher, Henry Bergson, an American philosopher and experimental psychologist, William James, and Charles Richet, a great physiologist and parapsychologist who won the Nobel Prize for physiology and medicine in 1913. This wide-ranging interest is an indication of the importance of psychical phenomena to other fields of study, and hence of man as an object of research for all disciplines - man as a microcosmos.

<sup>31</sup> C.B. Nash, *Parapsychology: The science of Psiology*, cit., p.3

Although the effort to establish parapsychology as a science started as far back as 1882, with the founding of the Society for Psychical Research in England, it took almost a century for it to be recognised as such. This was achieved through the absorption of the Parapsychological Association into the American Association for the Progress of Science in 1969. This singular act therefore conferred on parapsychology in some sense the sociological status of a science.

Behind this success was Joseph Banks Rhine who, as soon as he settled down at the Duke University in 1927, started working towards improving the quantitative (statistical) method in experimental parapsychology, using the Zener Cards specially designed for the purpose of data collecting and recording.<sup>32</sup> The cards got their name from their inventor and Rhine's collaborator, Karl Zener. Among Rhine's closest collaborators were his wife, Louisa Rhine, and J.G. Pratt. Rhine and his group perfected the scientific method already initiated by Charles Richet, ever before the founding of "L'Institut Métapsychique" in Paris; the twin Society to the already existing Society for Psychical Research. This French institute was founded by Richet himself in collaboration with a medical doctor, Rocco Santoliquido, in 1919.

One of the major objectives of J.B. Rhine, which is to establish parapsychology as a university discipline, eventually materialised through the insertion of the faculties of parapsychology in many universities of the world. Besides the Universities in the United States of America, those of Utrecht, Freiburg, Edinburgh, Leningrad, Rosario de Santa Fé (Argentina), Andhra (India), Tokyo, also established such faculties. The *Latin-American Centre of Parapsychology* was founded in 1966 in Brazil by Fr. Oscar Gonzales Quevedo. Italy was not left out in this development. The *Società Italiana di Metapsichica* which was founded in Rome in 1937, later in 1953 became

<sup>32</sup> Cf. J.B. Rhine, "History of Experimental Studies" in Benjamin B. Wolman, editor. *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 30; Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology: The Science of Psiology*, cit., pp. 28-29. Nash dated the systematisation of the method to 1930. As it had been Rhine's dream to see parapsychology established as an academic discipline, he immediately set working towards that objective as soon as he got into the university environment.

*Società Italiana di Parapsicologia*. The *Associazione Italiana di Metapsichica*(1946) and *Centro Studi Parapsicologici*(1954) also have their seats in Milan. Among the Italian great parapsychologists are, Fernando Cazzamalli Sanguineti, Piero Cassoli, Massimo Inardi and Fernando Bersani.<sup>33</sup> All these are indications that Parapsychology has come to stay as a science worthy of serious consideration or attention.

Before Parapsychology metamorphosed into a science, it had undergone different stages of development. We shall now turn to the detailed account of these stages.

### 2.3.1. 1776 - Mesmerism

Mesmerism is a movement that started in France in the late 18th century, that is, in 1776 to be precise. It inherited its name from its founder, Franz Anton Mesmer (1733-1815). Mesmer was a German physician who thrived in Vienna and later in France in the Romantic era when the craving for mysteries and marvels was at its peak. Taking advantage of this historical period, Mesmer propounded his new-found theory of magnetic fluid that is widely diffused in the body, known as *animal magnetism*. This magnetic fluid, he taught, and was believed, was a great means of curing all types of illnesses, especially those affecting the nerves. It is the view of Maria Teresa La Vecchia that for Mesmer, both animate bodies, the earth and celestial bodies exact mutual influence on one another. The agent of this influence is a fluid which is universally diffused, and so forms part of the substance of the nerves, giving the body a kind of magnetic property. This fluid could be directed according to certain methods thereby curing nerve sicknesses and other types of illnesses immediately and mediately respectively. The cure is effected since the influence is subject to mechanical laws.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Armando Pavese, *Manuale di Parapsicologia*, Monferrato (AL): Edizioni PIEMME, 1989, p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Maria Teresa La Vecchia, *Antropologia paranormale*, Parte 1, Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1995, p. 44.

Mesmer propounded these lofty ideas in his doctoral thesis *De planetarum influxu, L'influenza dei pianeti*.<sup>35</sup> It was alleged that the weakening of the magnetic energy in an organ or part of the body weakens or causes sickness to that particular part or organ. And to restore wholeness to the sick part or organ, Mesmer first started by using pieces of magnet which he usually placed on the affected part, and this was believed to be effective. Later on, he, and he alone discovered that healing power comes not from the magnet again but rather from his own body. And so he reverted to the method of imposition of his hand with caressing strokes over the body to increase its magnetic energy. He believed that the vibration from his hand is the channel through which this energy was being transferred. We need not forget also that the diagnosis of the ailment was his own preserve, without any other medical verification.

Mesmer's firm in Vienna was short-lived due to the negative attitude and report of three great scientific associations of the time, the Paris Academy of the time, the Royal Society of London, and the Academy of Berlin, to which he wrote seeking for support and approval. The fact is that while the first two of these associations thought it not worthy to reply at all, the third wrote back with unfavourable observations. Besides, it was discovered that his patients were preferably neurotics as well as young aristocratic women of Vienna. Being faced with opposition from different quarters both on account of the non-scientific basis of his theory, and of his method and preferred group of patients, he then transferred to France where he hoped to, and did establish a big clinic.

This so-called discovery won for Mesmer many disciples, the foremost of whom was Marquis Chastenat de Puységur, himself also a medical doctor. He was the first to observe in 1784, the phenomenon of hypnotic trance, under which condition the patients could not only read other people's minds, but also could view distant places with the eyes of their minds. This phenomenon is known as *travelling clairvoyance*. Hence Puységur discovered the method of artificially inducing the state of somnambulism or sleep-walking, in which state one could perform acts

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Pier Luigi Baima Bollone. *La scienza nel mondo degli spiriti*, cit., p. 161.

which are out of the ordinary. Even Carroll B. Nash was of the opinion that some of Puysegur's patients diagnosed both their own ailments and those of others who were far away, as well as prescribed appropriate remedies.<sup>36</sup>

The basic principle under which mesmerism worked is that the mind possesses some latent powers which when released could manifest in various paranormal ways. Such powers could be released by means of suggestion, either induced suggestion or personal one. Parapsychology utilises this method in its experiments.

The fame of Mesmer's healing method again aroused jealousy from the medical practitioners in the France of his day, and consequently the controversy which eventually led to the setting up of the *French Royal Commission*, by King Louis XVI to investigate his claims and practices. Though the report of the Commission was not in favour of mesmerism, the phenomenon of hypnotic trance captured the attention and interest of scientists and medical practitioners alike. In essence, Mesmer's method was that of profound psychological suggestion (hypnosis) which really worked in his patients. Mesmerism therefore gave rise to the phenomenon of modern scientific hypnotism.

Thus mesmerism opened the door to the recognition of the phenomenon of the *altered states of consciousness* which today has aroused great enthusiasm among parapsychologists; laid the foundation for *depth psychology* by the discovery of the deep trance or the state of lucidity.

Perhaps the current enthusiasm for altered states of consciousness among parapsychologists may best be viewed as one of the long-term legacies of the mesmeric movement.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology: The Science of Psychology*, cit., p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> John Beloff, "Historical Overview" in *Handbook of Parapsychology*, Benjamin B. Wolman, Editor, cit., p. 5.

It has to be noted that although mesmerism is attributed to the work and practices of Anton Mesmer, the theory of magnetic stars, that is, that stars have magnetic force that could affect human beings, and the theory of "animal magnetism" owe their origins to the Swiss physician, Paracelsus (1493-1541) and to Van Helmont (1577-1644) respectively.<sup>38</sup>

Paracelsus' belief in the hidden and healing forces of nature permeated and influenced all his medical theories and practices. He however owed the origin of this idea of the hidden forces of nature to the mythical and magical world-views of ancient civilisations like Greece. In those world-views, there exists reciprocal influence of both celestial and earthly bodies on one another. Even the roles of natural and mystical forces were being exchanged to the extent that while natural forces were being personified, the mystical forces were believed to be subject to the naturalistic and deterministic laws of nature; hence the cyclic and vitalistic view of nature.<sup>39</sup>

Hypnotism and its techniques on the other hand, go back to the ancient civilisations of Greece and Egypt, where special hypnotic centres and sleep temples for the sick were in use. The techniques for inducing hypnotic sleep in these centres included the use of music, repetition of certain words and the use of drugs. While the patient was asleep, the priest/healer employed the power of suggestion to bring about the alleged cures.<sup>40</sup>

The problem with mesmeric method however, was that there was no way of distinguishing between spontaneous and induced or conditioned paranormal phenomena in their patients, and here lies one of the weaknesses of mesmerism. Besides, from the scientific point of view, mesmerism has been found wanting on the basis of its hypothesis of *animal magnetism*. In the first place, Mesmer did not specify the polarity of the so-called magnetic field of the patient's body and his (Mesmer's) own body respectively. If the

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Nance Fyson, Editor, *Mind Power: Quest for the Unknown*, New York/Montreal: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1992, p.40.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Juan José Sanguinetti, *Scienza aristotelica e scienza moderna*, Roma: Armando Editore, 1992, pp. 86-87; Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII. 1074b, 1-5; *Physics*, IV. 223b, 23-30.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Nance Fyson, Editor, *Mind Power: Quest for the Unknown*, cit., pp. 39-40.

law of magnetism and electricity which states that 'like poles repel' while 'unlike poles attract' is credible and workable, and any person can demonstrate this law for himself using two pieces of magnetic irons, then the mesmeric theory of *animal magnetism*, in the form it has been propounded is still questionable. Mesmer did not clarify whether his body was positively charged while his patient's body was negatively charged or vice versa before the magnetic fluid became effective.

However, the psychological aspect of mesmerism has been postulated as the main factor behind its being effective or not. In this case, the mental attitude of the magnetiser has been emphasised. Thompson Jay Hudson was of the opinion that the first prerequisite for mesmeric process to be effective is that the magnetiser must have self-confidence in his subjective powers in order to achieve a positive result. The constant force emanates from this subject's mind, and he has to be reminding himself constantly of this power throughout the process, while at the same time passing his fingers over or massaging the supposed sick part, with his gaze fixed in the eyes of his subject or patient. The concentration of his gaze in the patient's eyes is supposed to displace the threshold of the latter's consciousness, thereby rendering him vulnerable to the magnetiser's will. According to Hudson,

Whatever effect is desired should be formulated in the mind of the operator, and reiterated with persistency until it is produced. The principle involved is obvious, and easily understood. The subject is passive, and receptive of subjective mental impressions. The subjective mind of the operator is charged with faith and confidence by auto-suggestion. That faith is impressed telepathically upon the subjective mind of the patient; and even though his objective belief may not coincide with the subjective impression thus received, the latter obtains control unconsciously to the subject, and the end is accomplished.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Thompson J. Hudson, *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*. Edison, New Jersey: Castle Books, 1995, pp. 110-111.

It is supposed that this method of mind-concentration is what is at work in psycho-therapeutics, in which it is believed that healing could be effected even at a distance. *Animal magnetism* therefore has taken the form of the force of the will.

Mesmerism first and foremost is based on the false hypothesis of the mythical and magical world-views of ancient civilisations as we have already seen, in which it was believed that the bodies, both astral and terrestrial influence one another reciprocally. Moreover, oriental natural methods of healing like acupuncture, acupressure, and reflexology which are fast diffusing in this technological age, show that the body has ways of taking care of itself if only the necessary nerves or organs are properly activated. These methods, which are based on activating the different nerve endings known as meridians which are believed to be connected to different organs of the body, have disproved the mesmeric theory of magnetic or animal fluid. The meridians are taken to be

invisible channels flowing under the skin. There are 12 main paired meridians on each side of the body, each linked with an organ ... and two relating to 'organs' unrecognised by Western physiologists: the *heart constrictor*, controlling circulation, and the *triple heater*, which keeps the body, and the emotions, warm.<sup>42</sup>

Although the process through which such methods function still remains a mystery and controversial especially among orthodox medical practitioners, their effects are real in alleviating or completely curing illnesses.<sup>43</sup> The modern technique known as physiotherapy which applies either massage, physical exercise or heat waves for the treatment of certain ailments could be compared, to a certain extent, to these natural methods of healing.

<sup>42</sup> H.S. Stuttman, Inc., Publishers. *Mysteries of the Mind, Space and Time - The Unexplained*, Vol. 1. Westport, Connecticut: Orbis Publishing Limited, 1992, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Appendix 1 at the end of this work is a typical example of one of these natural methods of healing.

The hypothesis that imagination or auto-suggestion plays an appreciable role in the healing process has equally been questioned since acupuncture has been found effective in healing animals too. It has been alleged that a dog, Judy's paralysed hind legs were restored to health by means of acupuncture.<sup>44</sup> If this claim of animal healing is authentic, it therefore means that acupuncture is objectively effective without necessarily requiring the subjective disposition of the patient. But does this rule out such subjective dispositions completely? There have been conflicting opinions as to the above question since the dividing line between the influences of the subject and the healing methods respectively on the healing process is difficult to be drawn. This again points to the difficulty of the empirical observation of man's intentional states.

### 2.3.2 1848 - Spiritism-Spiritualism

Although observations and reports of spiritualistic phenomena, that is, communication from discarnate spirits, had appeared in the preceding years, it was not until 1848 that it became a force to be reckoned with. It became curiously notorious because of the experiences of the Fox family in Hydesville, New York. Rappings (quick, sharp knocks or sounds) and movement of objects were experienced in their house, which was believed to be coming from the spirit of a murdered man who was buried in that house. It was alleged that questions were being directed to the spirit responsible for the phenomena, and responses were received by two raps for yes and one rap for no. From the answers received, human skeleton was discovered, on investigation, at the place indicated. Strangely enough, it was alleged that these rappings followed the Fox Sisters even to their new house. This and similar events like levitations, whether of the medium (the intermediary between the supposed discarnate spirit and the people) himself or herself, or of other objects, automatic writing known as automatism, that is, spontaneous writing without the writer being consciously aware of what is being written, the alleged phenomenon of apport, that is, making or causing things enter or go out of a room from the sources through which they could

<sup>44</sup> Cf. H.S. Stuttman Inc., Publishers, *Mysteries of the Mind, Space and Time - The Unexplained*, cit., p. 14.

not ordinarily pass; tilting of heavy objects at a distance; registration of voices or messages purported to have been delivered by discarnate spirits, and materialisation (partial images of the spirits concerned which were made visible to the audience at the sittings, like the hand), which were believed to have had no physical sources, gave rise to the insurgence of mediums who claimed to possess the power of producing parapsychical phenomena attributable to the spirits of the deceased. The last of the above enumerated phenomena is being utilised to a great extent by the mediums in their alleged process of solving people's psychosomatic or physical problems. Spiritualism is therefore looked upon as a true and proper religion. Rhine and Pratt defined it as,

a religion, having for its central emphasis belief in the existence of a world of discarnate personalities supposedly able to communicate with the living, mainly through mediumship. They are also believed capable of manifestations such as hauntings and poltergeist phenomena ( a sort of rough-housing attributed to noisy spirits).<sup>45</sup>

The spirits are therefore believed not only to communicate messages through the mediums, but also could produce physical effects. These physical effects confer the position of advantage to spiritualism over mesmerism with regard to attraction of adherents. The visible signs made it more attractive and intriguing than mesmerism.

As a religion, spiritualism is based on the unjustified interpretation of supranormal facts with its two basic beliefs or dogmas of communication with the dead and reincarnation. Its morality is founded on disdain for all sensuality and the promotion of renunciation and charity. According to the spiritualist's notion, there are three functional principles or parts in man, namely, the material body which is mortal, the fluidic or perispirit body which when released in dream, hypnosis or trance, is responsible for supranormal manifestations, and lastly a perfectible and imperishable spirit.

<sup>45</sup> Rhine, J.B., and Pratt, J.G., *Parapsychology: Frontier Science of the Mind*, cit., p. 14.

The perispirit or the astral body, besides the functions of regulating organic functions of the body and collection of sensations, also provides the link between the material body and the imperishable spirit. It is alleged that this is the nexus between the medium and the discarnate spirits. But if it is an essential constituent of man, why is this spirit-communication a special preserve of professional mediums rather than being available to all humans? It is an ancient belief due to the fact of spontaneous telepathy, that the material body could give rise to or double into that which is incorruptible and more subtle, and this is what the Egyptians call the *ka* or the duplicate.<sup>46</sup> Modern spiritualism has found its strong anchor on this belief in the duplication of the material body.

However beautiful and enlightening these spiritualistic ideas about man may seem, one still wonders how plausible is the fact that the material body is the cause of a semi-material body. It is no doubt a proposition that contradicts experience, and the natural law of cause and effect. How could matter generate that which is semi-spiritual or the inferior produce the superior? If sensation belongs to the perispirit body, it therefore follows that the sense organs are found in it and not in the material body. The absurdity of such a theory is evident. Such absurdity is clearly brought out by Amt Tanner when he writes:

Spiritualism is the ruck and muck of modern culture, the common enemy of true science and of true religion, and to drain its dismal and miasmatic marshes is the great work of modern culture. The passion to know whether when a man dies he shall live again, which weights all the dice and makes most men eagle-eyed for all that can favour and bat-eyed for all that seems against what is the deep desire of every heart, will never find satisfaction or solution in this wise ... Superstition today has its stronghold in the dark terrae incognitae of the unconscious soul of man towards which researchers today are just as superstitious as savages are towards lightning, eclipses, comets and earthquakes.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Maria Teresa La Vecchia, *Antropologia paranormale*, cit., p.57.

The attitude of mind of these two types of mankind towards these two classes of phenomena can be psychologically paralleled to the utmost detail ... The mysteries of our psychic being are bound ere long to be cleared up. Every one of these ghostly phenomena will be brought under the domain of law.<sup>47</sup>

The use of mediums as intermediaries in these manifestations, surely created opportunities for fraud and cheating. These sad consequences were even facilitated by the fact that the sittings were held either in the dark or semi-dark environments. The fact that mediumship had been professionalised, and the craze to make more money, made the profession more vulnerable to fraud. The downfall of the spiritualist movement started from here.

All the loopholes that had surrounded spiritualism notwithstanding, the case of the medium D.D. Home, offered an example of a possible genuine paranormal phenomena of this epoch worthy of scientific investigation. Home was said to have started the manifestation of psychical abilities right from his adolescent age. This made leading spiritualists in America to adopt him. It was reported that his séances were usually preceded by an earthquake-like shaking of the room, followed by the tilting or lifting of the table without its contents falling off; the sitters may feel being touched by invisible hands; things may either be deposited on their laps or snatched away. The spirits were said to make their identity known through Home, and at times they could play some beautiful melody on an accordion either being held by Home in his hand or placed under the table, and so on<sup>48</sup>. The credibility of Home stemmed from the fact that he usually operated in good illumination, contrary to the method of the other mediums who operated in darkness. This counted as the first empirical evidence on his behalf. Besides, many renowned scientists like Sir William Crookes, who had closely

<sup>47</sup> Amy Tanner, *Studies in Spiritism*, Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1994, p. xxxii.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. John Beloff, "Historical Overview", cit., pp. 8-9.

observed him, wrote accounts, usually long ones, of their experiences with him, thus validating the possibility of the genuineness of his psychic powers.

Spiritualism is a factor to reckon with as far as the development of parapsychology as a science is concerned. It supplied the materials which constituted its field of investigation, such as the bringing to light of the phenomena of poltergeist (ghost-like loud noise and lifting of objects), materialisation (semi-visible figures representing the discarnate spirits at work), levitations (lifting or tilting of objects or lifting of the medium himself by unseen means), rappings, and so on. These are the parapsychical phenomena which are grouped under Psychokinesis by the science of parapsychology, as they are known to date.

### 2.3.3 1882-1930 The Maturation Age - Founding of the Society for Psychical Research (S.P.R.)

The historical development of the science of parapsychology saw its turning-point with the establishment of the Society for Psychical Research in London, in 1882. It was surely a venture of no mean magnitude, embarked upon by audacious men who love daring even in the midst of ridicules and oppositions. This first initiative encouraged like-minded men in Poland, Germany, and France to set up like Societies in their respective countries, thus favouring the progress of research. America which takes the lead in psychical research today, was the last to found its own Society. Even when William James founded one in 1885, it was besieged with a lot of difficulties, especially financial ones, that led to its being amalgamated with the mother Society in London. However, it later regained its autonomy and is the world's leading point of reference for psychical research to date.

The background which favoured the founding of the Society was that provided by the tension between religion and science. That was the time when Charles Robert Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace came up with the theory of evolution, in the Victorian Age noted for its evangelistic and Calvinistic dogmatic and austere religiosity. In order that men be liberated from the extremes of either religious dogmatism or scientific materialism prevalent of the age, there was the need for open-minded inquiry into the

paranormal phenomena which was in vogue. The founding fathers of the London Society for Psychical Research included, Henry Sidgwick, its first president, Frederick Myers and Edmund Gurney. John Beloff described them thus;

All three could be described as products of the conflict between science and religion which came to a head in Victorian England with the advent of Darwin. They were men who had lost their faith in revealed religion but who were temperamentally averse to the prevailing scientific materialism.<sup>49</sup>

In the early days of parapsychology, as we have already seen, there operated mediums who produced paranormal physical effects which were usually attributed to discarnate spirits. As research and observation progressed, people who possess psychic skills without the mediation from spirits began to manifest. Their powers ranged from psychic diagnosis and healing to psychometry. And so, from the evidences of physical phenomena, the attention became principally drawn to the extrasensory phenomena of telepathy and the alleged evidences for survival after death. While telepathy is the spiritual communication between two living individuals, the survival evidence is the alleged communication between the spirit of the living on the one hand, and the spirit of the dead on the other hand. It was believed that if the phenomenon of telepathy could be scientifically established, then that of survival after death could be inferred from it. The logic is that if spirits could communicate while still in the body, they could continue to communicate whether they are still in the body or apart from it; being immaterial by nature, they could act independently of the body or matter.

The maturation age therefore witnessed the explosion of the manifestations of the clairvoyant psychic skills. People like Pascal Fortunny in Paris and Senora Maria Reyes de Z. in Mexico were renowned psychometrics. They used token objects to reveal either their owners or their places of provenance. Such people are usually being referred to as "psychic

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

detectives". Rudolf Tischner, a medical doctor in Munich, Germany, in 1925, discovered the psychic skill known as "cryptoscopy", that is, the capacity to read and reveal the contents of sealed opaque envelopes, from the clairvoyant subjects he was experimenting on. Some clairvoyants like Stefan Osswiecki, a Pole, was found to possess both psychometric and cryptoscopic skills. His case became the most famous after being studied by researchers and experts from Germany, England and France.<sup>50</sup>

As things turned out, instead of the telepathetic phenomenon that was to be the main focus of research, the clairvoyant one spontaneously dominated the scene. Besides these clairvoyant phenomena, there came to light also the phenomenon known as "cross correspondences". These were correspondences which resulted from the automatic writings, sent to the researchers from different places. They were alleged to be messages sent by the three founders of the Society for Psychical Research, Myers, Sidgwick and Gurney respectively, after their death, to some mediums or automatists from diverse geographical areas. Both the linguistic and grammatical qualities of the writings were said to be above the intellectual capabilities of the mediums. It was alleged that the messages started coming in from 1902 and continued through 1930, while their said authors had all died by 1901. These mysterious and spectacular phenomena were interpreted as the sign of their authors passionate desire to prove the fact of survival after death, even from beyond their earthly existence. The writings provided much research materials for this age.

#### 2.3.4 The Period of Joseph Banks Rhine

The history of the development of parapsychology as a science will not be complete, least of all authentic without the mention of J.B. Rhine, with the co-operation of his wife, Louisa Rhine, and co-worker, J.G. Pratt. Our exposition here however will be limited only to the important developments that took place during this period. The details of the contributions of Rhine and his group to the field of parapsychology will be treated in the next chapter of this work.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

Rhine and his group revolutionised the already existing methods and approaches to psychical phenomena which had been hitherto based on observations and evidences, by perfecting the scientific, quantitative, and statistical methods already introduced by Charles Richet as far back as 1884. Of great help in this project was the instrumentality of the Zener cards, named after their inventor and Rhine's collaborator, Karl Zener. The cards consist of a deck of 25, divided into five sets of 5, and each set bearing one of the five geometric symbols of circle, rectangle, wavy lines, star and plus sign. Before the introduction of the Zener cards, research was based only on the analysis of spontaneous psychic manifestations and the use of the ordinary playing cards in laboratory experimentation.

The seed of this revolutionary enterprise was sown when Rhine was still a student of McDougall who was the head of the Faculty of Psychology of Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, in the United States of America, in 1927. Rhine was aware of the importance of an institutional seat for the development of any scientific investigation, and so he struggled, amidst difficulties and discouragement from some colleges, to secure a place in the above university, and then was able to set up a parapsychology laboratory there.

That revolution was brought about by the two burning desires in the mind of Rhine. First, was the desire to raise parapsychology to the status of an accredited academic discipline in the university. And for this first objective to be achieved, there was the need for a more strict scientific method, which brought about the standardising of the already existing methods, as his second objective. Through the experiments of Rhine and his team, it was later to be postulated that psychic ability belongs to all men as such, and is not just an exclusive reserve of few gifted individuals. The experiments on the phenomenon of telepathy which was performed by Estabrooks at Harvard in 1927 with college students who were selected at random, which were judged to have yielded positive results, were also presented as possible evidence for man's universal heritage of psychic powers. The truth or falsity of this postulate will only be verified when the source of psychic ability might have been examined.

Under the leadership of William McDougall, both the name and techniques of the new discipline were standardised. The appellation changed from *psychical research* to *parapsychology*, thus giving it an independent status from psychology and delimiting its area of operation. It was also during this period of systematisation that the term *Extrasensory Perception (ESP)* was coined by no other person than Rhine himself, to include the paranormal phenomena of telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition, all of which make up the cognitive aspect of psychic phenomena. Rhine published his programme of scientific parapsychology in a monograph titled *Extrasensory Perception*. In it, he reviewed the earlier research efforts so far made in the field as well as mapped out the research procedures and statistical methods that were needed in the field. This programme later provided a guide for future researchers in psychic phenomena. The publication of the monograph equally brought the emerging discipline of parapsychology to the attention of the wider public.

Although the controversy between the spiritists and those opposed to spiritism had dominated the psychical scene, the publication of Rhine's monograph in 1934 widened the area of the controversy. This time the controversy was centred on matters of research methods, statistical calculations and conclusions drawn from the researches. It was mainly between the Duke group of researchers and professional psychologists who were afraid that the results of psychical research could either discredit professional psychology, or discredit themselves as professionals. Some of the critics of psychical research, Donald Adams, for example, were motivated by prejudice and jealousy of the person of Rhine.<sup>51</sup>

The period of J.B. Rhine marked a turning-point in the history of experimental parapsychology not only because of the positive experimental results of the Duke group, but also because of the academic controversy that characterised that period. The controversy, the criticisms and appraisals of

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science, Origins of Experimental Psychical Research*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980, p. 251. The details of the controversy will be treated in chapter 5 of this work.

psychical research of that period helped greatly in the development of the discipline and in orientating future researchers in the ways and methods of proper scientific investigation.

The Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man (FRNM) for the promotion of psychical research, was established by Rhine in Durham, North Carolina in 1962. He equally pioneered the establishment of parapsychological journals like *The Journal of Parapsychology* (1937), and *Research in Parapsychology* (1957). Summarising the contributions of Rhine to the development of psychical research Carroll B. Nash writes,

it was Rhine's enthusiasm, ingenuity, intellectual rigor, critical judgement, and dogged determination in the face of adverse criticism that led to the establishment of psychology as a science that, like any other, has some unique principles and characteristics of its own.<sup>52</sup>

Nash is not alone in this affirmation. As we mentioned before, the contributions of Rhine and his close collaborators will be closely examined in the next chapter.

### 2.3.5 The Contemporary Period

The organised laboratory experiments at Duke and their results which were made known to the public in Rhine's work *Extrasensory Perception*, served as an impetus for interested researchers to devote more time and resources to psychical research. This gave rise to the establishment of other research laboratories in the universities in different countries of Europe, Asia and the Americas like in England, Russia, Germany, Japan, Argentina and the United States of America.<sup>53</sup> Besides, other research centres like the

<sup>52</sup> Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology: The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 29. Also, Reginald Omez, *Psychical Phenomena*, cit., pp. 30-33; Armando Pavese, *Manuale di Parapsicologia*, cit., p. 137.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Armando Pavese, *Manuale di parapsicologia*, cit., pp. 137-138; Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, the Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 30.

Parapsychology Foundation and the Psychical Research Foundation, all in the United States of America were established. These and such like centres devoted their efforts to the promotion of psychical research by gathering and distributing funds to interested and organised researchers, organising national and international conferences, as well as disseminating the results from these conferences. The Parapsychology Foundation established the *Parapsychology Review*, the publication through which it disseminated the information from their research efforts. More researchers were encouraged to publish the results of their experiments through all the established journals.

More avenues for co-operation between psychical research and other related human sciences like psychology, religion, philosophy, medicine, et cetera, were opened up in this period. Psychical research has equally favoured research in the areas of mineralogy, psychiatry and psycho-neurotic medicine. Equally significant in this period is the explosion of occult sects disguised as religion, which could be traced to the diffusion of information about psychic powers.

Research to verify the presence of psychic abilities in animals was one of the legacies of this period. Rhine himself carried out experiments with a man-dog team in 1971 to see whether dogs could psychically discover underground objects.<sup>54</sup>

Progress in the field of parapsychology continued with regard to its areas of operation and the techniques it employs. During this period, interest was also centred on discovering the relationship between the *altered states of consciousness* which was discovered during the mesmeric period, or the state of the mind and psychical ability, that is, to determine the possible physiological correlates of extrasensory perception. Hence the study was concentrated on such states like dreams, hypnosis, deep relaxation, sensory deprivation and bombardment, meditation, and so on. The studies on dreams, for example, were carried out specifically at the Dream Laboratory of the Maimonides Hospital, New York, in order to find out whether there

<sup>54</sup> Cf. J.B. Rhine, "History of Experimental Studies" in Benjamin B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 42.

were other factors that favour psychic ability besides those of personality traits. For example, to find out whether a person in the stage of Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep could be more susceptible to psychic experience or not. REM sleep has been described as the twitching or restless movement which the eyes make while people are asleep, hence the name, "Rapid Eye Movement". Most of the experiments in this direction showed that psychological factors rather than physiological ones exercise more influence on psychic manifestations.<sup>55</sup>

The psychiatrist, Howard Roffwarg of Columbia University in New York rather suggested that REM sleep helps the development of the brain and the promotion of the growth of neural connections that are needed for learning in children. In adults, it is analogous to physical exercise that helps the muscular system to keep or maintain tone, though it acts on the central nervous system. That REM sleep is a necessary prerequisite in the learning process was confirmed by the experiments of the psychiatrists Ramon Greenberg and Chester Pearlman of Boston. They experimented with both rats and human volunteers and concluded

that the mind is doing serious work when it dreams - specifically, it is incorporating newly learned information into a long-term memory bank. ... REM may thus be critical in stimulating the development of associative thought in infants and young children. The theory would also explain why humans, who must constantly adapt to meet new challenges, exhibit so much REM activity.<sup>56</sup>

It has also been postulated that the most powerful night-time visions come during REM sleep.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 20. For an introductory account of experiments on ESP in dreams using the technique of REM, see Ullman, M., and Krippner, S., (with A. Vaughan), *Dream Telepathy*, New York: Macmillan, 1973.

<sup>56</sup> John L., Papanek, editor-in-chief, *Secrets of the Inner Mind*, Alexandria, Virginia: The Editors of Time-Life Books, 1993, p. 22.

On purely scientific level, this period saw the old methods of card-guessing for extrasensory perception, and dice-throwing for Psychokinesis being replaced by automated testing techniques and the use of computer for data processing and analysis. For example, Leonard Troland of the psychology department at Harvard University invented automatic recording machine; while Helmut Schmidt of Mind Science Foundation, San Antonio, Texas, also invented the **binary random generator** which is another type of automatic card selecting and recording machine.<sup>57</sup> These modern techniques are meant to reduce possible psycho-kinetic effects on telepathic and clairvoyant experiments, as well as manual-recording errors and hence safeguard accuracy and facilitate progress in this new field of study. Nevertheless, they have not been found capable of removing the basic mystery as to the nature of psychical phenomena. According to Beloff,

methodological rigor and sophistication can never be a substitute for concrete discoveries in science or for theoretical understanding. When it comes to the basic nature of psi, we are still almost as much in the dark as were our pioneers.<sup>58</sup>

This points to the fact that empirical science needs not pretend to have penetrated, or will ever penetrate to the deepest core of nature. When the inquiry touches the ultimate nature of any aspect of reality, that ultimate explanation of the "why" of things, then philosophy should come to the rescue of empirical science.

## 2.4 Conclusion

Our discussions in this chapter have so far centred on the development of parapsychology from its mythical and spiritualistic phases to its university laboratory status. The efforts of pioneer psychical researchers have somehow raised it to the status of a scientific discipline among others, with its proper material and formal objects. While its material object is man

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, the Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 30.

<sup>58</sup> John Beloff, "Historical Overview", cit., p. 21.

as a living, sensing and rational being, its formal object is man and his mental powers. From the historical development of the science which we have so far traced, there appears to be wide-ranging fields of interest that have emerged. These include the areas of extrasensory perception properly called, that is, that of clairvoyance, telepathy, precognition, and to some extent psychokinesis; and the area of the alleged evidence for survival after death. Although all these pose big philosophical problems, the scope of our inquiry will be limited to the area of extrasensory perception alone, which is in fact the proper interest of the science of parapsychology.

As an academic discipline, parapsychology utilises the general or common scientific methods of observation, experimentation and analysis. This it does starting from the early method of gathering and analysing spontaneous, reported cases, to the laboratory observation and analysis of specific cases of paranormal phenomena. The laboratory setting provides the scientific prerequisite of the opportunity for control experiments. Besides, it has its specific techniques which developed from card-guessing and dice-throwing to purely automated testing techniques, which help to minimise possible recording and calculating errors of the results. The statistical method of calculation improved upon by Rhine and his team won for parapsychology some sympathy from experimental scientists. Despite this fairly good beginning, parapsychologists have to be really alert and realistic to distinguish between fraudulent and genuine psychics, and between magical and natural psychic manifestations. The reality of fraud among some mediums and would-be psychics have strengthened the position of sceptics with psychic phenomena and research. This vigilance therefore becomes very necessary if parapsychology has to stand the test of a scientific discipline, and so win some credibility from the scientific community.

The fact that parapsychology counts on scientists in various fields and philosophers among its adherents, as the historical development shows, is an indication that it may be of some relevance to other disciplines. Moreover, that some universities, especially in Europe and the Americas, now have, among other faculties, that of parapsychology as well, shows how interest is developing towards the discipline because of the phenomena that is involved,

although the air of scepticism is still high. This is not surprising knowing that psychical phenomena are not totally susceptible to empirical verification.

All the progress and successes hitherto recorded by parapsychology notwithstanding, the principal question as to the nature and source of psychical phenomena still elude ultimate explanation. The experiments and hypotheses so far show that the empirical method alone can not supply convincing and ulterior answers to the perplexing questions posed by the paranormal phenomena. Hence in the words of Beloff, it has to be said that,

the significance of the paranormal is precisely that it signals the boundary of the scientific world-view. Beyond that boundary lies the domain of mind liberated from its dependence on the brain. On this view, parapsychology, using the methods of science, becomes a vindication of the essentially spiritual nature of man which must forever defy strict scientific analysis.<sup>59</sup>

Hence the reason why philosophy, as a universal science, can not simply stand on the fence in the face of such an all-important inquiry.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3

### JOSEPH BANKS RHINE AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, we examined the various remarkable stages through which parapsychology passed in its search for an academic status. Such stages included the mythical-ancient stage in which the idea of the animistic-magical influence prevailed. This lasted till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Franz Anton Mesmer appeared on the scene with his theory of "animal magnetism" and its purported healing effects. Although this theory and its practice left their mark on the soils of the age, it never satisfied the curiosity of the human mind as to the nature and functions of the psychic powers in the face of all the prevailing psychic experiences that were being reported then. The reports of the haunting incidences connected with the Fox family of Hydesville drew attention to the phenomenon of spirit communication that gave rise to the spiritualistic movements. That period witnessed the boom of both natural and professional mediums who claimed to be intermediaries between the spirit-world and the human world. The activities of the mediums which were partly extrasensory and partly psychophysical, partly genuine and partly fraudulent, necessitated an organised and systematic investigation so as to, among other objectives, bring "some order and direction to a chaos of popular credulity and enthusiasm."<sup>1</sup> Hence the beginning of some sort of scientific investigation into psychical phenomena.

This chapter sets out to examine the scientific efforts of Joseph Banks Rhine who, among parapsychologists, was and is still judged a valuable

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<sup>1</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh. *The Elusive Science, Origins of Experimental Psychical Research*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980, p. 70.

must be quick to note however that whatever progress and contributions Rhine made to psychical research stemmed from the efforts of his predecessors.

In fact, Charles Richet's monumental work, *Traité de Métapsychique*<sup>2</sup>, was the first serious attempt to establish parapsychology as a scientific discipline. In this work, Richet categorised psychic phenomena into 'objective meta-psychics' and 'subjective meta-psychics'. While the former stand for the physical, psycho-kinetic (PK) phenomena, the later stand for cryptesthesia (Richet's old term for extrasensory perception - ESP). Richet had hoped, through this work, to make parapsychology a unified science, having taken into consideration all the controversies that had surrounded it right from its beginnings. Unfortunately, his arguments against the spiritists' hypothesis of spirit communication in support of their survivalist theory on the one hand, and his open antagonism against the spiritists in general on the other hand, became a big obstacle to arriving at his desired consensus as to the nature and laws of psychic phenomena.

As a physiologist, Richet has strongly believed in the positivistic psychological parallelism, in which all the activities of the mind must always be referred to the concomitant physiological brain processes. For this reason, he could not imagine how the mind could outlive the death of the brain. This positivistic-materialistic view of human nature was precisely what some of the pioneers of psychical research set out to combat, in order to establish a holistic view of human nature. William McDougall, for example, who was Rhine's teacher and mentor, made it his main objective to pursue psychical research in order to correct the materialistic-mechanistic currents of thought of his time to which Richet belonged.

In the 1920s and 1930s he made it something of a mission to combat materialism wherever he saw it... As the appeal to scientific materialism increased, McDougall came to see

<sup>2</sup> Charles Richet, *Traité de Métapsychique*, Paris: Felix Alcan, 1922. English edition translated as *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, by Stanley De Brath, New York: Macmillan, 1923.

this opposition to materialism as a moral struggle. The materialistic conception of the world could only lead to the bankruptcy of values, for without a vision of the transcendental significance of man, life became empty of purpose and meaning.<sup>3</sup>

He therefore

allotted to psychical research the task of stemming "the destroying tide" of materialism, since only here could "facts incompatible with materialism" be discovered.<sup>4</sup>

It was from these two opposed currents of thought that Rhine and his collaborators set out to work.

### 3.2.1 Biographical Sketch - J.B. Rhine

Joseph Banks Rhine was born in 1896 to a peasant, Protestant family in central Pennsylvania. Because of the farming occupation of the family, they had to be alternating abode between central Pennsylvania and northern Ohio. Rhine would be said therefore to have grown up in these two communities. It was the family's desire that the young Joseph took up Protestant ministry as a profession, and so his studies were arranged for accordingly.

In 1910, at Marshallville in Ohio, Joseph, barely 14 years old, fell in love with Louisa Weckesser, in whom he discovered some religious interests. Their friendship grew to such an extent that in 1915 they chose nearby colleges for their continuing education. While Joseph went to Ohio Northern University to pursue religious studies, Louisa went to Wooster to study Botany. Joseph however transferred to Wooster the following year probably for the purpose of living closer to Louisa, and partly because he thought that Wooster had better courses in religion than his first school.

<sup>3</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 59.  
<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

During his sojourn there he fell into a profound intellectual and religious crisis and so had to leave the university after just one semester. The crisis was the result of his inability to reconcile the teachings of his religion and those of science. As a result, he had to definitely abandon the idea of becoming a Protestant minister. He abandoned studies so as to reflect on his life and mission but eventually found himself in the United States Marines of the first World War from which he got the rank of a sergeant in 1919, the same year that Louisa got her Bachelor of Science in Botany in the University of Chicago where she had transferred with her Botany lecturer.

All these restless years were seen as preparatory to a stable career which he eventually found in science. He wanted to read forestry but had to study botany as a preparatory course. He therefore went over to the University of Chicago for the purpose. Joseph happily sealed his relationship with Louisa there in Chicago by consolidating their marriage in 1920.

While Louisa continued her graduate studies in plant physiology, Joseph devoted himself to his under-graduate studies for the next two years at the end of which he also started specialising in plant physiology.

While J. B. studied the transport and metabolism of fats in plant seedlings, Louisa did research on the enzyme catalase. In 1923 both Rhines received graduate degrees - Louisa a Ph.D., her husband an M.S. - and that summer they took research positions at the Thompson Institute for Plant Research in Yonkers to work on various experimental problems in plant chemistry.<sup>5</sup>

Joseph's progress in scientific career was astronomical, for while holding his research position in Yonkers, the University of West Virginia offered him an academic post in botany. He even turned down an offer for an academic post from the University of Iowa, having solidified his post in the University of West Virginia where he enjoyed the love and admiration of his department. He successfully completed his Ph.D. program at Chicago in 1925.

<sup>5</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 72.

Naturally one would have expected Rhine to settle down contentedly in his career at this stage. But the reverse was the case. The Rhines still had their mind fixed on something beyond orthodox science. In Ernst Haeckel's book: *The Riddle of the Universe*, Joseph found an alternative or something comparable to his former religious beliefs. On the other hand, in Bergson's *Creative Evolution* translated by Arthur Mitchell, they found arguments which to their own estimation brought materialism down to its knees. But inasmuch as they could not for anything relinquish their hold on science, they could not find adequate answers to their questions on human nature and moral values from science alone.

Having wrestled so long with the problem of religious belief, they could not now simply abandon that problem separately compartmentalizing their scientific research and their moral concerns. Scientific research into the material world, divorced from meaning and values, was incomplete; whatever their future work in science, it would have to lead them on to attack the fundamental questions with which philosophy and religion had traditionally toyed.<sup>6</sup>

This tension between science and religion was characteristic of the 1920s. It led Shailer Matthews, the dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, to organise series of lectures featuring renowned scientists like Robert Millikan. These lectures did not make much impression on the Rhines as to the solution to the problem. It was in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's lecture in support of psychical research and spiritualism, and in the writings of Oliver Lodge on psychical research, that they found a prospective bridge. From here on, the Rhines started working seriously, reading, and making contacts, towards their embracing psychical research as their life's career.

But before Joseph could finally decide for psychical research as a career, he wrote letters to some of the early psychical researchers he knew, Joseph Jastrow, William McDougall (the man under whom he will eventually work), and Reverend Frederick Edwards, making his intention known to

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

them and asking for their advice. While the first two discouraged his idea of abandoning an already stable profession for an uncertain one, the last of the three advised him to keep his job while at the same time studying and researching on psychical phenomena on his own, using the mediums he could reach as case study.

Joseph followed Frederick Edwards' advice and started attending mediumistic sittings as an opportunity offered itself. To secure access to first-hand information on psychic research, he joined the New York Branch of the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR), offering them his services as well as those of his wife, Louisa. J. Malcolm Bird, through whom Joseph made his offer, was very pleased at getting a young scientist as a prospective member, and immediately offered Joseph the duty of reviewing all foreign periodicals especially the Italian, French, German and Spanish literature for the association's journal - The Journal of the American Society of Psychical Research (JASPR). This assignment, no doubt, offered Joseph the right opportunity he had been looking for, of having access to the heart of the problem. Now that he had seen psychical research from within, a decision had to be made between two equally attractive careers: that of a botanical scientist and a psychical researcher. On the 13th of January, 1926, Joseph wrote to Bird thus:

I have about decided to resign here this spring (in spite of assurance of raise in rank and salary) and go either to Chicago or Columbia to get thorough training in philosophy and psychology. While my botanical friends seem to expect me to make a successful botanist I am sure I cannot do so with such widely divided interests as I have at present. Moreover, the interest in psychic matters has greatly weakened the other, and I find myself drawn strongly to the point of giving my main attention to a study and interpretation (?) of these phenomena.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh. *The Elusive Science*, cit. p. 74.

Having made this decision, the Rhines then left their former job in West Virginia, and went to Boston where Joseph hoped to widen his knowledge of philosophy and psychology as added instruments for a holistic understanding of man and his nature. To this end, he enrolled for philosophy and psychology courses in Harvard under C.I. Lewis for logic, Alfred North Whitehead for philosophy, E.G. Boring for the psychology of sensation, and Morton Prince for abnormal psychology. He abandoned these studies within six months, having found Whitehead's courses very abstract and those of Boring nothing more than the physiology of sensation. It seemed that the high hopes he had placed on these subjects had eluded him, but as things would turn out, it became part of the preparatory stages to settle him in the short possible time at his proper place. The Rhines therefore settled definitively at Duke researching and experimenting on psychic phenomena.

Since their main purpose of taking up psychical research as a profession was to discover more about the nature of man, his transcendental nature to be precise, so as to refute the materialists' conception of man, all their experimental efforts were geared towards discovering the faculties that are responsible for psychic manifestations (if such psychic faculties really exist), and their relationship to the physical environment.

This testing of the reality of psychic claims and their elementary types was the main-line research, as it more or less had to be. But it was only a slightly more distant objective to ask whether there various claims represented distinctive powers, faculties or abilities, or whether they were basically unitary in principle and only different as phenomena ... to find where the abilities fitted into the rest of psychology and biology and how they related to the physical world.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> J.B. Rhine, "History of Experimental Studies" in Benjamin B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit. pp. 30-31.

The results of their experiments were published in many editions of the *Journal of Parapsychology*,<sup>9</sup> as well as in their other works as would reflect in the bibliography.

### 3.2.2 J. Gaither Pratt

J. G. Pratt coincidentally had almost the same modest social and religious background as his teacher and later co-worker, J.B. Rhine. He was born and brought up in a rural central North Carolina in the United States of America, and of a Methodist family. Like Rhine, he wanted to take up Methodist ministry as a profession and so entered the Duke University School of Religion in 1931. Having suffered also from distrust of traditional Christian religion, Methodism of his time, and its inability to shed light on the fundamental questions of human existence, he sought advice from Rhine with whom he had become acquainted by then. As would be expected, Rhine confirmed his doubts on the effectiveness of religion and advised him to seek redress in the human sciences.

It was partly on Rhine's suggestion that Pratt transferred to the graduate school in psychology, hoping that a science of human nature would prove more successful than religion at meeting the needs of mankind.<sup>10</sup>

As the tie between them continued to strengthen, Pratt gladly accepted to be assisting Rhine in his psychical experiments while continuing with his studies in psychology. This part-time assignment afforded Pratt some means of economic sustenance in his studies. He successfully completed his project in the psychology of learning for both his Masters and Doctorate degrees in 1933 and 1936 respectively. All these years, he continued assisting in experiments on psychical research. He not only assisted J.B. Rhine but also Gardner Murphy with whom he temporarily resided in New York in 1935. He became so fascinated by his experiences in

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Journal of Parapsychology*, Durham, College Station: Parapsychology Press.

<sup>10</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 140.

psychical phenomena that he eventually opted for a career in psychical research as soon as he completed his doctoral dissertation in psychology.

Pratt was credited for his keen interest and conscientiousness in experimentations in extrasensory perception. Besides assisting Rhine and Murphy with their experiments, he also carried out experiments on his own and even supervised other experiments in the Duke Parapsychology Laboratory. Among other successful experiments that Pratt had conducted, the most famous was the one known as the "Pearce-Pratt series" for clairvoyant ability at long distances. This was the experiment he conducted with Hubert Pearce as the subject, at varying distances. It was said that Pearce's rate of scoring moved in ascending order, that is, his rate increased in proportion to the number of calls carried out. In his book *Extrasensory Perception*, Rhine reported on the result of this experiment thus:

It is in many respects the best yet and answers several important questions at once ... Pratt picks up, in a room in the Physics Building of Duke University, every minute during the running period a card taken from a cut and shuffled pack that lies on the table before him, and puts it face down on top of a book. He does not look at its face. At the beginning of the same minute, Pearce, in the Duke Library, over 100 yards away, tries to perceive the card then "exposed" by Pratt. He has succeeded, magnificently, in doing so. At first he failed, as he nearly always does with a new condition procedure. But the runs mount as he goes, as follows: 3, 8, 5, 9, 10, 12, 11, 12, 11, 13, 13, 12. The total 300 at that distance average 9.9 per 25... Then the cards were taken to the Duke Medical Building, with over 250 yards between cards and percipient. Again there was the low-scoring adjustment period at first. This lasted over more runs this time but was followed by good scoring, which is now going on daily at this distance.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 101. Cf. Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 29.

The report of this long distance experiment for pure clairvoyance - pure because neither the experimenter nor the percipient had any clue to the designs on the cards (the zener cards used in experimentation) before the beginning and during the whole period of the experiment - seemed significant not only as a sign of credibility for the scientific status of parapsychology as its exponents claimed, but above all, as a thought-provoking pointer to man's psychic abilities. This particular experiment proved a turning-point in the history of psychical research.

Besides the "Pearce-Pratt series", Pratt equally performed other notable experiments at Duke which were not insignificant in their contributions to the recognition accorded to parapsychology as a university discipline. One was the experiments he performed with thirty-two subjects who were picked at random. The results were judged significant considering the strict, carefully controlled environment under which they were said to have been conducted.

Again, the "Pratt-Woodruff series" of 1938-1939, which was acknowledged by both psychologists and parapsychologists for their scientific rigor, proved a meeting-point for the two professional groups to conceding some scientific status to psychical research. In those series of experiments, in which Woodruff was the experimenter and Pratt was an observer, Pratt and Woodruff tried to prove not only the reality of extrasensory perception, but also the positive effect of good psychological disposition on the part of the percipient for successful results. Such psychological disposition was brought about by the cordial subject-experimenter relationship, the experimenter being positive and encouraging to the subject, thereby instilling some sense of self-confidence in the subject. The psychologists on Gardner Murphy's advisory committee set up to judge the results of the series reported thus:

The members of the committee have been impressed with the thoroughness with which the experimental work has been conducted and the report treated. From the standpoint of 'repeatability' the report is very satisfactory. The procedure has been described in complete detail.

Every step is explicitly written up... It is hoped that future writers on ESP will use the Pratt-Woodruff manuscript as a model for careful reporting of experimental results.<sup>12</sup>

That those experiments brought about the agreement between psychologists and parapsychologists with regard to the **status** of psychical research in the scientific world was attested to by Mauskopf and McVaugh in the following words:

What the Pratt-Woodruff experiment represented, in effect, was not so much a proof of ESP as a generally successful attempt by parapsychologists to accede to the standards demanded by academic psychologists, without compromising their own concern for the delicate psychological atmosphere in which psychical phenomena could be expected to occur. A serious and constructive exchange between the two communities had at least been initiated.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from working towards achieving the objectives set by the pioneers and promoters of psychical research, especially those of the Duke University Parapsychology Laboratory, Pratt was particularly interested in discovering the psychological factors that favour extrasensory perception. As a psychologist turned parapsychologist, this bent of interest could be understandable. His publications will be reflected in the general bibliography at the end of this work.

### 3.3 Experimentation in Parapsychology

Experimentation in the human sciences like psychology, and by implication parapsychology, entails the purposeful bringing about of the situation which the investigator or experimenter wants to work on, under the

<sup>12</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 291; Cf. "Letters and Notes" *JP* 3(1939): 246, 248.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 291-292.

conditions which he could control or vary. Under such conditions, he would be able to observe and record the results of his observations for the eventual drawing up of conclusions.

In parapsychology, the hypothesis on which experimentation was based were the spontaneous manifestations of psychic abilities by individuals. Such manifestations were either witnessed personally by the investigator or reported by others, especially the spiritualist claims of spirit communication and the poltergeist phenomena that induced the early parapsychologists into the survival problem.

Organized psychical research can be dated, symbolically, from a conversation between Henry Sidgwick and his student F.W.H. Meyers, one moonlit night in Cambridge about 1870, over the need to validate religious belief through the methods of empirical science.<sup>14</sup>

Besides these phenomena which Gauld described as religious belief, there were also experiences of parapsychical nature like the tilting of or levitation of objects without their being touched by anybody, the reading of sealed writings known as "cryptoscopy", et cetera, which provided the foundation for psychical research.

In the face of these psychic manifestations which were of both parapsychic and parapsychical natures, the pioneer parapsychologists set themselves two main objectives. First of all, to discover whether psychic ability is part of the universal human nature or it is a prerogative of specially gifted individuals. Secondly, they wanted to distinguish genuine psychic experiences from those that seem to be mere coincidences on the one hand and those that were due to psychological abnormality, drugs or fraud on the other hand. And to do this, no other method could be adequate to take care of the opposed standpoints of both the dogmatic exponents of psychic phenomena and the die-hard sceptics than the method of empirical sciences,

<sup>14</sup> Alan Gauld. *The Founders of Psychical Research*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968, p.103.

that of observation and experimentation, in an atmosphere where control could be possible.

Since psychic phenomena in all their manifestations are said to be a kind of communication, either between two minds or between one mind and the environment, they are alleged to be analogous to any normal or ordinary communication process. This is because, in any process of communication, there are three indispensable components, namely, the transmitter or the sender of the message, known as the transmitting pole, the receiver or receiving pole, and finally the message to be transmitted. The absence of any of these component parts invalidates the essence and meaning of the term 'communication'. In like manner, in any experimentation with regard to extrasensory perception, three indispensable components are needed. They are, the experimenter/agent who plays the role of the transmitter of the message, the message to be transmitted or perceived, and the subject who receives or perceives the message. To illustrate, in the experiment for telepathy for example, there should be two minds one of which will send the telepathic message which the other will receive and the message itself that is being sent. In clairvoyance test, there should be the target (card or sealed message in an opaque container) which contains the message, the message that is contained in the target, and the mind (subject) that perceives the message. The experimenter, besides the function of acting as agent, has the onus also of designing, conducting, and analysing the results of the experiment. It should be noted therefore that he needs not necessarily act as the agent. The main point is that the experiment involves a three-way componental process in order for it to be complete and valid.

Although Rhine had engaged himself in psychical research for quite some time, it was at Duke University in 1927 that serious scientific study of psychical phenomena was started. His presence at Duke and all the initial frustrating experiences later proved to be providential in the achievement of his set objectives. For instance, when he would not be allowed free hand in psychical research, he reluctantly, and after consultations with friends, accepted the offer to work at the Lamarckian experiments with rats at which McDougall had worked from 1920-1928, the year he entrusted the experiment to J.B. Rhine. The purpose of the experiments was to see

whether there could be empirical support for the hypothesis of the inheritance of acquired traits in human beings. Rhine later acknowledged that the experiment provided a good model for his research into the paranormal phenomena of telepathy and clairvoyance.

#### The Lamarckian hypothesis

demands that the habits, the memories, and even the scars on bodies, which were acquired by individual in historically earlier times, are transmitted to later generations by their "surviving egos" being reborn in large numbers.<sup>15</sup>

This was a hypothesis put forward by the exponents of the survivalist theory in their effort to prove, from spirit communication, the survival phenomenon. Although the Lamarckian hypothesis was proved to have had no analogue in modern molecular biology, Rhine however discovered very important clues to his later experiments in parapsychology. The experiments provided him first-hand experience with animals in the laboratory environment. The methodology they employed somehow anticipated the one he would use in psychical research. From the results of the Lamarckian experiments, Rhine concluded that the inheritance of acquired traits or characteristics was not something that could be proved mechanistically. It is an unknown that is only manifested in behaviour. He found a similarity between the phenomenon of inherited acquired traits and psychical phenomena, in that as the former, so the latter defy mechanistic explanation.

The Rhines, on settling at Duke, set themselves the task of re-examining and validating, if possible through proper experimental methods, all the prior findings of parapsychologists on psychical phenomena which were at their disposal. Joseph himself acknowledged that they started off on the foundation of parapsychological research already laid by their predecessors. In his own words he wrote:

<sup>15</sup> C.T.K. Chari, "Some Generalized Theories and Models of Psi: A Critical Evaluation" in Benjamin B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 818.

As we began at Duke in 1927 with this considerable inheritance from the past it still remained to be seen whether or not the earlier experiments could in some way and degree be replicated, and if they could, to see if the test methods could be improved.<sup>16</sup>

To achieve this objective, test cards were to be designed anew since as at that time, ordinary playing cards had been in use for the experiments. There was therefore the need for an instrument proper and specific to the phenomenon in question. This first practical step seemed to be in line with good scientific procedure since in every scientific or investigative enterprise the instruments and methods of research must be adequate and according to the nature of the problem to be investigated. Rhine then enlisted the help of Karl Zener who designed the new test cards which are known as the "Zener Cards". These cards had been and still remain authentic instruments in psychical research.

Besides his former experience with animal experimentation, his real initial research project was the materials gathered or collected by John F. Thomas, a public-school official turned parapsychologist, on his sittings with the medium Mrs. Minnie M. Soule, in Boston.<sup>17</sup> Thomas offered these materials to the Rhines for analysis, while at the same time paying them for the work. While at this project, the Rhines' attention was drawn to an alleged case of a mind-reading horse in Richmond, and they thought it a good research material in telepathic communication. It was said that the horse, known as "Lady" had the ability of answering unexpressed questions directed to her mentally by her owner, Mrs. Fonda, using her (Lady's) nose to touch lettered or numbered blocks on the ground. They were said to have made several visits to the Fonda and Lady, once in the company of McDougall who himself was equally impressed at the experiment. This singular eye-witness experiment not only fanned their interest on, but also provided evidence to what they had learnt on telepathic animals.

<sup>16</sup> J.B. Rhine, "History of Experimental Studies" in Benjamin B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 79.

the Rhines were well aware of the studies that had already been made of apparently telepathic animals, *denkende Tiere*, and of how in most cases the animals could be shown to be guided by tiny movements and other cues given consciously or unconsciously by the experimenter. ... they knew too of some studies that seemed to have demonstrated communication to animals in situations where sensory cues were excluded. They took care therefore to observe Lady's response to mental commands not only when Mrs. Fonda knew the answer Lady was to give but also when she did not, and from Lady's success in the latter cases as well as in the former they reasoned that the horse was not dependent upon cues from Mrs. Fonda.<sup>18</sup>

The awareness of the possibility of giving conscious or unconscious sensory cues, facial expressions for example, to the animals by the experimenter, made the Rhines to adopt strict control methods in their experiments with Lady. The result of the experiments was published in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*.<sup>19</sup>

The Rhines however, were not alone in their interest and study of the "Lady" phenomenon, since they were not the only ones engaged in psychical research. It was the Rhines' conviction that if the "Lady phenomenon" could be replicable, then experiments on telepathic communication could be successfully carried out with brute or dumb animals, in which case, the question of fraud would be completely ruled out. If such happened, they reasoned, then the case for the reality of the phenomenon of telepathy would have been established. Their study of Lady convinced them of the

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 81. Indeed, Rhine had reviewed in the November 1925 *Journal of the ASPR* an account from the *Psychische Studien* of Bechterew's experiments on telepathy with dogs, and he returned to the subject in his February 1926 reviews, calling Bechterew's work "one of the neatest and most completely convincing series of experiments in the recent literature on psychical research", (*JASPR* 20 (1926): 126, Cf. cit., p. 327.

<sup>19</sup> J.B. Rhine, and Louisa, E. Rhine, "An Investigation of a 'Mind-Reading' Horse" in *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 23, 446-466, 1928-1929.

psychological conditions necessary for telepathic communication to take place, as they were found in many other experiments. Such conditions include a relaxed state, something of the trance state, and complete elimination of distractions.

With the use of the new designed test cards, Rhine was able to distinguish the phenomenon of telepathy from that of clairvoyance in his experiments. Having made this distinction, he then set out the respective experimental procedures for telepathic and clairvoyant phenomena. These distinctions and experimental techniques formed the major part of the contents of his epoch making book, *Extrasensory Perception*.

From his researches also he became aware of the fact that experiment on clairvoyance was easier and simpler to handle than that on telepathy. This was because it needed only one subject, the would-be percipient or the professed psychic; the target cards, whether they were to be selected at random or they were to be called down-through, must be sealed. The sealing of the cards served as control against the intrusion of telepathic element in the experiment. Again, the recording of the result was straightforward since it involved only one response from the percipient.

All these efforts eventually resulted in the establishment of an independent parapsychology laboratory at Duke University. This laboratory became the Institute of Parapsychology in 1965.<sup>20</sup> Rhine was also the brain behind the founding of the *Journal of Parapsychology* in 1937. He later succeeded his master, McDougall, as the head of the department of psychology at the University, while at the same time teaching. But in order to give maximum attention to research work as he thought right, he had to drop the teaching job in 1950.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Pier Luigi Baima Bollone, *La scienza nel mondo degli spiriti*, Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1994, p. 253.

### 3.3.1 Methods of Experimentation

For research in any discipline to qualify as scientific, it has to begin with the two basic scientific methods of exploration and verification. In the exploratory stage, the researcher has the free rein of probing into his area of interest as much as he could in order to gather as much information as may warrant a hypothesis.

The chief characteristic of the exploratory stage of scientific inquiry is that in it the explorer is permitted to range widely, venture freely, and look into everything that might be important to his interest without being burdened with too much precautionary concern. It is a more venturesome, a more extravagant phase of investigation.<sup>21</sup>

In the verification stage instead, the researcher has as his objective the reliability of his results. In order to achieve this reliability, he has to work out adequate plan for experimentation, follow the plan strictly, taking into consideration also the means of controlling the experiment. He is above all not to be in a hurry to pronounce judgement on his experimental findings

until the accepted standards of science are met - standards of adequate experimental control, of extrachance (statistical) significance, and of independent confirmation by other investigators.<sup>22</sup>

In psychical research, two main methods had been in use which contributed to the attainment of the status of an independent discipline for parapsychology. They are known as the qualitative and the quantitative methods.

<sup>21</sup> J.B. Rhine and J.G. Pratt, *Parapsychology, Frontier Science of the Mind*, cit., p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

#### 3.3.1.1 The Qualitative Method

Psychical researchers from the beginning tried to follow the above mentioned basic scientific methods by first gathering and studying the reported spontaneous manifestations of psychic phenomena. They also studied the reported individual psychics in the persons of the mediums as pilot tests. These afforded them (the researchers) the opportunity of setting up semi-laboratory environments for the investigation of the cases. This signalled the beginnings of the investigative, qualitative stage, and hence of experimentation in parapsychology.

With this method, parapsychologists started the study of psychical phenomena as a human event in their spontaneous and induced phases. It was the preliminary method which they utilised in their efforts to establish the quality and characteristics of psychical phenomena in their spontaneous manifestations and in sittings with sensitives. It was almost the only method available for such investigations till about the 1930s. The pioneers of psychical research - Myers, Gurney and Podmore, used this method which could be termed the method of case studies, in their project to establish evidence for telepathy in the 1880s. According to Louisa Rhine,

the research method developed for this project overshadowed any earlier one and became the classic model for those succeeding it to such an extent that its influence is still felt today.<sup>23</sup>

The above statement by Mrs. Rhine only shows the importance which early parapsychologists attached to this method.

Louisa Rhine herself devoted a long time collecting and analysing spontaneous cases into their different psychic categories, according to their natures, characteristics, and conditions at which they were manifested. This demanded rational and systematic criteria for the phenomena to be properly

<sup>23</sup> Louisa E. Rhine, "Research Methods with Spontaneous Cases" in Benjamin B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 60.

classified. Carroll B. Nash believed that her work has not yet been surpassed in the history of parapsychology. According to him,

Louisa Rhine (1965), accumulated and analysed the world's largest collection of spontaneously occurring, ostensibly paranormal experiences, consisting of over 20,000 cases. Her analysis of these events into the categories of intuition, dreams, hallucinations, and PK phenomena (such as a clock stopping or a picture falling at the moment of death of a person connected with it) has elucidated the way in which psi is manifested in everyday life and has provided insights into its mechanism.<sup>24</sup>

Because the qualitative method is an interpretative and theoretical method of the observed data, it had been in most cases judged not free from the subjective orientation of the experimenter, and consequently its objectivity has become questionable. This is because more often than not, the strangeness of the phenomenon influences the experimenter sensorially and hence distorts his judgement irrespective of his professional and social status. The conclusions from this method therefore are not infrequently personal opinions of the experimenter, and this has been the root of the negative attitude and suspicion with which the study of psychical phenomena was greeted at its early stages.

However, the method has yielded practical values by helping to establish certain conditions under which the phenomena could manifest, and the influences which either the environment or the culture could have on the subjects or psychics. It has helped to establish the existence of such facts even if at only the theoretical level, using the same criteria that are valid in the socio-historic sciences. With this method, it has been possible to classify the phenomena into parapsychical and paraphysical, according to the characteristics of the manifestations.

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<sup>24</sup> Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, the Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 29; Cf. Enrico Marabini, *Propedeutica parapsicologica*, Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria Editrice, 1978, p. 165.

Although the results of case studies were judged to be mere conjectures, yet

case studies, then, if pursued by insightful methods, can still have a useful function, even if peripheral. They can give tentative hints on which the slower methods of experimentation can capitalize. Besides that, the results of their study can afford a measure of relief and satisfaction to persons baffled by psi experiences of their own.<sup>25</sup>

Not only has the method - that of gathering and analysing spontaneous reported cases as well as observation of alleged psychics in laboratory environments, and the subsequent analysis of observed facts been found useful as a preparatory stage for the more proper, statistical, scientific method, but it has also served a moral purpose of alleviating the fears and worries of the unsuspecting psychics, as Mrs. Rhine alluded to above.

### 3.3.1.2 Quantitative Method

Having utilised the preliminary, investigative method of psychical research, parapsychologists moved higher to a second stage based on mathematical calculations all in their efforts to establish the credibility of their field of research. And so with this type of method, they sought to prove that the number of hits or successful calls in a section of experimentation must surpass the probability of chance hits or successes. That is to say, in the use of a deck of 25 cards of 5 sets of symbols - star, circle, square, cross and wavy lines, (for these are the symbols on the standard Zener Cards), the probability of chance hits stands at 1 out of every 5 cards or 5 out of every deck of 25 cards, which is equal to 1/5. For an experiment to be judged favourable, the number of successful hits must exceed the probability line. The quantitative method therefore is based on

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<sup>25</sup> Louisa E. Rhine, "Research Methods with Spontaneous Cases" in Benjamin B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 78.

this probability principle, and it owed its origin to Charles Richet, but was said to have been perfected by J.B. Rhine.

Quantitative method is a mathematical-statistical method, that is, the one using statistical calculus in evaluating the results of the manifestations of psychical phenomena. This statistical method is the test of the significance of results in experiments, that is, the method by which the actual positive results are evaluated in relation to pure chance results or the mean chance expectation (MCE). The statistical calculus on its part is based on the parameter of the critical ratio (CR) which is given in psychical calculation as deviation (Dev) divided by the standard deviation (SD). The deviation (Dev) is given by the successful hits minus the mean chance expectation, while the standard deviation (SD) is worked out from the fixed number 10. It was worked out from the standard ESP runs which was set at 25 trials with the standard 25 deck Zener Cards. To get the standard deviation therefore, the square root of this standard fixed number 10 is divided by 2. To demonstrate the process of arriving at the critical ratio, let us suppose that in a series of 20 runs of 25 trials per run, there are all together 500 trials. In each run, the mean chance expectation is 5 or 1/5. The number of successful hits stands at 160. In the 20 runs, the probable chance result, the mean chance expectation will be  $5 \times 20$  which equals 100. The deviation (Dev) therefore will be 160 minus 100, which equals +60, that is, 60 successful hits over and above the mean chance expectation. The deviation bears a positive sign (+) if it is greater than the mean chance expectation, and a negative sign (-) if it is lesser. The critical ratio (CR) therefore will be: Deviation +60 divided by the standard deviation 10, which gives +6. From this critical ratio, the probability is calculated using the standard statistical table of the critical ratio conversion. The smaller the probability in relation to the critical ratio, the more significant the result will be judged and vice versa.

The calculation follows strictly all the statistical intricacies characteristic of empirical, scientific procedure. In fact, it is said that all the general methods used in statistical evaluation apply to the evaluation of parapsychical results. With statistical analysis, the hypothesis of chance as the cause of paranormal manifestations is tested. For

a statistical test never completely excludes the chance explanation; it only tells us when we are justified to *infer* that some principle was operating consistently to influence the results and whether to plan further investigations to test the consequences of this conclusion. The acid test of a conclusion reached on the basis of a statistical analysis is whether investigations made to follow it up lead to better understanding and control of the phenomena.<sup>26</sup>

J.B. Rhine and his Duke University group introduced different techniques for testing psychic ability. Among the most widely used in the field is the "Down-Through - DT" technique for testing either for clairvoyance or precognition. With this technique, the subject is expected to call down through the deck of cards without stopping in every run of trials. Later on, the "matching" technique was introduced. It could be "open matching" (OM), or "blind matching" (BM). In "open matching", the target cards to which the subject had to match the rest of the deck will be placed face upwards so that he sees them, thereby knowing the respective symbols on each card. In "blind matching" however, the reverse is the case, that is, the target cards are placed face downwards so that the subject would not have any clue as to their respective symbols. All these techniques served the purpose of control, and together with the methods, they helped to procure some sort of credibility, among the scientific community, of the academic and scientific status of parapsychology.

### 3.3.2 Factors Influencing Experimentation

Psychical researchers, in their quest for the understanding of the nature of psychic powers, had included in their objects for investigation, close observation of conditions which may be contributing to "psi hitting" or "psi missing" during experiments. "Psi hitting" simply refers to successful calls by the subject, while "psi missing" is the unsuccessful calls. They have categorised those conditions into biological, psychological, personality traits, subject-experimenter effect, and to some extent, cultural conditions. These

<sup>26</sup> J.B. Rhine and J.G. Pratt. *Parapsychology, Frontier Science of the Mind*. cit., p. 186.

conditions however have no water-tight demarcations since the psychic ability belongs to the unique individual in all his totality. As in all human actions, varied factors together contribute to the process and manifestation of psychic phenomena, although one factor usually takes the lead in the process.

On the biological level, it had been opined that genetic factor, especially with regard to one-egg identical twins, affect the scoring rate. This means that identical twins exhibit identical scoring rates during the experiments. The genes factor has led some researchers to believe that psychic ability could be hereditary, as Flournoy alleged that there was a family that possessed psychic ability even up to the fourth generation. Nash however was of the opinion that such hereditary basis for psychic ability has not yet been proved empirically.<sup>27</sup> The factor of parental or affective affinity has also been reported as favouring telepathic ability in particular. We have alluded to this factor earlier on in the section on telepathy.

Artistic ability, that is, the power of imagination and extrovertedness or sociability have been alleged by psychical researchers to favour psychic abilities. This was part of the arguments of Betty Humphrey's doctoral thesis at the Duke University in 1946. His conclusions were that well-adjusted, self-confident, stable and sociable personalities do better in ESP tests than maladjusted personalities.<sup>28</sup> According to Nash, artistic ability or creativity is related to psychic ability. Just as the incubation of creative ideas occurs at the unconscious level of the artist, so is the mediation of psi phenomena. Again they are related in the sense that openness to fleeting unexpected impressions is a favourable factor both for the manifestation of artistic creativity and that of psychic phenomena.<sup>29</sup> Artists are therefore judged to be more disposed for psychic manifestations than non-artists. Because creative personalities are also known to have the capacity for high imagery, and psychical information has been alleged to be mediated by visual imagery, they possess psychic ability more than non-creative personalities.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 94.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Seymour H. Mausekopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 300.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 99.

Extroverts, on the other hand, because of their spontaneity of character manifest psychic ability more than their introverted counterparts who are critical and calculative by nature. These points help to explain why extrasensory perception is more of a spontaneous phenomenon which could not be subjected completely to laboratory control. Hence the problem of its non-repeatability always in the laboratory environment.

From the psychological context, it is believed that relaxed atmosphere and lack of monotony favour psychic manifestation. Experimenters are therefore advised to devise ways and means of keeping the interest of the subjects high as much as possible. In experiments involving too many runs at a stretch, 'fatigue-curves' or 'decline effects', that is, fall in positive results, have been noticed which signalled the psychological effect of boredom and tediousness of the exercise.

Motivation offered by the experimenter through positive appraisal of the subject's performance, and introduction of novel techniques to avoid monotony have positive effect on psychic manifestation. The evidence of performance at merely the level of chance expectation with a class of students has been attributed to the anonymity of subjects, and little or no motivational technique by the experimenter. Hence Rhine and Pratt counselled that

the fact that needs emphasis in psi research today, however, is that such low-level scoring in mass tests, even when it is acceptably significant, is far below the potential of the individual subjects involved, i.e., below the level of performance of which many of them are capable of when strongly activated to achieve their utmost. It is, in fact, necessary for almost everyone to be keenly inspired to exercise his psi ability to a marked degree.<sup>30</sup>

This observation implies that there is need for cordial relationship between the subject and the experimenter which in its turn will generate trust

<sup>30</sup> J.B. Rhine and J.G. Pratt, *Parapsychology, Frontier Science of the Mind*, cit., p. 96.

and confidence in the subject for better performance. The subject will have trust in the experimenter as well as confidence in his psychic ability because of the motivation given by the experimenter. It is believed that the experimenter's attitude towards psychic phenomena, either positive or negative, on the one hand; and the subject's ability, on the other hand, affect the results of the experiments accordingly. Likewise does the subject's attitude affect the results. Avowed scepticism therefore either from the experimenter or the subject negatively affects experimental results as well as replication of results.

### 3.4 Extrasensory Phenomena Subjected to Experimentation

Extrasensory perception strictly so-called comprises telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition. There is the fourth type known as retrocognition but it was not given much attention in psychical research. Being the perception of an event in the past, pure retrocognition was very difficult to identify since the event that could be claimed to have been perceived retrocognitively could have been largely influenced by clairvoyant ability. Hence psychical researchers did not find it an outstanding material with which to achieve their purpose.

Besides the exclusion of retrocognition from our analysis, it becomes natural that we exclude also the psychophysical phenomena known as psycho-kinesis (PK) which embraces the physical aspects of psychical manifestations. This is based on the fact that our research centres exclusively on the cognitive aspects of psychical ability known as "psi-cognitive", and it embraces only those abilities that have to do with perception.

#### 3.4.1 Telepathy

Telepathy, our main object of focus in this section, is taken to be mind to mind communication. According to one definition, "telepathy refers to the communication of minds by extrasensory means".<sup>31</sup> We found this

<sup>31</sup> Nance Fyson, editor. *Mind Power: Quest for the Unknown*, cit., p. 62.

definition somehow vague with regard to the subjects of telepathic communication. It simply says "the communication of minds" without specifying how many minds would be involved in the process. Telepathic communication however, requires two minds for it to take place. And for an experience to be termed truly telepathic, it is necessary that the two minds (persons) involved be at different places at the time; it could be miles apart or at close range. Distance seemed to have proved no barrier to such communication.

The general telepathic process as explained by René Warcollier in his book: *La Télépathie; Recherches Expérimentales*, Paris: Alcan, 1921, quoted by Mauskopf and McVaugh, and as was widely shared by researchers of the time, was that it (telepathy)

involves the emission of some sort of force from the agent's subconscious, and only figuratively the transmission of its actual contents: the images that the percipient sees derive from the stock of his own subconscious, stimulated or called up by the agent's activity. The process is most often an unconscious one; the volition of the agent clearly is not necessary, and indeed transmission seems to occur best when both agent and percipient are in a relaxed state, semiconscious, in trance or asleep.<sup>32</sup>

This idea found a consensus among psychical researchers first because of the alleged scientific rigour of Warcollier's work, and secondly because it was a reiteration of the earlier pronouncement of pioneer researchers like F.W.H. Meyers.<sup>33</sup>

But if one were to analyse the above Warcollierian notion of telepathic process, it would seem as if it was no thought-transference as such

<sup>32</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., pp. 29-30.  
<sup>33</sup> Cf. F.H. Meyers, *La personalità umana e la sua sopravvivenza*, versione di P.D. Pesce e G.M. Paolucci, Vol. 1 & 11, Roma: Enrico Voghera, Editore, 1909.

since "the images that the percipient sees derive from the stock of his own subconscious". We have the impression here that the stock in both the agent's and the percipient's subconscious is the same. It rested with the agent only to activate those stock and they would come to light in the percipient's mind. If this interpretation holds true, then we would not be talking of telepathy since both the agent and the percipient possess the same thought-content, and so there is no actual thought-transference. In experiments on telepathy however, researchers have tried to demonstrate the case of actual thought-transference, where the agent conveyed the contents of his own mind or thought to the percipient.

In telepathic process, two living poles, the agent and the percipient are always involved. Where the former is the active participant, that is, the transmitter of the message, the latter becomes the passive channel of the telepathic information or the receiver of the information. In this case, the telepathy is called projective telepathy. This means that the agent consciously projected or concentrated his thoughts on the percipient who telepathically and spontaneously received it without any effort on his part. Telepathic information could also become receptive, where the percipient becomes the active participant while the agent becomes the passive transmitter. In other words, the percipient could consciously determine to perceive the state of the mind of the agent by concentrating his thoughts on the agent. In this case, it is the percipient that makes the effort to draw out the content of the agent's mind. Such could be the case between two people with strong affective ties. Telepathy therefore, being the transfer of thought from one mind to another by means other than sensorial, could be a two-way process: the percipient could be either the active participant in the receptive telepathy or the passive receiver in the projective telepathy, while the agent could be either the passive source of information in receptive telepathy or active participant in the projective telepathy.

Although telepathic processes generally take place spontaneously, there could be cases where the agent intentionally concentrates his thoughts

on the percipient and by so doing passes the desired information.<sup>34</sup> But does the fact that this could be achieved consciously make it not to be a spontaneous act? We would rather answer this in the negative. It still belongs to spontaneous psychic experience for the simple reason that it is obtained naturally and not in the laboratory environment or induced. Moreover, it could be said to belong to the type of experiences or psychic interaction between close friends or relatives as was alluded to by Aristotle. He was of the opinion that telepathic messages could be possible between real friends who are really concerned about or interested in one another or each other as the case may be.

That certain persons in particular should have vivid dreams, e.g., that familiar friends should thus have foresight in a special degree respecting one another, is due to the fact that such friends are most solicitous on one another's behalf. For as acquaintances are quick to recognize and perceive one another a long way off, so also they do as regards the sensory movements respecting one another; for sensory movements which refer to persons familiarly known are themselves more familiar.<sup>35</sup>

This Aristotelian notion found echo in the writings of parapsychologists as to the influence of affective links and kinship on telepathic communications.<sup>36</sup> It could equally be asked whether the fact that it could be induced renders it unnatural. Such and like perplexes could be better understood when we must have examined the nature of psychic abilities.

<sup>34</sup> We had personally witnessed the case of a father - an old man, who, before he died, was believed to have telepathically called home all his children living in distant places apart. Then he was able to give them his last or dying messages, and allotted to each his own portion of inheritance.

<sup>35</sup> Aristotle. *On Divination in Sleep*, 464a. 29-34.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Enrico Marabini. *Fenomeni parapsicologici*. Bologna: Nuova Libra Editrice, 1994. pp. 67-73; Armando Pavese. *Manuale di parapsicologia*, cit., p. 166; Carroll B. Nash. *Parapsychology, The Science of Psychology*, cit., p. 113.

Parapsychologists had been studying the phenomenon of telepathy in the laboratory environment. Such experimentation dated as far back as the first quarter of the beginning of psychical research, that is, the years between 1876 and 1900. This period belonged to the age of spiritism which was the phenomenon that attracted much attention in England and America. While the English physicists William Barret and Oliver Lodge were busy experimenting on the phenomenon of thought-transference as telepathy was called, Charles Richet, a French physiologist, was experimenting on the phenomenon of clairvoyance in France.

The thought-transference experiments which William Barret reported to the convention of the British Association of psychical research in Glasgow in 1876, were carried out with hypnotised subjects. In those experiments, he was said to have kept the subject and the hypnotiser in adjacent rooms, out of view of each other, while he stationed himself in the doorway between them as the experimenter. The agent (the hypnotist) was to communicate any sensation he wanted like the sensation of pain or taste (sweetness or bitterness) to the subject (percipient) who was to report that sensation. It was said that the success of the results necessitated further experiments, this second time with un hypnotised subjects. Oliver Lodge carried out this experiment in 1884. He used as subject and agent

pairs of young women reputed to have telepathic ability. The two participants, both un hypnotized, were seated back to back in a large room and were provided with paper and pencil with which they were to make drawings. The one acting as the subject succeeded remarkably well in drawing what the other, acting as agent, had drawn.<sup>37</sup>

Many other experiments were reported to have been carried out both in the United States of America, like the one by a student of William McDougall, George H. Estabrooks in Harvard in 1927; and in the psychology laboratory of the University of Groningen by H.I.F.W. Brugmans in 1922. Before these

<sup>37</sup> J.B. Rhine, "History of Experimental Studies" in Benjamin B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 26.

experiments, Leonard T. Troland had carried out series of experiments in the Department of Psychology in Harvard using automatic test machine that selected targets, recorded them and recorded the subject's responses automatically.

In all these experiments however, the successful results were said not to be very significant. Nevertheless, certain findings about the characteristics of psychical abilities were made. Such characteristics included the effect of good psychological dispositions on success, the decline effect due to long runs of experimentation, and the positive effect of alcohol on the abilities. As methods and techniques advanced, it was noticed that the results of what seemed to be sign of pure telepathy were sometimes a mixture of telepathy and clairvoyance. This discovery provided a stumbling block to the progress of research. It therefore awaited Joseph Banks Rhine and his Duke Laboratory group to evolve proper and adequate methods and controls for testing different types of extrasensory phenomena.

#### 3.4.2 Clairvoyance

Clairvoyance is another form of parapsychical manifestation which attracted much attention from parapsychologists. Rhine and Pratt defined it as "the extrasensory perception of objects and objective events, as distinguished from the mental states or thoughts of another person"<sup>38</sup> Unlike telepathy which is communication between two minds, clairvoyance implies communication between one mind and the objective world. While the target in telepathy is another mind's thought, in clairvoyance, the target is the object or event that is outside the percipient's or subject's mind.

Clairvoyant psychics are known to use their abilities for different purposes. For example, it was believed and had been attested that in the state of lucidity into which a psychic enters either by auto-suggestion or hypnosis, he could diagnose his own ailments as well as those of other persons. When the diagnosis concerns personal ailments, it is known as diagnostic autoscapy, and when it involves the ailments of others, it becomes

<sup>38</sup> J.B. Rhine and J. G. Pratt, *Parapsychology*, *Frontier Science of the Mind*, cit., p. 9.

diagnostic heteroscopy. This idea of psychic diagnosis, we could remember, owed its origin to Puységur, Mesmer's foremost disciple. Enrico Marabini was of the view that the state of lucidity favours not only psychic diagnosis but also the ability to describe contemporaneous events that are taking place at long distances away, of precognising events as well as of discovering hidden objects.<sup>39</sup>

The reports of the use of clairvoyant ability to discover hidden objects, and the use of token objects to discover their owners, history, or places of provenance, and of those known as psychic detectives (those who help the police in tracking down wanted criminals), have not been wanting in parapsychological literature.<sup>40</sup> These and such like psychic manifestations were subjected to experimentation both within and outside the Duke laboratory.

Experimentation on clairvoyant abilities started in Duke early in 1930. The initial experiments by the predecessors of the Rhine group lacked repeatability, one of the essential conditions of scientific investigation. Researchers like Ina Jephson carried out experiments in 1929 with success at the first trial and failure at the second one. Charles Richet was said to have performed extensive clairvoyant tests but met with both successes and failures. The unstable nature of these experiments increased the state of apprehension and dilemma as to the nature of the faculty. The Rhine group was therefore faced with the task of exploring other possibilities and methods

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Enrico Marabini, *Propedeutica Parapsicologica*, Bologna. Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria Editrice, 1978, p. 21. Enrico Marabini holds a doctorate degree in medicine and surgery with specialisation in obstetrics (midwifery) and gynaecology from "l'Università degli studi" in Bologna. Besides his medical profession, he taught parapsychology in the department of psychology of the faculty of medicine and surgery, University of Bologna, from 1975-1980. He holds the seat of parapsychology course in the Open University of Imola (Università Aperta di Imola). He generously granted the writer an interview in his office in Bologna on the 23rd of April, 1996.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Russell Targ and Keith Harary, *The Mind Race*, cit., pp. 168-76; Nance Fyson, editor, *Mind Power*, cit., pp. 63, 82-85; Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., pp. 251-54, 256-58.

like testing for both telepathy and clairvoyance at the same time, and under varying conditions.

... tests were carried out both with subjects in the normal waking state and when they were hypnotized, it was an open question as to which would be better. A wide variety of ways of presenting the target objects was tried, and quite a range of classes of subjects was explored. The subjects were tested in many types of situations - in groups as in the classroom, and individually in the laboratory, at home, or at a distance. In all of these exploratory approaches the first aim was to find the most favorable setting, the best test device, and the most conducive subject-experimenter relation.<sup>41</sup>

After they must have got some insight into some of the favourable techniques, they then started testing for pure clairvoyance. In pure clairvoyant tests, care must be taken to guarantee that no telepathic element infiltrated in them. For example, neither the agent (experimenter) nor the subject (percipient) should have any idea of the content of the target before the commencement of the experiment. The targets should be sealed in either the opaque boxes or envelopes. Later on opaque screens were found to be more secure than boxes and envelopes. Besides this precaution, use were made of computers for both the selection of the targets and printing out of the responses from the subject, without however printing the targets. When the targets were not printed, their anonymity was supposed to have been preserved thereby guaranteeing the non-intrusion of another psychic ability like precognitive telepathy in the experiment.

The experiment that indicated the reality of clairvoyant extrasensory perception was the Pearce-Pratt series of 1933: where a Duke student, Pearce, performed successfully well at distances of 100 yards and 250 yards respectively, with the targets placed in different buildings at those distances.

<sup>41</sup> J.B. Rhine and J.G. Pratt, *Parapsychology, Frontier Science of the Mind*, cit., p. 31.

During the first series of experiments, Pratt stayed in the Physics Building while Pearce was in the Duke University library, the two buildings being over 100 yards apart. Pratt picked a card from the deck, looked at it and then with a synchronised watch signalled to Pearce who also had a synchronised watch, to call the target. The calls took place in the interval of a minute between them. The second set of experiment took place at a distance of 250 yards between the agent (Pratt) and the percipient (Pearce). While the percipient remained in the library block, the agent moved over to the university's Medical Building, and the procedure continued as before. Both the agent and the percipient recorded their results, sealed them and handed them over to Rhine before they cross-checked them among themselves. The Pratt-Pearce series only served to support the earlier experiments on the effect of long distance on telepathic and clairvoyant phenomena.<sup>42</sup> The responsibility for carrying out these experiments was entrusted to Pratt by Rhine while he, Pratt, was still a student of psychology at Duke.

### 3.4.3 Precognition

Precognition, according to Rhine and Pratt has been seen simply as "the perception of a future event by means of ESP".<sup>43</sup> For Russell Targ and Keith Harary instead, it is "the knowledge of future events that cannot be perceived by any known means".<sup>44</sup> Carroll B. Nash on his part refers to the events that could be perceived precognitively as states or systems.<sup>45</sup> Underneath all these versions of definitions, lies the hypothesis that men could at times know the future through no known means. This has been an age-old belief which could be termed prediction, vision or prophesy. It has been alleged that precognitive messages usually come in the form of impressions, hallucinations or dreams, in which case, they appear in the form of images. These images are said to be more impressive when they concern events in the future than when the events are contemporaneous, that is, when

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., pp. 100-101.

<sup>43</sup> J.B. Rhine and J.G. Pratt, *Parapsychology, Frontier Science of the Mind*, cit., p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> Russell Targ and Keith Harary, *The Mind Race*, cit., p. 53.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 4.

they are being perceived at the same time that they are taking place. Because of many controversies as to whether or not an experience could be truly termed precognitive, some psychical researchers, from their research findings, had opined that there could be genuine precognitive experience quite distinct from other psychic experiences. However,

to qualify as a genuine instance of precognition an experience must refer to a coming event to an extent that is more than merely accidental; it must identify a future happening that could not have been inferred as about to occur, and, finally, it must refer to an event that could not have been brought about as a consequence of the prediction.<sup>46</sup>

For them therefore, if it could be proved that neither coincidence, and/or chance, nor telepathic and/or clairvoyant abilities are at work in precognitive experiments, then a case would have been established for pure precognition. All their experiments were therefore geared towards eliminating all the possible intrusions using the appropriate techniques.

In these experiments, the subject is expected to call down-through a deck of twenty-five zener cards, not in the order in which they actually were at the moment of calling. This would have been one of the techniques for testing for clairvoyant ability - the down-through (DT) technique. He was rather to call them in the order in which they were supposed to be after they had been shuffled at the end of the section. He was to be calling them uninterruptedly while the experimenter takes down the record of the call. At the end of each run, the deck is shuffled either by the agent or the experimenter and the result cross-checked. As experimentation progressed, a mechanical shuffling technique was designed as a control against the intrusion of other psychic abilities. Hubert Pearce, one of Rhine's students at Duke at the same time as Pratt, was noted for high scoring in such tests or experiments.

<sup>46</sup> J.B. Rhine and J.G. Pratt, *Parapsychology, Frontier Science of the Mind*, cit., p. 10.

Precognitive tests were carried out using the "matching" technique as well. In this case, the subject would be expected "to match his deck of cards against targets that would be identified with specific symbols only *after* the matching".<sup>47</sup> In other words, the target symbols which were to be identified by the agent or experimenter before the matching began in clairvoyant tests, were to be identified only after the matching had been completed in precognition test, precognition being the phenomenon related to future events.

Besides experiments with the standard cards, the Stanford Research Institute International in the United States of America which has as its project, research into the psychic ability known as "Remote Viewing", had performed experiments on precognitive remote viewing. Remote viewing is that capacity which a psychic may have for describing locations and events that could be miles away accurately without the aid of any sensory means. Russell Targ was a member of the research team of the Institute. He described his experiment with the "remote viewer" Pat Price, a one-time police commissioner from Burbank, California, in which Price was alleged to have precognitively described the scene where the colleagues of Targ would be in half an hour's time. Price had given the description of the scene ten minutes after the team had left for their destination. The interesting thing about this experiment was that the destination was to be chosen at random, that is, the team had to drive to where they were instinctively instructed.<sup>48</sup> Targ summarised the psychic ability of Price thus:

Pat Price, who died in 1975, had psychic functioning totally integrated into his daily life. He would tell us each day about the course of world events - the day and hour of the Israeli-Arab cease-fire in the Yom Kippur war, the eventual outcome of a celebrated kidnapping, the break-up of an OPEC conference by terrorists. Nearly everyday it seemed that Pat would have some new piece of precognitive news

<sup>47</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 171.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Russell Targ and Keith Harary, *The Mind Race*, cit., pp. 56-58.

for us to think about over lunch, days in advance of the event's actual occurrence.<sup>49</sup>

Hella Hammid, whom a team of experimenters from Stanford tested, was alleged to have exactly described a target location by precognition, which was randomly chosen and visited by the experimenters thirty minutes after the description. Part of their report was that "all four of Hella's precognitive descriptions were correctly matched to the corresponding target sites by three independent judges".<sup>50</sup>

In the experiments with Pat Price and similar experiments, a target location, which had to be chosen at random by the experimenters, had to be described by the psychic either as soon as the group took off or ever before they set out. The description would be tape-recorded, while the verification would be done hours after the team had returned, by visiting the target site and playing the recorded description. The target site could be real places or scenes existing on slides. In the latter case, the slides were numbered and Random-Number Generators (RNGs) (mechanical means) were used to select the slide bearing the numbers of the site, after it had been described by the viewer, and verification made.

The control experiment to the Stanford one was conducted in Chicago by John Bisaha, a psychology professor at the Mundelein College, and Brenda Dunne, a graduate psychology student at the same college. Their subjects were two female volunteers who described the target sites or locations perfectly well.<sup>51</sup>

However, the problem with using the random-number generators was that there could be the possibility of the viewer using psycho-kinetic ability to select his target site. Because it did not prove a reliable technique for testing for pure precognition, the free-response technique, that is, description of actual, existing sites was found preferable. Not only this mechanical

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Russell Targ and Keith Harary, *The Mind Race*, cit., pp. 62-3.

technique was found to be unreliable, but the standard card method was also suspect. It was said that psycho-kinetic power could equally influence the shuffling of the cards after the call. The suspected influence of psycho-kinetic powers on precognitive experiments had therefore impeded the acceptance of the experimental results so far. Hence the difficulty in pronouncing judgement on the empirical verification of pure precognition. But whether or not a case had been established on behalf of precognition, the problem still persists as to the rational explanation of premonitive or precognitive experiences.

### 3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we have tried to systematically out-line the efforts made so far especially by J.B. Rhine and his collaborators to establish some empirical grounds on which the claims of parapsychology to scientific status could be palatable to the scientific world. Some of their achievements included the systematisation and improvement of all the existing methods of psychical research. They also introduced novel methods and techniques which could be varied as need be, for adequate control and proper identification of different types of phenomena.

All the theoretical distinctions of different types of psychic phenomena already made before their time notwithstanding, they seemed to have succeeded in setting out experimental conditions that would distinguish telepathic from clairvoyant manifestations. These conditions imply that

a test for telepathy should properly attempt to communicate mental content, and no possible material referent should exist, while a test for clairvoyance should have as its target a physical object or situation unknown to anyone; otherwise a successful experiment can yield no results clearly attributable to one rather than the other.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh. *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 98.

By so doing, they helped to remove a methodological problem that had hindered progress for earlier researchers. This break-through was said to have occurred in the spring of 1932.

It has to be noted that before the 1920s, attention had been concentrated on the phenomenon of telepathy in all experiments since that was the only recognised phenomenon, to the neglect of the phenomenon of clairvoyance. But with the advent of the techniques of "down-through" (DT), and "before touching" (BT) introduced by the Duke group, the case for pure clairvoyance was established.

The novelty and prospect of Rhine's research methods attracted more disciples around him. Between 1932 and 1933, his subjects increased from two to seven. These subjects were claimed to be highly gifted psychically in telepathy and clairvoyance even to the astonishment of sceptical researchers. The new addition to his former subjects - A.J. Linzmayer and Hubert Pearce, were two graduate students, Sara Ownbey and George Zirkle, and three undergraduate students, May Frances Turner, T. Coleman Cooper and June Baily. Rhine's experience with these new subjects, reconfirmed his view on the influence of personality traits on and biological foundation of psychic abilities. These students were found to be artistically oriented, were extroverts or sociable, and had something of mildly clairvoyant abilities in their respective families. Rhine wrote on their significant performances thus:

during 1932/33 the five had some 16,675 trials at clairvoyance (BT and DT), averaging 7.6 per 25 guesses correct, 10,275 at telepathy, averaging 9.6 per 25 guesses correct.<sup>53</sup>

With this group, a nucleus of co-workers on whom he could rely for the consistency and progress of research was established. Interestingly enough, two of his graduate students, Sara Ownbey and George Zirkle got married

<sup>53</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh. *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 100. Cf. J.B. Rhine, *Extra-Sensory Perception*, Boston: Boston Society for Psychical Research, 1934. pp. 88-89, 162.

and became a couple parapsychologists just as J.B. Rhine and his wife Louisa Rhine. The experimental set-up at this point was seen to be analogous to that in any psychology laboratory.

It has to be acknowledged that psychical researchers have made and still continue to make efforts towards standardising the methods of research. Their efforts have, no doubt, helped to elucidate to some extent the nature and manner of operation of psychic faculty. But as would be inferred from the developments made so far, no conclusive or definitive judgement could as yet be made that could guarantee consistency of the repeatability of psychic manifestations, especially in the laboratory environment.

Although successful experiments had been performed, it had been observed that in a series of runs, no psychic had been able to achieve all round successful hits. They had often or at times manifested declining effects in their performance, which pointed to the fact that the faculty could be fatigued. Psychic researchers had however judged this particular observation to be of great significance in determining the nature of psychic faculty. Most significant of all is the fact that as a natural faculty, belonging to a living being, it seems to enjoy some amount of freedom as regards its operation. In other words, it is to be inferred that it is not a mechanical apparatus that could be manipulated at will by the experimenter, and as such it embodies in itself its specific laws which could not be reduced to mere physical and mechanical laws. According to Rhine,

all the relevant research of the past has shown that psi cannot be screened out by physical barriers, whether space, or time, or any other known physical condition.<sup>54</sup>

This is why its manifestation is more spontaneous than mechanical, hence the reason for the seeming disappointments that some experimenters had met with.

<sup>54</sup> J.B. Rhine, "History of Experimental Studies" in Benjamin B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 45.

It therefore follows that experimentation, in the manner of empirical sciences, could not yield the whole truth about human nature.

While experimentation was important, the tendency to depend entirely upon its analytical strengths aroused McDougall's indignation as distorting the very human experience and behaviour that psychology claimed to want to understand. In particular, there were two features of human experience that McDougall felt to be *sui generis* and to defy all analysis into other entities: consciousness and purpose.<sup>55</sup>

Consciousness and purpose are seen as part of the characteristics of the human person, the functions of which cannot be entirely subjected to the physical laws. They point to that spiritual aspect of human nature which is judged capable of interacting with, as well as directing other physical processes in the human person. And so,

goal-directedness was itself an antecedent cause of human and animal action and could not be reduced to stimulus-response pairs any more than mind could be reduced simply to neurological networks or to structures of psychic entities.<sup>56</sup>

That Rhine and his collaborators did partially achieve their objective of setting parapsychology on the same scientific basis with other human sciences is a generally accepted fact among psychical researchers, as our exposition shows. This however does not in any way imply that the case about psychic phenomena is now a concluded one. As it has been for every other human science that defies absolute empirical investigation, so it is for psychical research.

<sup>55</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh. *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 58.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 4

### PSYCHIC FACULTY AND HUMAN NATURE

#### 4.1 Introduction

The very fact that psi occurred showed that human nature could not be completely physical - that a qualitatively distinctive mental ability existed, one that could even be experimentally demonstrated as non-physical ... In a word, the mind after all was experimentally real.<sup>1</sup>

If the mind is "experimentally real", in the sense that the reality of mind has been inferred from the psychic manifestations exhibited in the laboratory setting and experimental techniques, as attested to in the above quotation from J.B. Rhine, it means that man is not after all a highly developed machine, as the mechanists would want us to believe, but a being with teleological orientation in all his thoughts and actions. Consequently, the exponents of mechanistic materialism should try to rethink their position or stand as to their view on human nature.

As against the teaching of mechanistic materialists, man's mental or psychic activity is characterised by intentionality. This means that psychic facts have an intrinsic reference to a content. This content in turn is considered both in its extensional and intentional senses. While the extensional sense "t" refers to objects outside the mind, and these could be real, physical or ideal objects; the intensional sense "s" refers to the meaning which we associate with the objects or events. Here we situate the dividing line between the fields of empirical science and philosophy in our discussion of psychic manifestations. The extensional aspect of the content of intentionality is observable and therefore is studied with the experimental, mathematical and scientific procedures, that is, it is quantitatively calculable. The intensional aspect which belongs to the introspective part of the mind on

<sup>1</sup> J.B. Rhine, "History of Experimental Studies" in Benjamin B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 38.

the other hand, is never a subject of empirical observation. Hence the domain of the conscious is not necessarily the field of physical sciences and so has its unique manner of approach which includes philosophical approach.

The main concern of this chapter however is not necessarily whether man is a living being with both spiritual and material components, as such, but rather the analysis of that non-physical aspect of human nature in its almost "undiscovered" dimension. This dimension is the psychic function of human nature, the very nature and mode of operation which is very little explored yet.

It is our belief that whatever light we would be able to shed on this aspect of man will no doubt be another drop in the ocean or wealth of knowledge already accumulated about him. Also our understanding and appreciation of the being of man will be enhanced. It is equally hoped that that understanding could probably help to ignite the dormant potentials of many or some minds to the most challenging call to live their human potentials to the best of their ability. If only man could recognise, appreciate, believe in, and utilise the heritage and power that is his as a corporeal-spiritual being, his lot and that of the whole universe/humanity would be greatly improved.

#### 4.2 Human Nature - A Recapitulation

Human nature, because it belongs to the general category of living things, exhibits first and foremost all the characteristics of the genus. Such characteristics include: growth, nutrition, reproduction and eventual decay. These characteristics involve movement and as such endow the living organism with a dynamism all its own. This dynamism on its part counts for the internal unity of the organism hence each and every organism is referred to as a living *being*.

Besides the nature of a living being, man has a nature that is specific to him alone and sets him apart from all the other living beings. That nature is specifically rationality. By virtue of man's rational powers, he stands out above every other corporeal, living being, by the fact that he has the power

to manipulate and direct all other beings to his own end. This end could be advantageous or disadvantageous as the case may be. He has become, in a sense, the lord of the universe. The psalmist marvelling at man's dignity and power because of his rationality exclaims:

what are human beings that you spare a thought for them, or the child of Adam that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than a god, you have crowned him with glory and beauty, made him lord of the works of your hands, put all things under his feet. (Psalm 8:4-6)

It is therefore natural that man's creative power is due to his rational or intellectual faculty. A casual reflection on the development of the universe right from the stone age, up to our present technological age, in the areas of culture, art, language, et cetera, gives us a little idea of what man's intellectual powers could achieve.

Although the external manifestations of these powers are in themselves intriguing, more stupendous still are their internal manifestations which are geared towards the internal development and betterment of man himself. Along this line, we think of his mental functions of the will, thought, desires, emotions, intuitions, imaginations, et cetera. These mental functions exercise a lot of influence on what man is and does. The function of the will however makes man capable of eliciting and utilising the other functions according to right reason. So despite the fact that these functions are natural to man, their use or non-use are said to depend on man's immediate or remote needs, and his willingness or not to utilise them to the best of their capacity.

In his use of these functions, man has manifested their powers in ways that are judged to be normal, like in the area of intellectual activity in all its ramifications. On occasions however, he has exhibited paranormal manifestations of these powers - paranormal in the sense that the end result of such mental powers cannot be accounted for through normal means. In other words, their processes do not follow the acknowledged patterns. Such is the case with the main argument of this our work which is *Extra-sensory*

*Perception*. How such powers are exhibited has been a point of study for professionals in different fields of learning who are interested in the *mystery* that is man. From their various studies and researches have emerged some hypotheses with regard to the two aspects of man's intellectual faculty, the conscious and the unconscious aspects, and the ways they operate.

#### 4.2.1 The Intellectual Faculty - Conscious and Unconscious Faces

Man's intellectual faculty is seen to be of dual character consisting of the objective and the subjective aspects, which in other words, are the conscious and the unconscious aspects of it. The conscious component or consciousness generally speaking, is usually linked to awareness, being aware of one's existence, thoughts, environment, et cetera. But in a strict sense, consciousness could be said to be inseparable with attention, that is, our being alert to a particular scene or event. When we are consciously attentive, it means that we are actively engaged in a cognitive process of awareness. In our conscious acts however, our attention could either be focal or peripheral. Focal attention concerns that particular aspect of our experience that commands our deliberate attention, that in which we are particularly interested and are attending to. Peripheral attention on the other hand, concerns those other aspects of our experience which though are not objects of our focal attention, are nevertheless within the area of our consciousness. It could be said therefore that while we are reflexively aware of the objects of our focal attention, we are concomitantly aware of the other events around us.

The unconscious aspect or unconsciousness of a fact or an event naturally implies the state of not being aware; there is no purposeful attention to the fact or event. In other words, the event could be said to have taken place spontaneously irrespective of ourselves. Such are the events that take place when one is either in a state of coma, sleep or hypnotism. While a person could remember, recall and narrate conscious events, he is completely oblivious of unconscious ones. He only gets to know them through other people's testimony.

We shall examine the unconscious in this work not from the Freudian standpoint which equates it with the seat of repressed, unpleasant and sexual emotions of childhood, which later become the source of mental conflict, neurosis of the civilised man - the emancipated man. This means that these repressed emotions which were stored away in the unconscious are the causes of such mental disorders like neurosis. Our point of view however is on the unconscious as the deepest level of man's mental life, that powerful, dark and creative sphere of the mind which is connected with dreams and imagination, the seat of man's artistic vision.

It has been observed, from the different ways they manifest themselves, that these two faces of the human intellect have distinct characteristics and hence exhibit different functions, and that each could act independently of the other under certain conditions. To try an explanation of their characteristics and functions, Hudson chose to look at them as two different entities by taking them to be two minds. He therefore proposes the hypothesis of two minds, the objective and the subjective minds.<sup>2</sup> We have to note however that this is just a working hypothesis and as such the appellation of the two aspects does not matter much. For Hudson himself, it is indifferent whether we suppose the existence of two minds or of two distinct powers of the same mind.<sup>3</sup> We would rather prefer using the second alternative to the first, that is, the two distinct powers of the same mind. This accords more to the nature of the human person as a unique and substantial entity composed of material and spiritual aspects. It could be rightly argued however that the powers of the mind exceed the number two, considering their various manifestations under various conditions. But in the final analysis, all the other power parts could be seen to be subsumed under this broad division of conscious and unconscious powers. In this exposition therefore, we shall be referring to them as the objective and the subjective powers of the mind, the objective as the conscious and the subjective as the unconscious powers of the mind.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Thomson Jay, Hudson, *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, cit., pp. 27-80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-6.

#### 4.2.2 The Objective and Subjective Powers of the Mind

The objective and subjective powers of the mind are of different natures and perform different functions though they belong to the same aspect of the person, his intellectual faculty. But because it is difficult to define their natures in the abstract for lack of adequate vocabulary, they are rather distinguished by the ways they function with regard to their cognitive and reasoning processes.

It is believed that it belongs to the objective power of the intellect to cognise the objective world, using the senses both external and internal as its tools. The end result of this activity is intellectual knowledge of the external world and all that it implies. The subjective power on its part, is said to cognise the objective world rather with intuition. It is seen as the custodian of memory and the base of emotions. The subjective power is believed to be the faculty that stirs up paranormal phenomena when it is placed in the favourable condition of altered states of consciousness, through either hypnotism or other relaxing techniques. This power is supposed to be more alert when the objective power is in abeyance or is temporarily non-functional. To render the objective power temporarily non-functional, any of the techniques - hypnotism or meditation (concentration) - could be used.

The radical difference between the objective and subjective powers of the mind lies in their method of reasoning. While the former uses all available methods of normal reasoning like the deductive, inductive, analytic and synthetic methods, the latter employs only the deductive method. But to say that the subjective power or the person in a subjective state reasons deductively, does not mean that he follows the syllogistic rules of logic as would do the person in the objective state. It rather means that he accepts the general principle which is put before it by suggestion, and without questioning, continues to reason therefrom to intelligible and correct conclusions. In which case, in obedience to the law of suggestion, and of course auto-suggestion, he implicitly believes the principle and acts or starts acting accordingly. In other words, once he accepts the major premise that has been suggested to him, all the inferences he makes prove to be logically following from that premise, though he is not aware of either the processes

or his actions. Nevertheless, he is said to be reasoning deductively from a general premise to particular details.

Perhaps an example, which could better be testified to by hypnotists, would help to make the subjective power's reasoning process clearer. When it is suggested to a person in the hypnotic state that he is a weight-lifter, for example, which suggestion he surely would accept, he starts acting the weight-lifter accordingly. Since the acceptance of the suggested principle is automatic, whatever action he performs or statement he makes seem to be dogmatic, that is, it must be that and that alone. This is because in such a state, he could not be convinced otherwise. He could only change his line of action when there is a counter or another suggestion which bears equal force like the former one.

Hudson was of the opinion that a person in the subjective state is in a perfect, anaesthetic state whereby the senses become completely non-functional, thereby rendering the person insensitive or immune to all sorts of sensations. He gave the example of the orator, Henry Clay, who was asked to make a ten-minute speech in an assembly. Knowing himself as one who, once he starts to make a speech, easily enters the subjective state and so could speak for a very long time; and being sick and weak in body, procured the promise of a friend who sat beside him to stop him at the expiration of ten minutes. And so it turned out, and as was anticipated, that he became so unresponsive to all the pinching by his friend even with a pin, that he produced the greatest of his speeches in a two-hour duration. The ten minutes turned to be two hours.<sup>4</sup>

The distinctions so far made notwithstanding, whatever action that is performed by man is the action of the whole man irrespective of the specialised faculty through which that action is fulfilled. Such is also applicable to man's mental activity. Although awareness and focal or periphery attention characterise conscious activities but are lacking in unconscious activities, there is an intrinsic relationship between conscious and unconscious activities. This relationship springs first and foremost from

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-60.

the unity of the human person to whom the conscious and the unconscious powers belong. Just as there is hierarchy of existents in general so is there hierarchy of powers in every living organism, each part performing its specific function for the good of the whole organism, as St. Paul described in his first letter to the Corinthians, 12:12-30. We already saw this unity when we discussed the knowing processes of the human person, the acquisition of knowledge beginning from sense impressions and culminating in intellectual perception.

Peter Lloyd and other psychologists drew an analogy of the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious powers from that between the vice marshal and the ground crews. As the vice marshal or field commander gives orders to his subordinates, without either specifying the details or personally monitoring their respective activities, knowing that each group is an expert in their various functions, so is the relationship between the conscious and other subordinate powers of the mind. In all mental activities therefore, consciousness is the vice marshal that initiates and monitors the activities of other mental powers to which the unconscious as specialised power belongs. They see the unconscious as part of the subsystems of the conscious which, when activated, starts off its particular activity. Because this subsystem is stored out of the conscious, it starts working according to its nature, with full autonomy once it has been set in motion.<sup>5</sup> This is what we believe happens in psychic manifestations. As soon as the unconscious or subjective power of the mind is activated by means of meditation, hypnotism or yoga, it is disposed to bring about psychic experiences without any interference from the conscious or objective power of the mind. Such could also be the case with spontaneous psychic experiences though the processes for activating the unconscious power are not consciously initiated. Hence the unconscious is given pre-eminence in Paranormal activities.

Man's subjective intellectual power is therefore seen as transcendent, in the sense that it is not being governed by physical laws, that is, it defies

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Peter Lloyd, Andrew Mayes, ASR Manstead, PR Meudell, HL Wagner, *Introduction to Psychology*, Hammersmith, London: Fontana Press, 1986, pp. 227-229.

space-time limitations, having as its formal object those phenomena that do not belong to the extensional content of thought. Its effect or influence is seen more in those professions that demand high imaginative sense like in art and poetry, hence it is the seat of man's imaginative and inventive skills or powers. Orators are also believed to possess high capacity for the influence of the subjective power of the intellect.

#### 4.3 Psychic Faculty - A Distinct Human Faculty?

The reality of the psychic faculty, or in its technical parlance, *psi function*, has become an accepted hypothesis among people of different academic professions like psychologists, medical doctors, physicists, physiologists, neurophysiologists, biologists and parapsychologists alike. Nevertheless, its proper nature has been so elusive that psychologists and parapsychologists have been describing it, each according to his own limited understanding and vocabulary. The general consensus however is that it is a faculty of the mind, that deepest and perhaps the most complicated but indispensable aspect of the human person. It is deepest in the sense that it is fathomless both in nature and functions compared to the corporeal part of the person. It is equally complicated in the sense that the laws of logic and mathematics or even those of physics have very little to reveal about its nature and functions. And it is indispensable in the sense that it could be said to be equivalent to everything human - it confers identity and dignity to the human person, the psyche as the spiritual aspect of man.

As a faculty of that distinctive aspect of man, the mind, it becomes logical to presume or even to affirm that it belongs to man's global mental heritage, and so as part and parcel of man as a unique being. However, the complexities associated with its manifestations, in all their ramifications, have made the question of its nature more perplexing, hence the need to examine what psychical researchers thought that they have discovered about that nature. It is only when its nature has been fairly elucidated that the question of its distinctiveness or not, as well as that of the mode of its operations could become as comprehensible as possible. After all, classical metaphysics teaches us that the nature of a being determines its mode of activity - *agere sequitur esse*.

#### 4.3.1 The Nature of Psychic Faculty

One of the questions with which psychic researchers battled in the 1930s concerns the nature or general characteristics of psychic faculty. The hypothesis of its possible physical explanation was put up, but no such explanation could stand the test. From the series of experiments performed by Pearce and Pratt known as the Pearce-Pratt series, the non-physical nature of this faculty was highlighted. This was shown from the fact that distance was found to be no barrier to psychic manifestation or psi performance. But the discovery of modern science that different forms of electromagnetic waves, radiowaves for instance, equally function irrespective of distance, now challenges that opinion as to its non-physical nature. This is the hypothesis from neurophysiology that there might be some sort of interaction of microwaves between minds in telepathy, or between minds and objects in clairvoyance.

However, the independent experiments by L.L. Vasiliev of Leningrad carried out in the early 1930s not only confirmed the Pearce-Pratt findings, but also was designed to guard against physical interference. Apart from experimenting on the long-distance effect on telepathy, he also tried electromagnetic screening of his subjects during the experiments. The results from both methods were said to confirm the fact of the non-interference of distance or space in the subject's extrasensory perception.<sup>6</sup>

J.B. Rhine on his part, opined that physics itself has confirmed the non-physical nature of psychic faculty, while acknowledging it as a force to be reckoned with in the whole of nature. According to him,

by the criteria of physics itself, psi had been shown to be nonphysical: yet it had evidenced the earmarks of a reliable principle in nature - human nature, of course. It exerted

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

influence. It exhibited the "capacity to work", the general definition of energy.<sup>7</sup>

From the above quotation, it becomes evident that psychic faculty is a form of energy. But the next question then becomes, "what type of energy is it?". It could not be said to be physical energy since it has been shown earlier that it is of a non-physical nature. Parapsychological literature have designated this energy as *psychic energy*.

The mind should not be seen as actor but rather as an organiser or controller of the actions of the body. While physical controllers of bodily actions are hierarchical, with the result that any damage to the uppermost controller, the brain, interrupts the functioning of some part of or the whole entity, psychic faculty is the ultimate controller which is itself self-controlled. As the mind organises, the body carries out the action which is manifested in the extensional aspect of psychic act. In this sense, it is a non-physical function. The operation of the mind therefore is that of self-control and not of action. To describe psychic function as a form of "energy" is the result of man's poor vocabulary as well as his effort to explain the seemingly unexplainable.

Besides being a non-physical function, psi or psychic faculty is a biological function, inasmuch as it belongs to a living organism, man. It has been alleged that psi belongs to the genetic system of the organism without any specific localisation, either in the nervous or sensorimotor (organs and muscles) systems. In effect, it is a power common to all human species irrespective of race, sex or age. If that is the case, one wonders why it is manifest in some individuals and not in others; and why it is more intense in some and only apparent in others. This perplexity should be explained with reference to the section on the *Factors that Influence the Functioning of Psi* in this work. In that section, we have alluded to certain special tendencies in the individuals like belief or not in psychic phenomena, that is, positive or negative disposition towards them, cordial subject-experimenter relationship, motivation, et cetera, as the main sources of differences in the performance

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

or non-performance of psychic ability. On the effect of the subject's motivation in psychic performance Rhine writes:

It is safe to say that we do not know of anything that does affect the actual amount of psi except the subject's general motivation. If subjects are indifferent, uninterested, and yet still take part in a test for some reason or other, they are likely to score only at chance levels. If they are interested, then their characteristics as measured by these more-or-less standard and familiar psychological test simply divide into the two groups showing plus or minus scoring tendencies. They are at the time and in these particular tests either psi-hitters or psi-missers.<sup>8</sup>

It therefore follows that negative attitude towards psychic abilities will surely produce negative results. Here is ~~one~~ of the contributions of psychology to the understanding of psychic functions ~~made manifest~~.

Moreover, it is believed that those who make positive effort to develop psychic functioning usually reap the fruit of their labours. As our Appendix 3 suggests, those who want to develop their psychic powers should be paying particular attention to their intuitive impressions. We should however think that learning to develop them will be effective only if one has a positive disposition towards both the powers and their manifestations; but above all, if one has strong belief in one's own psychic powers.

Some psychical researchers, Reginald Omez for example, were of the opinion that psychic faculty is not an exclusive reserve of man, but that a good number of animals possess it too.<sup>9</sup> This opinion reiterates the fact that it is a faculty that is specifically of living organisms, and hence of the biological nature of the faculty.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 39-40.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Reginald. Omez, *Psychic Phenomena*, cit., pp. 117-118.

Being a faculty that belongs by nature to the genetic system of the organism, it is therefore believed to be a normal faculty, contrary to the views that associate it with mental disorders or psychopathological states of the individual. Psychic phenomena could result from the use of certain substances and drugs like caffeine and alcohol, and could be retarded by sodium amytal. Pathological disorders like neurosis could equally give rise to the phenomena<sup>10</sup> but these are abnormal and exceptional cases which should be treated as such.

Psychic faculty is also seen as an unconscious function. This aspect of it was demonstrated in the "sheep-goat" experiments of Gertrude R. Schmeidler, in which the sheep component represented those who are in favour of psychic abilities, while the goat component stood for those who are against the abilities. In the experiments, the goat component was found to have been unconsciously avoiding the targets and so were performing below chance expectations, while the sheep components produced results that were judged to be statistically very significant. This is a pointer to one of the effects of psychological traits on the use of one's psychic powers, either negatively or positively.

To say that psi is an unconscious function basically refers to the process which is involved in its manifestation, and not to the subject's cognitive ability. This distinction between the subject and the process is necessary in order to answer to the possible objection that an 'unconscious perception' could not after all be taken as perception. Perception by nature is a form of awareness and therefore a conscious activity. But the operation or process of the functioning of psychic faculty eludes the conscious focus of the subject. He becomes conscious of only the result or after-effect of the process. Rhine and Pratt confirmed the opinion that it is the secondary result or what they called *the converted after-effect* of the psychic function that is consciously recognised by the subject.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Seymour H., Mauskopf. and Michael R., McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., pp. 100 & 116; Carroll B., Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 121.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. J.B., Rhine. and J.G., Pratt, *Parapsychology, Frontier Science of the Mind*, cit., p. 87.

Such after-effects are of various kinds and according to our authors, Louisa Rhine had categorised them into four main groups thus:

First, there are intuitive experiences in which the subject just knows in an unaccountable way of some event he could not have perceived sensorially or known from memory, reasoning, or lucky guess. Second, he may experience a veridical or meaningful hallucination; that is, the truth conveyed to him is projected in such a way that he sees, hears, smells, or "feels" the essential message, much as if the actual occurrence were present to his senses. Third, he may, in some symbolic way, dramatize the message in a dream (or daydream) experience so that he has to interpret it to get at the meaning conveyed. Fourth, he may dream (or daydream) the scene itself in all literal detail, experiencing a pictorial realization of a meaningful event.<sup>12</sup>

These four different means through which psychic ability manifests itself, that is, intuition, hallucination, dreaming and imagery, are therefore seen as mere mechanisms through which meaningful information is extracted from psychic processes or functions. Although the information acquired is always very impressive, vivid and convincing to the subject, yet the process of the psi function remains obscure and unconscious to him. In other words, he could not possibly explain how it works, as he would make references to the perceptual processes in sensory perception. This is because, as we have pointed out before, there is not yet any known physical organ to which the responsibility of psychic functioning could be assigned. We shall therefore turn to the examination of the manner of the functioning of psychic faculty according to psychologists and parapsychologists.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.3.2 The Functions of Psychic Faculty - Laws Governing Psychic Manifestations

Parapsychologists, still in their bid to establish their discipline on a strong pedestal of scientific status, put forward hypotheses which though their abstract correctness could not be proved, yet have demonstrated their correctness through their workability or effects. The importance of a working hypothesis in any scientific field cannot be over-emphasised, hence the necessity of such a hypothesis for psychological research. What the Keplerian and the Newtonian theories did for astronomy on the one hand, and the atomic theory for chemistry on the other hand, are indications of the indispensability of working hypothesis in the field of science. Not only do hypotheses reduce the frequency of conflicting theories in the fields, but they also provide a form of stability, and consequently favour progress in the respective fields. It is important to note however, that hypotheses are always open to revision depending on further discoveries, and this openness to revision is equally an aid to scientific progress. This is exactly what the discovery of the quantum theory has done for classical physics and mechanics.

Because it has been believed that psychic faculty functions irrespective of space and time, as had been demonstrated in the experiments of clairvoyance and precognition, J.B. Rhine and psychological researchers came to a conclusion that the mind of man is not space-time bound. Not being bound by space and time therefore, it seems that the mind in its psychic operations is not bound by physical laws, that is, the laws of cause and effect, either. In a letter to Francis Bolton in summer of 1934, J.B. Rhine made known to him the result of his experiments on precognition which demonstrated that the mind, in its psychic functions, is not limited by the cardinal properties of matter, space and time.<sup>13</sup>

If physical laws do not govern psychic manifestation, what other law/laws do then? To answer this question, parapsychologists have taken

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Seymour, H., Mauskopf, and Michael, R., McVaugh. *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 173; Rhine to Bolton, 7 July, 1934.

recourse to psychology, the science of the mind and its functions, for help. Research by the scholars of hypnotism, exemplified in the persons of Ambroise August Liebeault, and Hippolyte Bernheim, revealed that the mind of man under certain conditions, the hypnotic state in particular, is amenable to suggestion. That it is in such a state that most of the psychic manifestations occur. According to these studies, it is alleged "that hypnotic subjects are constantly amenable to the power of suggestion, that suggestion is the all-potent factor in the production of all hypnotic phenomena".<sup>14</sup> From this then Hudson formulated what he calls *the laws of suggestion and auto-suggestion*, and *the laws of adverse suggestion and controversion*. It is believed that the mind in its psychic functions operates under these laws. The workability or not of this hypothesis is yet to be proved.

The basis of this hypothesis lies in the supposed dual nature of man's intellectual faculty which comprises the conscious and the unconscious natures. These natures have been designated as the objective and the subjective minds respectively. An in-depth examination of their different characteristics and functions will be taken up in the preceding section on the *Intellective Faculty*. Suffice it for us to note here that it is believed that it is the subjective part of man's mind that is the seat of psychic phenomena and hence obeys the above laws. In order to get the mind into a subjective state or what Charles Honorton calls *internal attention states*,<sup>15</sup> parapsychologists, for experimental purposes, and psychics to facilitate their performance, have devised and employed various techniques. Such techniques include hypnotism and meditation or relaxation, which form part of the conditions that govern psychic manifestations.

<sup>14</sup> Thomson Jay, Hudson. *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, Edison, New Jersey: Castle Books, 1995, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Charles Honorton, "Psi and Internal Attention States" in Benjamin B. Wolman (Editor), *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 435.

#### 4.3.2.1 The Laws of Suggestion and Auto-Suggestion

It is believed that hypnotism, one of the ways of altering the state of man's consciousness by inducing a deep sleep in the subject, is an invaluable technique in discovering how psychic faculty functions. In a hypnotic state, man's reflective power is put out of the scene, by blocking off all reasoning ability, thereby rendering his mind blank and so susceptible to suggestion either by others or by himself. The mind in a hypnotic state does not by that very fact become inactive, this point has to be understood. The fact that the mind is disposed to believe and consequently act out all that is being suggested to it, is a sign of its being active. What is rather being aimed at in hypnosis is the blocking out of every other external and internal sensations which are regarded as intruders, so that the subjective mind will be free for possible psychic impressions.

To be hypnotised, the person is made to concentrate attention on a certain point or object for a reasonable length of time before the subjective state is reached. And so the main word in the technique is *concentration*. Whether in hypnosis or meditation, concentration is the principal means of inducing the required altered states of consciousness or internal attention states. The Raja Yoga, a system of meditation in practice in the Orient since about the year 1500 B.C., and which has influenced other systems of yogi, is a typical example of the method of inducing the internal attention states. It is a method that aims at reducing psycho-physical noise by tuning out all forms of environmental - internal and external - stimulation. Such environmental stimulation may result from the person's desires, emotions or somatic-sensory perceptions. When these stimulations are tuned out, then the mind directs its attention specifically and wholly towards the internal processes of thought and images, through which psychic information is mediated into consciousness.

Indian yoga in general aims at the complete shutting out of noise from man's consciousness so as to arrive at the state of *siddhi* or the activation of his paranormal faculty. It is a state that goes beyond words and thoughts which Christian mystics, in their effort to describe contemplative prayer refer to as "prayer of silence, prayer of repose,... prayer of the

heart".<sup>16</sup> By analogy, we should call it 'the state of mental silence, the state of repose, or the state of the heart'. In this state then man is disposed to contemplate eternal things thereby achieving detachment from all that is worldly. Not only oriental but also Christian mysticism as seen above employs this method of meditation and the practice of psycho-physical relaxation as a means for contact with the higher world or level of human existence. In all these methods, the psycho-somatic system of the individual is conducted outside the domain of reflective consciousness thereby releasing the subliminal "I" and its faculties, to which it is believed that psychic faculty belongs.

Summarising this process of letting-go of all psycho-physical noise, Honorton quotes a well-known percipient in the history of parapsychology, Mary Craig Sinclair thus:

By making the body insensitive I mean simply to relax completely your mental hold of, or awareness of all bodily sensations... Relax all mental interest in everything in the environment; inhibit all thoughts which try to wander into consciousness... Drop your body, a dead weight, from your conscious mind... To make the conscious mind a blank it is necessary to "let go" of consciousness of the body. If, after you have practised "letting go" of the body, you find that your mind is not a blank, then you have not succeeded in getting your body rid of all tension.<sup>17</sup>

Omez was of the same opinion with Sinclair in emphasising the importance of relaxation which opens up man's receptive power while quietening his reflective power.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> James Borst. *A Method of Contemplative Prayer*, Sydney: St. Paul's Publications, 1977. p. 68.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 451. Cf. Sinclair, U., *Mental Radio*, Monrovia, California: Sinclair, 1930. pp. 181-182.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Reginald Omez, *Psychic Phenomena*, cit., pp. 118-119.

It has to be observed that both Sinclair, herself a psychic, and Omez, a Christian as well as a religious priest belonging to the Order of Preachers, the Dominicans, are talking about self-induced internal attention states as should be practised by psychics, or those who are desirous of contemplating eternal realities.

The importance of meditation or concentration in order to raise one's mind to higher experiences is well attested to by famous spiritual writers and teachers like Dom Vitalis Lehodey, and Cardinal Lercaro.<sup>19</sup> Religious leaders utilise it to induce religious enthusiasm, devotion and submission in their followers. The place and effect of concentration on psychic functioning has been highlighted in the lives of religious people, monks in particular, who are said to use psychic power to localise water sources before building their monasteries. This was the observation of José Maria Pilon<sup>20</sup>, in his interview with José Olaizola. Father Pilon was of the opinion that the prayer and regulated life of the religious, coupled with their severe though balanced diet, in other words, life of discipline, favour their capacity for concentration through which psychic faculty functions.<sup>21</sup>

In this process of concentration, once the objective, rational powers have been eclipsed, so to speak, and the subjective powers being released, the person simply lets himself free and responsive to the psychic communication or psychic energy. At this point then does suggestion become a power to reckon with. But it has to be clearly understood that suggestion does not solely and necessarily imply verbal communication. It could be done either verbally or mentally. In the latter case, the

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Lehodey, Vitalis Dom. *The Ways of Mental Prayer*, Dublin: Gill, 1960, pt. 11, Ch. ix, par. 2; Lercaro, Cardinal, *Methods of Mental Prayer*, London: Burns & Oats, 1957, Ch., 14.

<sup>20</sup> José Maria Pilon is a Spanish Jesuit Priest who lives in Madrid, in the house of the professed Jesuits. He is a renowned radiesthetician who discovered and established water-wells for many localities that have water problems. The water-wells that owe their existence to his psychic faculty count up to 500 in Spain alone, besides those in Venezuela and Guatemala.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. José Luis Olaizola. *Mas alla de la muerte, El pais sin descubrir*, Barcelona: Casa Dell'Arco, 1994, p. 106.

communicator simply concentrates his thoughts or wishes on the subject, while the subject accepts or perceives the thoughts of the communicator and starts acting accordingly. This non-verbal communication or suggestion is what is thought to be taking place in telepathic communications.<sup>22</sup>

Just as the subjective state favours suggestion from other minds, so it is believed to be with regard to auto-suggestion or suggestion from the same mind itself. That is to say, in the internal attention states, the mind is disposed and attentive to the thoughts and wishes it concentrates upon and believes in. The effect of this auto-suggestion is seen in the area of psycho-therapeutics, where one's subjective belief is an indispensable factor in the therapeutic healing. It is believed that all psycho-somatic illnesses are better taken care of by the laws of suggestion and auto-suggestion, in which case, the healing could be either psychological or physical. Some forms of healing methods like suggestive healing, hypnotism, spiritism, mesmerism, Christian science, mind cure, and even religious healing, utilise this technique of suggestion. In either of these cases, unconditional, subjective faith which results from suggestion or auto-suggestion is an indispensable prerequisite. Whoever has attended any healing session of the healing ministries either in the Pentecostal circles or in the mainstream religions could attest to this fact. The 'spiritual healers' always shout out repetitively phrases like, "Believe that you are healed, that Jesus has heard your prayers, ...". The emphasis here is on the word 'belief'. In other words, healing whether as a result of suggestion and auto-suggestion or as miraculous demands an act of faith from the person desiring to be healed.

<sup>22</sup> The experiences of a religious sister psychic whom we interviewed, and who wishes to remain anonymous, authenticated this fact for us. She gave instances when she communicated or received telepathic information to or from her blood brother on the one hand, and her friend, also a religious, on the other hand. According to her, whenever she concentrates her thoughts or wishes on her friend, the latter picks up the message and acts accordingly. She believes that that must also be the case with the messages she receives from her friend and her brother. It is of interest to note that while this sister lives and works in the Republic of Ireland, a Briton though she is, her friend lives and works in the Philippines, and her brother lives in England. For her, time and space are never barriers to the communication. It takes place irrespective of where the parties find themselves at the time. This is the case of projective telepathy we mentioned in chapter three of this work. Cf. Appendix III in this work.

At this point, it becomes expedient to say that there is a great difference between the hypnotic and the meditative states. In the former, the subliminal "T" which has been released seems to be at the mercy of the hypnotist, and in such case, the reflective power of the subject is drastically reduced. Although it is not for us to give any moral judgement on the subject of hypnosis in this work, yet the temptation to say that hypnotism puts a big question mark on the authenticity of the information gathered from the subject, still remains. If the subject is at the mercy of the operator or experimenter, then the moral responsibility of the subject with regard to his actions and statements under such a state becomes very doubtful.

Axel Munthe however believes that hypnotism has no adverse moral implication for the subject. According to him, a hypnotised subject does not follow the suggestions of the hypnotiser sheepishly, but is rather quite conscious of what he does in the hypnotic sleep. He was equally of the opinion that people could not be hypnotised against their will, and for this reason, the purported hypnosis at a distance is just an empty theory. For him, mechanical means like fixation of attention on an object and suggestion are not enough for sending someone to hypnotic sleep. Rather the power behind the person's susceptibility to hypnotism lies in his sub-conscious mind.<sup>23</sup> But if hypnotic subjects are conscious of what they do, choosing what they want and what they do not want to do, why is it that they do not usually remember what they said while in hypnotic sleep? And if the force of hypnotism is in the subject's sub-conscious mind, how could he be conscious of what he wants and what he does not want to do? Here again surfaces the difficulty of trying to explain the non-empirical, non-observable phenomenon, the intensional aspect of the human mind.

The fact remains however, that while some people are easily susceptible to hypnotism and so could be hypnotised at will, there are those who could not be hypnotised without their co-operation. It could therefore

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Axel Munthe. *La storia di San Michele*, XXV edizione, Milano: Garzanti, 1943. p. 312.

be said that the argument about moral responsibility holds only for those who could be hypnotised at will.

In the meditative state on the other hand, the subliminal "T" that is released is said to re-acquire its unity and so becomes free in the way it observes, feels and does its work in the free and new horizons that have been opened up for it. This is because the individual purposely strives to enter into that state in order to achieve his desired goal. It is a proper human act which is accomplished with full liberty of spirit. It seems a natural way of releasing the authentic self through which man continues to build and re-build his authenticity as a person. But these differences notwithstanding, the point that is of much interest here is the fact that the emergence of psychic function is attributed to the altered states of consciousness, or what Marabini referred to as the state of the eclipse of consciousness,<sup>24</sup> that is, the psychological condition known as the state of mental silence. Whichever way that state is reached, the important thing is to achieve the desired purpose.

#### 4.3.2.2 The Laws of Adverse Suggestion and Controversion

As the mind in the subjective state is said to be susceptible to suggestion, it has been noted by hypnotists that it will continue holding on to, and acting on whatever suggestion that has been put to it, until a new suggestion is made. The new suggestion being as powerful as the former, draws the mind to incline to it, thereby changing its former line of action. This means that in such a state, the argumentative faculty of the mind has been eclipsed and as such, it cannot discriminate between one suggestion and another. However, although it will continue following suggestion after another, there is a tendency noticed by hypnotists, of its being thrown into a state of confusion and some nervous excitement. This is because it sees the latter suggestion as a contrary or adverse one, and being incapable of controversial argumentation, the state of confusion ensues. This mental

<sup>24</sup> Enrico Marabini. *Fenomeni parapsicologici*, cit., p. 177. We would prefer to describe it as the eclipse of man's reasoning or reflective power.



qualification as *perception*. To qualify them with the word *perception* carries the implication that they are sources of knowledge, but this is not to be presumed but rather discovered or proved.

From experiments and reports therefrom, for example, the experiments performed by Louisa Rhine with children, the Pratt-Woodruff experiments, and those by Lucien Warner - this last mentioned specifically designed his experiments for determining the possible parallels between sensory and extra-sensory perceptions - no such parallels were found to exist between them. The conclusions from Warner's experiments showed no such parallels, thereby substantiating what J.B. Rhine had been suspecting from the out-set. But that no parallels exist between sensory and extra-sensory perceptions simply means that the processes by which the perceptions occur differ greatly. That is to say that while sensory perception is based on some material neurological processes, involving a mechanical transmission of information from outside sources to the receptors or nerve endings, and subsequently to the brain; extra-sensory perception follows quite a different process, the process that still remains hypothetical although the effects are manifest.

Sensory perception is known to depend on specific external and internal organs in order for it to actualise, while no such organs have as yet been discovered to which extra-sensory perception could be connected. Being strictly bound to material organs, sensory perception is governed by spatial-temporal limitations, the limitations which have not yet been found to have any influence on extra-sensory perception. J.B. Rhine made his convictions of the distinctiveness of both types of perception clear in his major works, *Extra-sensory Perception* and *New Frontiers of the Mind* thus:

I began using the term "Extra-Sensory Perception" (E.S.P.) at first with the more tentative meaning, "perception without the function of the recognized senses". But as our studies progressed it gradually became more and more evident that E.S.P. was fundamentally different from the sensory processes, lacking a sense organ, apparently independent of recognized energy forms, non-

radiative but projectory, cognitive but unanalyzable into sensory components - all quite nonsensory characteristics... Hence the present interpretation is rather that E.S.P. is, frankly, "perception in a mode that is just *not* sensory", omitting all question of "unrecognized". I think we have progressed this far with reasonable certainty.<sup>28</sup>

Hence, as regards their mode of operation or processes of actualisation, sensory and extra-sensory perceptions have no parallels, they operate on quite different levels.

However, despite the fact that sensory and extra-sensory perceptions operate differently, yet they are perceptions of the same subject, that is, they are proper human activity, belonging to the same human person. So extra-sensory perception, like sensory perception, has a natural and not a supernatural explanation. They have been shown to be the activities that belong to man's intellectual faculty, functioning differently under different conditions.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, as different faces of the same coin - man's intellectual faculty - both are means by which man becomes aware of himself as well as his environment. Besides sensory awareness which is just one of the different ways through which information is made available to the individual, and to which he responds continuously, there is also what is commonly known as intuition which is equally a source of information. In the sensory awareness itself is also included the stream of images and thoughts which come through memory and imagination, all sources of information. So man becomes aware of himself and his environment, comes to know and respond to them either perceptually, emotionally or intuitively. And because through extra-sensory perception, information about man and his environment is made available to him, the processes not yet fully known, it could equally be regarded as perception. It is perception because just as sensory perception is

<sup>28</sup> J.B. Rhine. *Extra-Sensory Perception*, cit., p. 2; Cf. *New Frontiers of the Mind*, cit., pp. 174-188.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. The foregone sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 of this present chapter.

accompanied by physical reaction from the perceiver, so it is in extrasensory perception.

Whatever be the case, however, suffice it for us to say that information about things and events reach man both sensorially and extra-sensorially. This is evident from the way man responds to such information, since the manner of response is determined by the manner through which the information is received. It is believed that psychic information or impression comes in a flash either as feelings, thoughts or images; and that their mode of appearing is usually surprising and unexplainable. They are believed to be non-visual sensations<sup>30</sup> that make deep impressions on the psychic thereby influencing his feelings at the deepest level of his personality. This accounts for the change of mood which they usually exhibit in response to the impressions. These signs could be said to be the subjective effects of psychic impressions. On the objective level however, the information is usually made public or known to others so that their veracity could be ascertained. Literature and living examples abound of pieces of information received psychically, either telepathically, clairvoyantly or precognitively, which are known to be true or to have come true. Not only are they known to be true, but they have also led people to act accordingly, thereby producing physical effects. Consequently, extra-sensory information produces both theoretical and practical knowledge.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

Our excursion into this chapter up to this moment has been on the reality of psychical faculty or power in relation to man's global nature. Arguments abound as to whether the purported psychic phenomena really exist or not; and if they exist, whether they are not manifestations of neurological disorders in man. Opinions equally abound as to the resolution of the dilemma, creating camps for and against the issue. The existence of camps however is judged to be normal not only on the grounds that the argument is between individuals or groups of various environmental and

<sup>30</sup> As "general awareness or impression not caused by anything that can be seen or defined".

intellectual backgrounds, but above all, because of the elusive nature of the reality involved. Non-empirical realities are always enigmatic and so require, over and above the normal methods of investigation into the realities of the physical universe, special methods if any reasonable insight into them is to be gained.

On the first issue about the existence or not of psychic phenomena, there have been claims that the purported psychic manifestations are nothing but fraudulent practices by clever self-acclaimed psychics and mediums, aimed at exploiting the desperate and often superstitious-minded individuals. Among these superstitious-minded are counted those who are highly learned and highly placed in the society. Not only fraudulent but also magical practices are said to account for the purported paranormal phenomena. These objections explain the sceptical and at times hostile attitude of empirical scientists and psychologists towards parapsychologists and their theories.

This attitude is not surprising since psychic manifestations by nature elude all physical or empirical explanation. They belong, as we have mentioned earlier, to the intensional "s" content of man's mental activity. Besides, some hypotheses and practices within parapsychology itself cast doubt on the authenticity of the said phenomena. For instance, the use of hypnotism to elicit paranormal phenomena makes one wonder whether the phenomena are natural manifestations or the results of pure suggestion. This perhaps may be why it is still an open question among parapsychologists whether hypnotism is an essential and indispensable factor for the manifestation of psychic phenomena. However, it may be convincingly argued that hypnotism is only helpful in laboratory environment, just to artificially induce that state of lucidity or altered state of consciousness which is indispensable for the awareness or perception of psychic information. Whatever the case may be, there have been reports of spontaneous psychic manifestations which never called for hypnotism, nor were elicited by consciously altering one's state of consciousness through yoga or meditation.

That trickery or fraudulent practices existed and may still exist in the field of psychic exhibition is an indisputable reality. Such frauds had either

been unveiled by experienced, intelligent scientists and observers who have been accustomed to the scientific rigors of the laboratory experiments; or they had been admitted to by the trickster or magician himself. A typical example of a trickster who even went so far as describing himself as a charlatan, a fake and a liar, was a magician James Randi. He however declared that he played such tricks for the purpose of entertainment.<sup>31</sup> But the fact that he succeeded and was believed, shows that tricks or frauds are possibilities in the field of the paranormal display.

Although Randi acknowledged his trickery, he was of the opinion that it should not be taken for granted that all psychics are acclaimed tricksters, or that there is no room for genuine cases, simply because he himself played tricks. He set out himself, and encouraged others also for an objective investigation into the acclaimed manifestations of psychic powers. To this end, he participated in the humanist symposium comprising scientists and authors which took place in Buffalo, New York, in May, 1976. It was said that the purpose of the symposium was specifically to investigate claims of psychic performances by people like Uri Geller.<sup>32</sup> The symposium gave birth to a committee known as *the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP)*.

That Randi used tricks, as a magician, to produce pseudo-paranormal phenomena, as he himself admitted to, only helps to show that it is normal and necessary to suspect trickery in matters of paranormal claims. Moreover, such an attitude of suspicion or scepticism contributes positively to efforts geared towards objective investigation, and the consequent tentative or final pronouncements on the said claims. This is an attitude of critical mindedness, simply put, which is the desired attitude in the fields of scientific and philosophical investigations, where objectivity is the sole aim.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Nance Feyson (editor), *Quest for the Unknown: Mind Power*, cit., p. 130.

<sup>32</sup> Uri Geller is a renowned psychic who came into the scene in the early 1970s. Born in Tel Aviv by parents who were Hungarian Jews, in December, 1946, he was said to have started manifesting paranormal powers at the early age of three. His fits started with the phenomenon of metal-bending, like bending of spoons, and graduated to that of psychic mineral exploration. He performed extensively in theatres, school halls and television programmes both in his own country Israel and in the United States of America.

It is also an evidence that magicians could mislead even scientists of great standing into believing them, despite their scientific acumen. Scientists, after all, are human beings and so are not immune to deceit. They could be deceived because, as a journalist and an amateur magician Martin Gardner reasoned, scientists have been dealing with the rational world and so think rationally, while the magicians' mode of thinking is seen as irrational, and completely other from the scientists' mode.<sup>33</sup>

All the arguments against the reality of psychic phenomena - which we hope to give ample treatment in the next chapter - notwithstanding, studies, researches and experiments that have so far been carried out, and are still going on, have been pointing to the fact that psychic phenomenon is a reality. It is believed that psychic power is nothing but another aspect of man's intellectual faculty through which he perceives and apprehends himself and his environment on a higher level. Although the reality of fraud has also been verified through these studies, that does not detract from the reality of genuine psychic phenomena. As a human activity, it is understandable that it could not be immune from manipulation by man himself, if he so desires. Fraud therefore could better be understood as a parasite that feeds on the noble human endowment which is his psychic power, and even as a pointer to the ingenuity of man's intellectual faculty.

The other side of the argument looks at paranormal manifestations as coming from people with neurophysiological disorders. But if the analysis of the human nature which we have made so far has revealed some truth about the said nature, then one would confidently say that such an assertion, that is, attributing psychic manifestations to neurophysiological disorders, is a blatant, escapist tactics. The exponents of such an argument could be seen as either being afraid of acknowledging what they are, or are indolent about facing the responsibility that such a knowledge would entail, or they are simply afraid of the truth about the reality of the human nature and all that that truth entails. That certain drugs or neurophysiological states could sometimes elicit psychic experiences does not make such experiences the exclusive preserve of drug addicts and psychotics.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Nance Feyson (editor), *Quest for the Unknown: Mind Power*, cit., pp. 130-131.

Thus far, opinions have been agreeing as to the inexhaustible powers of man's spiritual nature which defy the limitations of space and time. Manifestations of those powers in various ways, especially as psychic phenomena, has prompted scientists and philosophers alike to search for the nature and mechanisms of the source of such powers. And though there has not yet been perfect agreement between them, and the expectation of such perfect agreement would be nothing but utopic or idealistic, yet there has been enough evidence that the powers reside in the spiritual aspect of man. Consequently, these powers belong to man as such irrespective of class or condition of health. There are evidences also which claim that the powers function at the higher level of man's being, when not encumbered or distracted by the workings of the lower level, that is, the corporeal or sensitive functions of his being. Techniques have even been devised to create the required conditions for the releasing of the higher functions of the intellectual faculty to which psychic functions belong. Let us be reminded however, that the powers, though may require the techniques, do not strictly depend on them. In other words, they function spontaneously in some cases regardless of man's conscious efforts.

That psychic powers emanate from the higher level of man's intellectual faculty is a pointer to the fact that man is not an advanced form of machine as mechanistic materialism would want us to believe. It also proves that man's intellectual activity has a distinct nature and level of operation as against the teaching of materialistic parallelism.

Psychic activity is an activity that enjoys the liberty of the human person in cases when the individual decides to elicit the paranormal state of the mind. Moreover, the various uses to which psychic function could be put point to its being a free act. It would seem that the person in the subjective state is just acting like a robot since he is unconscious of the processes of his actions. If this is the case then, it means that the psychic manifestations that ensue in such a state are merely fruits of mechanical and not free act.

When we talk of free acts, we intend those acts that follow from the person's initiative, that one purposely chose for oneself. This is freedom in the positive sense, not just freedom as the absence of coercion. To enter into

the altered state of consciousness demands a purposeful decision, hence one goes out for it using the appropriate techniques that are available to him. Besides, projective telepathy, for instance, involves purposeful concentration of one mind on another in order to communicate with that other. It therefore follows that psychic phenomena are not devoid of the liberty of the will of the psychic. Since all human actions, not acts of man, are initiated and scrutinised by man's conscious power, that is, his objective power, the decision to be put or to put oneself into an altered state of consciousness is a free act which is aimed at achieving the goal set to itself by consciousness, and that goal is psychic experience. Consciousness therefore is the "central, high-order regulating system"<sup>34</sup> of the human person.

On the ontological level, nature as an entity possesses the reason for its existence, order and intelligibility. The subjective power of the mind as an aspect of the global nature equally possesses its own reason for existence. This follows from what we have said before that action follows being, that is, every existent acts according to its nature. The subjective power of the mind intrinsically acts on purpose when it acts according to its nature.

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<sup>34</sup> Peter Lloyd, and others, *Introduction to Psychology*, cit., p. 229.

## CHAPTER 5

### PSYCHICAL RESEARCH : A RE-APPRAISAL

#### 5.1 Introduction

Having navigated through the area of man's psychic powers, it becomes expedient for us to look back into what has gone before. While we could not, in any way, claim to have done an exhaustive research into this field, nevertheless certain relevant facts have emerged from the study.

Psychic phenomenon in whichever form it is found - as extrasensory or psycho-kinetic phenomenon, had in ancient times, been attributed to non-human or supernatural origin. If it was not thought to be caused by a discarnate spirit acting through the medium, it was seen as the result of demonic possession. It was at best, considered the effect of the fraudulent practices of money-grubbers and those who wanted fame at all costs. However, the appearance of psychical research or parapsychology on the scene, as an academic discipline has so far clarified these various views, even if it has not achieved one hundred percent success.

While the reality of certain extraordinary events of either divine or demonic origin in the lives of some humans, like miraculous and mystical phenomena or real demonic possession could not be denied, yet psychical research has uncovered the fact that psychic phenomena are natural phenomena that originate from the living animals' (human beings and some brutes) psyche. Psychic ability or power therefore is a human faculty belonging to that non-material aspect of man's nature. Its seat is in the mind, and as such it is part of man's intellectual faculty.

The mystery surrounding the nature, source and mode of operation of psychic faculty, that is, the problematic nature of extra-sensory mode of perception is however hoped to be resolved in the near future with the current neuro-physiological researches going on. The hypothesis is that like sensory perception, extra-sensory phenomena have a frequentistic basis, from

the physical standpoint, which means that they are the phenomena evolving in time. The dynamic evolution of these phenomena is complex, in which case, they involve non-linear, unstable and even "chaotic" phenomena. This chaotic, non-linear dynamics is typical of all biological processes like the brain network which is unstable in its processing and transmission of signals among the neurons.<sup>1</sup>

This is interesting because it helps to find a possible explanation of extra-sensory phenomena at the level of ordinary, sensory perception with reference to the physical basis of memory in mammalian brain. The memory process offers a typical example of a biological process of a non-linear, and unstable dynamics. The memory base can be localised not in space, but in time, that is, in dynamic configurations of reciprocally exciting clusters of neurons. These configurations, because of their unstable character, can be localised in different spatial arrays of neurons, so as to justify from a physical standpoint, the observed plasticity of biological brains. For example, after a damage in some part of the brain, the function of this part can be substituted after a proper training, by another part. In short, memory is conserved not in space but in time. In other words, traces of memory are not conserved and localised in a determined, static neuron but in a configuration of dynamic, self-exciting neural networks. In this way, each neuron, for each unit of time, can participate in different processes of remembering or recalling.

Moreover, if we take into account the unstable and non-stationary chaotic character of these dynamic processes, the memory capabilities of neural networks increase exponentially. This means that if we characterise a stable, dynamic process through the  $n$  fixed points of its energy shape,

<sup>1</sup> Cf., Gianfranco Basti, *Neural Images and Neural Coding: The Semantic Problem in Cognitive Neuroscience*, p. 15; Basti, G.; Perrone, A.; Cocciolo, P., "Using Chaotic Neural Nets to Compress, Store and Transmit Information" in *Applications of Artificial Neural Networks*, V, SPIE - Proceedings Series, 2243, S.K. Rogers and D.W. Ruck (Eds), Washington: SPIE Press, 1994, pp. 540-551; Churchland, P.S., *Neurophilosophy. Toward a Unified Science of the Mind-Brain*. Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1986; Kohonen, T., *Self-Organization and Associative Memory*. Second Edition, Berlin: Springer, 1988.

generally the number of patterns that can be memorised in this dynamics is less than  $n$  (in the range of  $0.15n$ ). On the contrary, if we move to an unstable dynamics, we can consider also the cycles among the  $n$  fixed points, that is, all the possible combinations among  $n$  points. In this way, the memory capabilities are not less than  $n$ , but less than  $2^n$ ; a number which is by far greater than could be obtained in a stable, dynamic process.

Another characteristic of chaotic dynamics for furnishing a physical basis of memory in ordinary perception is that this dynamic way of memorising grants a very fast switching mechanism from one memory record to another. To switch from a word to another means indeed not to stabilise the dynamics from one fixed point to another like in stable systems, but simply to jump from an unstable cycle to another. On the contrary, a stable dynamics like the computer for example, requires a complete re-set of the dynamic process for this switching mechanism. Chaotic dynamics therefore exhibit automatic, self-adjusting mechanism.

Finally, chaotic dynamics could offer a suitable physical basis also for paranormal phenomena like telepathy. Indeed, there are some hints about the presence also in chaotic systems, of special temporal, non-locality phenomena that can occur at very *low* levels of energy just as it is required in brains. It is established in *high* energy physics (quantum physics) that non-local phenomena can occur; that is, that bodies can interact in some way "contracting" the space-time among them. As far as these phenomena in quantum physics can have a mathematical explanation at the level of non-linear and chaotic dynamics, similar phenomena could also occur at lower levels of energy, like in biology and brain dynamics. The chaotic and non-linear character of both classes of phenomena, could be their common basis. According to Robert J. Russell, quantum physics has revealed more in nature than our common experience knows. In his words,

Nature reveals a highly non-local and wholistic character at the quantum level which is strikingly different from the separability of nature in our ordinary experience.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, Bohm's concept of *hidden variables* in quantum physics, interpreting the EPR - Albert Einstein, Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen - experiment, in which they discovered that two quantum entities that have once interacted, still retain some power of reciprocal influence even at a distance, could be adduced to account for paranormal phenomena.

However, a renowned physicist and Anglican theologian, John Polkinghorne disagrees with the above hypothesis. For him,

the togetherness-in-separation of the EPR experiment does not itself tell us anything about the possibility of telepathic communication. The idiosyncratic oddness of the quantum microworld is not a basis for believing in the paranormal in the macroworld.<sup>3</sup>

This refusal of quantum physics to explain paranormal phenomena is, of course, right. The phenomena in the macroworld are at very low energy level and quantum phenomena are not involved in them. Therefore, no explanation of these phenomena exists from the theoretical point of view, in quantum physics.

Russell, though sharing this opinion,<sup>4</sup> however believes that quantum physics has helped to unravel the hidden mystery in nature. According to him,

<sup>2</sup> Robert J. Russell; William R. Stoeger, S.J.; and George V. Coyne, S.J., (Editors), *Physics, Philosophy and Theology: A Common Quest for Understanding*, Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory, 1988, p. 348.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., *ibid.*, p. 352.

quantum physics teaches us that the ordinary experiences of everyday living - seeing, tasting, touching, hearing, smelling - and the ordinary realm of classical science - measuring, weighing, locating, comparing, moving - all have a hidden dimension. Through the metaphor of nature as hidden, quantum physics illumines the existence of the mysterious within the mundane; nature discloses a mysterious quality and an extraordinary reality otherwise enclosed within everyday attire.<sup>5</sup>

The philosopher-scientist Aristotle, in his own way, could be seen as consistent with these hypotheses in his teaching *On Divination in Sleep*, 464a, 6-16, as has been fully cited on Section 2.2 in this work. Both the ideas of chaotic dynamics and of non-linearity seem to be implicit in his view of the transparent mediums, air, water and glass, which though they transmit the colours, for example, do not become in act of the colours which they transmit, that is, they do not become coloured themselves. Like in chaotic dynamics, many dynamic, unstable configurations, according to him, can exist simultaneously, that is, *virtually not in act*, in these media for the transmission of sensory qualities. Because of this property, these media have for Aristotle, the property of transmitting instantaneously the sensory information both from a physical body to sense organs outside the animal organism, and among various parts of the animal organism inside it, through the *vapours*, that is, the so-called *bodily spirits*, diffused in the senses and in all the animal body. This finds explanation in the Aristotelic-Thomistic theory of forms as the source of internal dynamics of biological processes,<sup>6</sup> and any process that is the result of the intrinsic nature of the organism is natural or ordinary to the organism and not extraordinary.

Psychic power has been at work in man from the cradle, though the practice of magic and the occult had always vested it with the sense of mystery, hence it has been seen as the specific preserve of a few individuals.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 356.

<sup>6</sup> Cf., Gianfranco Basti, *Filosofia dell'uomo*, cit., pp. 45-51.

This has obscured its being understood as a natural heritage of mankind. But as part of his intellectual faculty, it is believed to be the source of that extraordinary mode of knowing which is called extrasensory perception. Because this perception comes through no known sensory channels, it becomes very problematic explaining its nature and mode of operation.

But from the studies done so far on the matter, opinions seem to be converging on the fact that it functions spontaneously and unconsciously: spontaneously because often the perception comes in a flash though vivid, clear, and personally and emotionally impressive to the percipient irrespective of himself; and unconsciously because the process through which the impression gets to the percipient eludes his consciousness. The percipient is the receiver of the paranormal impressions. While there is reasoning process for the acquisition of sensitive and intellective perception, no such process has yet been identified in paranormal or extrasensory perception. The unconscious nature of the process renders its operation unpredictable, hence the difficulty of its perfect repeatability in the laboratory environment.

Through psychical research however, certain conditions have been proposed as favouring or hindering the normal functioning of the psychic ability or faculty.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, deep concentration or meditative yoga and hypnotism are conscious preparatory techniques for entering into the altered states of consciousness like trance, in which state the psychic faculty is activated. But opinions differ as to whether hypnotism is actually necessary or indispensable for the achievement of paranormal perception. However, the main point of consensus is that relaxation of both mind and body or the locking out of external and internal distractions helps to liberate the psychic faculty to grasp information extrasensorially.

Besides, it is believed that certain psychological factors like mood and motivation affect the functioning of psychic ability. While happy mood favours it, unhappy or agitated mood blocks its functioning, hence the preference of extroverted to introverted subjects for the experiment. On the

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Chapter 3. Section 3.3.3 for a detailed analysis of the factors that favour psychic manifestations.

other hand, highly motivated subjects are said to perform better than non-motivated subjects in experimental situations. There is also the effect of the will on psychic functioning, that is, belief in psychic ability is judged to favour its functioning, while disbelief hinders it. This means that those who believe in their psychic ability, that they could perform psychically, are better disposed to enter the altered states of consciousness in which the psychic power is released. This led to the classification of subjects into sheep and goats, sheep being those who believe in psychic ability and so usually score higher in experiments, and goats stand for those who do not believe in it, and consequently they score lower. It helps to recall here too the role of belief in psychic healing through the power of suggestion and auto-suggestion. Again, the effect of subject-experimenter relationship has been highlighted. It is believed that the more cordial the relationship, the better results to be expected, and vice versa.

The presence or otherwise of these conditions determines the results to expect in experimentation. It has been shown that the knowledge and application of these conditions have greatly helped in laboratory experiments, not only for the purpose of obtaining positive results, but also for providing control experiments. It is a fact well-known to scientists that control experiments are indispensable for verification and authentication of experimental results. Such scientific procedure has not been found wanting in psychical research. Since psychic ability could be deliberately exercised and experimented on, it then follows that extrasensory perception is not only a spontaneous but also a purposeful phenomenon. We hope that this point on purposefulness will be better elucidated in the section on the "Social and Economic Uses of Psychic Ability", to be treated later in this chapter.

That a lot of veritable information could be obtained through the psychic faculty is an experiential fact. It is experiential not only to the percipient, otherwise it will become mere fairy-tale, but also to all the parties that may be involved. There have been cases of telepathic information regarding the states of mind of loved ones; of clairvoyant perception of events happening in distant places as it is observed in the area of psychic viewing already discussed. There have also been cases of precognitive

information regarding future events like the precognitive vision of the end result of the battle of Lepanto to which we have referred previously.

Precognition however, is still a more controversial aspect of psychic phenomena because it concerns future events. One hypothesis is that psycho-kinetic power could be influencing precognition results when it concerns events that depend on the person's will, like in the call of the order of the deck of cards before they are shuffled.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, historical events and those which concern the lives of people could be manipulated in the name of precognition. Such are the events of free future. Real precognition could only be verified when the psychic foretells the events of necessary future like natural disasters. Events of that nature do not depend on the psychic's will and so their coming through could be taken as genuine cases of precognition. According to Nash, significant results have been obtained in precognition experiments involving the forecasting of the future weather temperature and the result of the closing average of the stock market on a future date.<sup>9</sup>

All these notwithstanding, psychic researchers have found it an uphill task trying to convince the academic community of the necessity and usefulness of psychical research. The fault however lies neither with the researchers nor with the academic community but rather with the nature of the phenomenon that is involved, as well as the proliferation of pseudo-phenomena which are being paraded as paranormal. These include all the magical and occult practices that are used to deceive, enslave and destroy the psycho-somatic equilibrium of individuals. We have already dedicated a chapter to the exposition of all the efforts that psychical researchers have made in the attempt to prove psychic phenomena and research worthy of consideration. But we hope to discuss the controversy over psychical research; and some of the degrading effects or moral implications of the practices of pseudo-psychics later in this chapter. Besides, we equally intend to examine the philosophical implications of psychical research, as well as the prospects that the future has for it.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Carroll B. Nash. *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 79.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

## 5.2 A Controversial Enterprise

Psychical research has been and still is a very controversial discipline. The controversy around it springs from the very nature of the phenomena it sets out to investigate. Psychic phenomenon, which is the formal object of psychical research is a phenomenon that has so far defied absolute empirical explanation, in the terms of the empirical sciences. And for many minds, especially the materialistic and positivistic oriented ones, any discipline that could not prove its objects empirically does not deserve any attention, much less being referred to as a science. Hence for them, any claim to psychic phenomena is based either on superstition, illusion or magical fraud, and so should be dismissed as such.

It has to be noted however that any enquiry that concerns the essential nature of living beings must go beyond the materially empirical if it is to be a serious and real enquiry; hence the popular saying that 'life is greater than logic'. This means that some aspects of the nature of the life principle, as they are manifested in some of its activities defy the rational mode of thinking of the empirical scientists. The simple reason for this is that the life principle is essentially non-material. Such is the case when we come to the investigation of the paranormal powers of the human mind both in their cognitive and physical aspects. In other words, the extrasensory and psycho-physical or psycho-kinetic functions of the human mind, because they operate through no known sensory channels, will always remain irrational to the empiricists and the positivists.

Besides, psychical research met with a lot of controversy in its early beginnings as an emerging science. It is not uncommon in the history of the sciences that any emerging discipline meets with opposition and resistance both from the general public and from professionals. The opposition could spring from either the fear of disruption of the existing order - the way things used to be - or out of prejudice against either the discipline itself or the pioneers of the new discipline. When prejudice is the root of the opposition, usually peers whether academic or otherwise and acquaintances are involved.

There could be those who oppose the new discipline either out of fear of possible competition (rivalry) with their own fields of research, or from sheer intellectual pride, that is, the attitude of those who believe that they have the monopoly of knowledge, and so are in control of every possible thing that is to be known. For such people, the possibility of new intellectual adventures is an illusion.

Again, opposition could come from well-meaning scientists who insist on and argue from the point of view of strict scientific rigor or procedure. The mentality of this group could be compared to that of those who act the part of the 'devil's advocate' in the process for canonisation of saints. Their main objective for opposing is to encourage the pioneers of the new discipline to rigorous research.

Psychical research had battled and continues to battle through these various camps as we hope to explore shortly.

### 5.2.1 Among Scientists and Professionals

That psychical research has known both adherents and antagonists is replete in its history as an academic discipline. The antagonism leaned more on the part of the materialists, positivistic scientists and psychologists. This situation is not surprising, considering the fact that psychical research could be said to be treading on difficult and abnormal ground with regard to its object of enquiry. Whereas for the materialists, everything that exists is completely material, for the positivists anything or phenomenon that eludes empirical demonstration is neither true nor false but simply nonsensical. C.E.M. Hansel, for example, who represents the typical rationalistic and sceptical mentality towards psychical research and phenomena always regarded any reported positive results from researchers as suspect. He remained intransigent in his view that any purported positive results must have been achieved through some sensory cues from the experimenter.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. H.S. Stutman Inc. (publishers), *Mysteries of Mind, Space and Time - The Unexplained*, Westport, Connecticut: Orbis Publishing Limited, 1992. p. 127; Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh. *The Elusive Science*, cit., p. 291.

Some scientists on the other hand, rejected the reality of psychic phenomena from the way the early researchers approached the matter, on the grounds that the research lacked rigorous scientific procedure, and so its conclusions could not be relied upon. Their position however changed as the researchers improved on their research methods.

Some psychologists were antagonistic to psychical research due to either fear that it may encroach upon and compete with their discipline, or simply out of prejudice. Donald Adams' antagonistic attitude is a typical example of the latter case, that is, prejudice. As Mauskopf and McVaugh reported,

the unsettling effect that Rhine's work was coming to have upon American psychologists, the reluctant half-acceptance that more and more were willing to grant it, is nowhere better seen than in the case of Donald Adams, Rhine's colleague at Duke... Adams wanted not the truth (of Rhine's research results) but to prove his positive conclusions wrong. Yet as Adams confessed, he had to stretch to do so. In part, he based his objections on an *ad hominem* dislike of Rhine and of what he perceived as his professional limitations; but he had to concede that Rhine's "statistics seemed impeccable and his gradually more rigorous conditions adequate"... Adams was perfectly well aware that he was rationalizing his instinctive prejudices, and during 1935 he began to realize that he was not alone among psychologists in this.<sup>11</sup>

It is revelatory from the above quotation also that what actually triggered off widespread controversy with regard to psychic phenomena and psychical research was the coming to light of J.B. Rhine's monograph *Extra-Sensory Perception* in 1934. At the beginning of the twentieth century, before the publication of this work, the controversy was between spiritists

<sup>11</sup> Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh. *The Elusive Science*, cit., pp. 251-252.

whose main interest was the search for the proof for the survival of bodily death; and experimental psychologists for whom all mental activity has a physiological basis, and so should not be referred to anything outside the individual. This is the case where all mental activity depends, of necessity, on the brain for it to be actualised.

Allied to this interpretation is that of psycho-physical parallelism which sees mental activity as a coincidence with the physiological activity of the brain. In other words, mental activities of man happen concomitantly with that of the physiological activities of the brain. Both interpretations claim that mental activities have material basis.

Some experimental psychologists like Joseph Jastrow saw psychical research as a discipline that simply collects the stories of ghosts, and investigates mediums. As such, it (psychical research), misrepresents and brings out the false image of experimental psychology.<sup>12</sup>

The foregone arguments from experimental psychologists could be judged of trivial importance when compared with the arguments that ensued latter with the appearance of *Extra-sensory Perception*, although they had set discouraging precedence for the reception of psychical research by the psychological, academic community. The author, because he could not depend solely on psychologists for the appraisal of psychical research, sent complimentary copies of his work to a good number of people of varied professions. These include scientists, psychologists, theologians, philosophers, ministers, even a magician, Wallace Lee, and many of his acquaintances and casual correspondents. This was to ensure that the efforts of the Duke group was disseminated to the wider public rather than confining the information to a small portion of the society made up of psychologists. In a letter to Walter Franklin Prince of 18th May, 1934, Rhine made it clear that his choice of a wider, reading public was motivated by the desire to get more people interested in psychical phenomena, and perhaps in psychical research. According to him:

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

I had much rather send a copy to an intelligent school teacher out in a small middle west city whom I happen to know would do something about the subject - perform some experiments, interest some students, start a working group, and perhaps write her professor in a near-by university about the subject - than to send ten copies to the ten leading psychologists in this country who would throw them in the waste basket... I would even rather send one to a magician or a clergyman who will do something about the subject than to the dean of American psychologists, Mckean Catell, who would throw it at my head.<sup>13</sup>

This is an indication of the type of reaction that he had envisaged from academic psychologists, hence his choice of the general public or potential psychical researchers for his audience.

His fears were not unfounded because there were those who were intent on discrediting him and his Duke group through their acquaintance with *Extra-sensory Perception*. Donald Adams, whom we have mentioned earlier, a one-time colleague of Rhine at the Duke University, represents this group clearly. His antagonism sprang from his jealousy and prejudice of the person of Rhine, his personal ambition and his sceptical stand towards psychical research. Adams knew very well the influence that Rhine wielded in the department of psychology at Duke because of his good standing with the chairman of the department, McDougall. He feared that if publicity was given to Rhine's work, it might lead to the splitting of the department thereby limiting the chances of the position he and others were aspiring towards in the department. When Adams later decided to be dispassionate in his scientific endeavours, he personally confessed that prejudice and jealousy were behind his overall antagonistic attitude towards Rhine and psychical research.

Besides Adams, there were other opponents of extrasensory perception, like J.E. Coover of Stanford and Joseph Jastrow of Wisconsin.

<sup>13</sup> Rhine's Letter to Prince, 18 May 1934; Cf., Ibid., p. 242.

While the former's hostility towards Rhine and psychical research was covert, the latter's was considered almost obsessive. Coover was alleged to have fought tooth and nail to prevent the establishment of psychical research in Stanford, though the fight was done underground, while Jastrow was considered an open critic of extrasensory perception. His main objection to the book was that the experimental procedures were not clearly and distinctly spelt out so as to give interested researchers a well defined direction to follow when trying their own experiments. To this observation, Rhine advised Jastrow to read through the book patiently and without preconceived ideas so as to discover the answers to his objection.

The controversy gathered momentum from the separate though co-ordinated attacks by two friends and associates, Dael Wolfe of the University of Chicago and Harold Gulliksen. They wrote two discrediting papers based on the discovery by B.F. Skinner, of some faulty ESP cards. Skinner discovered that some cards revealed the symbols on them from their backs under certain type of light. Although Rhine personally acknowledged such flaws which were due to some drying agents, and maintained that because of them, stricter screening of experiments had been adopted, yet Skinner and his associates capitalised on them to argue against psychical phenomena and research.

It is to be noted however, that the reason behind these discrediting attacks was their fear that the wide popularity which Rhine's book *Extra-sensory Perception* had acquired, and the consequent reports of positive, independent results in psychical research, not only posed a threat to their professional ambition but might also spoil the public image of academic psychology. These critics saw psychical research as an unorthodox and faddish or adulterated psychology.

In 1955, a medical researcher, G.R. Price, wrote an article in the *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, describing psychical researchers as tricksters. His accusation was known to have been directed to Rhine and S.G. Soal. Rhine, instead of getting offended, entered into correspondence with Price. He took time to answer the objections and questions from Price, explaining to him all their

methods and procedures of research and experimentation. The result from this correspondence was an "Apology to Rhine and Soal" written by Price 17 years after the first publication, and published in the same journal.<sup>14</sup>

All these notwithstanding, many psychologists and scientists alike were willing to give psychical research a chance to prove itself. Such were the ones who had rather mixed attitude of mild curiosity and perplexity towards the claims of the book. Worthy of mention in this regard was the accommodating attitude of the department of psychology of the University of Chicago. They judged psychic phenomena to be something outside their own special concern, nevertheless worthy of serious consideration. They decided to withhold their comments at that critical moment, waiting for further experimental results or progress in the field.

The psychologists of the Clark University, despite their observations as to what they thought to be the shortcomings of the book, especially with the statistical method, an observation made by W.S. Hunter,<sup>15</sup> were equally willing to give psychical research a chance to prove itself. This resulted in one of their staff, R.R. Willoughby, travelling to Duke University in April, 1935, to perform and supervise some experiments on telepathy and clairvoyance himself. Willoughby compared psychic phenomena and psychical research to a cross-word puzzle that seems paradoxical. Although they seem incomprehensible, yet they are so fascinating that they could capture and imprison the interest of even sceptics.

Equally impressive was the response of the department of psychology of the University of Colorado. Both departments of Clark University and the University of Colorado encouraged some of their undergraduate and graduate students to take up experimental and research programs in parapsychology or psychical research. While Willoughby personally supervised the experiments in psychical research by their undergraduate student Ralph Rothera at Clark, Karl Munzinger, the chairman of the

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Nance, Feyson, Editor, *Quest for the Unknown: Mind Power*, cit., p. 83.

<sup>15</sup> Hunter passed on the statistical problem to his colleague who is specialist in statistics to scrutinise. a gesture which mirrors openness of mind.

department at Colorado encouraged a graduate program by Dorothy Martin.<sup>16</sup>

The fact that *Extra-sensory Perception* has proselytised for psychical research is evident from the interest shown, and the independent experiments which many other universities and individuals have embarked upon after reading the book. Some psychologists like Wally Reichenberg and Kenneth H. Baker organised and gave seminars on extrasensory perception in the Menninger Clinic and the University of Minnesota respectively. The significant results that emerged from the experiments performed during the seminars convinced the psychologists and some philosophers like Eugene Adams, the brother of the parapsychologist Donald Adams, of the possibility of extrasensory perception. That some results were significant did not rule out the fact that some were not judged significant.

Again, the results of the questionnaire which James C. Crumbaugh of the Southern Methodist University sent to the psychology departments in the whole of the United States of America helped to exonerate the claims of the Duke group. In the questionnaire, Crumbaugh sampled the opinions of psychologists on psychical research and on what they knew about other independent researchers. The responses he collected varied from open-minded attitude, to complete ignorance of the avenue for disseminating information on psychical research, that is, the "Journal of Parapsychology". Some of his respondents gave the impression of total scepticism on psychic phenomena. Nevertheless, the majority of his respondents were convinced of the possibility of extrasensory perception and so of Rhine's right to continue with his research.<sup>17</sup>

Another significant turn of events which contributed to giving psychical phenomena and research some serious consideration in the midst of criticisms was an invitation to Rhine by E.G. Boring to a psychological colloquium in Harvard in 1936. The aim of the invitation was for Rhine to

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Seymour H. Mauskopf and Michael R. McVaugh, *The Elusive Science*, cit., pp. 247-248.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

enlighten psychologists on the phenomenon of extrasensory perception. Although Rhine was apprehensive of the possible outcome of the colloquium, it turned out to be an eye-opener to that group of psychologists, as well as a source of satisfaction, relief and encouragement to Rhine himself.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever the general or personal attitude of scientists towards psychical research, many of them realised that they could not be acting fairly in good conscience to their profession, by sitting on the fence in the face of the unexplainable phenomena. Besides, the public interest that the phenomena generated pushed them to over-look their instincts so as to give some thought and time to psychical research. Some psychologists like James Grier Miller utilised the techniques of psychical research, that of target guessing, in his research on the nature of consciousness and behaviour. Even the psychological problems of the homing of birds like that of pigeons or that of perception and behaviour were considered appropriate parapsychological problems. This pointed to the fact that there might, after all, exist not an opposition but rather a relationship between mainstream psychology and psychical research or parapsychology.

They equally realised that the reality of any phenomenon, psychic phenomena inclusive, does not necessarily depend on public opinion. When something exists, it exists irrespective of public or private recognition of its existence. Donald Adams, a once open antagonist of Rhine and psychical research, after he had confessed of being guided by prejudice and jealousy in his former attitude, and having decided to become dispassionate in his scientific endeavours, made it clear that

there is a sort of slow inexorability about scientific method before which prejudice is silly, small-minded and futile. Nature does not seem to care in the least what we think of her.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

In effect, whatever we think of her, she remains the nature that she is. Moreover, nature possesses within itself the reason for its existence, order and intelligibility which are not condemned to physical or empirical scientific explanation.

It seems however to be a sign of scientific myopism or intellectual narrow-mindedness for professionals of any one human discipline to claim self-sufficiency in their field as to the source of global knowledge, and hence to look on other disciplines as rivals. Psychical research is one of those disciplines that have always been looked upon with suspicion. But the evidence on its side with regard to the professional status of parapsychologists has somehow exonerated it. Right from the beginning of psychical research to the present day, parapsychologists have comprised men and women from varied professions - physicist, philosophers, biologists, physiologists, neurophysiologists, medical doctors, psychologists, et cetera. This points to the somewhat universal interest on psychic phenomena and their relevance to other disciplines.

One conclusion that could be drawn from this peculiar characteristic is that psychical research is more of an interdisciplinary character. The importance of this interdisciplinarity was stressed by Enrico Marabini, when taking the idea of Karl Popper, he sees the growth and progress of knowledge as depending on the fact that every discipline should not be concerned simply with its specific formal object, but should rather be more open to the solution of problems. He therefore considers interdisciplinarity, in which different disciplines will bring their different methodological processes to bear on the search for the understanding of paranormal phenomena as a fundamental, methodological criterion for the understanding of man.<sup>20</sup> This point seems to be a revelation of the nature and importance of the object of psychical research - man and his psi-cognitive and psi-kinetic faculties. Man is considered to be a microcosm since he embodies both the material and spiritual aspects of reality in himself. As a result of this all-comprehensive nature, no one discipline or branch of knowledge will ever boast of having a comprehensive technique for an exhaustive understanding

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Enrico Marabini. *Fenomeni parapsicologici*, cit., pp. xx - xxi.

of man, hence the need for interdisciplinarity whenever the study of man is the case. Moreover, it is even impossible to talk of any knowledge at all without reference to man either as the subject or as the object of knowledge.

### 5.2.2 The Catholic Church and Psychological Research

The Catholic Church by virtue of her universal mission, has always taken interest in natural and supernatural phenomena which had characterised every epoch of her existence. As a universal mother that she is, she could not afford to sit on the fence in the face of these phenomena which affect her children either for good or for evil. Such has been her stand with regard to paranormal phenomena like telepathy, levitation of either objects or the psychic him/herself, certain cures which are considered to be out of the ordinary, et cetera. But because of the circumstances that surrounded her early life and history - persecutions, proliferation of heresies, revolutions and schisms - she has always been cautious and perhaps over-protective in her attitude towards the phenomena that she judges could affect the faith and morals of her children.

In the early years of the church, paranormal phenomena had been considered principally from the point of view of their causes, and not necessarily as facts in themselves. Hence they were attributed to either divine origin, in which case they were considered to be miraculous, or to diabolical origin and so were looked upon as occult phenomena. Those who judged them to be of diabolical origin were completely against any such phenomena and their manifestations and practices. As something totally occult, they posed a great threat to both the faith and mental health of those who practise them as well as to those who in any way believed in them. They were equally regarded as being responsible for the proliferation of occult societies and sects.<sup>21</sup> This attitude understandably is that of antagonism and condemnation.

<sup>21</sup> We would rather think that the proliferation of sects is principally rooted in some people's inordinate quest for power, fame and wealth on the part of their founders, and man's search for meaning in life and solution to life's hydra-headed problems, on the part of their adherents. We equally believe that the sects' syndrome poses a positive challenge

However, it took an illustrious and studious son of the church in the person of Monsignor Prospero Lambertini, who later became Pope Benedict XIV, with almost thirty years of study to change the above mentality. In his work, *De Canonizatione (On the Canonisation of Saints)*,<sup>22</sup> he presented paranormal or psychical phenomena not necessarily from the point of view of their origin but principally as natural facts that belong to human beings as well as to brutes. The conclusions from his studies are judged to have coincided with those of modern psychical research, with regard to the origin, types of, and conditions favouring psychic phenomena and manifestations. According to the said studies, not only pathologically normal human beings, but also lunatics, idiots, neurotics, and even animals exhibit psychic powers. Psychic or paranormal manifestations include telepathic knowledge of the thoughts of other minds, clairvoyant perception of present events which may be taking place in far away places, perception of events either in the past or in the future, known as retrocognition and precognition in modern terminology. That sleeping or trance state rather than the waking state favours paranormal manifestations. Again, that those manifestations come to the percipient in symbolic forms. Lambertini was said to have concluded, from those studies, that saintliness should not, and does not depend on paranormal or extraordinary manifestations. Rather the criterion for judging saintliness should be the world-be saint's degree of charity towards God and his/her fellow human beings.<sup>23</sup>

to the church in this modern world, for her to re-examine her catechetical and pedagogical methods of taking care of the fundamental spiritual, moral, mental and even physical needs of her members. The sects' syndrome as we see it, is one of the major "signs of the times" to be properly studied, comprehended and tackled.

<sup>22</sup> Lambertini made this study when, as Archbishop of Bologna, Italy, he was playing the role of *Devil's Advocate - Promotor Fidei* in the process for canonisation of saints. Cf., Lambertinis, Prosperi Cardinalis De, *Opus De Servorum Dei Beatificatione, et Beatorum Canonizatione*, Editio Novissima. Venetiis: Sumptibus Remondinianis, MDCCLXVI (1766), Caput Primum, "De Miraculis, et Miraculorum gradibus", Primae Partis, Libri Quarti, pp. 2-8.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Emidio Alessandrini, *Creder tutto... creder nulla, il notae De Miraculis: Opera inedita del Cardinal Prospero Lambertini (Benedetto XIV), sui fenomeni straordinari e magico-superstiziosi*, Assisi: S. Mariae Angelorum, 1995, pp. LXXXII-LXXXIII; Armando Pavese, *Manuale di parapsicologia*, cit., pp. 124-124; U. Dettore, "Benedetto

The above conclusions from Lambertini's studies did awaken the interest of the church towards a more serious and critical examination of paranormal phenomena. Because such phenomena are very significant for those who experience them, as well as for those who witness or are in one way or another involved in them, a proper understanding of their nature and implications is indispensable if people are to be guided on the right track. The motivation of interest on the part of the church was two-fold. Firstly, she wants to guard against the erroneous philosophical and religious conceptions of paranormal phenomena which are contrary to divine revelation. In the introductory chapter of this work, we saw how the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of psychic phenomena led to superstitious and occult practices, even by simple-minded and unsuspecting individuals.

Secondly, she wants to guide the religious attitudes and practices of her children aright. In the past, and even in our days, the popular piety of the majority of catholic Christians is sometimes centred on certain extraordinary manifestations in the mystical life of saints and holy people, like their visions, stigmatisation and strange events of all sorts. This is because these events, since they are out of the ordinary, are in some way linked to the people's sense of the sacred or the mysterious. And this sense of the mysterious support their religious practices, according to their understanding.

The church therefore sees a proper catechesis on the paranormal as a duty which should not be neglected if people should stop taking shadows for reality with regard to the essence of true religion. To this end, a seat of "Paranormology" has been established in the Pontificia Università Lateranense, Accademia Alfonsiana, in Rome, under the professorship of Fr. Andreas Resch, C.Ss.R. Besides, there is a course on "Paranormal Anthropology" given by Maria Teresa La Vecchia at the Pontifical Gregorian University also in Rome. These are surely steps in the right direction, but we think that their impart is still very limited. It is our conviction that,

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XIV" in *L'uomo e l'ignoto, Enciclopedia di parapsicologia e dell'insolito*, 5 voll. Milano: ed. Armenia, 1978, pp. 1, 155-156.

considering the gravity of the adverse effect of the esoteric and occult influences on the faith and life of the populace today, more practical steps should be taken in terms of right education of the people. This, we believe, is part of the church's saving mission on earth.

### 5.3 Extrasensory Perception: Human Knowledge or Otherwise?

If knowledge is human activity through which man acquires information about reality, and if extrasensory perception is considered to be human activity through which man equally acquires information about reality, then the question of whether or not it is human knowledge is out of discussion. But if we take knowledge to be just the means of discovering and dominating (controlling) the universe, that is, the knowledge that could be measured and quantified, thus leading to technological mastery, then there is no room for extrasensory perception in that category of human knowledge. The knowledge we have in mind above is the positivistic, empirical scientific type of knowledge, for which any proposition or piece of information to qualify as knowledge, must be empirically verifiable, otherwise it becomes neither true nor false but rather nonsensical. If it is not judged to be nonsensical, such a proposition is at best categorised as popular or folk belief and does not belong to scientific knowledge.

According to Willis W. Harman however,

there is another kind of knowledge that is applicable where the goal is not so much the ability to control as to understand - in particular, to understand human growth and development, and the search for meaning. This knowledge is much more concerned with such nonquantifiable factors as purpose, volition, and values. Models and metaphors used tend to involve holistic concepts (e.g., health, values, states of consciousness). Teleological explanations involving a sense of meaning and purpose seem appropriate; purely deterministic models do not fit with human experience. Above all, this kind of knowledge centers on human subjective experience - especially the

deep intuitive insights underlying the central value commitments of both individuals and societies.<sup>24</sup>

Harman is of the view that this kind of knowledge, because it is not "hard science" in the Western concept of conventional science, is less appraised and acknowledged. Nevertheless, it seems indispensable for the holistic understanding and utilisation of reality, and for deeper insight into the meaning and purpose of both human existence and the existence of the whole of reality.

But before we try a settlement of the academic problem of whether or not extrasensory perception is human knowledge, we shall first and foremost have a quick review of what it takes for knowledge to qualify as such. In the first place, knowledge generally understood, is characterised by the fact that it has content. Knowledge is always knowledge of something. This is why it is said that knowledge is factual. Secondly, it has a public character, which means that it is made public with words. In other words, knowledge is propositional or expressed with propositions. Words here embrace both imageries and signs. The deep-seated sentiments and understanding of reality by artists, are vividly expressed through work of arts, like paintings. Put in another way, knowledge is communicative by nature; and there are various ways of communicating what one knows. It could be either by oral or written words, by gestures and signs, by paintings or by actions.

Besides, knowledge has both subjective and objective contents. This characteristic combines the first and the second in one; that is, it combines the content and communicative aspects together, what we have described before as the extensional and intensional contents of knowledge. In which case, knowledge is said to be personal knowledge which becomes propositional about the truth of things as the human person conceives them, or rather as they reveal themselves to the mind of man. In normal human knowledge, there is the subject - the knower, the object or the thing known, and the process by which the knowledge is actualised and made manifest.

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<sup>24</sup>Russell Targ and Keith Harary. *The Mind Race, Understanding and Using Psychic Abilities*, cit., p. xvi.

Human knowledge therefore is the activity of the human person, in which he/she perceives, cognises, and assimilates or internalises the object of his/her knowledge. The end product of this process is the enrichment of not only the knower but also humanity as a whole, when the theoretical aspect of knowledge actualises into practical activity by the knower.

Even our ordinary common knowledge from our daily experiences which culminate in our spontaneous natural convictions qualify from the above criteria. That is the type of knowledge with which man lives and directs his affairs reasonably and profitably without bordering about the scientific and philosophical arguments with regard to the validity of knowledge. He is convinced of the facts of his existence and of the external world.

Extrasensory perception is perception by human beings and not by discarnate spirits or angels, and as such it is, strictly speaking, human cognition or knowledge. It is human perception in an extrasensorial way. Cognitive processes are supposed to be involved in it, notwithstanding the fact that the processes could not yet be clearly understood. In perceiving extrasensorially, information reaches the mind of the subject or percipient from his outside world. This world is made up of other minds, in the case of telepathy; or external objects or events, in the case of clairvoyance. The information is made public either by its effect on the percipient or by the pronouncement by the percipient of some propositions regarding the information.

Psi interaction or information is detected by the percipient who, taking cognisance of its influence on him, attends to it accordingly. The influence usually impinges strongly on the percipient and becomes so outstanding that it is experienced as quite different from the normal, sensorial experiences. In other words, the experience is so intense that it is durable, and exercises a deep influence on the percipient's moods and dispositions, which in most cases leads the person to action. Here, psi information is judged to be a form of knowledge, since knowledge whether as theoretical or practical often culminates in action. That what we know affects our attitudes, out-looks and actions is an experiential fact. Why the deep

influence if not that the information has been assimilated or internalised? It sounds logical to say that this aspect of psi interaction meets the criterion of the "Adequacy theory of the truth-value of knowledge", where the knower, in a way, becomes what is known without losing his identity as the knower.

Apart from all these general characteristics which we judge adequate for granting epistemological status to extrasensory perception, there is a characteristic that sets it out as extrasensory. That is the fact that no known sensory organ, external and internal, has as yet been discovered through which the perception is actualised. Perceptual process generally speaking, could be active or passive depending on whether it is analytic or non-analytic in method. While the analytic method belongs to the normal, sensitive/intellective knowledge, the non-analytic method characterises extrasensory perception. In other words, cognition in extrasensory perception is taken to be tacit as opposed to articulate cognition of the sensitive/intellective perception. While knowledge is acquired through the analysis of perceptual impressions by the senses and the intellect in the latter case, it comes in a block, somewhat intuitively in the former case. In the sensitive/intellective knowledge, the active participation of the knower, with his senses and intellect is indispensable. In extrasensory knowledge on the other hand, the knowledge could be described as "given", in which case the knower is passive with regard to the processes by which the knowledge reaches him. Hence it is a receptive rather than an active mode of perception. This is what parapsychologists mean when they say that it is an unconscious act; meaning by that, that the percipient contributes nothing to the process, but only cognises the 'after effect' of the perceptual process which is the information. It is therefore a direct type of perception analogous to that which is acquired through Hindu yoga meditation, that is, the meditative perception. This explains why psychic skills are said to be more prominent in the state of trance and altered states of consciousness than in the waking state; and why monks and religious people who practise meditation are said to be gifted with psychic skills.

Furthermore, cognition in extrasensory perception is less restricted than in sensitive/intellective perception. This means that the field of operation is wider in extrasensory perception because information about

things and events of which the percipient has no prior experience comes to his awareness. Cognitive psychology teaches that in normal sensory perception, both the perceiver's previous experiences, preoccupation, assumptions and expectations, all influence what he actually perceives.<sup>25</sup> But we would rather think that they influence not the actual perception, but the interpretation of what is perceived, and may contribute to the source of error and partisanship in knowledge. This weakness of human knowledge does not seem to affect extrasensory knowledge since the information is in most cases, discovered to correspond to the exact events and time of the occurrence of the events.

#### 5.4 Conclusion: The Implications of Psychical Research

Psychical research has gone through a turbulent controversial evolutionary process as we have seen. It has risked being reduced to a research for a few interested individuals if not for the patience and perseverance of the pioneer researchers. Their persevering efforts have helped not only towards a better understanding of the nature of man's mental faculty, but has also given us some insight into the deepest activities of that faculty especially with regard to its paranormal functions. Psychical research has gone above the known channels of the intellective functions of that faculty, to the not-yet fully known channels simply described as the paranormal or psychic powers. These powers do not seem to be bound by the space-time limitations or laws. In other words, they function irrespective of the laws of cause and effect. They therefore function under laws which are specific to them, that is, the laws of suggestion and auto-suggestion.

The peculiar nature and functions of the psychic power point to the immense capacity of the human spirit, and hence to the profound nature of man. From this point of view, psychical research has some implications for both philosophy and the empirical sciences, as to their views about man and his nature. It has helped to confirm the view that man is not just one of those

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Fraser Watts and Mark Williams. *The Psychology of Religious Knowing*, London: Geoffrey Chapman. 1994. p. 54.

material beings in the universe that are subject to the same physical laws, as some philosophical trends and empirical sciences teach.

It is to be noted also that these powers, being part of the nature of man, have the reason for their being or existence as every other power. Since man became conscious of the immense potential of these powers, he has been using them in various ways to justify the reason for their existence. From our studies so far, we have seen that they have been employed both for good and for evil. They have been manipulated for personal aggrandisement, at the expense of both individuals and communities. And the rate at which such manipulation goes on in this our present age, gives some cause for concern, attention and caution. From this perspective therefore, psychical research has some moral implications. We shall, from here, proceed to examine some of these implications for mankind.

#### 5.4.1 Philosophical Implications

In considering the implications of psychical research or parapsychology for philosophy, we would like to look at them from three different angles. We shall first of all have a quick, panoramic view of the impressions of some philosophical trends on the nature of reality in general; followed by the contribution of psychical research to the understanding of the nature of reality in general; and finally, to the understanding of human nature in particular.

The debate about the nature of reality has dominated the philosophical scene since man embarked on the conscious reflection on the universe that surrounds him. That has been the origin of philosophy as an academic discipline. The debate, I believe, will continue as long as there are human beings who think, reason, and understand differently in this physical universe. While it is not our main objective to start writing the comprehensive history of the debate, suffice it for us to recall the major camps that were involved. The first two opposing camps were the materialists and the idealists. For the materialists, matter is accorded pre-eminence as the only reality that exists. Whatever exists is material and so beings are constituted by physical properties alone. According to the pre-

Socratic atomists Democritus and Leucippus, the basic stuff out of which the world is made is matter, and beings are composed of atoms. This composition takes place in space or void through the collision and pressure of atoms on one another. Consequently, the only existing things are atoms and void. From the materialistic point of view, neither spiritual beings nor psychological properties like consciousness exist. All mental activity are explainable in terms of neural functions or changes. Man is just a self-moving machine and this is the idea that Julien de Mettrie expounded in his work, *L'Homme machine*, (Leiden: 1748). Psychological properties are therefore given physiological and mechanistic interpretation.

Idealism on the other hand admits only of the existence of the mind or the Absolute. The material world is only a mental vision, that is, the product of the mind. It is not therefore genuinely real. For Berkeley, to be is to be perceived (*esse est percipi*). This means that whatever physical object that is, is because it could be perceived, otherwise it is not. Only the mind which perceives the ideas that are constituted by the sensible qualities of physical objects exist. Without the perceiving mind, there could be no physical objects in the universe. Objects have no independent existence apart from the mind that perceives them. Consequently, the subject or the owner of the mind does not exist either. All ideas are in the mind and are perceivable by it. Therefore there is no unthinking substance or *substractum*.

Hegel carried the idealist's thesis to its conclusion by postulating the Absolute Spirit or Pure Thought as the only real existent. This Absolute Spirit manifests itself in Nature and history. Finite beings are modes of the Absolute or its expressions. In other words, the Absolute, through the process of thought continuously realises itself in dialectical evolution in all beings. The dialectical process through which it actualises itself is that of affirmation, negation, and negation of negation - thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Both human beings and the whole physical universe are simply thought realised.

Common sense and experience however teach us that neither of these opinions is a sustainable thesis. The existence of different types of beings both living and non-living is a datum of experience. Aristotle also

taught that every existent is composed of both material and immaterial elements, matter and form. While the material element is common to all physical existents, the formal element gives each and every existent its specific character or nature.

Besides, there are the rationalists like René Descartes, who though they admitted the existence of the two aspects of reality, mind and matter, yet accorded each an autonomy in their respective domains. Reality is of two kinds, the thinking substance *res cogitans* which is quite distinct from and independent of the extended substance *res extensa*. While all natural phenomena are reduced to quantitative descriptions because they are extended, thought or thinking substance is indivisible and unextended. Man is principally a thinking substance although he possesses a body as well. The big philosophical mind/body problem is due to Cartesian dualistic theory. This trend of thought has equally been proved erroneous by common sense and experience, not to talk of correct philosophical thought.

There are also those thinkers who are being referred to as the realists, for whom reality's two aspects, the material and the spiritual are in equilibrium as regards the purpose for their existence and their function in nature. Aristotle, whose thought was christianised and perfected by Thomas Aquinas, is considered one of the most important realists. For him, every aspect of reality is a composite of matter and form, the former being material in nature while the latter is non-material in nature. The form, being of an immaterial nature, is that which confers a distinctive nature to existents whereas matter is that which is common to all physical existents. In effect, nature is neither pure matter nor pure form, but both together. Both components account for the unity of any organism from which proceeds all its activities.

Psychical research from its inception has in general opted for this realistic view of nature. We recall that the main objective of many of its pioneers, was to combat the materialistic and positivistic view of human nature. So it could be conveniently said that it has not only contributed to confirming the existence of the material and non-material aspects of nature, but has also gone further to discover the hitherto unknown psychic powers

in man, whose functioning is not necessarily governed by the laws of space and time. J.B. Rhine was of the opinion that psychical research has equally confirmed the assumptions of the world's religions with regard to the existence of a spiritual nature in man. According to him,

the psi discoveries do, however, confirm the religious doctrine of the existence in man of a spiritual reality or influence. It has been largely on the basis of intuitive experience that the assumption of a non-physical or spiritual force in man's nature has been maintained. Now in a limited degree it can be said that the science of parapsychology has, by its proof of an extraphysical operation in man, justified this basic tenet of the world's religions.<sup>26</sup>

Rhine did not pretend to claim that psychical research has discovered all that needs to be discovered about that nature. Nevertheless, its contribution is still something to be recognised. And this has been judged to be the most important consequence of psychical research not only to philosophy in general, but also to the study of man in particular, by various other disciplines like psychology, anthropology, biology, et cetera.

Consequent on this revelation therefore, psychical research has proved to the empirical sciences that they do not have all the means for the comprehensive knowledge of reality in general, and of human nature in particular. It belongs to the empirical sciences only to describe the physical aspects of reality, hence they are not equipped to answer the questions as to the why of reality, that is, questions as to the intrinsic reason of its existence. This is because, certain factors of reality like purpose, are not quantifiable with the empirical, scientific methods.<sup>27</sup> Psychical research, by

<sup>26</sup> J.B. Rhine. "Parapsychology and Human Potentialities" in *Explorations in Human Potentialities*, Herbert A. Otto, Editor and Compiler, U.S.A., Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1966. pp. 108-109.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. N. David Mermim. "Spooky Actions at a Distance: Mysteries of the Quantum Theory" in *The Great Ideas*, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1988, p. 6.

its methods of investigation, points to the fact that the study of man's psychic powers demands methods and criteria other than those of the empirical sciences.

Man, who was referred to by G.B. Mondin as "an impossible possibility",<sup>28</sup> seems to be a paradoxical being, as far as the full knowledge of his nature is concerned. The more man thinks that he has understood himself, the more he discovers the inexhaustibility of the depth of his being. He owes the profundity of his being to his spiritual nature which confers the status of a little world - microcosm - on him. Louis Bogliolo is of the opinion that man's spiritual nature is so great that the whole physical universe is nothing when compared with it. Even the universe itself could have meaning when it serves as an environment where such a great capacity of man is exercised in all its aspects.<sup>29</sup> Psalm 8, verses 1,4-8 which we have referred to earlier-on, exalts the Creator Who made man "little less than a god". And all these directly or indirectly make reference to his spiritual nature.

Besides, through psychic phenomena, their force, properties and powers, man could be said to have gained some subjective experience of his freedom, thereby countering the deterministic interpretation of human actions. This points to the voluntary use of his psychic powers. But the operations of the psychic powers, the processes of which are said to be unconscious, do not render this point on freedom apparent. If man does not consciously participate in the process of acquiring information through psychic powers, how could it be said that his will, which is the faculty of freedom is involved? We need to recall here that although there are spontaneous cases of psychic intuition, psychical research has revealed that once man becomes aware of his psychic powers, he could and does willingly create favourable conditions for their full use. This is the case when he willingly agrees to be put, or he puts himself in the favourable condition of altered states of consciousness to release the psychic powers, or when he purposely concentrates his thoughts on another mind either to communicate

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology*, cit., p. 19ff.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Louis Bogliolo, *Philosophical Anthropology*, cit., p. 28.

those thoughts and emotions or to draw out the thoughts and emotions of the other mind. Hence the freedom lies in his decision to use his psychic powers and not in the processes of their operation. This point will become clearer when we discuss the social and economic uses of these powers. Man therefore is not just considered a robot at the mercy of unknown, occult powers.

Furthermore, psychical research may have helped, and we believe it could help when properly understood, both the simple-minded adherents of the world's religions, men of letters and academics to correct the erroneous notions which they have of man's spiritual nature, and perhaps of his teleological end. Using the words of J.B. Rhine,

my final point is that parapsychology has the significant but difficult challenge of bringing home to the academic mind of today how far away from the true picture of man it has gotten, how far out on the mechanistic limb it has been forced by the rapidly advancing sciences and technologies centered on the physical world. This small new branch has the opportunity and the responsibility to draw man's attention back to the other side of his own nature - a hidden, difficult side - one he has taken largely on faith and intuition.<sup>30</sup>

The survivalist theorists who hoped to point to man's survival of bodily death through psychical research have man's teleological end as their objective. Nandor Fodor, a Hungarian psychoanalyst and parapsychologist, when asked his view on the significance of psychical research for religion, said that the question of survival could now be accepted on evidence. By this, he meant that those who did not believe in survival out of faith, citing

<sup>30</sup> J.B. Rhine, "Parapsychology and Human Potentialities" in *Explorations in Human Potentialities*, cit., pp. 110-111.

Freud as an example, had come to do so from the evidence of psychical research.<sup>31</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Moral Implications

Psychical research presents not only philosophical, but also moral implications. This stems from the fact that psychic powers, as we have been discussing them, belong to thinking and willing human beings. Any power or capacity that belongs to a being or an existent by nature is meant for a purpose. Man, being a creature endowed with free-will, acts on purpose, and so can use his powers either for good or for evil, according as he desires. Psychic powers are not exceptions to this double but opposed use. They have been employed, according to the history of parapsychology, in different fields like in psychology, psychiatry, medicine, et cetera, for useful, practical purposes. The examples of psychic diagnosis and healing bear this out. Enrico Marabini, an obstetrician/gynaecologist testified to the use to which psychic powers could be employed in the medical profession.<sup>32</sup> The transmission of information through psychic means thereby averting impending disaster, or bringing loved ones together in time of desperate need, are no doubt of useful, practical purposes.

But psychic powers could, and have been equally employed for devastating and unethical purposes. This has been the major reason behind the antagonistic and unaccommodating attitude of many well-meaning individuals towards psychics and psychic manifestations. Literature and video films now abound, written or produced by people who have personally been victims of unethical or immoral effects of the abusive use of psychic powers. That such things could be dramatised, filmed and made available to the public is a means of conscientising the people on their evil techniques and consequences. They achieve the pedagogical objective for which they are

produced. Russell Targ and Keith Harary devoted chapter six of their book to some of those unethical uses to which they could be employed.<sup>33</sup>

In order for people to acquire the knowledge of the manipulative use of these powers, they get themselves into the study and practice of metapsychology. It consists of those philosophical or religious practices that capitalise on human psychology for their seemingly good, but actually destructive aims. To such belong all spiritualistic and occult or demonic societies and the so-called religions like the theosophic and esoteric societies. In such societies, it is believed that the technique known as "deprogramming" is used to divest the members of all prior belief and viewpoint they must have had about life and all reality. In other words, they brainwash and indoctrinate the members, at times with threats of death, to the point of reducing them to mere robots or puppets. It could be said that they are reduced to a status far below that of human beings, without their being conscious of the fact. The laws of suggestion and auto-suggestion are the main instruments at work in this process.

In this regard therefore, one would say that such acts are devoid of any atom of respect for the human person. We see all acts that lead to the dehumanisation of the human person as crimes against humanity. Anyaehé Ogbonna also thinks along this line, and believes that esoteric societies or secret cults offer nothing useful or positive either to the members as individuals or to the society at large.<sup>34</sup>

In her book, *He came to Set the Captives Free*,<sup>35</sup> Rebecca Brown, a medical doctor, described both her personal involvement, and that of somebody she eventually helped to deliver from the clutches of Satan, in a

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Russell Targ and Keith Harary, *The Mind Race: Understanding and Using Psychic Abilities*, cit., pp. 112-129. See also the video films titled: "Living in Bondage", Parts 1 & 2, written by Kenneth Nnebue, Lagos, Nigeria: NEK Video Links, 1992 & 1993; "Nneka the Pretty Serpent", Parts 1 & 2, written by Okechukwu Ogunjiofor and Kanayo O. Kanayo, Lagos, Nigeria: Gabosky Films Inc., 1995.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Anyaehé P. Ogbonna, *Occultism: Steps to Satan or Steps to Wisdom*, Nigeria, Owerri: Austus Printers, 1995, p. 29.

<sup>35</sup> Rebecca Brown, *He Came to Set the Captives Free*, Springdale, PA.: Whitaker House, 1992.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Allen Spraggett, *The Unexplained*, New York: The New American Library, third printing, 1967, pp. 201-202, 204.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Appendix 2 in this work.

church-disguised cult. We shall quote her description of the cult in full, lengthy though it may be, just to highlight some of their trickish and morally destructive ways. According to Rebecca's former enemy, but who later became her great friend, Elaine,<sup>36</sup>

This group which secretly calls itself The Brotherhood, is made up of people who are directly controlled by, and worship, Satan...

This cult is extremely secretive. No written records of membership are kept. Even the contracts with Satan signed in blood by the members are burned by the high priests and high priestesses. (This is not common knowledge among the lower ranking members). These satanists infest every level of society - the poor and the rich. The very well educated, the police force, government officials, business men and women, and even some so-called Christian ministers. Most all of them attend local Christian churches and are considered "good citizens" because of their involvement in local civic activities. This is all done as a cover-up. They lead double lives and are expert at it, masters of deception. *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness...*

And to highlight the type of atrocities that they commit against humanity, she continues:

They all go by code names at their meetings so that, should they meet each other on the street, often as not they would

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<sup>36</sup> Elaine was once a staunch member of the Brotherhood and hated Rebecca to the marrow, but who was eventually delivered from the clutches of Satan by Rebecca and her Christian group. Rebecca took Elaine into her house afterwards, but suffered greatly in the hands of the cult members for Elaine's sake. Both eventually won the battle against the cult members.

not know each other's real name. They are rigidly disciplined by Satan and his demons. They practice human sacrifice several times a year and animal sacrifice on a monthly basis. The human sacrifices are most often babies - born out of wedlock to various cult members, cared for by the doctors and nurses within the cult so that the mother is never seen in a hospital - the baby's birth is never registered, neither its death...

Incredible atrocities are committed within the cult by humans so controlled by the demons within them that they lose all emotions of love and compassion and become cruel beings that hardly seem human.<sup>37</sup>

This singular and illuminating example of "the Brotherhood" is just the tip of the ice-berg, compared to the number of such cults in the world today. Russell Targ and Keith Harary writing as far back as 1984, estimated the number of such cults in the United States alone to be about three thousand, with about three million disciples.<sup>38</sup> There is the recent news about devil worship which is said to be widespread in Kenya. The cult is alleged to be indulging in satanic worship that involves human rituals and sacrifices, and so the Archbishop of Nairobi, has himself been investigating the case.<sup>39</sup>

The most disturbing of the deceptive techniques of these cults is the fact that they disguise themselves as forms of religions, and their members as "good citizens". Moreover, their founders/foundresses and members, either by fraud or actual satanic influence, exhibit extraordinary psychic powers. According to Targ and Harary, they deliberately misrepresent psychic functioning and by so doing, they manipulate people. In other words, they

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<sup>37</sup> Rebecca Brown, *He Came To Set The Captives Free*, cit., pp. 30-31

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Russell Targ and Keith Harary, *The Mind Race: Understanding and Using Psychic Abilities*, cit., p. 112.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) "News Hour", 19 hours Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). 20 September, 1996.

make people believe that they are using natural powers, whereas in essence, their powers are demonic.<sup>40</sup>

Could there be anything more degrading of human dignity than these abominable practices? It is obvious that enormous harm is done both to the individuals who fall victims to these occult societies, and to the society at large! The people and the society are not only sapped physically, morally, psychologically and spiritually, but also economically. They are sapped economically also because they brainwash people to the extent that they believe that whatever they are and have belong to the cult, and they will be behaving accordingly.

The practice of confusing the public about psychic functioning is a multimillion-dollar business for a broad variety of cults, ranging in size from just a few members to hundreds of thousands.<sup>41</sup>

Even the mass suicides committed both in the Americas and in Europe, by the members of the "Peoples Temple", a cult founded by the famous Rev. Jim Jones, have done a lot of harm to families and the society at large.

Another unethical way in which psychic powers could be used is to control the thoughts, behaviour and mental equilibrium of other people. This, according to some psychics with whom we exchanged ideas, and whose thoughts we have as Appendix 3 in this work, could be done by concentration of thought on the desired victim, who will start acting according to the intention of the psychic. They take it to be the force of mental energy. Targ and Harary also subscribed to this point. They recall that the main interest of the Soviet psychical researchers was to discover the extended means of influencing minds at a distance. J.G. Pratt traced the development of psychical research in the Soviet Union to the efforts and zeal

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. Russell Targ and Keith Harary, *The Mind Race: Understanding and Using Psychic Abilities*, cit., p.113.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

of V.M. Bechterev who founded and directed the Institute for Brain Research in the city of Leningrad, which was formerly known as Petrograd. The institute integrated research on mental suggestion into its programme. This integration in its turn led to the formation of a "Commission for the Study of Mental Suggestion" as an arm of the institute, to ensure consistent research programmes and dissemination of their results.<sup>42</sup>

Whatever the image of psychical research and phenomena that these cults have painted, psychical research as has been exposed in this work, has been seen to differ essentially and distinctly from all forms of magical and occult practices. While psychical research uses its limited scientific methods to investigate the existence and nature of paranormal phenomena, the magicians and occultists instead resort to their so-called revelations from beings other than humans to explain psychic manifestations, thereby consolidating and perpetrating their unethical and fraudulent teachings and practices.

All obstacles against, and shortcomings of psychical research notwithstanding, it has helped to expose the tricks and baselessness of the magical and the occult and their perpetrators, as we saw in the case of Helena Bravatsky, the foundress of the theosophic society. It could therefore be said that psychical research has provided natural aid for man to be set free from superstition with all its consequent mental, psychological, physical and spiritual enslavement and disorder. It seems to be a step forward towards the recovery of human dignity and equilibrium, which has been shattered in the maze of the technological age, and which man has been frantically searching to recover. It is this search, over and above every other motive, that has led him into all sorts of practices and actions that seem to promise him some consolation. And the results of such practices are nothing but disillusionment and frustration which drive some to the extreme point of suicide.

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 236 and 260; J.G., Pratt. "Soviet Research in Parapsychology" in B.B. Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., pp. 884-885.

### 5.4.3 Social and Economic Uses of Psychic Power

Psychic abilities as we have seen, belong to human beings as part of their spiritual nature. They are the powers of the human mind, which, when properly harnessed, have been found to be of immense social and economic benefits both to the possessors and to the beneficiaries. Because such powers are seen to be a sort of energy, it has been alleged that their use could be very exhausting for the possessor. Nevertheless, the satisfaction that comes from their positive effects compensates for the exhaustion, hence their continued use, the personal discomfort of the psychic notwithstanding. We believe that every useful enterprise demands some sacrifice.

Among the marked areas in which psychic powers have been and are still being used are the areas of diagnosing and healing of ailments; finding of lost objects and even lost persons; in the criminal investigation departments of the police force, for detection of criminals; in archaeological, mineral and water discovery.

Ailments have been diagnosed psychically at a distance and possible treatment prescribed, as the case in our appendix 3 testifies. In that living case, somebody in Poland diagnosed the ailment of another person in Rome and advised on the treatment over the telephone. Our interlocutor in the interview in appendix 2, Enrico Marabini, during our discussion with him, attested to the times when he had psychically diagnosed some ailments to the great astonishment of his medical colleagues. Such was the case with H.J. Urban, an Austrian neuropsychiatrist, who was alleged to have telepathically diagnosed ailments and prescribed remedies. Moreover, hospitals and clinics in Brazil have extensively benefited from the services of psychics, for diagnosing ailments. An example is made of José Arigo who was an uneducated psychic surgeon in Brazil. His unorthodox practices sent him twice to prison but the investigations into his case by renowned medical doctors eventually exonerated him.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 251; H.S. Stutman (publishers), *Mysteries of Mind, Space and Time, The Unexplained*, cit., pp 230-232.

Apart from simply diagnosing and prescribing remedies, ailments have been said to be healed psychically. We have to note however that in most cases, healings that are referred to as psychic concern psychosomatic and neurotic ailments, whether or not they take place within a religious pilgrimage environment. Such are the ailments that are easily curable by suggestion and auto-suggestion, that is, by the power of imagination, as we have seen before.

Because of the fact that some ailments could disappear either temporally or permanently, depending on how strong the power of suggestion is, many such healings have been mistaken to be miraculous. It therefore becomes necessary to specify that healings that are judged miraculous belong to such that concern the cure of organic or physical parts of the person. Besides, such ailment must have been medically declared or judged incurable. Both Jan Ehrenwald and Reginald Omez agree that for a cure to be pronounced miraculous, four conditions must be fulfilled, thus: first, that the person's condition before and after the visit to the pilgrimage centre or supplication to a supposed holy person, must be certified. Secondly, that there must be evidence of an existing incurable illness. Thirdly, that the recovery must be immediate and complete. And finally, that the cure must persist, which means that the illness does not recur.<sup>44</sup> It has become a universal mistake of faith healing and popular credence, that both the supposed religious healer, priest or minister, the patient and the congregation as a whole, take every purported or actual sign of healing as miraculous. They do not usually distinguish between the organic and functional aspects of ailments, and as a result, faith healing centres notoriously become miracle centres. It is true however that divine action is not limited only to special types of ailments or to special parts of the body. Real miracles could take place in faith healing centers but the problem is how

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Jan Ehrenwald, "Parapsychology and the Healing Arts" in Benjamin B. Wolman, Editor, *Handbook of Parapsychology*, cit., p. 546; Reginald Omez, *Psychic Phenomena*, cit., pp. 82-89. Omez gave a comprehensive survey of the procedures of the "Bureau des Constatations Médicales de Lourdes", a medical commission set up by the church to scrutinise all aspects of ailments that are supposed to have been cured at Lourdes. They do not pronounce judgement on the cures but rather pass on their findings to another competent commission which has the duty of declaring a cure miraculous or not.

to distinguish psychic from miraculous healing. This we think, could be the reason for the stringent conditions set down by the church as criteria for official recognition of healing as miraculous.

Psychic powers are also utilised in searching for and finding lost persons and objects. According to some psychics like José Maria Pilon, this is the most exhausting and time consuming aspect of the use of psychic powers. It is nevertheless very exhilarating when the result is positive in the case of lost persons, but very depressing when it is negative, that is, when the person is found not alive but dead.<sup>45</sup> In the search for a lost person, the psychic needs the picture or any object that belongs to the lost person. And coming in contact or proximity with such object, he extrasensorially picks up impressions of the lost person. At times, he uses the pendulum over the map of the place where the person lives, his city or village, in order to discover and describe where the person should be found. While the former technique of using any belonging of the lost person in the search, is known as psychometry, the latter technique, that of using a pendulum or any divining instrument, is called radiesthesia in parapsychology.

Psychometry is also the technique used in discovering criminals. Those who practise it are known as psychic detectives. It has been alleged that the police force in the United States of America uses psychic detectives extensively in their search for and apprehension of criminals. There was the case of an American psychic, Joan, who was said to have used the clothes belonging to a missing boy to discover that the boy had been murdered. Moreover, she used the same means to describe the man who murdered the boy. The police artist then made a sketch of the murderer from the description, from which the boy's father immediately identified him as a friend of their family. It was eventually discovered that the man was the actual murderer, and so he was apprehended and prosecuted.<sup>46</sup> It is an understanding among detectives that every criminal takes away something from the scene of the crime, but at the same time leaves something behind,

<sup>45</sup> Cf. José Luis Olaizola, *Mas alla de la muerte, El pais sin descubrir*, cit., pp. 96-104.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Nance Fyson, Editor, *Quest for the Unknown: Mind Power*, cit., p. 99. Other examples of similar cases are to be found on pages 100-101 of the same book.

usually in the form of an imprint. Hence psychic detectives could give positive clues relating not only to the lost person or object, but also to the criminal/s who perpetrated the crime.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, psychic powers have also been found useful in archaeology either to discover archaeological sites, or to give the history of archaeological objects and fossils. Impressions regarding the history of ancient objects are believed to be perceived by the psychics when they get in contact with the objects. George McMullen had impressed the Canadian Archaeological Association by his description of the place of provenience of a piece of carved, black stone which was found on an ancient Indian site in the Queen Charlotte Island. According to him, the stone was the handiwork of a West African slave. Further archaeological studies eventually proved that the stone was carved by a Sierra Leonian slave.<sup>48</sup> Many other examples abound where archaeological sites have been psychically discovered in England, Russia, and in the United States of America. Such sites include churches, monasteries, lost chapels, palaces, battlefields, et cetera.<sup>49</sup>

Mineralogists equally employ the services of psychics to locate mineral sites easily and at less cost. The exploits of Uri Geller, who amassed huge wealth from his discovery of coal, gold, and mineral-oil deposits for oil companies, stand out as a good example. Oil companies prefer paying psychics who could locate the exact spot of the mineral deposit, to spending more money and energy in searching through the jungles for the deposits. Testimony had it that Geller discovered coal deposits for the "South African Anglo-vaal Mining Company" at the request of its chairman, Clive Menell. Besides, Peter Sterling, the chairman of "Zanex", an Australian minerals and exploration company, testified to the great successes that Geller had exploring mineral deposits for his company in Solomon Islands. Even the discovery of diamond deposits, which was unsuspected by anybody before

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Carrol B. Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 257.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Nance Fyson, Editor, *Quest for the Unknown: Mind Power*, cit., p. 102.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 103; Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 256.

him, at the Malaita Islands, was attributed to Geller by Sterling.<sup>50</sup> Geller's expertise in discovering oil and mineral deposits gave rise to an association known as "Uri Geller Associates". It comprises mining engineers and geologists, with Geller himself as a member. It is a big profit-oriented group from which oil companies ask for expert advice.

Just as mineral deposits could be discovered by psychics, so could they discover underground water sources. The personal testimony of the Jesuit priest, José Maria Pilon, made this evident. He even alluded to the fact that psychic power is an age-old gift apparent in their Society - the Society of Jesus. He testified to the fact that monks use such powers to discover sources of water supply, before building their monasteries.<sup>51</sup>

Arguments could be raised that water and mineral divining are not purely psychic expertise but have physical explanation. The hypothesis for the physical explanation is that the movement of the divining rod or instrument towards the water or mineral source is due to the interaction between the electromagnetic waves from the instrument and the underground water or mineral. This is a possible hypothesis but there are still some perplexities to be resolved. If water and mineral divining is due to purely physical interaction or force, why is it that not everybody is a water or mineral diviner? Why is it that oil companies choose to employ extra services of psychics? Why could not mineralogists and geologists themselves with all their specialised training and expertise do the work of divining and so save their companies some extra expenditure? Until these 'whys' are satisfactorily answered, there remains some reason to believe that some non-physical force is still involved in the phenomenon.

Psychics who use their powers ethically are surely of immense social and economic benefit. Not only do they help to alleviate the sufferings of the people, like in the discovery of under-ground water sources, by the Jesuit priest cited above, but their services are also considered to be cheaper in monetary terms. In psychic healing for example, the adverse side-effects of

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Nance Fyson, Editor, *Quest for the Unknown: Mind Power*, cit., p. 132.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. José Luis Olaizola, *Mas alla de la muerte, El pais sin descubrir*, cit., pp. 96-100.

conventional drugs are found to be wanting, in which case, it is a healthier means of healing. Again, the cost of healing is minimal compared to that of conventional medicine. Even high-ranking government officials in the United States of America employ the services of psychics because of the many benefits derived therefrom.<sup>52</sup> If all these are possible through extrasensory perception, then it could be said to have spoken for itself, with regard to its status as a form of knowledge.

#### 5.4.4 Vision for the Future

The general attitude towards psychical research or parapsychology could be said to be equivalent to that of the uninitiated towards philosophy as an academic discipline. We have often heard people ask questions as to the cash value of philosophy, that is, its practical use. Such questions however come from people who are either ignorant of the discipline, or are prejudiced against it. There are others who measure usefulness only in terms of practical, concrete, here and now value. Either of the three groups needs a special manner of approach for their enlightenment. The same fate has befallen psychic research down through its history. Even to date, opinions are still divided as to the genuineness of psychic phenomena, and consequently of their usefulness. Such however, is the fate of any discipline that goes in search of the essential, non-material aspects of reality.

But from this our research so far, we can say that any discipline that concerns man and his essential nature will always remain valid for all times. Since man is a composite of both the tangible and the intangible elements, and since it is the intangible element, with its impalpable nature, that gives meaning and direction to man's whole existence and activity, we repeat, man will always remain an ever-revelatory object of study. There is therefore always the possibility of some new discoveries with regard to his nature, from whatever angle or perspective we choose to study him.

Psychical research has given us some insight into the nature and functioning of this intangible-immaterial aspect of man which is his mind,

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Nance Fyson, Editor, *Quest for the Unknown: Mind Power*, cit., p. 133.

especially with regard to its paranormal abilities or powers. Moreover, we have gathered that not all paranormal manifestations are attributable to beings other than human. The naturalness and purity of such manifestations as against the magical and occult practices have also been highlighted. From here, the many, not-too often suspected aspects of the various manipulative uses to which the powers could be employed have been brought to our full consciousness. The double-faced uses to which psychic powers could be put have been exposed. While the ethical/moral uses of the powers have been shown to be of immense benefit both to the individuals and to mankind at large, the unethical uses have been shown to be very damaging to people both spiritually, psychologically, morally, physically and economically.

It seems natural to believe, from our research, that psychical research, with its interdisciplinary nature, has been of some help to other disciplines like religion, philosophy, psychology, medicine, neurophysiology, et cetera. This is evident from the fact that parapsychologists, as the history of parapsychology reveals, have been men and women who are specialised in one or another discipline before embracing psychical research. If it has helped, and still helps people in the practice of their chosen professions, we would therefore think its study should be given some serious thought, especially in ecclesiastical circles.

It is our humble submission that the basic elements and modalities of parapsychology, of course strictly linked to the basic teachings of moral theology, could be useful in ecclesiastical studies. Armando Pavese is also of the view that this will be of much benefit for the evangelising mission of future priests.<sup>53</sup> The challenge of the diffusion of sects and occult societies, and their menacing consequences should be a cause of concern for all. Man's fundamental inclination to the mysterious, and his ardent desire and search for meaning in his life, make it a necessity for future pastors of souls and spiritual leaders<sup>54</sup> to have the basic understanding of man's profound

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Armando Pavese. *Manuale di Parapsicologia*, cit., p. 124.

<sup>54</sup> By spiritual leaders, we mean, religious men and women, and all those who are being prepared for missionary and catechetical activities. That is, those who may in one form or another, be entrusted with the care of souls.

nature and his paranormal capabilities. If people's psychic abilities are better understood and properly harnessed, it will surely yield much spiritual and material benefits. Not only will superstition and unfounded fears be reduced in people's lives, but they will also be helped to open up to genuine faith and relationship with the Absolute.

We mention specifically spiritual leaders for the training programme because of the influence they wield in society. They have the confidence and trust of the people. They really need to be taught to distinguish pathological from natural paranormal phenomena. They equally need to be able to distinguish the paranormal phenomena that have man's psychic power as their source from other phenomena that could be attributed to supernatural intervention, either diabolical or divine intervention. This is important especially with regard to all the claims of marvels and prodigies with which our modern society has been infested.

We believe that the religious leaders' understanding of man's paranormal abilities will equip them to help others, as well as to understand and help themselves. In other words, the would-be spiritual healers will be in a better position to discern whether their healing powers are from their natural psychic powers or they are special gift from above. If they are natural psychic powers or they are special gift from above, they need to discern which of the spirits instruments of external intervention, they need to discern which of the spirits (the divine or the demonic) that is leading them. They will equally be able to discern those of the spiritual healers who are instruments for God, and those who are instruments for the devil. Days are gone when superstition and occult practices were considered the exclusive reserve of the so-called primitive people. Technology has brought in its wake, new or "civilised" forms of superstition and occultism. And the rate at which the doctrines of occult societies are being sold to the public, through the highly, technological means of communication, is becoming very alarming. The number of sponsored radio and television programmes, especially on occult societies disguised as churches bears this out. Even some governments, heeding the opinions of their people, try to legislate against such television propaganda. An example that readily comes to mind is the recent debate on whether the English government should allow the scheduled advertisement, for 18 September 1996, by the society-baptised church known as "Scientology".

The news was that the testimonies from ex-members of the society, present it as a highly secretive cult whose meetings are not open to the public. Moreover, the techniques used within the society are those of mind-control and brainwashing, which people judge to be dehumanising techniques. In order to salvage their faces therefore, the leaders of the society planned a nation-wide advertisement to try to restore the people's confidence in the society. They claim as their main objective, the promotion of the well-being of their members.<sup>55</sup>

If civil governments could be pre-occupied about the menacing effects of such societies, all the more reason the care-takers of people's spiritual well-being should be adequately prepared for such a delicate but important task. We believe that sophisticated problems need sophisticated methods of approach. Consequently, it is our opinion that the church should utilise more of the modern means of communication in this regard; and this in turn demands well-prepared personnel. The church, no doubt, owns and operates highly organised media centres, but we expect that more could and should be done. There may still be places where such means of social communication are lacking, either because of personnel and/or financial constraint, or because of repressive governments. Such areas and situations need corporate effort of all concerned, if meaningful results are to be expected.

Although some psychical research centres have almost become moribund for lack of funds and public/governmental support, yet we are aware that some progress has been made in the civil sector in terms of research and dissemination of information. One such centre is the "Foundation of Research on the Nature of Man" (FRNM), in the United States of America. The centre has now been renamed the "Rhine Research Centre", probably to immortalise the man who brought parapsychology to the status of an academic discipline, and who founded and directed the research centre. It now has three divisions namely; "The Institute for Parapsychology", "The Parapsychology Press", and "The Journal of

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) "News Desk", 10 hours, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Tuesday. 17 September 1996.

Parapsychology", all sharing the same address in Durham.<sup>56</sup> This seems to be a sign of a bright future for psychical research, although that is still restricted to those countries where there are interested researchers.

This sign of progress notwithstanding, the fact still remains that psychical research is still not a known field in many places. Although it has acquired some academic status, we think that that status is very restricted. Hence parapsychologists have a great task of especially disseminating the fruit of their academic researches as widely as possible.

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. The information received by the writer from the Institute for Parapsychology, on 7 September 1996.

## 6 GENERAL CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Preamble

Knowledge is the simplest but most profound of all human experiences. The ordinary man down through the ages has always been convinced of his power to know as well as the certainty and truth of what he knows. His knowledge derives from his everyday experiences which are both direct and indirect experiences. He is certain of his being an existent among other existents; he knows the differences between these various types of existents; and he can utilise them according to his knowledge of them to his own benefit. He has become the master of the universe through his knowledge. Facts of his sense and intellectual experiences like things in space and time, of certain qualities and quantities, himself as the conscious self, as being in some states of mind, having some emotions, et cetera, are for him certain and true facts. His conviction about them are spontaneous and unshakeable.

But his innate desire to discover more about himself and his environment has led him to start questioning the 'how' and 'why', that is, the foundations and ultimate reasons for his knowledge. This is the beginning of the scientific and philosophical investigations into the nature of knowledge and the faculty through which the acquisition of knowledge is possible. Only at this point then, does it become clear to man that knowledge which he had all along taken for granted is not as simple and as a matter-of-fact as he thought. Not only did he discover that the concept of knowledge or the verb "to know" defies exact definition, but also that the processes that go into the making of the experience that we call knowledge is not as matter-of-fact as he had thought.

From his scientific and philosophical enquiry therefore, he discovered that the whole man, with his senses and intellect, is involved in the process of knowing, and this is because he is a being endowed with both material and spiritual nature. And because of his material component, his experiences of the external world so far as the recognised processes of knowing have revealed, start from his body. This means that he receives the first

impression of other bodies through his external senses which are situated in his body. The internal senses for their part co-ordinate these impressions before sending them to the intellect for the final analysis and the passing of judgement as to what they really are. It therefore follows that in human knowledge, generally speaking, both the senses and the intellect are indispensable tools. Nevertheless, it is the intellective function that makes knowledge specifically human, endowing knowledge with a spiritual character.

There have however been reports of spontaneous, individual cases of information about people and events which are being received by people through means unknown to the receiver, that is, means other than the normal sensory ones. Such are the telepathic information where it has been alleged that some people could receive veritable information about their loved ones as to their state of mind, whether they are suffering and need help from the perceiver or in the case of their imminent death, and so on. Some people are believed to perceive information about events happening at distant places or the situation of things in distant places without being at the particular places at the moment when the events were taking place. This is termed clairvoyant knowledge. While in telepathy, it is believed that minds could communicate with other minds profitably without any physical or sensory mediation, it is equally alleged that minds could apprehend or affect external events and objects without sensory mediation in clairvoyance. Cases of precognising future events have also been put forward as part of these out-of-the-ordinary ways of knowing. These are known as paranormal modes of knowing.

The claims for such paranormal powers are widespread both in the pre-literate and the literate societies. They have given rise to certain false beliefs and practices as are evident in the theory and practice of magic and the occult. These practices are based on the assumption that the human mind has the powers, all its own, with which it attains the type of knowledge that is hidden to the senses. In other words, that the mind could attain certain types of knowledge without necessarily depending on the senses for the preliminary information. This implies that the mind is not completely dependent on the senses for some of its intellectual activities. If such independence is proved, it might mean that the claim to man's survival of

bodily death by the world religions could be strengthened and reaffirmed. Moreover, the irrationality of the teachings of the materialistic and positivistic trends in philosophy that man is a bundle of sensations and a mere automaton, a self-moving machine without any spiritual component would be exposed.

The birth of parapsychology as an academic discipline is an attempt to address the problem of the nature of man, and of the autonomy of the mind from the senses in paranormal phenomena. The major aims of the pioneer parapsychologists, otherwise known as psychical researchers, were first to point to the survival thesis and then to refute the teachings of materialism as to the nature of man. The last of the above aims was the principal motivating force for Joseph Banks Rhine and his research group on their struggle to establish psychical research as an academic discipline of a university status.

Before the discipline could eventually attain university status, it went through different evolutionary processes. The first of these evolutive stages was the mesmeric period. This was the period dominated by a German physician, Anton Mesmer, who taught that nervous and other ailments were caused by the weakening of the animal fluid in the body of the patient. These ailments were supposed to have been cured by gently massaging the sick parts of the body thereby allowing the magnetic fluid in Mesmer's body to restore wholeness to the patient. Mesmer took advantage of the Romantic era, the era in which he lived, when the quest for mysteries and marvels was high, to gather both disciples and patients. Although his fame did not last, he bequeathed to future psychical researchers the concept of the phenomenon of hypnosis. It is a phenomenon that became very significant in the search for the nature and workings of psychic ability.

The spiritists or spiritualists followed in the trains of the mesmerists. These are those researchers who occupied themselves with the survival problem. The claims of spirit communication were rampant during this period and this favoured mediumistic practices. There were many mediums who claimed to act as intermediaries between the living and the dead. They offered their services to those who wanted to communicate with their dead

loved ones, by claiming to get out messages from the dead to the living. Because of the craze for such information, mediumship became a very lucrative profession, and as would be expected, it bred fraudulent practices among the mediums. This period therefore witnessed the explosion of esoteric and theosophical societies. Because of all the evil, fraudulent and manipulative practices that followed in the wake of spiritualism, it provided a strong source of scepticism towards psychical research and hence a source of impetus for stricter control in experiments in psychical research, especially with mediums. At this point, we shall examine the scientific character of psychical research to see how far it has or has not succeeded as a science.

## 6.2 Psychical Research: Science or Pseudo-science?

Although we regard the preliminary phases of psychical research as pseudo-research periods, we see them as having prepared the ground for proper scientific research in psychical phenomena. The stage at which psychical research is to date has given it a scientific status, although not without some reservations from hard-line physical scientists. The recognised scientific research started in the Duke University psychology laboratory in 1927, through the instrumentation of J.B. Rhine and his Duke group. Standing on the foundation laid by earlier researchers, they set out systematising both the methods and techniques of psychical research. Over and above the prior methods of gathering and analysing spontaneous reported psychic manifestations, and the use of ordinary playing cards in experiments, standardised test cards known as the "Zener cards" were introduced. Besides, a statistical method of calculation of research results also came into use. It was actually this statistical method that convinced the experimental psychologists, among whom were found the greatest opponents of psychical research, of the credibility of the research results. Manual methods of selecting targets and recording of results were replaced by automatic techniques using automatic recording machines.

The common scientific quantitative-experimental approach which involves observation, experimentation and analysis characterised modern psychical research. Equally characteristic is the laboratory setting that provides scientific prerequisite for control experiments. These conditions

coupled with the constant publication of experimental results positively contributed to the affiliation given the Parapsychology Association by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1969.<sup>1</sup> Hence we could say again that psychical research has achieved a scientific status and that is why Beloff claimed that psychical research has become a vindication of the essentially spiritual nature of man, using the method of science.<sup>2</sup>

The most effective instrument that brought psychical research to the consciousness of the academic community was the publications that emerged from the research efforts of the Duke group. From those publications, especially Rhine's monograph, *Extrasensory Perception*, more people came to know about psychical phenomena and research, and many universities added psychical research to the number of their existing disciplines. Although the monograph aroused a lot of controversy over the legitimacy of psychical research as an independent academic discipline, the criticisms and comments from scholars from other professional fields helped the Duke group to improve upon and expand their research methods and techniques. They bequeathed these methods and techniques to future researchers in the field.

### 6.2.1 Relevant Findings from Psychical Research

The research results so far have been pointing to man's mind as possessing power, the nature of which has not yet been fully discovered. That power is the psychic ability believed to pertain to the inner part of the mind which is known as the unconscious or what psychic researchers call the subjective aspect of the mind. It is the belief of the researchers that this subjective mind is set in motion when the mind is put in the altered state of consciousness through hypnotism, yoga, meditation or even through the administration of certain drugs. In this state then, the mind could apprehend information in a manner or process other than the sensory. This information could be telepathic, clairvoyant or precognitive in nature. These are the

<sup>1</sup> Cf., Carroll B. Nash, *Parapsychology, The Science of Psiology*, cit., p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., John Beloff, "Historical Overview", cit., p. 21.

parapsychical phenomena that belong to the psi-cognitive aspect of psychic phenomena on which we base our research.

As an aspect of the mind, this power belongs to man by nature but its manifestation depends on different factors like belief in the power itself, relaxed mood, extroversion, artistic traits, and so on. People could develop and improve on this power through practice. Unfortunately only a few have been found to be able to use this power.

Those who could utilise this power have employed it in many useful as well as malevolent ways. In useful ways, people have employed it for diagnosing ailments and prescribing remedies, thereby reducing the risk of the side effects of conventional drugs, as well as reducing the cost of curing those ailments. This is known as psychic diagnosis and healing. Some use this power to gather information about their loved ones and attend to them accordingly. Moreover, the power is used for discovering lost persons and objects, and for detecting criminals. Underground water and mineral sources have been discovered and utilised through psychic power.

### 6.3 Some Controversial and Hypothetical Issues Still Facing Psychical Research

Notwithstanding the fact that psychical research has used the methods of physical science to combat the empirical and materialistic scientific view of human nature, by pointing to the existence of the spiritual and not only the material aspect of that nature, neurophysiological science still doubts and contends the extrasensorial nature of psychic phenomena. It therefore nurtures the controversy over the physical relation between the stimuli (targets) and the subject of psychic phenomena. Not only neurophysiologists but also physicists and physiologists hypothesise that there must be some sensory cues that favour positive results in ESP experiments. They thought this cue to be in the form of undictated electromagnetic waves operating between the targets and the percipients.

If psychic phenomena have physical basis and therefore could be explained in purely physical terms, then there would not have been the problem of repeatability in experiments as has been observed. Moreover, the question of the decline-effect, that is, the same subject scoring positively as well as negatively during the course of experiments would not have featured in experimental results. It would have meant that psychic manifestations must follow the normal and natural course of cause and effect laws and so could be produced any time, any where and by anybody. But this has never been the case. The truth rather is that extrasensory perception is an unconscious, erratic and unstable phenomenon and hence is not subject to physical laws. This is why not everybody could manifest psychic ability, which is believed to be a common heritage of mankind.

This common heritage notwithstanding, J.B. Rhine singled out certain people like priests of different religions, professional practitioners of the occult, and mystics for a more exhaustive experimental study. Reports from anthropologists (and even experience) have it that this group of people manifest unusual phenomena of extrasensory type.<sup>1</sup> It is believed that if future researchers succeed in developing adequate test methods for this group, and make them experimental subjects, some of their techniques, which are not as yet discovered and are still hypothetical may be brought to light. The source of their power, whether external (supernatural forces) or internal (psychic nature) could equally be enlightened.

Another hypothetical point in the field of psychical research is the phenomenon of precognition. People are very much sceptical as to whether it does actually happen at all; whether coincidence or chance is not the factor at work in the so-called precognitive experiences. According to Aquinas, knowledge of future events is not in the nature of man. It is God alone Who lives and acts in eternity and Who knows the future as it is. Man can only know the future through revelation from God. In this case, man participates in what is divine when the future is being revealed to him. He is equally of the opinion that certain people make pact with demons in order to

<sup>1</sup> Cf., J.B. Rhine and Others. *Extra-Sensory Perception After Sixty Years*, Boston: Bruce Humphries Publishers, 1966. pp. 330-331.

know the future. This, for him, is divination and consequently superstitious and sinful act because by so doing, man is usurping the power that belongs to God alone.<sup>4</sup> This means that all veridical precognitive information have either God or demonic influence as their source.

Another hypothesis tries to explain precognition in terms of backward causation. It assumes that the events which are in the future cause the percipient to precognise them. Backward causation is rather an absurd hypothesis since it contradicts the known laws of cause and effect, which takes the cause to be really existent for it to act as real cause. If backward causation is granted, it also implies the possibility of present actions influencing past ones which is equally absurd. Moreover, common sense as well as philosophical reflection on time and causality make it very difficult, even in the presence of empirical evidence, to accept the phenomenon of precognition on this purely natural explanation since future events are as yet non-existent.

Because precognition concerns events in the future, it completely defies all known physical laws. It therefore requires more rigorous and in-depth scientific, philosophical and theological investigation if any meaningful insight is to be obtained into its cause, natural or supernatural.

#### 6.4 Psychological Research and Realist Philosophy

Realist philosophy as we already know, is concerned with the global or holistic and not the truncated view of nature in general and man in particular. Psychological research, as an empirical mode for the study of the paranormal powers of man's mind has not been found to be in opposition to the realist philosophy. Rather, its findings have helped to expose the weaknesses and one-sidedness of certain philosophical trends like the materialistic-positivistic trend that explains reality, mental events inclusive, in purely physiological and physical, scientific manner. Such trends are manifest in the mind-brain identity theory in all its ramifications. The theory

<sup>4</sup> Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*, 11a-11ae, q.95, arts. 1 and 2.

however has been proved incoherent in itself considering the fact that mental activity involves behaviour and consciousness which are not explainable in physical terms. While mental processes like thought have content, both intentional and extensional, brain processes simply take place and are devoid of content. This implies that reality or nature as a whole is not to be reduced to pure matter condemned to deterministic, physical laws.

Realist philosophy's view on the inherently teleological nature of human actions as against the opinions of physical determinists, has been boosted by psychological research. In psychic manifestations, certain ends are achieved which the psychic sets before himself at the beginning of the preparatory stages that put him in the favourable altered states of consciousness. In other words, psychic manifestations - telepathy, clairvoyance, healing, psycho-kinetic effects, et cetera, are human actions with ends in view which point to the freedom of human actions, and this counteracts the deterministic view of such actions. It therefore follows that man is not a developed type of machine as the materialistic-positivistic philosophical theories judge him.

Psychological research has also enlarged the field of human knowledge as has been hitherto known through realist philosophy as we shall see in the preceding section.

While we admit that psychological research, from what has been discussed so far, is not excluded from realist philosophy, it is nevertheless not sub-ordinate to it, in the sense that it is an autonomous mode of research into the inner nature of man. This points to the interdisciplinary nature of psychological research which is also evident in the diversity of professionals who embrace psychological research - philosophers, psychologists, physiologists, neurophysiologists, religious people, et cetera. Philosophy as a universal science however, has the duty of elucidating, in the light of right reason, the contributions of other disciplines to the global body of knowledge on reality.

technological age has been infested with these occult practices is an experiential fact. They not only misrepresent psychic functioning but religion as well. They have therefore become a force to reckon with and confront if sanity will be restored to the phenomenon of psychic functioning, as well as to the healing ministry of the church. But before we go into the morality of the uses of psychic power as such, it is expedient to distinguish as clearly as possible between the supernatural and the paranormal psychic phenomena as a way of delimiting our area of investigation.

### 6.6.1 Supernatural and Natural Psychic Phenomena Differentiated

In our effort to try to distinguish supernatural from paranormal events, we shall single out miracles as an example of what we mean by supernatural events. We shall also talk about events that derive from special charisms. While paranormal psychic manifestations belong to the activities of the deepest nature of man's mind, miracles on the other hand, are prodigious signs of God's extraordinary intervention, signs of His goodness and power, in human affairs. Such signs are not explainable in terms of empirical, scientific physical laws of cause and effect since they occur outside the normal course of nature. They have the glory of God as their objective.

Broadly defined, a miracle is "that which goes beyond human capability and vision". But

strictly speaking, a miracle is defined as an event that occurs outside the natural run of things... an event that happens outside the ordinary processes of the *whole* of created nature.<sup>6</sup>

In the same first part of the *Summa*, question 105, article 7, Aquinas made it clear that miracles are altogether wondrous events that have God as their

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*Saint Thomas Aquinas: De Occultis Operibus Naturae: Ad Quemdam Militem Ultramontanum*, A Dissertation, Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1939, pp. 61ff.

<sup>6</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q.114, art.4; q.110, art.4.

sole cause. The common benefit of miracles is that they have the power of leading men to God because they are signs of God's presence among them.

Although God is the sole author of miracles, He could, if He so wishes, use men as instruments or His ministers to perform miraculous acts. When men are channels through which God manifests His power and goodness, we talk of charisms. Some charisms are special gifts from God which are above the natural capacity of man, by which he performs extraordinary acts. So charismatic people in this sense, are God's instruments for demonstrating His goodness and power towards His creatures. Charisms however admit of greater and lesser degree depending on the nature of each, although the gifts are given by the same Spirit for the same purpose which is the glory of God, as St. Paul tells us in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 4 to verse 11.

Generally speaking, miracles and some special charisms are considered as paranormal phenomena since they are outside the field of empirical or physical science. Not only do they manifest the wisdom, power and goodness of God, but they also confirm man as co-operator in God's work. For real Christians however, miracles and charisms are normal phenomena because they are seen as signs that accompany believers according to the gospel of St. Mark, chapter 16, verse 17.

In-between this direct intervention by God in human affairs through miracles, and His instrumentalisation of men through special charisms lies the natural psychic power which, as we have seen, is part of man's nature. This power is specifically human because it belongs to man's spiritual nature which with the material nature make the whole man. Being part of his spiritual nature, it points to the transcendental dimension of man and hence to his participation in the divine nature. As part of man's nature therefore, it possesses an inherent purpose of its existence which is the betterment and progress of man's life, bodily and spiritual. It is therefore a natural means by which man is expected to fulfil part of the purpose of his existence as a rational, free being. As a rational, free being, man could either employ this power in the right manner or in an abusive manner, hence the ethical and unethical uses to which man has been employing it.

It is generally very difficult to differentiate miraculous phenomena from natural paranormal ones from their external point of view because both are prodigious and extraordinary events. Both miraculous and psychical phenomena defy physical explanation and this compounds the problem of differentiation all the more.

However, to ascertain whether an event is miraculous or not, both the fact in itself and the circumstances under which it occurred should be examined. The influence of forces of physical nature must be ruled out. But since it is impossible for us to know all the potentialities of nature as it exhibits both open and hidden or occult forces, we rather proceed by our understanding of the limitations of nature. Since nature is created and finite, it is limited and therefore could not produce infinite and universal effects as miraculous events. Naturally, effects are not superior to their causes. Natural forces usually operate within the confines of the physical laws of cause and effect. Moreover, certain effects are necessarily conditioned by others and so require a minimum length of time to occur. This is evident in those paranormal manifestations that require preparatory stages to put oneself into the favourable altered states of consciousness. Miraculous events on their part occur within the periods that are evidently shorter than the minimum required by natural events. A miraculous cure for example, takes place instantaneously, is permanent in the sense that the sickness does not recur and concerns the ailment that has defied all known medical care and approach.

Moreover, real miracles usually take place in religious contexts, that is, they are usually the results of prayers offered to God, or supplications made through the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Saints. This is one of the criteria for recognising miraculous events, otherwise the event may be due to magical or diabolical influence as in the case of the Egyptian magicians who repeated the miraculous performances of Moses before Pharaoh - Exodus, 7:8ff.

Hence, it has to be noted that demons could equally perform seemingly miraculous acts and that is why the emphasis on the strict

definition of miracle is on the word *whole* in the forces of nature. Since we do not know all the forces of nature, we relatively attribute the word "miracle" to any prodigious event, the cause of which is unknown to us. Hence we attribute miraculous powers to demons and magicians as Aquinas testified to, quoting St. Augustine he writes, "By magical arts miracles are often performed just like those worked by the servants of God".<sup>7</sup> In the same article, he quickly tells us how to discern which of the events is the work of God and which belongs to magicians, thus:

*As Augustine says, when magicians do what saints do, they do it for a different purpose and by a different title. The former do it seeking their own glory, while the latter do it seeking the glory of God. Again, the former act according to certain secret agreements, while the latter act by the explicit assistance and command of God to whom all created things are subject.*<sup>8</sup>

To ascertain miraculous facts therefore one has to first examine the fact and the circumstances to see whether they are produced by a natural or physical agent. If the agent is not natural, it must then be preternatural, that is, God or an angel. The angel may be a good or bad angel hence the need for proper scrutiny of the circumstances. Secondly, it has to be ascertained whether or not the fact is produced by a free and intelligent agent. Find out whether the fact is an answer to prayers offered to God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints or just the work of a wonder-worker (magician). If the free and intelligent agent is not man, then the agent is a preternatural one.

#### 6.6.2 Sources that Define the Morality of Human Acts

Before we could assign any moral status to the uses of psychic power, we shall first define the sources that make human acts moral or otherwise. Apart from the two basic norms that determine the morality of human acts, namely, the objective moral norm and the subjective moral norm

<sup>7</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. q.114, art.4.

<sup>8</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. q.114, art.4, ad. 3.

(man's conscience), there are three sources from which the morality of human acts spring. They are, the object, the circumstances and the intention.

The object is the direct and primary effect that issues from the act which is considered independently of the circumstances and the intention. The effect of an act is seen in the changes which are brought about by the act in the subject to which it is directed. These changes could be physical, biological and psychological. Brainwashing, for example, causes both physical and psychological changes to the brain and the psyche respectively of the person brainwashed. Hence a morally evil act is that of which its object is morally evil, while a morally good act has a morally good object.

Circumstances are considered to be morally relevant to human acts if they add to or lessen the effects of moral acts, otherwise they are morally indifferent. Circumstances that contribute to the infringement of the rights and obligations of persons in justice determine the morality of human acts. For example, the act of one who takes advantage of people's needy conditions to exploit them is morally bad not only from the point of view of the object of the act, but also from the circumstances under which such act is accomplished.

Finally, the end which the agent of the act intends to achieve, when they are appropriate to the acts, makes them good, otherwise they make them bad or evil. The intention here is the purpose for which one acts, that which motivates the agent to action.

It is the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church that no circumstances or good intentions could make a morally evil act good.<sup>9</sup> The norm of morality therefore demands that both the object, the circumstances and the intention must agree for an act to be judged morally good or evil.

<sup>9</sup> Cf., C. Henry Peschke, *Christian Ethics*, Vol. 1, Manila: Catholic Trade (Manila), Inc., 1977, p. 201.

### 6.6.3 Using Psychic Power

Every gift or charism that man possesses is meant to be utilised for the glory of God and the benefit of men. But evil creeps in from the bad use of man's liberty in the employment of his gifts. Actions that are in consonance with man's dignity are ethical or morally good, while those that degrade his dignity are unethical or morally evil. As we have already seen, all the good use to which psychic power could be employed are judged to be ethically good. Such uses include telepathic communication between loved ones through which help could be procured for either of the parties concerned, by being available at the time of need; psychic diagnosis and healing; psychic detection of lost persons, objects and criminals; psychic detection of underground water and mineral sources. All these are ethical so long as they contribute to the betterment of man's living condition on the one hand, and serve as signs of the immense love of the Creator for His creatures. Miraculous, charismatic or natural psychic healing for example, spring from the love of God and neighbour and leads to the glory of God. This love of God and neighbour we believe, should be the criteria for discerning the motive of our paranormal acts.

Because man is a free agent or being, some people have been manipulatively using their psychic power unethically especially in occult and magical ways. But occult and magical practices in whatever form they appear are abuses of true religion. True religion is geared towards the glory of God which is the ultimate reason for which man and the whole creation exist. And it is in the realisation of this design that man's life and all his temporal achievements will be meaningful.

In occult and magical practices however, man transfers the religious faith and trust which are due to God alone in true worship to the demons and other occult forces. In this lies true superstition. Instead of ascribing the supreme worth to God, the essence of true worship, such worth is ascribed to other created forces. Superstition that springs from lack of faith and trust in God, and which therefore seeks security and refuge in occult forces, that is, trusting in imaginary powers, is sinful.

The practice of human sacrifices which is part and parcel of occult practices are abominations to God because life belongs to Him alone and no man has any right to offer Him that which is specifically His by right.

Devil worship, another distinguishing mark of the occult, is, categorically speaking, idolatry and a sin against the very first commandment of God. Besides the devil, money, prestige and pleasure may be, and are objects of worship in occult societies, and this is equally idolatrous, as seen in Mt. 6:24; Eph. 5:5; Phil. 3:19; Col. 3:5.

Apart from the above direct affront which occult practitioners make to God, they equally pose big threat to the physical and spiritual lives of human persons. Occult and magical practices carry with them pernicious effects like degrading conducts as seen in human and animal sacrifices; compulsive or obsessive dependence on occult power and this manifests itself in the curiosity to know the future which is the sign of anxiety and insecurity. This dependence on occult forces is a form of imprisonment which robs one of the freedom of the children of God.

Moreover, there is evidence of psychical disequilibrium in those given in to occult and magical practices because they open up their unconscious to uncontrollable forces either as spirits or other people's unconscious. This is the effect of brainwashing which we know is one of the principal techniques in occult societies.

Occultism sterilises Christian life because it is a deviation from the worship of God, to the mysterious and the occult. It brings with it the experience of profound impediment to true religion which needs only the prayer of liberation to deliver the person and open him up once again to the action of grace.

Occult and magical practices which we see as misrepresentations of psychic power are simply idolatry. Even their pernicious effects show that they are contrary and degrading to human nature, and so they are ethically unacceptable to normal, rational human beings and not just for Christians.

Healing, for example, is generally meant for restoring wholeness to the individual. And wholeness implies both the material (physical) and spiritual components of the person. Healing therefore, strictly speaking, should be both physical and spiritual. While physical healing is an empirical fact as it affects man's physical body, spiritual healing involves liberation from sin which leads to spiritual salvation. Now, could the purported or actual healing which is brought about through occult means be described as healing in the strict sense of the word? It is clear that there could be no partnership between the agents of darkness and those of light. Whoever has a pact with the devil is surely living in bondage, and whatever apparent good effect that results from such a pact, as the alleged healing, takes care of only the physical aspect of man to the detriment of his spiritual component. This we believe, accounts for the intermittent recurrence of the ailment or whatever problem that drove people into the occult in the first place. Aquinas warns that "no temporal utility can be compared with the harm to spiritual health that results from research into the occult by summoning demons".<sup>10</sup> By implication, this spiritual harm is not only on the healed but also on the healer.

In order to ascertain the morality of the use of psychic power therefore, both the act itself, the circumstances under which it is performed and the intention for which it is performed should be good. Whether as an exercise of one's natural powers or of special charism, the principal and driving motive force should always be the glory of God, man himself being only an instrument through which God chooses to manifest that glory. This fundamental motive is therefore to be the guide for all psychic activities as well as the moderator of any possible excesses that may arise as the result of the marvellous manifestations of the power. It has to be clearly stated that whether as natural or supernatural power, it is always a gift, the former of nature, and the latter of grace. And so no one should arrogate the glory due to the Giver of all good gifts to himself lest he be guilty of idolatry.

In reality, there is too much confusion in the face of the many unexplainable phenomena and forces which are real in the lives of humans

<sup>10</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 11a-11ae. q 95, art. 4.

like the psychic phenomena. Because of this, caution should be exercised not to categorise all unusual phenomena as superstitious on the one hand, and not to be easily credulous in them without some critical investigation and reflection on the other hand. We should bear in mind that those practices which are based on belief in imaginary forces are categorised as superstitious.

On another note, although psychic power is a reality and a useful one as we have seen, one should not get enslaved in its practices, especially to the extent of being totally dependent on it for the solution of one's problems. There is need for absolute faith in the all-powerful God, and trust in His loving care of His children through various concrete means, natural and supernatural. While we take advantage of those means, we should never lose sight of the real source of the means.

The words of Fr. Peschke summarises the morality of the uses of psychic powers thus:

The use of parapsychological powers is in principle subject to the same moral laws as any other human activity and any other influence exercised on others. In themselves, parapsychological abilities are not evil. They are gifts of the Creator as much as any other special qualities a man possesses. And it is man's obligation to make rightful and good use of them. To avail oneself of these powers for good or at least neutral effects is lawful and admissible; but to place them in the service of evil purposes and harmful effects is sinful and irresponsible.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> C. Henry Peschke, *Christian Ethics*, Vol. 11, Manila: Catholic Trade (Manila), Inc., 1978, p. 106.

## APPENDIX 1

### REFLEXOLOGY AND OTHER HEALING METHODS: BASED ON AN INTERVIEW WITH REV. FR. REINHARD NEUDECKER, S.J.<sup>1</sup>, IN ROME, ITALY, ON 30th MARCH, 1996.

#### Introduction

Reflexology is one of the natural ways that the human organism is helped to restore its systems to their full efficiency with regard to health. There are reflex zones on the feet which nature intends should be taken care of by man walking bare foot on rough ground and surfaces, thereby facilitating blood circulation. Civilisation and change in costume have brought in their wake a change in nature's ways and this has resulted in inadequate blood circulation which causes cold feet. This in its turn have been found to affect other organs of the body which are connected with the reflex zones.

In the second chapter of this work, we examined the different stages in the development of parapsychology as an academic discipline. One of these stages is the mesmeric period, named after the propounder of the theory of animal magnetism. This theory teaches that sickness is caused by the weakening of the magnetic or animal fluid in the body, and to restore wholeness to the body, the strength of this fluid had to be restored.

Anton Mesmer, a professional medical doctor, resorted to the use of massage in healing his patients, many of whom comprised young ladies. He

<sup>1</sup> Reinhard Neudecker is a Jesuit priest with academic studies in Philosophy and Theology. He had a doctorate degree in Biblical Theology from the University of Innsbruck in Austria. He did seven years of specialised studies in Rabbinic Literature in the Jewish Rabbinic seminary in Cincinnati with a doctorate degree. Presently he is the professor of Rabbinic Literature in the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, an assignment he has been performing since 1978. He also has a diploma in Reflexology.

taught that the magnetic fluid in his hand was responsible for the healing effected in his patients.

Although medical commissions and science have long since debunked this theory, Fr. Neudecker, in our interview with him, has helped to clarify the technique of healing by massage known as reflexology. This method simply involves the activation of the reflex zones or points which are connected to the different organs of the body thereby restoring the normal blood circulation in the body. It is believed that the malfunctioning of the organs of the body which results in discomforts of varying degrees is the result of the improper circulation of blood in the body. The full explanation of this technique follows below.

During the interview, we asked many questions and took some notes of the answers. We are here trying to reproduce the interview which, because of our lack of prior knowledge of the field, is somehow repetitive and does not strictly follow a logical order.

Fr. Neudecker practises reflexology on the feet. According to him people have reflexes. In the feet there are at least some sixty reflex points, reflex zones which connect to other parts of the human body; for the eye there are points of reflexes in the feet as well as for any organ in the body, and for the functions of the body. They are connected by the nerve zones, by the nerves to a point in the feet. So if you treat a point in the foot, you can also treat the corresponding organ, the part of the body or organ to which it is connected.

The "mechanism" by which it works cannot be explained scientifically in a perfect way but it works and it has effects. So basically, in order to treat somebody, you treat the reflex zones.

If for example somebody has problems in the kidney, you can pinch a certain point and if there is a reflex, usually in the form of pain, then you can see that there is something that is not in order. And you can treat the problem by massaging that reflex point. In order that the method functions, you have to make sure that the feet are relaxed so that there is a response

(reflex). But, of course, many physical problems are not due to only one reflex zone or one organ; there is an interrelation of different organs or functions of our body, and different reflex zones are usually co-involved. In other words, many sicknesses arise not just from the malfunctioning of one organ, but of different organs, in which case, the treatment will equally involve different reflex zones or points.

## Method

The method is to make sure that the feet are relaxed, because if the feet are stiff, the points do not respond. You may pinch them but you do not get the reaction from the reflex. So for many people, especially older or very sick people, you have to make special movements like rotating the feet in order to relax them so that they will respond to your massage. This is most essential and it has to be noted that some people need four to five hours or even longer before the feet are relaxed. Some younger people however, and also usually women respond immediately. It is only when the feet are relaxed therefore that they could be treated.

Supposing that a person comes and says "I have eye problems, headache" or whatever, you will examine the points that relate to the respective problems. In most cases the problems are not related to the malfunctioning of just one organ, as has been said above, that is, the sickness could be due to the malfunctioning of more than one organ of the body, but from the different reflexes or pains you can get an idea of the sickness.

To the question as to whether or not he studied this reflexology, Father replied thus: "Yes, I first read it and I saw people practising it in Indonesia years ago, and then I became interested. Then I went to a training centre for reflexology in Germany where I got a diploma in it. And I practised in Tanzania for a year in a refugee settlement, just treating people with reflexology and I had quite extra-ordinary success".

Then we wanted to know whether people have to tell one what their problems or sicknesses are before treatment. He said that people telling you the nature of their sickness is one method. That sometimes people may tell

him what problems they have, and then he would examine the reflex points. The points however are not often very apparent, so one has to understand a bit of the complications. It is not when somebody says, "I have eye problem", for example, one is not just to massage the eye reflex. It may be kidney or bladder, it may be the lymphatic system also that is involved, so you have to know a bit of what you will examine and massage. For instance, for asthma, you massage among other points, those of the kidney, ureter, bladder, para-thyroid gland, and lungs. So if somebody knows he has this kind of sickness, you will look up these points and in relaxed feet, there will be reflexes, usually in the form of pain, and by massaging or treating these points, the sickness can be healed. Some sicknesses could be healed in one sitting, while some could take two weeks or more, simply by massage without recourse to any drugs.

At this point, Neudecker gave some examples of cases he handled. He said that he treated a Protestant minister in Tanzania whom everybody knew was practically deaf, to the extent that people had to shout into his ear before he could hear a little. After three days of treatment the minister told him: "I am a new man. I can hear again".

Also there were a few women who were thought to be barren because they could not get pregnant, and when he had examined some points that could be involved, he discovered that they had problems there and he taught them what to do. After returning to Rome, he eventually learnt from the pastor/priest that some of them had given birth after faithfully applying the method.

In another case in Tanzania, he taught a woman to massage her child who was bent and could not walk straight. When he visited them after a month and found that the child had not improved at all, he asked the mother for the reason and she admitted that she had not done any massage. He scolded her with threats of more scolding in case the child failed to improve before his next visit. The woman then started the massage which resulted in the betterment of the child to her utter bewilderment. After he had left, news later came to him through their parish priest that the girl had started walking straight again.

There was also the case of a professor back here in Rome, who came to him with pain and by examining his feet, Neudecker found out that he had hernia. So he had "diagnosed" in many cases. He had "diagnosed" a lady, medical doctor and suggested to her that she had problems of the duodenum which she confirmed because she knew of it before coming to him.

Sometimes people do not know what they are suffering from and after examining the reflex points, you can know which points to massage. By massaging these points, the pain will slowly disappear and the person may be healed. As a general rule then one could say, "where you have pain, there you have to massage".

But then one wonders whether it is all types of sickness that could be cured with this method. Here our interlocutor was of the opinion that a lot could be healed. He however admitted that for example, infections involving the presence of one type of virus or another or a sickness that is already too advanced, could not be healed by reflexology.

And if something needs surgery, could reflexology take care of it as well? Here he answered in the affirmative saying that in some cases surgery could be avoided, because sometimes surgery is really not necessary, although you may need a long time for massaging. For example, somebody may say that he needs eye surgery, but if you massage the points long enough, that is, the reflex zones, you may avoid surgery. He admitted of having treated people with goitre, stomach problems, back problems, headaches, migraine, diabetes, all through massage. Reflexology therefore takes care of sicknesses that have not advanced too much.

He gave the example of his experiences too in Ethiopia where he worked for a short time. There a lady, medical doctor in charge of a medical centre told him that she had many diabetic patients, and asked him to teach some of the health workers how to do the massage against diabetes which he gladly did. She wrote to him later and said that all those diabetic patients, and they were about fifty of them, who came regularly for the massage, that none of them needed any more of medication, it was all done by massage. This kind of massage, according to him, may take two or three months or

longer before one gets the result. But for some sicknesses like fever and headache, the result may even be immediate, just within two or three minutes, but these are exceptional cases.

It has to be noted that reflexology does not guarantee automatic and complete cure of the sickness. That is to say that after the cure, the probability that it could come back is there, though usually not like any other sickness. It is therefore necessary to continue the treatment even after the person feels healed so as to procure complete cure and stability.

Reflexology is seen as just one way of helping the body to heal itself, the body heals itself because when you stimulate it by massage, you stimulate the organs, thereby helping the flow of toxic wastes out of the body. So you stimulate the body in order that it heals itself. Hence it works better in younger people who still have enough regenerative power than in older people whose systems have been weakened by age. It is said that one could even massage oneself but it is better if somebody else does it for the person.

In reflexology, two factors contribute to its effectiveness, and they are: charisma and technique. So even if one knows the technique, it is a gift as well because there is need for a communication and a feeling of "sympathy" between the person who massages and the patient. The person you are treating should be open and at ease with you for the reflex to work. And so it is not just a mere technique. Although it is a technique that could be learned, you need the smoothness of feeling and relationship to the other person. It is a process between the "healer" and the healed. If the patient trusts and loves you, you can do a lot for him or her.

It is important to note that during the massage one should not talk but concentrate one's look on the patient, otherwise the attention will be distracted. One has to be aware that the reflexes are also reflected in the eye of the patient.

Neudecker told us that as he does not believe only in traditional medicine, he had always believed that there must be something more natural. And he knows for example, that Jesus told His disciples to go and heal

Jesus was a healer and He sent His disciples to go and heal people. And so for him, the healer and the priest have in ancient religions and traditions, something in common. It is found in other traditions and not just in the New Testament. Healing therefore is not something that is foreign to a religious vocation.

This his profound interest and belief in natural medicine or way of healing was strengthened when he experienced it in Indonesia years ago. Then he went to Tanzania for sabbatical leave where there were about thirty thousand refugees without a doctor, about twelve years ago. He treated about five thousand people through massage in one year alone, a fact which was reported by the Jesuit Refugee Service, and in that way, he came to learn the method more fully, thus fulfilling his natural desire.

He emphasised the fact that many sickness is psychosomatic in nature and if the psyche is treated, then you may have the sickness under your control. Hence although reflexology is a technique, one should also try to empathise with the patients. You have to create a kind of unity with the other person for it then to work. If you have the feeling with people, sometimes they need not have to tell you anything but you will intuitively know what their problems are by the way they look or walk. Lack of healing, in the cases that can be treated by reflexology, he said, is due either to wrong massage, neglect of massage or incredulity, lack of faith from either of the parties involved - the "healer" or the patient; or it could be due to lack of the regenerative power in the sick or elderly people.

Due to certain unavoidable circumstances like the fact that there were many sick people in the refugee settlement without any medical doctor, and very many of them lived far away from the headquarters of the settlement, it became practically impossible for Neudecker to follow the ideal of reflexology. In effect, he could only, most of the time, examine the feet and then had to teach someone else or others who would do the actual massage.

When we asked whether this healing method is widely known, we got the impression that unfortunately it is not widely known as such. It was said that some doctors most of the time do not know the techniques of

reflexology and so are suspicious of it. There may also be some element of jealousy at work here. In some countries, health practitioners are not allowed and this is health practising practically. In some other countries instead, the doctors could prescribe massage and send the patient to these health practitioners so that the health insurance could pay for it. But often he would prescribe not more than six to ten sessions which, in most cases is too short a period and so does not have the proper effect. Moreover, many of the people who could do it do not practise if it is not paid for by the health insurance, and doctors do not prescribe it most of the time. If the practitioners could make out a living out of it, it could be much more successful. Though it is a good method, it is unfortunately generally ignored.

Taiwan however is an exception to this general fate of reflexology. There it was introduced by a missionary and it became very well known. But there entered jealousy and opposition, but in spite of that, it is well valued and well known. In some places like Taiwan therefore, it is very well known and practised.

When we asked Neudecker to evaluate the phenomenon of healing ministry which is spreading both within and outside the catholic church, he was of the opinion that we should be inspired by the apostolic times. According to him, Jesus told His apostles to heal and Jesus Himself also healed, and this has been known from the beginning of the church. He however admitted that having witnessed healing among prayer sessions and Pentecostal churches and charismatics, he does not think that they have very much success.

He emphasised the fact that there are many ways of healing of which meditation is an important one. If you meditate and are at peace with yourself, he opined, it is healing process and he thinks that this is relatively not very much known. If one is in harmony with him/herself, sickness will have very little chance. It is the peace, love and acceptance - the fruits of meditation that bring healing and even long life. If you are in harmony with yourself, he emphasised, sickness has no chance within you. So he hopes that this internal strength should be developed - peace with oneself.

Fasting is equally an effective way of healing. Through fasting one gets rid of toxic wastes in the body, as when one fasts for about two weeks. But unfortunately, many do not know how to fast. Fasting is something in Christianity which could be revived and practised much more.

Healthy living and healthy food equally help healing. Above all, faith is one of the most effective healing powers in man. So although there exist some healing methods in the church, he thinks that they could develop much more.

### Comment

Based on this interview, we could say that reflexology, as it is presented in this appendix seems to be what Anton Mesmer nominated *animal magnetism*<sup>2</sup>. However, it has revealed the fact that natural methods of healing should be acknowledged as such for what they are, rather than camouflaging them with seemingly mysterious and high-sounding names. Although from the scientific point of view, the theory of *animal magnetism* has no basis, reflexology, to our humble opinion, has helped to shade more light on such purported theory. It also serves to enlighten those who could be easily deceived by the so-called "magic" or "spiritual" healers, that there is in nature much more than human mind could imagine or discover at a time. Hence one should be on alert against self-styled "miracle healers" who use nothing but natural techniques wrapped in apparent mysterious gestures to exploit unsuspecting and perhaps desperate individuals who are sincerely searching for ways and means of answering to their problems.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf., The section on *Mesmerism* in this work.

## APPENDIX 2

### L'INTERVISTA CON IL DOTTOR ENRICO MARABINI, OSTETRICO-GINECOLOGO, A BOLOGNA, IL 23 APRILE, 1996.

Il nostro interlocutore, che ha al suo attivo lunghi anni di studio e di esperienze sui fenomeni paranormali - la sua curiosità e l'interesse per questi fenomeni risalgono agli anni 1943, durante la seconda guerra mondiale - ritiene che sia necessario affrontare lo studio del paranormale con molta serietà e responsabilità e con un impegno paziente e tenace.

Con molta serietà perché, parlando di parapsicologia, facilmente si finisce col parlare di occultismo, di magia, di ufologia, di credenze superstiziose tramandate dalla cultura del luogo, sino a coinvolgere fideismi religiosi. In tal modo si possono attivare comportamenti acritici e psicopatologici. Con studio paziente e tenace, perché la disciplina parapsicologica per il ricercatore non solo è avara di soddisfazioni, ma anche perché è una disciplina difficile - se non la più difficile - delle scienze umane. La ragione della sua difficoltà di approccio e di conoscenza dipende dal fatto che la ricerca parapsicologica coinvolge in senso generale il Bios e in modo particolare l'uomo inteso nella sua totalità bio-psico-spirituale (*Totus homo*).

**Ma se ci sono in verità fenomeni parapsicologici, come mai non c'è accordo tra gli stessi parapsicologi da un lato, e i parapsicologi e gli scienziati dall'altro lato? Perché, nel campo paranormale ci sono i credenti e ci sono gli scettici?**

La risposta è molto complessa e variamente articolata; essa implica questioni di metodo e fa riferimento a problematiche biopsichiche culturali. In breve posso dire che l'esclusione dal paradigma fisico matematico da parte del pensiero scientifico accademico di tutto ciò che non è riconducibile entro

le categorie spazio temporali, è la ragione di fondo del dibattito fra un buon numero di scienziati e i parapsicologi.

In base alle caratteristiche del loro oggetto di studio i parapsicologi si trovano a dover affrontare l'analisi dei fenomeni psi non solo secondo una concettualità empirica, ma anche da un punto di vista qualitativo e in funzione di un'ottica psico-cognitiva dei significati. D'altra parte, io mi chiedo, come sarà mai possibile applicare criteri empirici di misura a dei significati e a fenomeni coscienziali? Quale bilancia potrà pesare la forza del mio pensiero, o quale metro potrà misurare il significato di una mia emozione? Io ritengo che coloro che aprioristicamente, senza uno studio approfondito, negano un certo tipo di eventi, compiono un atto irreverente nei confronti della conoscenza. Sarebbe più corretto se queste persone dicessero che questo tipo di problematica non interessa.

Il disaccordo che spesso compare anche tra studiosi del paranormale, ha come motivo principale la differente interpretazione dei fatti. L'antica querelle tra "spiritisti" e "animisti", anche se si è di molto attutita, non è comunque ancora scomparsa.

Per parte mia, ritengo sia errato per chi vuole affrontare il problema del paranormale, partire con interpretazioni - o peggio con spiegazioni - degli eventi parapsicologici. Tali difficoltà possono venire superate se l'impostazione della ricerca parte dalla constatazione che la Parapsicologia è una disciplina intimamente legata alla biologia. Quando negli anni '70 insegnavo Parapsicologia all'Istituto di Psicologia della Facoltà di Medicina e Chirurgia dell'Università di Bologna, presentai questa disciplina come una **branca delle Scienze biologiche ed una specializzazione della Psicologia.**

Ecco perché sostengo che bisogna realizzare un nuovo paradigma (per usare l'espressione di Kuhn) capace di usufruire di altri criteri di conoscenza come ad esempio quella **intuitiva**, attraverso cui si può cogliere una verità che è ai confini contingenti della razionalità. D'altra parte non dobbiamo dimenticare che la conoscenza intuitiva ha accompagnato l'uomo in molte occasioni della sua vita e, specialmente, nel suo cammino artistico, scientifico e spirituale. E dico spirituale perché tramite l'attivazione della

funzione intuitiva, l'uomo ha la possibilità di penetrare anche nel mondo dello spirito. Ecco dunque l'importanza delle conoscenze della psicologia umanistica per affrontare gli studi parapsicologici e in ciò vi è la ragione del perché nei miei libri di parapsicologia inizio sempre il discorso del paranormale affrontando la conoscenza della struttura e della dinamica psichica umana.

Quando un fenomeno parapsicologico accade - ad esempio lo spostamento di questo paio di occhiali qui sul mio tavolo - non è sufficiente verificare che questo fenomeno detto PK o psicocinesi, è avvenuto senza che su di esso abbia agito un qualsiasi tipo di forza fisica conosciuta. Con una più attenta e allargata osservazione, lo studioso deve considerare tutto il complesso di variabili rappresentato dall'ambiente in cui si verifica il fenomeno: dall'oggetto stesso sottoposto a psicocinesi (gli occhiali), al medium, allo sperimentatore, alle caratteristiche psicologiche del medium, o chi per esso, delle sue problematiche e quelle dello stesso sperimentatore. Da questo si deduce che l'evento paranormale è da considerare come la **manifestazione terminale di elementi** (variabili) che, nella loro unità costitutiva realizzano la struttura di un sistema: il **Sistema Fenomenico Paranormale (SFP)**. Il soggetto che funge da medium, dicevo, va studiato per le sue caratteristiche psicologiche e le sue problematiche, nonché da un punto di vista medico; tutte variabili che operano a livello fenomenico.

Vi è poi un'altra considerazione da fare. Il fenomeno paranormale rappresenta sempre un "rapporto interattivo e comunicativo" tra il soggetto e il mondo che si realizza seguendo modalità che escludono le coordinate spazio-temporali e le normali modalità corporee psicosomatiche usualmente attivate per dare un messaggio. Lo spazio e il tempo paiono proprio non avere alcuna importanza sulla realizzazione di fenomeni psi, per cui non c'è il vicino o il lontano; non c'è il passato o il futuro, ma solo un eterno presente.

E allora a questo punto, ci si potrebbe chiedere: Che cos'è che nell'uomo ha queste caratteristiche? Io rispondo, la coscienza egoica, cioè l'io. La coscienza non ha tempo e spazio, perciò noi ci possiamo trovare con la nostra mente (con il nostro io) in qualsiasi parte dell'universo. Inoltre dobbiamo considerare che la nostra psiche presenta delle specifiche funzioni

ben conosciute in psicologia: le emozioni, gli impulsi e desideri, il pensiero, l'immaginazione, l'intuizione e la volontà. Ebbene la parapsicologia suggerisce la presenza anche di un'altra funzione, la **funzione psi**.

Quando un uomo attiva una particolare funzione (più o meno volontariamente), necessariamente egli assume un certo specifico comportamento. Per cui, se quel soggetto attiverà le funzioni dello psicosoma atte a realizzare un comportamento atletico egli esprimerà delle manifestazioni oggettive, che gli permetteranno di ottenere particolari prestazioni. E così pure un soggetto può assumere un comportamento artistico, oppure un comportamento mistico, ecc... In altri termini quel soggetto esprimerà un comportamento caratterizzato da specifiche manifestazioni psicosomatiche sempre coerenti alla attivazione di quelle particolari funzioni. Per cui, quando un soggetto attiva la funzione psi, si predispone a realizzare particolari manifestazioni paranormali, sia di tipo **psicognitivo (ESP o GESP)** o di tipo **parafisico (PK)**.

E' ovvio che la intensità o la pregnanza delle manifestazioni risente oltre che delle condizioni del momento, anche delle caratteristiche costituzionali del soggetto. Basti pensare al comportamento artistico di Michelangelo o di un Raffaello. Le manifestazioni emergenti dalla attivazione della loro facoltà creativa, intuitiva, estetica sono indiscutibilmente di livello superiore. E così pure basti pensare nell'ambito creativo musicale, a un Mozart e a tutta la sua famiglia. Ma tutto ciò non esclude che vi siano tanti altri pittori, atleti o musicisti, anche se di livello inferiore.

**Vuol dire che questa facoltà è in ogni essere umano, è innata?**

Ma certamente. Anche la facoltà paranormale è una facoltà psichica e come tale è una caratteristica biologica. Naturalmente in campo umano acquista una maggiore pienezza di contenuti emotivi e cognitivi psicospirituali. E così pure, un altro dato emerge dalla osservazione: quando un soggetto attiva particolari funzioni psicologiche creative, o intuitive, o

paranormali si trova sempre in un particolare stato coscienziale, normalmente definito "stato altro di coscienza" (tra gli stati modificati o alterati di coscienza troviamo il sonno, il sogno, la trance medianica o ipnotica, l'estasi, il coma, ecc.).

### **E come si può sviluppare la facoltà paranormale?**

Si può svilupparla, o meglio risvegliarla anche educandola con l'apprendimento. Naturalmente tutti possiamo imparare a dipingere, ma anche se abbiamo un insegnante come Cimabue non potremo diventare dei Giotto e così pure tutti possiamo scrivere poesie, senza diventare per questo Dante Alighieri o Shakespeare.

### **E perchè accade ciò?**

Perchè quei grandi personaggi che ho ricordato hanno una caratteristica biopsichica costituzionale, culturale ed intellettuale tale per cui le loro manifestazioni possono raggiungere altissimi livelli di perfezione. Quando poi il soggetto attiva, più o meno volontariamente, uno stato modificato di coscienza tramite cui manifesta un comportamento mistico o di estasi, ciò sta a dimostrare che tramite l'attivazione di funzioni superiori (quelle che Assagioli colloca nel "Supercoscienze") entra in rapporto con realtà di un differente dominio: il mondo dello spirito.

E tutto ciò è grandemente comprensibile se si considera che l'essere umano presenta quattro differenti livelli costitutivi: un livello fisico (materico), un livello biologico (che lo struttura come sistema animato), un livello psicologico e un livello spirituale. A seconda della differente attivazione dei livelli bio-psico-spirituale egli esprimerà particolari e specifiche manifestazioni. Questa concettualità spiega dunque le modalità operative della facoltà paranormale. Facoltà che emerge quando il soggetto entra in un particolare stato modificato di coscienza che da tempo ho definito "comportamento paranormale". Comportamento che tutti possono teoricamente esperire, anche se pochissimi sono i grandi medium, o i

grandi veggenti. Questa, dunque, è una facoltà che tutti potenzialmente possiedono, anche se non tutti sono in grado di realizzare comportamenti paranormali in modo evidente e in modo continuativo.

In base a questi concetti ritengo che ora si possa meglio comprendere perchè quando si parla di parapsicologia, in realtà si parla dell'uomo e, più specificatamente, di certe sue naturali capacità straordinarie, che per ragioni classificatorie differenziali abbiamo deciso di chiamarle paranormali (o parapsicologiche).

### **Ma come si possono distinguere le manifestazioni paranormali genuine da quelle magiche e fraudolente?**

Alla base di ogni nostra manifestazione biologica c'è sempre la necessità di soddisfare un **bisogno** e alla base di ogni espressione psicologica c'è sempre una **motivazione**. Ad esempio, io ti do la mano perchè ti saluto, oppure io ti do la mano perchè ti offro un aiuto. Ebbene anche se il gesto è molto simile, in realtà sono due cose completamente diverse. In ognuna c'è sempre una motivazione particolare e alla base troviamo sempre un fenomeno comunicativo, in questo caso di tipo non verbale, di differente significato. Anche nel fenomeno paranormale vi è rappresentata (anche se in modo non sempre palese) una motivazione che lo giustifica come evento comunicativo.

Dopo questa premessa, per quel che riguarda il problema del fenomeno magico, da un punto di vista fenomenico si può dire che uno sciamano o uno stregone tramite un particolare comportamento - in genere di tipo fortemente rituale - può realizzare fenomeni comportamentali anomali e straordinari del tipo dei fenomeni paranormali.

La differenza delle manifestazioni "magiche" se confrontate con le manifestazioni "paranormali" sta nelle motivazioni inconscie e nelle credenze (la concezione fondamentale della magia è l'analogia) che stanno alla base della ritualità di quella antica arte. Motivazioni e credenze che tendono a

realizzare particolari comportamenti. In breve, per esperienza direi che le manifestazioni magiche acquistano una più forte reattività psicosomatica con una **dominanza somatica** e questo fatto attiva, oltre a evidenti manifestazioni oggettive, anche forti cariche emotive di tipo istintuale e primitivo. Con ciò non vengono escluse le forti influenze psico-cognitive che possono emergere anche da quei comportamenti.

Infine, per quel che concerne la possibilità di distinguere fenomeni paranormali genuini dai fenomeni fraudolenti (cioè manifestazioni con apparenti caratteristiche di paranormalità), tutto dipende dalla esperienza del ricercatore e dalla sua concettualità metodologica. Una seria ricerca parapsicologica, rispettosa di precisi criteri metodologici, è sempre capace di smascherare gli illusionisti o i falsi medium.

#### **Come si può stabilire che esiste un fenomeno paranormale?**

In campo sperimentale, le conclusioni sono legate ai risultati di test quali-quantitativi a cui è stato sottoposto il soggetto, per cui il giudizio valutativo comporta minori difficoltà.

#### **Alcuni ammettono che la parapsicologia è una scienza mentre altri la vedono come una pseudo-scienza. Cosa ne pensa dottore?**

Se per scienza intendiamo una via di conoscenza del mondo e delle cose del mondo, la parapsicologia è una via di conoscenza. Se invece per scienza si intende la scienza empirica, fisico-matematica, operante entro un paradigma di tipo empirico galileiano, allora la parapsicologia viene considerata una pseudo-scienza. Il guaio è che chi considera questa disciplina una pseudo-scienza sono gli "Scientisti" cioè coloro che considerano valido solo ciò che è sottoponibile a misura. Per costoro, ad esempio la psicoanalisi è una pseudo-scienza, le scienze storiche e socio-storiche sono pseudo-scienze, sempre perchè non sono sottoponibili a

controlli empirici e a possibilità predittive. Ancora oggi i fenomeni parapsicologici non sono considerati sottoponibili a ricerca scientifica perchè "non sono ripetibili". Come se i fenomeni fisici lo fossero. Basterebbe ricordare che **nell'universo non esistono gli "identici"**, per cui non ci potrà mai essere un fenomeno identico se non a se stesso e solo in quel particolare momento. Perciò non esistono fenomeni ripetibili! Come spesso dico, ogni momento della nostra vita è una performance.

Che la parapsicologia sia una ricerca scientifica è fuori discussione, fosse solo per come i ricercatori contemporanei affrontano. Per potere affrontare questo discorso in modo pratico bisogna in primo luogo avere chiare nozioni di psicologia, di neurofisiologia ed anche di psichiatria, dato che molto spesso le persone che raccontano fatti "straordinari" rivestendoli anche di aspetti emotivi e interpretativi possono essere individui con disturbi psichici più o meno conclamati. Perciò, pur essendo in buona fede, raccontano le loro "fantasie" o le loro "allucinazioni", o "illusioni". La definizione di un **evento paranormale di tipo spontaneo**, dunque, comporta in primo luogo una chiara conoscenza dei fatti ed una documentazione capace di potere confermare il racconto. Ma il controllo dei fatti implica anche la conoscenza di coloro che li hanno vissuti. Perciò, come prima ho detto, bisogna conoscere il soggetto coinvolto in tali eventi. Conoscerlo da un punto di vista clinico e laboratoristico, da un punto di vista psicologico anche col sussidio di test psicodiagnostici: occorre indagare sulla vita del soggetto, sulle sue aspettative, sui suoi desideri, sulle sue frustrazioni, sul suo livello reattivo emozionale. Tutti i parapsicologici sanno quanta importanza, ad esempio, ha lo stato emotivo nella realizzazione dei fenomeni spontanei di tipo lo studio delle strutture fenomeniche paranormali nella loro completezza organizzativa (quello che ho definito Sistema Fenomenico Paranormale) seguendo criteri metodologici non solo di tipo qualitativo e quali-quantitativo, ma specialmente nelle ricerche sperimentali di tipo matematico-statistico. Quando il parapsicologo affronta lo studio dei fenomeni parapsicologici parte dalla congettura dell'**ipotesi psi**. Il suo compito di base, dunque, è quello di portare il **controllo dell'ipotesi psi** (uso il termine "controllare" secondo la concettualità popperiana). Colui che aprioristicamente non considera possibile la fenomenologia paranormale, parte dalla ipotesi che i fenomeni paranormali non esistono e perciò il suo

compito è quello di **controllare la presenza della frode**. Dunque, differenti sono le ipotesi e perciò differenti sono le rispettive vie della ricerca.

## IL METODO

Il metodo in parapsicologia segue differenti vie, anche se fino agli anni '30 si seguiva il cosiddetto "metodo qualitativo" e, per la fenomenologia spontanea il metodo delle inchieste. Dagli anni '30 inizia ad imporsi in America, per opera di J.B. Rhine, il metodo matematico-statistico, già preconizzato da C. Richet agli inizi del secolo. Questo metodo, detto "quantitativo" si basa su criteri probabilistici e valuta il comportamento dei dati offerti da un soggetto durante test di indovinamento di simboli (croce, cerchio, quadro, onda, stella) riuniti in mazzi di carte (carte Zener). Sempre seguendo un simile criterio probabilistico si sono poi creati test per lo studio della macro e della micro PK. Test inizialmente fondati sul lancio di dadi.

Dagli anni '70 ho suggerito un nuovo modo per affrontare lo studio sperimentale della **psi**, mediante l'integrazione di criteri qualitativi (test a risposta libera) analizzati mediante modalità matematico-statistiche. In tal modo è nato il "metodo quali-quantitativo", usato per prove di ESP o di GESP con l'uso di **stimoli-bersaglio** (target) rappresentati da disegni o immagini più o meno complesse. Di questo metodo ho parlato nel mio testo *Introduzione alla parapsicologia* (San Marco Libri, Padova, 1991) e in modo dettagliato in una mia relazione dal titolo: "Proposta di un criterio metodologico quali-quantitativo in esperienze di GESP", (Atti della 3<sup>o</sup> Giornata Parapsicologica Bolognese, 18-19 maggio 1985, 31). L'interesse di questo tipo di studio sta nel fatto che il ricercatore ha la possibilità di valutare con criteri probabilistici anche i risultati di test a risposta libera.

**Esiste o no quel fenomeno detto "guarigione psichica" e "diagnosi psichica"? Se esiste, quale applicazione ha per la medicina convenzionale?**

L'esperienza profana è convinta che vi sono individui capaci di realizzare guarigioni di malattie con la "forza psichica" o con l'imposizione

delle mani (vedi i guaritori). E questa osservazione si sperde nella notte dei tempi. Basti pensare alle possibilità dimostrate da sciamani o da stregoni delle primitive tribù. Ai nostri giorni, il fenomeno anche se ha cambiato veste, non è modificato nella sostanza. E ciò è dimostrato dal fatto che ci sono milioni di persone che sia per le diagnosi che per curare le malattie da cui sono afflitti (e che spesso non hanno trovato alcun beneficio dalle cure della medicina ufficiale) si rivolgono a "santoni", "pranoterapeuti", "maghi", "guaritori" che pullulano in ogni angolo del mondo. E, stando a quello che la gente dice, molte persone migliorano o guariscono.

D'altra parte le modalità del rapporto guaritore-paziente, pur variando nelle differenti culture, in sostanza si fonda sullo stesso principio che è riconducibile al seguente modello. Da un lato vi è un "sensitivo" con capacità paranormali e nel momento che entra in "rapporto psichico" col paziente (che in realtà è un individuo che crede nella utilità di tale rapporto), coglie non solo il suo stato fisiopatologico (diagnosi paranormale eteroscopica), ma adotta i rimedi più adatti per quel paziente. Rimedi sia di natura psicologica o farmacologica in genere di tipo fitoterapico.

Ma, poiché ogni medaglia ha due facce, la medicina ufficiale si chiede quanta parte ha la suggestione sorretta dalla speranza di tali pazienti. E questa domanda è giustificata dal fatto che i metodi e le modalità seguite da coloro che praticano una "medicina alternativa" non seguono criteri razionali e scientifici, ma tradizionali e spesso istintivi. Quando poi si parla di "prana" o di "bioenergie", poiché tali forze non sono sottoponibili a verifica scientifica, non sono considerate dalla medicina convenzionale.

Vi sono comunque interessanti controlli sperimentali sulla capacità di certi "guaritori" di accelerare processi di guarigione di ferite in cavie, o a modificare la crescita di culture microbiche. Tuttavia credo che valga la pena di ricordare che recenti studi scientifici hanno dimostrato che tramite l'attivazione di un comportamento psico-emotivo (a volte fondato su situazione stressanti, o sostenuto da una forte credenza o più ancora dalla fede), l'uomo ha la possibilità di modificare non solo l'attività del suo sistema neuro-endocrino, ma anche i processi immunologici dell'organismo. Ora, mi sembra che queste conoscenze siano molto importanti perché ci permettono

di comprendere la possibile esistenza di tante e ancora sconosciute capacità del nostro organismo nel misterioso rapporto psiche-soma.

**Quale è l'atteggiamento della Chiesa secondo lei riguardo tutti questi fenomeni?**

L'atteggiamento della Chiesa, in linea di massima, si può considerare prudente, anche se in varie occasioni pare ostile nei confronti di tutta la fenomenologia paranormale. Da un lato perché c'è la preoccupazione di non alimentare false credenze in persone non preparate alla complessità del problema, per un altro verso per il rischio di mescolare fatti di tipo psicopatologico con credenze fideistiche che se male interpretate potrebbero turbare le persone.

Ciò non vuol dire che la Chiesa non si interessi di questi problemi, tanto è vero che in Vaticano padre Resch da molti anni si occupa specificatamente di "Paranormologia" (sinonimo di Parapsicologia) ed io stesso, negli anni '70, tenni un corso di parapsicologia presso il Convento dei Domenicani promosso dal Centro di San Domenico di Bologna.

**APPENDIX 3**

**EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION: A SPECIFIC CASE**

**Rome, Italy, 15 July 1996**

A religious sister "A", who was suffering from exhaustion after years of great responsibility, began to show symptoms of redness around the left eye. Two days later the condition was confirmed as erysipelas.

A Polish sister "B" had been trying to help the condition of exhaustion through foot massage (acupressure) and healing through transmission of energy. Sister A had wanted to take a holiday with another group of sisters but was not able to travel due to the erysipelas. She hoped to follow them two days later, on 20 July.

**18 July**

B needed help to deal with the new condition, so she phoned to another sister, "C", in Poland. If C is with a person, she can quickly see the sickness in that person's body. She can also "operate" on the aura (or energy body) of the person and remove the sickness. She can also "see" from a distance, with or without a photo of the person concerned.

C had no photo of A, and B simply told her, "I am in difficulty with A, I need your help". C concentrated for a moment and then asked, "What is wrong with her left eye?". B told her what the matter was and also described the general, poor physical condition of A, and C gave her some advice. A began to make progress but when she learned that she would not be able to travel on 20 July, she lost courage and the healing process was seriously hindered.

## 19 July

*B* telephoned again to Poland. *C* first replied with, "Let me know if I am seeing correctly", and she described the condition of the face that she could "see". It takes greater concentration for her to see at a distance (the distance was about 2000 km). Her description was perfectly accurate. She gave some more advice, then told *B* to take care of herself. *C* could feel that *B* was being upset by other people and needed to "shield" herself. *B* confirmed that there was some jealousy and that people were making her life difficult. *C* promised to help her.

## 20 July

The help from *C* to *B* is the more difficult part to prove. *A*'s healing suddenly progressed well again and she was ready to travel on 21 July. *B* reported that she, herself, had been in a state of tension and distress, partly on behalf of *A*, but mainly because of the negative dynamics going on around her. When she concentrated on connecting with *C*, she felt a resurgence of calm and strength and was able to continue helping *A*. She describes this connection as a kind of link-up achieved through concentrated willing and "being open" towards the distant person.

## 20 July - Results of a Conversation with *B*

*B* describes what she senses as a kind of knowing, a kind of inner certainty that comes either spontaneously, that is, without willing, or as the first "knowing" when she concentrates on a person. Sometimes she gets a strong feeling that she should go to a certain place or that a specific person needs her. It is important to follow the first feeling or intuition. If one begins to think about it, reason often says, "It does not make sense". If *B* does not follow her first intuition, she generally finds later that she has done the wrong thing.

It should be noted that while *B* and *C* always pray much, they do not regard their powers as "faith healing", but as a channelling of their energy. *B* "feels", while *C* both "feels" and "sees" what is happening. They regard it as a natural faculty which all human beings are endowed with. Some people are more sensitive than others and the feeling and seeing comes spontaneously. It is a faculty that develops more and more with use and practice. If this kind of sensing or knowledge arises spontaneously at some stage in a person's life, they will naturally be drawn to pay attention to it and will probably develop it. With help or guidance from someone who is well practised, they can develop the faculty to a high degree. Someone in whom this kind of awareness has not risen so strikingly can develop it by paying attention to spontaneous feelings or intuitions. Concentration on these will lead to a heightened awareness. A person can also practise using his/her own energy to help others, even if at first they do not "feel" so much.

## Power of the Human Spirit - A Simple Proof

Most people, if not everyone, have experienced an atmosphere of tension or other disturbance that can affect a roomful of people. Sometimes we say, "you could cut the atmosphere with a knife! Or, the depression or bad mood of another person can lame us". Negative feelings or attitudes have a stronger spontaneous effect than positive ones. People who have heightened extrasensory perception are very much affected by the feelings of others. They are also aware that they can affect others more than people who have not developed that faculty. Consequently the attitude of people like *B*, *C* and others must be positive and benevolent. It costs an effort and it is probably the reason why they are usually prayerful people if they have a religion, and why they practise some form of meditation if they have no definable religion. All believe in higher good, whether Christian or not. Those who do not believe in a higher good, believe in some Power and may be using this for their own ends, for power or prestige. That is when this extrasensory faculty becomes turned to something bad or even evil. Usually people should feel that they have an obligation to use this faculty for good, to help others.

## Mutual Attraction

Persons who are sensitive in this way are usually drawn to each other at first meeting. It happened that two other persons, *D* and *E* are close friends but lived far apart. They are both sensitive to non-tangible phenomena and much of their communication seems to go through a kind of involuntary telepathy, even at a distance of half way round the world. When *D* first met *B*, they also quickly became friends. Some years later, unknown at first to *D*, her friend *E* arrived in the place where *B* was and they, too were immediately drawn to each other, and could communicate in spite of the fact that they do not speak the same language. They could feel understood by each other.

## GLOSSARY

*Acupressure*: Another method of healing by massaging the different meridians to cure their corresponding organs of the body.

*Acupuncture*: An ancient natural method of healing by inserting special types of needles at different points on the body which are believed to be connected to the different organs.

*Agent*: The sender of telepathic message. The experimenter could act as an agent during experiments.

*Animal Magnetism*: The theory that human body contains magnetic fluid which is effective in curing illnesses by passing or stroking of hand across the diseased area.

*Apport*: causing objects go out of or enter rooms or closed vessels without openings.

*Automatism*: spontaneous writing without the writer being consciously aware of what is being written.

"*Before Touching*" (BT) : The technique used in clairvoyant tests whereby the cards are kept aside as they are being called, only to be cross-checked at the end of the call.

*Blind Matching* (BM): A method in which the subject is to match a deck of ESP cards to the five key cards placed face down before him. Neither the subject nor the experimenter should know the order of the key cards.

*Clairvoyance*: Extrasensory awareness of objects or objective events; communication between mind and matter.

*Critical Ratio (CR)* : A measure to determine whether or not the observed deviation is significantly greater than the expected random fluctuation about the average. It is obtained by dividing the observed deviation by the standard deviation.

*Cross Correspondence (CC)* : Automatic writings containing messages from discarnate spirits, sent to psychical researchers by the mediums.

*Cryptoscopy*: The power of reading and revealing the contents of closed opaque envelopes.

*Deviation (Dev.)* : The amount an observed number of hits or an average score varies (either above or below) from mean chance expectation of a run or series or other unit of trials.

*Down - Through (DT)* : A means of clairvoyance test in which the subject is to call all the deck of cards before the experimenter cross-checks the deck for the result of the calls.

*Dowsing*: The use of divining instrument or pendulum to discover or locate underground water, minerals or hidden items, either in the field or on map.

*Experimenter*: A person who prepares, carries out, and analyses the results of experiments.

*Extrasensory Perception*: Knowledge of or response to an external event of influence not apprehended through known sensory channels.

*Hypnotism*. The induction of a mental state that renders the subject susceptible to suggestions from the hypnotist.

*Levitation*: Lifting or tilting of the medium or objects by unseen means.

*Lucidity*: A Semi-trance state in which the psychic or the medium is aware of the events around him.

*Materialisations*: The purported appearance of semi-visible temporary figures of living organisms or parts of them like the hand, believed to be parts of the discarnate spirits that are at work through the medium.

*Mean Chance Expectation*: The most likely score in either ESP or PK experiments if only chance is involved.

*Medium*: A psychic who is believed to be manifesting paranormal phenomena through the influence of discarnate spirits.

*Mediumship*: The purported act of communication with discarnate spirits as their agent for the people.

*Mesmerism*: The technique, named after its founder, Anton Mesmer, by which subjects are put into hypnotic sleep or altered state of consciousness. Another name for hypnotism.

*Occultism*: A term representing various esoteric theories and practices aimed at obtaining hidden powers.

*Open Matching(OM)*: A method in which the subject is to match a deck of ESP cards to the five key cards, with the five standard symbols, which are placed face up before him.

*Parapsychology*: The discipline that studies paranormal phenomena of Extrasensory perception and psycho-kinesis.

*Percipient*: One who experiences the psi influence, the receiver of the message.

*Poltergeist*: Phenomenon involving unexplained movements or breakages of objects; literally meaning "noisy ghost".

*Precognition*: Perception of future events which could not have been predicted or inferred by normal means.

*Psi*: A general term to identifying a person's extrasensorimotor communication with the environment which includes ESP and PK used either as noun or adjective. Also a symbol in quantum mechanics for a wave function.

*Psi-cognitive*: A term embracing all the phenomena of extrasensory perception - telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition.

*Psi-Hitting*: The use of psychic power to call the target/s correctly.

*Psi-Kinetic*: Another name for psycho-kinetic phenomena.

*Psi-Missing*: The use of psychic power to get a negative call.

*Psiology*: A term coined by Carroll B. Nash to designate parapsychology or psychical research.

*Psychic*: Someone who is accredited with paranormal abilities.

*Psychic Detective*: Somebody who discovers criminals by being in contact with any object connected with the crime.

*Psychic Diagnosis*: Diagnosis of illnesses by means other than those of medical science.

*Psychic Energy*: The force, not physical, that is believed to be responsible for all psychic manifestations.

*Psychic Healing*: Healing effected by means which are inexplicable in terms of orthodox medical knowledge.

*Psychical Research*: Older term for parapsychology.

*Psycho-Kinesis(PK)* : Mental influence on external objects or processes without mediation of known motor organs.

*Psychometry*: The art of divining facts about objects or their owners by being in contact with the objects.

*Random-Number Generators (RNGs)* : Automatic, electronic machines for generating random sequence of output or cards in experiments.

*Rapid Eye Movement(REM)* : The twitching or restless movement made by the eyes while a person is asleep which indicates the dream stage of sleep.

*Reflexology*: A natural way of healing involving massage of the reflex points on the foot.

*Remote Viewing*: The extrasensory perception of remote scenes which could be geographical or topographical.

*Spiritism - Spiritualism*: A religion that bases its teachings on the survival of bodily death, and believes that discarnate spirits communicate with the living through the mediums.

*Standard Deviation (SD)* : Usually, the theoretical root mean square of the deviations. It is obtained from the formula  $\sqrt{npq}$  in which n is the number of single trials, p the probability of success per trial, and q the probability of failure.

*Subject*: One who is being tested for psychic ability either as an agent or as a percipient.

*Target*: Any object or aspect of the subject's environment - Zener cards, human beings, historical sights, etcetera - to which he should direct his psychic ability during experiments.

*Trance*: A state of total mental absorption usually induced by hypnotism, auto-hypnotism from meditation or yoga in which various forms of automatisms may take place.

*Travelling Clairvoyance:* A type of clairvoyance in which the psychic, in a state of trance, mentally visits distant places and scenes and describes them when he awakens.

*Telepathy:* Mind to mind communication; that is, mental response or awareness of another person's mental state or content.

*Zener Cards:* Specially designed cards, named after their designer Karl Zener, which are used in psychical research experiments.

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### **Bibliographical Methodology**

The bibliography is arranged in a manner that will reflect the development of parapsychology or psychical research as an academic discipline, in the following order:

First are the books and articles written by the authors on whose experimental studies our research is based, and they are arranged in chronological order. However, books and articles written by them in conjunction with other authors are placed last in the order, although they may have come first in chronological order. Then follow books and articles written by other authors in parapsychology, divided into Older and More Recent Literature, arranged in alphabetical order of authors. Books and articles written between the last quarter of the 19th century and 1959 are classified as Older Literature while those written from 1960 to date stand for More Recent Literature. Since these are arranged in alphabetical order of authors, we shall separate sections for books and articles respectively. Finally, we have a section on Other Relevant Works also arranged in alphabetical order of authors. List of some parapsychological journals are included for the sake of information.

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