Parapsychology – Is It Still a Subject of Suspicion and Ridicule?

**DESPITE THE FACT** that parapsychology has been recognised as a subject worthy of study and research by some universities in the UK:

* [Liverpool Hope University](http://www.hope.ac.uk/ssss/psychology/pages/para/parapsychology.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) (department now closed)
* [Goldsmiths – University of London](http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/study-options/undergraduate/BSc-Pyschology.php%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
* [Coventry University](http://www.coventry.ac.uk/courses/course/188.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
* [Edinburgh University](http://moebius.psy.ed.ac.uk/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
* [University College Northampton](http://almond.admin.nene.ac.uk:7777/portal/page?_pageid=473,2563731&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL" \t "_blank)

superficial research indicates that most diploma/degree courses (both here and elsewhere around the world) are designed to help psychologists dismiss psi as the fantasy of deluded minds. There appears to be very little effort being made to establish whether or not the hidden powers attributed to parapsychology really do exist. Studies that were carried out by psychology departments in the past dismissed the subject as a pseudo science.

Diploma courses in the subject do exist but do little more than educate interested parties about the claims made for the twenty plus ‘powers’ that come within its purlieu. They do not attempt to teach students how to access such powers and they certainly do not try to enhance them in any who claim to be able to exercise them. Even Wikipedia, that most open source of liberal opinion, goes out of its way to pooh-pooh any thoughts of there being any chance of discovering a scientific basis for the reality of parapsychology. Psi is a fairytale, a myth – one that has survived for thousands of years.

However, some quite recent research of the possible beneficial uses of telepathy (if it were shown to exist) has been pursued in research at Cambridge University and in India, which indicates that there might just be a possibility that it does exist and that it can be enhanced. All seems to have gone quiet since the initial announcement in 2014. Was it an error or have the claims made been laughed out of court by academia? I suspect the latter.

And yet…

No one with access to modern means of communication (i.e. radio and television, computers and the internet) can be ignorant of the fact that medical science, especially neurosurgery, is making spectacular progress in its discoveries of how the brain works and how, for instance, to repair or replace damaged nerves to enable it to control physical actions of, say, damaged limbs, including fingers and thumbs, much of it, sadly, on the back of charitable efforts to help soldiers with horrific war wounds from the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The Cambridge team looking at the use of telepathy to enable brain-damaged individuals to communicate with their doctors or carers claim to have succeeded in passing very basic code over thousands of miles (between India and the UK?) by enhancing the brains of their patients using tMS – transcranial Magnetic Stimulation –procedures, established treatment for psychiatric patients suffering with depression.

Work is proceeding in research of how to translate brain signals into speech, with some success. (It’s to hoped that the speech will sound better than poor Stephen Hawking’s signature computer output.)

It is maintained by physicists everywhere that the next most touted psi ‘power’ – psychokinesis (or telekinesis) – is totally impossible and that its existence would contravene all the long-established laws of physics. If such a power did exist, they claim, its energy level would be so weak that it could never be of any use or it would have been revealed to the world by modern experiments long since.

Such denials have the ring of mediaeval Vatican denials that the Earth goes round the Sun, once so vehemently proclaimed.

The brain contains billions of neurons each connected via trillions of synapses in a maze so complicated that even the finest brain surgeons and neuroscientists find it difficult to explain how it all works. So far they have, with the use of the most up-to-the-minute brain scanners, only managed to recognise some of the more common electrical reactions within the lobes of the brain itself – they know which areas ‘light up’ when we experience certain emotions or physical urges – a step in the right direction. No one’s suggesting it’s easy! Progress in research is inevitably slower than science fiction would have us believe.

The sci-fi writer has a huge advantage. He is not working in real time. He can work out for himself all the hurdles on the way to the perceived objective and situate his fiction suitably far ahead in time for all those hurdles to have been overcome. Need quantum supercomputers to work out your solutions? Everyone’s got one! Need a limitless source of electrical power to run them? No problem –scientists have learnt how to tap the Sun’s energy with little or no loss. Who needs nuclear fusion machines, when our Sun (and all the others around the universe) is already one gigantic and ever-present fusion reactor? Indeed, who needs people with the brainpower we attribute to brain surgeons, when we have Artificial General Intelligence-controlled quantum supercomputers, with the combined knowledge of the world of science at their ‘fingertips’?

Most sci-fi writers still prefer to have human heroes and tend to use rogue androids as their villains/anti-heroes – it’s something to do with the market they serve. AGIs are unlikely to amuse themselves by reading fiction, even if they are aware of its existence and can present their sponsors with light reading material on demand. That said, it is fascinating to explore a future scenario, where a few super-intelligent people control a word run by AGIs and robots with the help of a myriad of robots, android or otherwise.

I believe that attempts to create and introduce androids that can service all man’s desires will continue to be made in the real world, UNLESS psi powers really are found to exist. If they do, it will not be necessary to create expensive and potentially dangerous ’droids. Humans using psi teleportation will be able to travel through the ether as ‘avatars’ capable of instantly materialising and de-materialising wherever they please. If they do, it is almost certain that holographic AGI interfaces will take the place of ’droids and be able to replace human avatars when and if required.\*

\* Such a developing scenario is envisaged in my sci-fi trilogy, ***Think Freedom,*** available on Amazon Kindle only.