

Telepathy: 1963-1970

by

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I recommend this thesis for acceptance by the Honors Program of Ball State University for graduation with honors.

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## Preface

I initially wanted to look at the trends in the study of telepathy within the last decade; however, the Ball State University Library did not have copies of the Journal of Parapsychology for the years 1960 through 1962. I, therefore, limited my discussion to the research trends from 1963-1970.

In this paper, I deleted references to articles and abstracts from the Journal of Parapsychology which were written by foreign psychologists. My criterion included only those articles and abstracts written by psychologists listed in the 1970 membership roll of the American Psychological Association. It is possible that I deleted articles by American psychologists or psychiatrists who are not members of the APA.

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Throughout history, there have been references to individuals who have been gifted as oracles, seers, or fortune-tellers because of their abilities to "read" minds or forecast the future. It has only been within the last 100 years that psychic phenomena have been subjected to scientific investigation; and, only within the past few decades have these phenomena been tested through rigorous scientific procedures.

The scientific study of extra-sensory perception (ESP) or the psi process is called parapsychology. In the field of parapsychology, there is also included the related topics of psychokinesis and the survival of the personality after death (14, p. 3). J.B. Rhine has defined ESP as an "awareness of something outside of one's self acquired without the use of the senses (8, p. 3)." Perhaps a more concise definition of ESP is offered by Gertrude Schmeidler: "it (ESP) is a direct response to something of which there is no means of sensing or remembering or inferring (14, p. 3)." The concept of ESP includes three phenomena: clairvoyance, telepathy, and precognition. Clairvoyance is the ESP of an object or an event. Telepathy is the awareness of the feelings or thoughts of another person. Precognition is the awareness or foreknowledge of future events (8, p. 3). Psychokinesis (PK) is the action of mind on matter without any visible physical force (8, p. 3).

The first official recognition of psychic phenomena as an area worthy of study was in 1952 when the Society for Psychical

research was founded in London. This organization devoted itself to three kinds of research: (1) the naturalistic collection and examination of "spontaneous cases" of psychic phenomena; (2) intensive studies of individuals who seem to have special abilities (sensitives, psychics, and mediums); and, (3) experimentation (14, p. 6). Such research was carried out in the United States and Great Britain; the reader is directed to Schmeidler for an extensive history of the research.

Parapsychology took a new direction in 1930 when J.B. Rhine joined William McDougall at Duke University. Rhine became the director of the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke. He changed the research from a mere collection of data to quantitative methods and analysis. Rhine's early work was devoted to card guessing. Because of the remarkable results he obtained, his work attracted the interest of the American Psychological Association. From an examination of the data by the APA in 1937, it was concluded that his results were obtained under informal conditions. The APA suggested "constructive criticisms for tightening procedures (which) were incorporated into parapsychology and have become routine experimental controls in Rhine's laboratory (14, p. 9)."

Psychologically-oriented psi research in the university is found in foreign rather than in the United States. Although there are no psychology centers devoted to ESP research, individual psychologists may do research at City College in New York, Clemson University, and branches of U.C.L.A. Research

centers in the United States are sponsored by the fields of psychiatry and physics and technology. Psychiatrically-oriented research centers are: (1) Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn; (2) Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia; and, (3) the Neuropsychiatric Institute at U.C.L.A. Physically- and technically-oriented research centers are: (1) Newark College of Engineering; (2) Department of Biophysics at the University of Pittsburgh; and, (3) the Boeing Research Laboratories in Seattle (10, p. 121). The Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University was divorced from the Department of Psychology in 1950 to end the controversy of psychology concerning parapsychology (10, p. 125).

Since so many experiments with significant results have been documented, the focus of parapsychology has changed. Investigators are attempting to answer such questions as what are the causes of ESP, what are the limiting conditions, and what are any facilitating or inhibiting conditions (14, p. 10). Another question to be answered is if certain personality characteristics correlate with high ESP ability (8, p. 13). Therefore, the existence of ESP is taken for granted by parapsychologists. Although there are many skeptics, parapsychology is gaining wider recognition among those outside of the parapsychological field.

With this introduction, this paper will look briefly at the history of telepathy and then determine the direction of telepathic

research in the United States from 1963 to 1970 as it is reported in the Journal of Parapsychology.

Telepathy was the first type of psychic phenomenon to be studied. The first distinctive test of telepathy came with the work done at Duke University in 1946 and was later confirmed by Dr. S.G. Soal in England ( 11, p. 93). However, it has been the most difficult phenomenon to test because it is hard to rule out the presence of other forms of psi (8, p. 6). For telepathy to exist, the percipient or receiver must learn of what the agent is thinking without using any of his sense organs; the agent's or sender's thoughts must be known to the receiver whether he wishes it or not and without making an effort to communicate (2, p. 10). Therefore, complicated precautions are necessary because two subjects must be controlled and hypotheses require greater complication of design (10, p. 112).

In testing telepathy, the agent cannot choose what to think of because the choice of the target may reflect his associations or may be similar to the percipient's associations (14, p. 5). The first telepathy experiments as reported by Rhine followed this format:

The sender, or agent, selected in his mind a given order for the symbols in his first five trials-let us say rectangle, star, rectangle, waves, waves. Keeping this symbol order dimly in mind, he would concentrate his attention on the first one and signal for the receiver or percipient, to make a call. After the receiver had made his call and it had been recorded then and only then would the sender make the record of his first symbol. In this way there would be no objective record until after the receiver's call was recorded (9, p. 162).

When he first began his studies, Rhine had his subjects sit at the same table; but he later moved them to different rooms. Later on, his subjects participated in experiments covering greater distances.

Another method for testing telepathy was developed by McManan. The agent invents a private code to translate random digits into symbols. The digits are randomly entered in a random number table and he follows its order in "sending" the symbols of ESP cards. The subject records the symbols. If an extrachance correspondance is noted, it should demonstrate pure telepathy because clairvoyance would convey digits not symbols (14, p. 6).

Telepathy is one of the most well-known forms of ESP among the general public. However, there are many skeptics in the scientific world. In order for telepathic communication to exist, information must be transmitted without the use of special apparatus. Telepathic communication implies that there are human abilities which are unknown to psychology and physiology and that there are properties of matter unknown to physics (2, p. 10). Understandably, scientists are skeptical of telepathy.

Between the years of 1963 and 1970, there were only five articles written by American psychologists which dealt with telepathy in the Journal of Parapsychology. Of the five articles, two were written by Dr. J.B. Rhine (10, 11) and two were written by his wife, Dr. Louise E. Rhine (12,13). The four



articles by the Rhines besides giving a brief history of telepathy summarized the conclusions of prior telepathy experiments. Dr. J.B. Rhine's articles discussed the history of ESP which included telepathy. Dr. Rhine cautioned that telepathy should be guardedly defined despite the amount of evidence supporting the existence of telepathy. He suggested that it be defined as:

psi communication without an objective target other than that of the sender's own organism as he thinks of the target messages the receiver is asked to identify (11, p. 93).

His article in the June, 1966 issue was a summary of different periods in ESP research; he gave information about telepathy that is presented earlier in this paper.

Dr. L.E. Rhine seemed to be concerned with the process involved in telepathy. She found no support for the assumption that the agent "sends" a message to the percipient; rather, the percipient was usually the one initiated the telepathic exchange or was the true agent (13, p. 66-69). She analyzed a collection of spontaneous cases to determine the relationship between the agent and the percipient (12). In previous experiments, the nature of the telepathic process had not been tested to determine the direction of the action. Her question was whether the "percipient's experience depended on the fact that the agent sent the thought or if he could have perceived it under his own initiative without the agent's action (12, p.236). Her results indicated that telepathy seemed to occur whether or not the agent directed his thoughts to the percipient (12, p. 236). Dr. Rhine concluded as far as it was possible the case study

supported the idea that ESP is a single process with the types (clairvoyance, telepathy, and precognition) being different only in the kinds of information they perceive (12, p. 239).

E. Douglas Dean in a presidential address before the 10th annual convention of the Parapsychological Association summarized the evidence regarding telepathic exchange:

- (1) The transfer of information is selective because one may not receive telepathic information from a third person.
- (2) The percipient may be the active initiator of the psi exchange. The author's plethysmograph work shows stronger GESP response to names of significant persons to the percipient than the agent's response to the names of significant persons.
- (3) The distance between the agent and the percipient does not impair psi exchange to any extent.
- (4) The manner in which the psi message travels in long distance communication is a complete unknown. If it travels in a straight line or bends around the earth, either method poses problems for physical theory.
- (5) It is necessary to determine the speed of the transfer of information.
- (6) In spontaneous case material, it would seem that strong emotions seem to facilitate psi transfer. An explanation that Dean offers is that perhaps we repress telepathic powers in our everyday life because it implies omnipotence; and in a rush of emotion, our repressions may be swept away (1, p. 327-328).

Dean continued by suggesting the possibility that telepathic transfer takes place in a manner proposed by Feynman be researched. Feynman proposed that there are discontinuities in space such that matter (or energy) might enter at one point and simultaneously emerge at a distant point.

The articles in the Journal of Parapsychology more or less were recantulations of previous research. There was only one suggestion as to the direction that future research may take. A case study approach to study telepathy as a process was made; however, the case study method would lack the scientific rigor and control of a more experimental design.

In addition to articles, the Journal of Parapsychology presented abstracts of telepathic research. These abstracts could be classified into two areas: experimental research and the effect of personality factors upon telepathy.

The methodology of the experimental research ranged from using relatively simple post-hypnotic suggestion to the use of technical instruments and the binary number system of information theory. In one experiment, the effect of post-hypnotic suggestions that the subjects would receive telepathically transmitted images during three experimental conditions was studied. It was found that the control subjects' results were significant when the subjects rated themselves on the images evoked during a trance; that is, they rated themselves on their records as contrasted to the targets; only the judges' ratings of the hypnotic group were significant under the condition of a rest or nap period in which thoughts and dreams were recalled; and, the judges' ratings for the non-hypnotic group were significant under the condition of a week at home during which the subjects recorded their dreams. It would seem that there was some evidence of telepathy among the non-hypnotic subjects when responses were immediately elicited.

The judges found that there had been some telepathic exchange when the thoughts and dreams were recalled during a rest or nap period (p=0.001). Telepathy seemed to be demonstrated according to the judges for the non-hypnosis group when they recorded the images in their dreams a week after the session (3, p. 88).

A monograph by Ullman and Krippner explored the area of telepathy and dreaming through the use of Rapid Eye Movement (REM) monitoring techniques. A formal experimental series began in 1964 at Maimonides Dream Laboratory; these findings suggest that telepathic transfer of information from an agent to a sleeping subject may be possible.

An experiment was made by Reswick and Vodovnik in which a sender was required to transmit the number 13 in binary code (1101) to a receiver in another room. A young couple in love was used as the subjects. Red and green lights were used to signify either 0 or 1 of the binary code, and a yellow light was used as a "nonsense symbol" to determine the extent of the receiver's preference for one color or the other. A complicated procedure was devised in which the sender transmitted the color and the receiver pushed a button corresponding to the color he "received". The sender transmitted the message 790 times for each digit. The messages were compared by the computer for the two colors most often chosen by the receiver. The color most often selected was taken as final. The results showed that all four digits were received successfully; so that, the number 13 was transmitted.

The experimental research indicates that telepathy in some

form does exist. The experiment by Keswick and Vodovnik appears to be the most methodologically sound; however, more data should be collected using different subjects before any definite conclusions can be drawn. Interesting possibilities have been raised regarding the feasibility of using hypnosis as a method of studying telepathy. Telepathic transmission to sleeping subjects opens new areas of study.

Another area of research was the effect of personality variables upon telepathy. In a research brief by Thelma Moss, the hypothesis that telepathy is often experienced when the agent is in a strong emotional state and the receiver is relaxed or asleep was tested. In each experimental group, a transmitter was exposed to slide episodes with sound effects; each slide was to create a different emotion in the transmitter. After each episode, the transmitter recorded his reactions on one channel of a stereo tape recorder; the receiver recorded his sensations and images on the other channel. A control group was formed. Her results showed that the matched responses and stimuli for the experimental group were significant above the .001 level, while the control group scored significantly below chance (pp. 283-284).

Another study made by Moss in collaboration with J.A. Gengerelli dealt with the telepathic transmission of emotional stimuli. The results of this experiment showed that the free association of the receiver while he is relaxed and reclining is related significantly to the simultaneous free association of the

transmitter while he is exposed to emotionally arousing visual and auditory stimuli in another sound-proof room. Adequate controls were applied. One limitation of the study was that the subjects were selected because they believed they had telepathy; this belief may have had some facilitating effect.

One abstract attempted to analyze telepathy. Strong motivation and a relaxed state of mind of the receiver created a favorable situation for telepathy. Murphy proposed that perhaps the often partial transmission of material or repetition of details is due to an unconscious motive not to send or receive a message rather than the difficulty of the information itself. He also suggested that normal perception and the perception of ESP are similar; he cited an experiment on subliminal perception which might show how unconscious factors may influence ESP.(6, p. 139).

Research on personality and telepathy seems to be based mainly on the effect of emotions and telepathy. The studies of emotional stimuli and its effects upon telepathy used scientific methods to test the hypotheses. The results of these studies showed that a relaxed state of mind on the part of the receiver greatly facilitates telepathic transmission.

It would appear from the reported studies in the Journal of Parapsychology that every effort is made to utilize scientific experimental methodology in testing telepathy. New methods of testing telepathy were suggested through the use of hypnosis and through the use of a binary number choice. Most of the studies looked at the relationship between strong emotion or

the receiver's frame of mind and telepathy. The conclusions reached were that strong emotion does facilitate telepathy and that it is facilitated when the receiver's frame of mind is relaxed.

It would seem that there are still areas to be studied in regards to telepathy. There was literally no research done in the U.S. on personality traits which might correlate with high telepathic ability. Another question which could be answered is whether the telepathic ability of an individual peaks at a certain age and then declines or whether the ability is stable throughout the individual's lifetime. Do all people possess telepathic abilities or are only a few people gifted with the ability? A fundamental question to be answered is exactly what is telepathy. Is it merely a type of subliminal perception or is it a psychic phenomenon? There are still many areas to be researched in telepathy; only through the slow, arduous scientific process can telepathy be thoroughly studied.

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