



Probing the Underlying Reality:

The Spectrum of Mind-Matter Interactions

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A TOUR D'HORIZON OF MIND-MATTER INTERACTIONS COVERING A PLETHORA OF VARIOUS PHENOMENA

Birds, butterflies, and many other animals can fly, humans cannot, and if one says otherwise people would be quick in calling their sanity and reason into doubt. Yet there are reports that some humans have been observed floating in the air – admittedly not “flying” like birds – a phenomenon called levitation. Common sense would call that impossible as it contradicts the laws of nature, but deeper consideration makes clear that common sense is an inappropriate advisor in such cases, as common sense is derived from common experiences, while levitation, and a few other phenomena touched upon in this presentation, are far from being common – indeed they are very rare. Analogically, invoking natural laws needs to be done cautiously; one must not forget that natural laws are not set in stone like the ten commandments (as depicted in artistry). However, they are ultimately empirically de-

rived, thus new empirical data lead to their modification as it happens in the progress of science. Thus, the obvious bizarreness of some phenomena must not result in a bias to repudiate them unexamined.

Two main aspects need to be addressed: the veridicality and accuracy of the report and the explicability of the phenomenon. Thirdly, the replicability is an issue, too. Scrutiny needs to be applied to rule out all “normal” (as opposed to paranormal), conventional explanations; only phenomena that passed such investigation (“genuine phenomena”) warrant further consideration.

Micro-PK is probably easier to accommodate within the framework of natural science. Think of the discussion of quantum physics and psi, and of philosophical approaches such as dual-aspect monism. Moreover, experimental research in micro-PK is much easier. The big obstacle within macro-PK, e.g. physical mediumship,



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is the fact that these phenomena are somehow linked to specifically gifted individuals and occur only in their presence (similar to how poltergeist phenomena are primarily linked to a specific focus person). The rareness of such gifted persons makes replication more difficult. However, when discussing replication, one needs to distinguish between *intrapersonal* replicability (a certain medium showing a certain phenomenon time and again, which is the case more often than not, most mediums have certain “specialties”) and *interpersonal* replicability (a certain phenomenon shown by various mediums; our recently deceased colleague Erlendur Haraldsson pursued this line of research).

Given the relative rareness of well-documented phenomena and of suitable mediums across time, as well as the difficulties of finding new gifted subjects, it is no wonder that macro-PK gets more and more marginalized in contemporary parapsychology, ostensibly becoming merely a matter for the history of science. This approach is inappropriate as macro-PK is not confined to the “Great Mediums” of the past, but analogue phenomena – albeit of a smaller scale – happen still in our present age (e.g. Distant Mental Influence on Living Systems aka Bio-PK, Paranormal Metal Bending aka Geller-Effect, etc.).

This presentation will demonstrate a few phenomena of magnitude, it will touch upon famous persons (sensitives, mediums, and researchers alike) such as Joseph of Copertino, Daniel Dunglas Hume, Princess Metternich, William Crookes, Henry Slade and Carl Zöllner, Eusapia Palladino, the Schneider brothers, Albert, Baron Schrenck-Notzing, J.B. Rhine, and on phenomena such as telekinesis vs. psychokinesis, apports, materialization, Distant Mental Influence on Living Systems, and Paranormal Metal Bending.

THE FLESH OF THE MIND: GRANDEUR AND ILLUSIONS OF PSYCHOKINESIS IN THE METAPSYCHICS OF THE ROARING TWENTIES

At the onset of the Institut Métapsychique International, founded in 1919 in Paris, several physical mediums were tested in the new laboratory. Among those who occupied the public debate were Marthe Béraud (alias Eva C.), Teofil Modrzejewski (alias Franek Kluski), Jan Guzyk, and Rudi Schneider. We can see a progression in the methodological search to find an optimal balance between the conditions of control and the conditions of production of the

phenomenon. The pinnacle of this search are the experiments by Eugène and Marcel Osty using infra-red beam and automatic photographs. However, these scientific developments cannot be extracted from their historical context. They are marked by controversies opposing metapsychists to mainstream scholars (Henri Piéron, etc.) or rivals (Harry Price, etc.). Restoring the record is a real challenge for the historian of science.



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CONTEXT AND CULTURE: THE MENTAL ASPECT OF PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP

Historically, the main objective in investigating physical mediumship has been to establish the veridicality of the reported phenomena. The phenomena themselves follow fairly well-established patterns: breezes blow, raps rap, furniture moves, unexpected objects appear, and sitters are touched. However, with some mediums, some of the time, we encounter lights, mists, ectoplasm, materialized hands, arms, faces, and even full human figures.

As investigators, we are mainly concerned with the mechanics, with what is produced, how it might be produced naturally (and often fraudulently), the quality of the reporting and the credentials of the investigators. However, when you reach the stage where you cannot come up with natural explanations, and the phenomena are beyond the “normal paranormal”, it seems worthwhile to look beyond the physical manifestations to

their meaning, to how they reflect the relationships between those involved, what might be going on in their minds, and why the phenomena take the form they do.

Physical mediums tend to be viewed more as conduits for the manifestations than as active participants in their creation, with the investigators playing the part of detached observers. Yet in the case of the more meaningful phenomena, the relationship between the medium, the sitters, and what is produced clearly involves a considerable degree of mental entanglement and clairvoyant messaging. The phenomena are also entangled in the wider context of culture and class - not in the stereotypical sociological perspective sense, but in the anthropological sense of cultural meanings, norms and values that apply to particular groups and individuals at a particular time in history. In my paper, I look at selected spectacular mediums from different cultures,



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such as Eusapia Palladino, Indridi Indridasson and Jan Guzik from that point of view. However, I pay particular attention to the case of the Polish writer Teofil Modrzewski, also known as the medium Franek Kluski, and argue that, for him, mediumship may have represented an eventually irreconcilable clash of cultures.

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OUT OF THIN AIR? AN ASSESSMENT OF THE APPORT STUDIES PERFORMED BY ELEMÉR CHENGERY PAP IN BUDAPEST

Physical mediumship is characterized by the occurrence of phenomena that seem to defy currently prevailing standard theories of physics, such as inexplicable movements of objects (macro-psychokinesis) and the seemingly unexplained materialization of objects, sometimes in closed spaces (apports). Nevertheless, systematic investigations into apport phenomena have barely been performed. One of the few exceptions is represented by Elemér Chengery Pap's studies that were conducted from 1928 to 1938 in a "Metapsychical Laboratory" in Budapest that was specifically created to study physical mediums – especially apport medium Lajos Pap (unrelated to Chengery

Pap). Chengery Pap summarized his research in a voluminous, but little-known, Hungarian treatise that ranks among the largest monographs of experimental parapsychology written by a single investigator.

In this presentation, I first provide an overview on Chengery Pap's research and laboratory, as well as on the most remarkable phenomena reported from Lajos Pap that he produced under apparently strict control conditions. They range from apports of various solid objects, liquids, snow, plants, ensembles of living insects, and crawfish, to living vertebrates up to the size of a sparrow hawk. Chengery Pap collected these apports and exhibited them in show cases in an "apport muse-



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um” that belonged to his laboratory. Not surprisingly, these occurrences attracted the interest of numerous parapsychologists. Consequently, Chengery Pap and his medium were invited to hold a series of ten experimental sittings in Nandor Fodor’s *International Institute for Psychical Research* in London in 1935. The proceedings and outcomes of these test sittings, however, revealed remarkable loopholes in Chengery Pap’s experimental approach and threw a rather critical light on Lajos Pap’s judgment. In addition to this, I focus other unfavorable aspects of Chengery Pap’s monograph such as the seemingly purposeful omission of important information about problematical aspects of Lajos Pap’s mediumship. Finally, I describe experiences and results from my own studies of alleged contemporary physical mediums with a specialty on producing apports, such as Kai Mügge.

In the light of all these findings, Chengery Pap’s research approach and manner of presenting it cannot be regarded conclusive, and the authenticity of Lajos Pap’s phenomena remains questionable. Nevertheless, Chengery Pap’s extensive treatise remains of historical significance in parapsychology and provides an instructive example highlighting some of the difficulties in studying physical mediums.

MIND MATTER INTERACTIONS AND PROBABILITIES: Can Humans Influence Individual Experiences in the Undetermined Future by Changing Tiny Probabilities?

The power of the mind to influence the physical world has long been a controversial discussion. In order to test the hypothesis, scientific experiments increasingly focus on assumed small scale effects (micro-PK). Small scale effects, however, are believed not have a significant impact on the experienced individual reality, but only can be measured in labs. This is true for many effects in our lives. If people lose 0.01% of their yearly income, they will not notice any significant effect on their lives. If we experience a force of 0.0001% of our body weight, the effect will go unnoticed. In other words, the effects of small causes are assumed to disappear over time.

In recent times, a diversity of systems became known to behave unpredictably despite their seeming simplicity and despite the fact that they are governed by well-

understood physical laws. There is a common element in these systems - a very high degree of sensitivity to initial conditions. Those systems are described by the well-known deterministic chaos. A closer look reveals that seemingly all systems in our world are governed by these roles. It is only the time scale which makes the predictability of our solar system different from the predictability of our weather.

The same deterministic chaos can be seen when predictions of future experiences or events in humans are done. In some cases, the future seems to be dominated by deterministic laws, in other cases even the near future of a person seems to be undetermined.

If humans are able to influence tiny effects, this could also mean that humans may be able to influence large events (i.e. their individual experiences) in the future.



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