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CHARISMA, EMPATHY, AND THE EXPERIENCE OF TELEPATHY

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A critique is offered of the preference of parapsychology for physical explanatory models for telepathy. Discussion shows this trend emerging from the combined effects of historical accident, definitional exclusion, and informant vocabulary. An alternative explanatory model is offered which draws upon the rich but underutilized psychological foundations of parapsychology. Emphasizing telepathy's original definition as a communication event, two other phenomena are held to fall into the same class of events : charisma and empathy. Concepts traditionally used to understand charisma and empathy are shown to be equally suited for modeling telepathy. Experimental, theoretical, and especially philosophical implications of this "possible world" model are addressed throughout.

This essay argues for an intimate relationship between telepathy, charisma, and empathy (the possible world model). A perusal of the parapsychological corpus will lead one to two conclusions about such an hypothesis : first, that clues leading in this direction have been present since the field's inception, and second, that despite these historical antecedents and the fact that even social psychology has noted the parallelisms (cf. Karniol, 1990), parapsychology itself has never gathered these threads and woven them into an explicit explanatory model.

The implications of this model for parapsychology include the expected experimental and theoretical devidends required of any hypothesis worth entertaining. Some of these are indicated in the concluding section of this essay. More emphasis, however, is given to the ramifications of the possible world model for the philosophical foundations of parapshychology. At the risk of overstating the case, should the model be validated, parapsychology may lose telepathy as an object of study to some other discipline, perhaps social psychology. The outcome of any such "turf war" will depend largely upon how parapsychology is prepared to view a non-physical explanation for

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telepathy. Insight on this problem can be gained from an overview of how parapsychology has regarded such explanations in the past.

PHYSICS AND TELEPATHY

Trying to explain telepathy via psychology contrasts with an historical tendency within parapsychology to favor explanatory models based upon physics. Central to this observation is the term "explanatory." While a reviewer comments that "the overwhelming majority of experiments in parapsychology reflect primarily a psychological rather than a physical approach," it is nonetheless equally true that the use of psychological theory has been only implicit rather than explicit (Schmeidler, 1988). Physical theory in some form remains the most explicit *explanatory* tradition within parapsychology ; psychological variables, although indeed pervasive, are accorded the lesser status of correlates of, or what Rao and Palmer (1989, p. 546) call "descriptive constructs" for psi. In other words, parapsychology tends to use psychology to *describe* what psi *is like*, but resorts to physics to *explain* what psi *is*.

In the study of telepathy, the earliest model of the experience's mechanism was long based upon analogies with electromagnetic energy, despite Jung's (1952/1960) admonitions to the contrary. At its most naive and explicit, persons were modeled as living crystal sets sending and receiving radio-like signals. Subjects would be encouraged to "tune in" to the targets so as to get better "reception". Most present day researchers no longer espouse such a simplistic physical model, although advocates of this position can still be found (for an unusually strong version, see Gayer, 1985).

While the energy model itself has fallen into disfavor, its former stature within parapshychology is evident from the "survivals" (to use an anthropological term) which exist within the discipline. Particularly obvious here are the protocols for test scoring. The energetic model, reasonably enough within its system, concluded that the "psychic" was the "guesser", a subject "sensitive" to the natural signals "emitted" by interchangeable agents. The crediting of high scores to percipients continues to be the norm, although it is now accepted as the default value of standard practice rather than the reasoned implication of the researcher's working theory (e.g., Carr, 1982).

If parapsychologists reject the energy model as the wrong model, many theorists continue to assume that the appropriate model is still to be sought within physics, especially quantum mechanics. This tenacious interest in explicit physical models may simply be the result of parapsychology's history. According to Hacking (1988, p. 434), "The leading scientists who studied telepathy were drawn from the physical rather than the life sciences". Even today, two of the

researchers Rao and Palmer (1987) judge to have conducted the most impeccable experimentation in parapsychology are Helmut Schmidt, a physicist, and Robert Jahn, former dean of Princeton's School of Engineering and Applied Science. That these workers should bring with them the models and ways of thinking of the physical sciences, and that the impress of this disposition should linger and spread, is thereby understandable, even to be expected.

Yet even if we assume that physics will provide the answer to psi phenomena, the question can be raised whether this is the best place to begin. Symons' (1979, pp. 7-8) discussion of proximate and ultimate causation, although set within the context of evolutionary biology, is not without relevance here.

> Proximate, or immediate, causal analyses consider *how* the behaviour came to exist... [Q]uestions about the proximate causes of behaviour deal with development, physiology, and immediate stimulus : they consider the individual animal's history and present circumstances ....Ultimate, or evolutionary, causal analyses consider *why* the behaviour exists.... [and] thus consider primarily the species's history....

In the terms of our discussion, an ultimate, physical explanation would argue why telepathy occurs at all, while the proximate psychological explanation would explain why it occurs in a particular case.

A thorough discussion of ultimate versus proximate explanations would not be appropriate here. It must suffice to point out that while the former may be superior to the latter in terms of stating general theory, a grasp of proximate explanation is a necessary prerequisite to the development of an adequate ultimate one. Ultimate explanations cannot be invoked whole cloth, but rather must be used to explain the development of the specific mechanisms which make proximate causation possible. Until the proximate mechanisms have been identified, therefore, the full development of ultimate explanation must wait. Schmidt (1984, pp. 271-272) arrives at much the same conclusion :

> For the physicist, the ultimate goal of psi research would be the discovery of some novel microscopic law of Nature of great mathematical simplicity and beauty, from which all psi effects could, in principle, be derived. That law would qualify, from the physicist's viewpoint, as an "explanation" of psi.
>
> But the phenomenological, macroscopic approach appears as a reasonable, and perhaps necessary, first step, as a basis for a later, more complete understanding.

In other words, a physical perspective may be necessary, but first we must answer the question, "Physics of what"? After this proximate process has been identified, it will be the physics of only that psy-

chological process which will be relevant for an ultimate explanation of telepathy (cf. Rao & Palmer, 1987, p. 546). Identification of the proximate mechanism, in turn, will come only from a conscientious attention to the psychological reality of the experience as lived.

There is a second perspective, however, from which the lack of developed psychological explanatory models must be judged not as an accidental oversight, but as a cultivated disinterest. This view relates to parapsychology's perception of its subject and goal.

According to Brian MacKenzie and S. Lynne MacKenzie, "Parapsychology is... still definable as the study of phenomena that cannot be assimilated to a mathematico-physical conception of the world – roughly, of phenomena that cannot be given a reductive explanation but that interfere in some way with those that otherwise can" (quoted by McClenon, 1984, p. 68). Subject matter for parapsychology is that set which is not simply beyond the scope of physical law, but which also seems to transgress these same laws. Similarly, Rao and Palmer (1987, p. 539) state that *"Parapsychology* is that branch of science that makes a systematic study of psi anomalies", "anomalies" having been defined as those interactions which "appear to exceed somehow the capacities of the sensory and motor systems as these are presently understood". (For a critique of Palmer's conception of anomalies, see Druckman and Swets, 1988, p. 199 ; Palmer's earlier [1986] discussion of anomalies uses other language which may avoid some of the difficulties being discussed here. Attention is given here to the 1987 statement because, being later, we can assume that it is the more mature statement of what he intends).

Central to both these difinitions is the relationship between psi and the physical sciences. The incompatibility of the former with the known laws of the latter both limits the subject matter for parapsychology and provides it with a research problem. It may be noted that an overt statement about exactly which laws are being transgressed in any specific event is usually not to be found (Flew, 1985, p. 20). Yet within this research paradigm, either the incompatibilities must be shown to be more apparent than real, or the shortcomings of physics must be revised to account for the anomalies.

Whatever the outcome, it can be argued that when read strictly the goal of parapsychology is not to explain psi phenomena via the best available theory, but explicitly to explain or reconcile them with the "mathematico-physical conception of the world." This approach automatically excludes the psychological and social sciences from any but secondary roles. What was previously described as the ultimate explanation of psi becomes definitionally the *only* explanation in which the field is interested.

Psychological explanation would not be recognized as a legitimate and valuable level of explanation in its own right, but would be of

interest only to the extent that it facilitated the work towards the "real" physical explanation. Thus we could expect that the communication aspect of telepathy as it relates to signal transmission would have an enduring appeal to parapsychologists since it holds the promise of being reducible to more elementary physical properties ; by this same reasoning, the sociolinguistic and social psychological facets of communication, being nonreducible to physics, would not enjoy similar attentions.

A final factor predisposing parapsychologists towards a physical theoretical orientation can be offered, the discussion of which segues into the model proposed below. Rather than the historical accidents of academic background or the definitional limitations of the discipline, parapsychologists may simply be responding to the language of the reported cases. The layman, when referring to psi experiences, will made mention of "energy" and "power," for instance. These are both physical concepts, and the question then becomes whether they are being invoked literally or metaphorically. Making this distinction is part of the task of the case-oriented researcher.

Pivotal here is the issue of description versus explanation (Palmer, 1986). Hufford (1982) provides an excellent exposition on the point in his study of the Old Hag Syndrome. With the aid of clarifying field material, he powerfully demonstrates the types of useful conclusions which can be generated about a controversial phenomenon when it is studied in as pure a form as possible (descriptively, experientially), as free as possible of post hoc theoretical filters (cf. Schmeidler's [1990] reminder of the "remote-viewing directive to tell what you see instead of telling what it looks like").

As an example of this distinction, we could point to informant accounts of the Old Hag as sometimes involving footsteps, with an accompanying unseen presence. When pressed, the informants heard noises which sounded *like* footsteps (rhythmically resembling a stride, increasing acoustically with each beat) ; since footsteps imply persons, they subsequently assumed that someone was approaching via processes such as projection or cognitive completion. Only the noise, then, is properly part of the complex ; equating the noise with footsteps and a presence is an outcome of a series of conclusions and expectations as the mind struggles to make sense out of the raw sensation of the unexpected noises.

While the linguistic description of the experience and the experience proper can both be valuable research foci, they are not identical, and distinctions must be made between them. When informants use language drawn from physics, the researcher must discern whether this is an act of labeling raw data or of inferring from that data.

These, and perhaps other factors have converged to render physics the explanatory standard for parapsychology. This trend has

thrived at the expense of alternative perspectives, such as the psychological. Just as anthropology is often embarrassed when other disciplines display a more sophisticated grasp of its favorite buzz word, "culture," parapsychologists may find that they have paid a similar price by allowing the non-physical dimension of psi to remain underdeveloped. As we shall see, social psychology and linguistics may have a richer capacity to conceptualize telepathic events than does a physics-oriented parapsychology.

A POSSIBLE WORLD MODEL OF TELEPATHY

A. Definition and Description

Taking our cue from Hufford, should one decide to look beyond a physical perspective of psi – whether because it is wrong, premature, limited, or simply too complex and removed from the vitality of the psi experience as actually lived by real persons – the best place to begin seems to be with the raw account. What is the telepathic experience like in its elemental form, and what conclusions, if any, can be drawn from such an experience-centered description ?

Without access to a database such as that used by L. Rhine (1969) for her review of psi case reports, it is not possible to attempt a full experience-centered description of telepathy. But before an attempt can be even begun, it is necessary first to clarify those attributes which will be held to be true by *definition*. Failure of a case to meet these minimal requirements would not inform us about telepathy, but rather cause the episode to be categorized under a different rubric altogether.

Telepathy was originally defined in 1882 by F.W.H. Myers as the "transmission of thought independently of the recognized channels of sense" (quoted by Fodor, 1966, p. 376). Insufficient attention has been given to this original understanding of telepathy as a communicative event, and not merely one of physical reception (cf. Meerloo, 1964 ; but compare Walker, 1977).

Ellis and Beattie (1986, p. 4) structure the communicative event into three components :

> (1) A transmitter who encodes information into a singnal ; (2) The physical transimission of a singal ; and (3) a receiver who decodes the singal to recover the information who encoded by the transmitter. [A more detailed description of this process is offered by Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum, 1967, p. 272].

By this model, communication theory's transmitter and receiver, analogs of parapsychology's agent and percipient, respectively, are both active in the process. Initially, at least, there is no justification to require telepathy to be an ability possessed by the percipient alone.

Even if we accept Rhine's (1956, p. 29) conclusion that "the percipient rather than the agent [is] the active initiating person in telepthic exchanges", this does not eliminate the possibility that attributes of both parties are required for the initiated exchange to culminate in a successful communicative event (cf. Ehrenwald, 1972, p. 414 ; Schmeidler, 1961, p. 41).

Among the types of communication, telepathy begins to be distinugished by being definitionally "extrasensory". That the senses are classically numbered as five is an artifact of history and not a law of nature ; "Even in humans, Aristotle's list of the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch is incomplete" (Wilson, 1990). The number five does not, therefore, exhaust the known avenues for effective communication.

For instance, among the !Kung, sweat from a dancer in an altered state is rubbed into others, either to facilitate the latter's healing or initiate their own altered states (Katz, 1982). This is clearly a form of communication in the terms articulated above, one almost certainly chemical-or, more specifically, pheromone-based, yet which type falls outside the rigid constructs of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling. For while touching—physical contact—is involved, the touch does not encode the message by which the change in state of consciousness is communicated. The molecules, which constitute the message here must be described as "extrasensory" in that the receptor organs are none of those identified by the Aristotelian five, although one of these still *mediates* the messenger since touching is involved.

Describing telepathy as extrasensory, then, does not make telepathy unique. It is necessary to specify that, unlike the !Kung example, telepathy is both extrasensory and unmediated (cf. "independently of the recognized channels of sense"), as are all psi phenomena. If five do not exhaust the media for message transmission, it is not unreasonable to speculate that at least one of these unenumerated is able to act without the interference or conveyance of the "big five."

Finally, telepathy is *unmediated extrasensory communication between sentient beings*, none of which should render telepathy a priori an impossibility, or, for that matter, necessarily improbable. Moreover, since successful communication is more dependent upon psychological features than upon the merely physical, we should expect that understanding the former will yield richer dividends than the latter.

While telepathy definitionally occurs between sentient beings (hereafter termed "persons"), applying Hufford's experience-centered perspective will reveal that what is important is the *relationship* between the agent and the percipient. Any tallying of case studies necessarily will conclude that telepatic events occur between persons already

known, or otherwise socially linked to each other. This is true because telepahy "has no particular form of its own," (Rhine, 1969, p. 234), and hence must be identified solely by the matching of mental events experienced by independent persons. Matching in order to identify requires access to both parties. Lacking certification of a match, the experience *might* have been telepathic by the standard of our definition, but this must remain a speculation.

Thus, for the event to become sanctioned as "telepathic", information from both persons must in some way corroborate the event's content, requiring that they be socially related or connected, either directly or through intermediaries. An experience-centered description will build upon these agent-percipient dyads of known relationship, usually, but not necessarily, highly cathected in a positive direction. Given that a relationship is present, it is but a small step to suggest that the qualities of that relationship can impact the telepathic event (for a review of the experimental literature on this point, see Sanchez, 1986).

Both induction from reported cases and laboratory research converge to support the conclusion that successful telepathy occurs between persons who participate in a marked relationship. Not surprisingly, therefore, Schmeidler (1961) not only demonstrates that testing success is related to individual personality, but also that an important interaction occurs between the personality traits of actor and percipient. Where such balance exists, telepathic linkage is facilitated ; where it is absent, a telepathic event would be surprising (cf. Murphy, 1962 ; Meerloo, 1964, p. 68). Telepathy, we may then conclude, is foremost a social phenomenon, and attempts to understand it should be in these terms.

The most reasonable next step, given Schmeidler's (1988, 1990) underappreciated premise that psi is fundamentally a psychological process, is to look through "normal" psychological literature, since "normal and paranormal functions are so similar that learning about psychological processes will give useful information about parapsychological ones" (1988, p. 7). The idea is that the extraordinary, stunning instances of telepathic comunication may be grotesque examples of more mundane abilities. There may be other social phenomena which conform to the definition and experience-centered description of telepathy. The argument is made below that empathy and charisms both fall into this category.

B. Charismatic as Telepathic Agent

As early as 1922 Max Weber included telepathic experiences as a specific instance of a more general class of social phenomena :

> Nor does every person have the capacity to achieve the ecstatic states which are viewed, in accordance with primitive experience,

> as the preconditions for producing certain effects in meteorology, healing, divination, and telepathy.... We shall henceforth employ the term "charisma" for such extraordinary powers. (1922/1963, p. 2).

While the connotations of charisma are different for Weber from those used by social psychologists, the latter have not so altered the term that it has lost its suggestive parallelisms with the telepathic event.

For instance, according to Riggio (1987, p. 13), "the truly charismatic individual is.....a master of nonverbal communication". Since telepathy, too, is but one type of nonverbal communication, the possibility arises that the charismatic is also telepathic, or that the two share an underlying process. The suggestive parallels go on : Lindholm (1990, p. 26) claims that "the intense emotional state of the charismatic is transmitted spontaneously to onlookers", and both he and Riggio (1987) use the term "infect" when characterizing the qualities of this transmission.

The charismatic can be described as having a "psychological force radiating" from him (Lindholm, 1990). These emotions assume the character of information because the charismatic effect can "affect the feelings of others" (Riggio, 1987, p. 7) or "automatically cause or inhibit actions" (Durkheim, 1915/1965, p. 237, provided his construct of "respect" is synonymous with ours of "charisma"). Charisma, in short, shares with telepathy the attributes of nonverbal, perhaps extrasensory communication between persons.

Finally, reports of the charismatic experience bear striking parallels with what we expect from a telepathic case report :

> Susan Atkins reports that when she was delegated to command some of the followers, she found herself able to read their thoughts and to manipulate them, just as she believed [Charles] Manson did. (Lindholm, 1990, p. 132)

Some experimental results support this relationship between charisma and telepathy. Wiesinger (1973), for instance, in an experiment with school children, reports that his subjects "tended to take their psi information from the *most popular* classmates ($p<0.005$) and to avoid the unpopular ones ($p<0.025$)" (emphasis added ; the assumption is that high charisma correlates with social popularity). However, a search of the research literature turned up no explicit investigation into the relationship of charisma to psi phenomena.

In sum, the evidence suggests first that charisma, "defined as a dramatic flair involving the desire and ability to communicate emotions and thereby inspire others" (Friedman, Riggio, & Casella, 1988, p. 204), significantly overlaps with telepathy on at least the descriptive level. More specifically, one who possesses this talent in quantity

would seem to be able to do similar sorts of feats expected of an exceptional telephatic agent.

C. Empathic as Telephatic Percipient

Lindholm (1990, p. 7) states that "If the charismatic is able to compel, the follower has a matching capacity for being compelled." By modeling the process as a two-way transaction, requiring aptitudes from both parties, Lindholm suggests for charisma a model identical to that Schmeidler (1961) offered for telepathy. What known social psychological trait would best fit the description of a telepathic percipient ? Empathy offers itself as an obvious candidate.

An influential definition of empathy was provided by Dymond (1949, p. 127) : Empathy denotes "the imaginative transposing of oneself into the thinking, feeling and acting of another and so structuring the world as he does." "In empathy, the empathizer 'reaches out' for the other person... In empathy, we substitute ourselves for the others... To know what it would be like if I were the other person is empathy" (Wispe, 1986, p. 318). Finally, we see again the appearance of a key term from telepathy's original definition when Hickson (1985, p. 91) states that "a transmission of knowledge and feeling is assumed to be the empathic effect."

These depictions of empathy are similar to those which can be found for telepathy :

> Psychics often commented that "reading" a client was simple, a matter of "becoming one with" that client and then "reading themselves." What psychics do, then, is predicated on the ability to literally or metaphorically "let go" of their ego boundaries. (Galanti, 1989, p. 6)

A striking, apparently unmediated instance of empathic rapport, then, parallels the category of telepathic percipience. In empathy, the *I* merges with the *other,* so that the *I* obtains information about the state of the *other* ; this same description applies to telepathy, so that telepathy becomes a subclass of empathy.

The resemblance between what is called telepathy, and what social psychology studies as empathy arises because both are nonverbal if not extrasensory communications between socially connected persons. The correspondence is even more striking when considering the predictive test of empathy : Subjects are asked to fill out a questionnaire as they think the other person did (Dymond, 1949). To the psychologist, a high score here indicates high empathy ; to a parapsychologist, this score could approximate a test of GESP. This similarity is all the more impressive since the GESP test requires that the parties be unknown to one another ; likewise, Dymond's

origional methodology explicitly excluded friends from being in the same subject groups.

There is high face validity, then, to the expectation that telepathy and empathy are related phenomenon. A few experimental results support this relationship. Sanchez (1986), for instance, found that the personal distress subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Idex significantly correlated with telepathy test scores.

D. Theoretical Summary

From this discussion emerges the broad outlines of a new model for telepathy. What parapsychologists study is but one side (the percipient's) of the extreme pole of a socially interactive process which, in less dramatic forms, permeates everday life

In this model, empathy and charisma are *not* mere personality correlates of telepathic phenomena. At the very least, telepathy can be fully modeled using concepts traditionally reserved for empathy and charisma. In stronger terms, the possibility cannot be excluded that in fact empathy, charisma, and telepathy are different manifestations of a single process. As opposed to the traditional perspective of telepathy as a qualitatively distinct phenomenon, empathy would be the same process's action under special conditions. Under other conditions, while still remaining the same psychological process, people find it experientially distinctive, and hence label it differently as "telepathy."

To use Palmer's (1986) terminology, this model suggests that telepathy has been separated not because it *is* different in any real way from charisma and empathy, but because it is *perceived* as such ; whereas charisma and empathy are "normal," telepathy is "anomalous." The condition of being "anomalous" is a function of the knowledge set of the perceiver, and not an objective quality of the perceived. Hence, telepathy can very well be anomalous without concluding from that fact that it need be inherently different from related phenomena.

Instead of a "mental radio," the proper analogy may be with what linguists call "possible worlds" (McCawley, 1981), or what D'Andrade (1990), in a review of human cognitive research, calls "semantic inter subjectivity." Within both these rubrics, effective communication is achieved only when, for purposes of that intercourse, the parties argee on those matters which may be taken for granted. If, for instance, I say that "John is coming," I may or may not need to specify which John, depending on whether, in the world created for this discourse, this information is included as one of that world's defining predicates.

In these terms, charisma is the ability to expand one's own world to engulf others, to impose one's predicates upon others with mini-

mal compromising on a middle ground. Empathy, on the other hand, involves the surrender of one's own world and entry into someone else's, the displacement, at least temporarily, with the other person's predicates for his or her own. Telepathy, finally, is a product of the some process as are charisma and empathy, all being manifestations of a "symbiotic gradient reaching from the ego to the nonego" (Ehrenwald, 1972, p. 406).

While future study will be necessary to ascertain whether these phenomena are complimentary or equivalent, and, if the latter, whether the equivalence is complete or functional, what the three clearly have in common is that all are forms of nonverbal communication between socially connected actors. Too little is currently known about empathy and charisma to state without qualification that they meet the criteria to be labelled either "extrasensory" or "unmediated." But while these experiences are often facilitated through paralinguistic cueing, such cueing may not be required. For instance, charismatic influences often continue in the absence of the physical presence of the object, and may in fact be transmitted through intermediary vectors such as published writings or third parties. These features fit well with the model that the critical variable is the correspondence of predicates, and that this correspondence can be achieved through many means, some of which are strictly sensory, but others not. Mediation is also an open question.

This model would not be difficult to test. Regarding the functional equivalency of telepathy, charisma, and empathy, three hypotheses are sufficient to demostrate that the high face validity argued above has a deeper substance. First, those scoring high on charisma tests such as the Affective Communication Test (Friedman, Prince, Riggio, & DiMatteo, 1980) should have more sucess as telepathic agents than those with lower scores. Second, those possessed of significant empathic talents should perform better as telepathic percipients than do others. A third hypothesis is that, in most circumstances, a combination of the two attributes is required for consistent success.

Some additional hypotheses would address the further issues raised by the possible world model. All things being equal, including levels of charisma and empathy, those pairs which share a larger number of predicates about the world will score better on tests for telepathy. Stated as a general principle, homogeneous pairs will score better than heterogeneous pairs. Experimentally, this could be operationalized by comparing same sex with mixed pairs, combinations of North American and Asians, and of illiterates with Ph.D's.

CONCLUSIONS

The argument has been made that empathy, charisma, and telepathy bear a sufficient amount of resemblance to warrant the suggestion

that they are related, interactive, and possibly equivalent. Rather than physics, the vocabulary to model experience of each of these phenomena should come from sociolinguistics and social psychology.

There is an overall attractiveness to this model as an explanation for telepathy largely because it can not only account for the data it was specifically intended to explain, but also because it can illume a much wider field. As an example for the former, we might consider the problem of the unreliability of telepathic abilities. As Rhine (1956, p. 31) notes, "different results seem to be produced by different agents even with the same percipients." Such erratic results become not merely explainable, but even predictable with the possible world model.

First, it cautions against an overemphasis on the role of the percipient, commonly referred to as the "psychic." If the communicative event is the outcome of a reciprocal, interactive relationship, then no single person can be credited with "powering" it. Moreover, since relationships are dynamic, a pair which performs well at one session cannot be assumed to perform well at the next unless it is known that the relationship, and the valuation of that relationship, has not altered in the interim. Since such stability is rare, the prediction should be that results will vary. What was an experimental frustration thus becomes a theoretical expectation.

As only a hint of its theoretical productivity, we can show that the model can contribute to debates at the level of even ultimate physical explanation. For instance, in his review of two such models, Schmidt (1984, p. 263) states that the teleological model carries with it the necessary implication "that, in a proper test arrangement, a prophet can perform PK tasks and a successful PK subject can predict future events."

The possible world model would argue to the contrary: If telepathy is an interactive communication event, whatever overlap there may be between telepathy and other forms of psi (and I suspect it is considerable) will depend upon the subjects being able to identify with the object. If we assume that identifying with other people is an easier task than with dice, we can in fact predict that PK and telepathic subjects are not interchangeable, whatever the experimental design. We should therefore be able to reject this particular physical model in favor of another which does not carry this implication.

Finally, I have tried throughout to indicate the context of the possible world model relative to the philosophical infrastructure of the discipline. Having presented the model, some final comments on this problem can be offered. It was seen that some prevalent definitions of parapsychology emphasize the relationship of psi experiences to scientific laws and, more importantly, the state of our knowledge about

these laws. (It is not necessary for this point to argue whether these laws are necessarily physical). Specifically, palmer (1986) states that parapsychology is the study of anomalous events, the condition of being anomalous, recall, being determined by the failure of the event to be "captured" within the scope of one of these known scientific laws. It was also mentioned that social psychology is approaching a recognition that some facets of its subject matter could profitably be applied to phenomenon such as "reading people's minds" (Karniol, 1990). These facts intersect to touch on fundamental issues for parapsychologists.

The model proposed here integrates telepathy into established social science constructs. Were this to become the standard, even lay perspective, telepathy would cease to be anomalous. The question, then, is whether parapsychology is prepared to lose telepathy as a subject matter to social psychology. If Palmer's definition reflects a consensus within the discipline, then parapsychologists will indeed be willing and even pleased to see the field surrender one of its "flagship" research foci, and count the loss as a success.

I hope this does not happen. Empathy and charisma have been neatly operationalized by social psychology, but thus far the field has had little success in explaining them. We can hardly expect telepathy to fare better. Parapsychologists, on the other hand, traditionally are more willing to employ an eclectic approach to their research which is more likely to generate the origional insights required to unravel these complicated phenomena.

A better outcome, from my perspective, would be for parapsychology to "annex" empathy and charisma from social psychology. Such a move requires, however, that a more positive definition be found for parapsychology than that it is the study of what physics cannot currently explain.

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