

THE HOPE BOOKLETS

edited by Filippo Liverziani
The Convivium, Centre of Study and Community of Research
Via dei Serpenti, 100 00184 Roma, Italy

6

UNDERSTANDING MEDIUMISM

In the Hope Movement we are often accused of letting ourselves be swayed by emotivity and not being sufficiently self-critical. Only a really thoroughgoing study can reply with efficacy to these objections and provide a more rational and objective backing to our testimony. In this sense, even a study like the present one, which is based on our personal experiences, can contribute to the common search.

UNDERSTANDING MEDIUMISM

Review of experiences for an overall interpretation

CONTENTS

1. Presentation
2. The approach is non-dogmatic but rather rational intended for those who really want to gain greater insight into the phenomena that suggest survival
3. That mother really communicates with her son: the psychic bond between them is too strong to permit the place of the loved one to be stably usurped by another soul
4. I myself am certain to have communicated with my father and propose to explain the reasons for this conviction
5. Those friends of ours really communicated with that illustrious soul: in earthly life they had been friends and that created a psychic bond beyond death
6. It is far easier for Pope John to come and visit us at home now that he is dead than when he lived in the Vatican Palace
7. Likewise, it is easier for other VIPs even while alive to come and pay us astral visits
8. Parallel astral visits of less illustrious friends and acquaintances who still live on the earth
9. In what sense is it possible for a saint or, in any case, a sacred personage to pay an astral or mediumistic visit
10. An originally sacred personage manifests itself in many different ways according to the different reception capacities of each and, remaining one in se, establishes a direct personal contact with each
11. In what sense the sacred personage to whom we turn always listens to us
12. With a sacred personage to whom we turn we can establish a full and vital relationship at all levels living in him and of him
13. Various aspects and levels at which a mediumistic personality can communicate with us
14. We can communicate mediumistically with more profound parts of our personality that we evoke by simply touching objects that by long use have become impregnated with it
15. A variant is constituted by the fact that, touching a book of mine that belonged to one of my forebears, I conversed with an "entity" (of that object) that was less a creation of mine and more autonomous with a life of its own
16. Touching a wedding ring, we had a conversation with a kind of collective entity that expressed the "union" between the two spouses
17. We dialogued with the profound personality of a friend of ours after we had touched his watch
18. All this explains how a mediumistic personality can communicate with us also by means of its extending into an "appurtenance"
19. Objects impregnated by a person to whom they belonged and who carried them about seem to be in some way comparable to the inducer objects of psychometry
20. Not only simply possessed material objects can be considered as "appurtenances" but also objects that are creations of the spirit and even purely mental creations

21. Even the things that men of genius have created on the purely mental plane continue to live an autonomous life of their own in the astral world of the other dimension to the point of being capable of manifesting themselves through a medium
22. Let us here recall the mediumistic manifestation of a fictitious mental reality: a collective creation of which we had experience in the Convivium Group
23. Let us also recall that we communicated with a personage created by the fantasy of the author of a mini-comedy (here we are concerned with an individual creation).
24. We can consider among the “appurtenances” of a given individual also his poetical or musical work because it echoes in all those who interpret or follow or think it and in one way or another also relive it creatively
25. A sacred personage lives and can manifest himself also mediumistically through the “appurtenance” that is constituted by his charism: an “aura” that is formed also with the contribution that his devotees make by the different manner in which each one of them lives the relationship with that personage and incarnates him in his personal existence
26. A communicating personality can express itself also through the intermediary of another entity that in some way mediates it
27. Lastly, a soul could delude itself to be the one in whose name it presents itself
28. What a mediumistic personality communicates to us depends on the different levels, aspects and modes by means of which it establishes contact with us
29. What we receive from a mediumistic personality in terms of communication
30. What the mediumistic personality in its turn, receives from us
31. When communicating with us and for as long as the communication lasts, an entity becomes enriched by a part of ourselves and thus comes to constitute a composite personality
32. The formation of a mediumistic personality composed of both the entity and us human subjects seemingly also occurs in certain communication experiments with plants
33. When it passes from its normal condition to the condition of communicating with us an entity experiences an alternation of states of consciousness
34. The alternation of the two states of consciousness of the entity may have its counterpart in the alternation of a “communication memory” and the ordinary and accustomed “sphere memory”
35. A parallel with the phenomenon of alternating personalities is possible but in this case it would take place in a non-pathological form
36. Unlike the alternating personalities which in earthly existence represent a clear and well known pathological phenomenon the alternation of the states of consciousness after death can constitute a positive and functional phenomenon
37. How it is possible to remain in communion with a disincarnate soul in the same moments and periods in which an entity for the purposes of its own elevation has to temporarily forget itself
38. At any moment, moreover, we can be in perfect communion with every reality with all and with each in the dimension of the eternal present that is always contemporary with us
39. Conclusions like these may be reached by means of a scientific and philosophic study based on an intuition that penetrates into the very heart of the phenomena to grasp their intimate significance
40. A mediumistic communication is always conditioned and even hindered in some way by its human channels
41. Each new entity that comes to communicate does so on the tracks of preconstituted automatisms: which are movements and words and phrases and other modes of

expression but also thought contents that have already been acquired in the course of our researches

42. Though the limits of the human channels may condition and hinder the communication of information, they are not such as to prevent it
43. Particular importance attaches to our questions which in the other dimension provoke and trigger a well defined response mechanism
44. Entities may make themselves vehicles of transcendental revelations to the extent to which we on earth render ourselves receptive to those revelations thanks to greater awareness and the desire for more refined and elevated knowledge

1. Presentation

As has already been clarified on several occasions, these Notes represent a service that the Convivium offers to the Hope Movement.

And it is in this spirit of service that we present certain results of our researches: passed in review and considered overall, these results can suggest and even strongly confirm a certain idea of mediumism.

We have to avoid two attitudes that seem equally negative to us:

- 1) the scepticism of many pure parapsychologists, who deny all possibility of mediumistic communication with the other dimension and reduce mediumism to a human and psychological fact and, at the very most, to mere telepathy and clairvoyance;
- 2) the fanaticism of many fundamentalists, who absolutize the mediumistic message, almost as if it were a divine revelation to be accepted *en bloc* and literally without even considering the possibility that it could be conditioned by those who receive it.

Fanaticism generates scepticism by reaction, and refuge in a fanatical faith is sought as a defence against scepticism. No true becoming aware, no gain of consciousness is possible for as long as one remains in this blind alley.

We are undoubtedly fully convinced, at least in general terms, of the authenticity of the messages that come to us from our dear ones. But we are also well aware that these messages pass through a human vehicle and have therefore to be received with appropriate discernment.

Indeed, one must make a due distinction between the original authentic inspiration of the message and everything that could condition its reception.

We of the Hope Movement are often accused of letting ourselves be swayed by emotivity and not being sufficiently self-critical. Only a really thoroughgoing study can reply with efficacy to these objections and provide a more rational and objective backing to our testimony.

In this sense, even a study like the present one, which is based on our personal experiences, can contribute to the common search. We submit it to your attention in the hope that it may contribute to rendering our dialogue more fruitful.

**2. The approach is non-dogmatic
but rather rational
intended for those who really want
to gain greater insight
into the phenomena
that suggest survival**

At least at first sight, the phenomenon of mediumism suggests survival. It would thus seem to offer good support for the hope that physical death does not mean total annihilation for us humans.

I am convinced that, quite apart from mere appearances and going into the merits, one can arrive at reasonably certain conclusions. Conclusions that are perhaps not scientific in the very strict sense, but nevertheless reasonable. But I am equally convinced that such a conclusion can draw authentic justifications only from a really thoroughgoing study.

Direct experience, and nothing but direct experience, refines the antennas of the sensitivity that renders possible a very intimate comprehension.

All the same, one must also be able to get away from the phenomenon and consider it from a certain distance, analyze it critically. Unless one does this, there is the danger of remaining entangled in pure emotiveness and to draw one's conclusions in a dogmatic manner.

Dogmatism is the infancy of the spirit. Many, far too many, take refuge in it as if it were a fortress, the only place where they feel safe. They do not want to reason, fear criticism. They feel each and every objection as an attack on the certainties to which they cling. They are afraid of venturing onto a terrain that seems unknown and treacherous.

The experience of mediumistic communications, or at least presumed to be such, has given many people the comfort being once more with a dearly beloved person they lost. This already helps one to understand how and why the message seems quite unquestionable to them. This beloved person told them this and that: words that have to be accepted *en bloc* without discrimination.

There are many of our dear friends among these persons. We love them, we respect them, we accept them as they are, without any desire of changing them at all costs. Their attitude may appear unjustified in critical terms, but is perfectly explainable in psychological terms.

Here I want to limit myself to characterizing this particular position in order to distinguish it from another possible attitude, which I see and feel more consonant with the needs of our research and, even more so, with our ideal of rationality.

Many of our friends who will not tolerate even a minimum of criticism when one speaks of mediumism are the equivalent of what in religious terms are called fundamentalists. They are just as hidebound by literal interpretation.

In the religious ambit, fundamentalists express themselves more or less like this: "God spoke to me and told me exactly this and that. Colon, carriage return, new quote..."

Objection: "But the Bible also says that God created the world in six days and, always abiding literally by what it says, one can calculate that he did this about six thousand years ago..."

"Does six thousand years ago take us to the beginning of the universe?!"

A lady friend of mine, whose strong spirituality does not seem to have an equal dose of mental elasticity and common sense as its counterpart, would reply: "Certainly, the universe has existed for some six thousand years" (I don't recall the exact figure she gave me on a particular occasion). "The Bible says so!"

In short, either all or nothing. Take it or leave it. Monolithic faith. Believe, obey and fight.

At the political level there are the various fascisms and totalitarian regimes. But there is also a metapsychic totalitarianism, devoid of all sense of subtlety and shades of meaning, strictly logical in its reasoning, but not very reasonable, all “geometry” and little or no “finesse”,

Here is an example that one hears time and time again: “I spoke with the Entity, who told me, colon, carriage return, inverted commas, this, that and the other, inverted commas, full stop. And then: “The veil of human ignorance drops upon passage to the other dimension. The Entities know everything. And they can communicate everything in an immediate and perfect manner. Therefore, whatever they may say, be it concerned even with philosophy, theology, astrology, geography or history, is to be accepted as absolute and unquestionable truth. The Entity said so. How can one doubt it?”

What can one possibly say in response to that kind of approach? You either accept it *en bloc*, or just stand there dumbfounded, hair on edge and mouth agape! All one can do is to note without comment, which would in any case prove difficult and altogether sterile.

May I be forgiven if I have indulged in some vivacious expressions to be more incisive. Be it clear that I have no intention whatsoever of making fun of an attitude of this kind, which seems to belong to a more remote – and certainly more primitive and infantile – stage of the development of the human spirit. Everything that forms part of man has to be understood. We, too, passed such a stage, hopefully now well behind us.

All I want to say is that such an attitude, together with the stage of which it forms part, has to be clearly defined and characterized. Not as a point of arrival, may God assist us, but as a stage to be overcome. One decidedly has to go beyond it.

As I said before, I want to speak with the greatest of respect of people who have lost someone who was very dear to them and, once they have succeeded in re-establishing a mediumistic contact with that person, take the message literally from A to Z. All I want to say to such a friend is this: “That is an approach that has to be overcome on account of its inadequacy”.

At this point the friend could say: “What I am doing now is fine for me. I feel satisfied. I want to talk to my son, my departed companion. I’m not interested in science, but in a relationship of love, beyond death, with my loved one”.

If that is what you desire, I don’t want to stand in your way at all. All I’m saying is that this feeling of yours is something private, something that cannot be proposed in more objective terms. But you say that it’s your own business, that it has nothing to do with anybody else. That’s fine. In full respect of your feelings, which you yourself consider subjective, I take my distance to give voice to a concern of a different order.

I am a scholar. But not for that reason an arid person. Not least because my studies are not concerned with the different varieties of minerals or cryptogams or coleopterans, but rather with the eternal problems of man, the supreme questions of life and death and the ultimate destination of us humans.

“Even the rich weep” is the title of an Italian television serial. And thus even scholars have a heart. And among them I want to privilege the philosophers, at least the true ones.

If your problem is an existential one, it is also my problem, dear friend. We may have arrived there by two different roads, where your road is the more painful one, a reaction to a grave loss, while mine is a more tranquil and philosophical one, a gradual maturation. But the point is that they eventually converge, so that we end up by meeting.

However, if you – as you say – are fine where you are, I have no critical comments I want to put to you. I do that only with those who spontaneously feel the need for a more critical approach.

Let us now come back to the thread of a possible more positive and constructive approach. Many people see what everybody calls the Hope Movement as a mere emotional phenomenon and nothing more. I, on the other hand, see this hope as having well founded reasons and want to try to make others see them.

It is founded on an experience of the other dimension: an individual and collective experience that offers extensive material to rational consideration.

Further insight into this experience has to be gained by maturing a sensitivity, though not without subjecting the data to careful critical analysis.

What kind of rationality comes into play here? Certainly not a “geometric” rationality, the kind that is fine for studying physical phenomena, but proves to be too rigid and monolithic for grasping psychic phenomena in all their subtle nuances.

Psychic phenomena will be fully understood only by those who manage to re-live them within themselves.

The kind of rationality that is needed here is far more elastic and adaptable to all articulations and infinite nuances that these phenomena may assume. Though more fluid and mouldable and subtle, this rationality nevertheless has a rigour of its own. Not, of course, a rigour of the strictly logico-mathematical kind, but one that has to be valued with different parameters.

I realize that I am indicating a more difficult road. But it will be as well to aim at the best: and the best is obtained by facing and overcoming the difficulties.

3. That mother really communicates with her son: the psychic bond between them is too strong to permit the place of the loved one to be stably usurped by another soul

I am well aware that for many friends the doubt whether they are really communicating with the soul of their beloved can be atrocious. Consider the case of a mother who – to all appearances – has at long last managed to communicate with her son who has passed to the other dimension. And then I come along to instil some doubt in this connection. Let me therefore say right away that I am one of those who share her certainty.

I do not say this to console her. If anything to comfort her. Comforting means giving strength. And here we have the strength of reasons that to me seem rather objective, though always within the bounds of the rationality, the reasonableness in the wider sense that I spoke about a little while ago.

The mother and her son are undoubtedly united by a very strong spiritual bond that expresses itself in an immediate and powerful manner. And I, due to a conviction that comes to me from experience, am inclined to attribute authenticity even to communications in which the mother encounters difficulty in recognizing the personality of the son.

I am convinced that these difficulties, in general, have to be attributed to the medium: not only is the medium wholly unaware of the communicating personality (and therefore offers poor support to the communication), but is also unable to make up this ignorance by what he might be able to capture, availing himself of adequate faculties of paranormal perception.

An objection that here comes to mind is that it could be a question of a different entity. A disincarnate spirit who is very anxious to speak could make himself pass for the son of our friend: for the sole purpose of obtaining a hearing and some space for satisfying his desire for contact with the terrestrial sphere.

But I am asking myself how such an alien entity could have within him sufficient energy to supplant – not occasionally, but ordinarily and continuously – a son whose bond with the mother is so intense as to prevail over all adverse powers.

**4. I myself am certain
to have communicated with my father
and propose to explain
the reasons for this conviction**

Here I could mention an experience of my own. I do not have children. A particular bond, beyond death, ties me to my father. I felt him to be present in various circumstances of my life.

On one of these occasions, in London, I went to a spiritualistic religious service, at the end of which a psychic felt the presence, invisible to all the others, of my father and described to me his earth-like features, which he had re-assumed in order to let himself be recognized. The same happened many years later, when I revisited the city and took part in another service of that kind.

“Daddy” manifested himself on several occasions in the course of telewriting experiments I carried out with the mediumism of my wife Bettina.

Before these mediumistic powers of my wife revealed themselves, I had had a series of seven telewriting experiences in the spring of 1985 with a Roman friend by the name of Lilia. And I am convinced that in the course of these sessions I communicated with my deceased father on at least one occasion.

But it was at this point that seemingly another entity intervened in the communication. This happened, so it would seem, in the last two sessions of the series.

What is it that induces me to conclude in favour of the inauthenticity of these manifestations? The entity expressed itself not only haltingly, but also in a manner that in substance was wholly improper; and also in form, with words that were inadequate and abyssally different from the vocabulary that on the occasion of subsequent séances was to reveal itself extraordinarily similar, and in all its shadings, the customary and characteristic way in which my father expressed himself while alive on earth.

Moreover, he had expressed himself in a personal and significant manner already in the course of the first sessions with Lilia. And with her mediumism had already given proof of being able to express himself in his own style.

The impression that the subsequent manifestation was not authentic subsequently received confirmation from the first soul with whom we communicated through the mediumism of Bettina, a precious faculty that suddenly and unexpectedly revealed itself on the evening following the seventh afternoon session with Lilia.

Telewriting communications are obtained by several people (generally two) who jointly put their fingers (preferably the index and the middle finger) on a little “glass” or “plate”. Though sustained by the psychic energies of the subjects, the movement of the object seems to take place on its own initiative. The glass slides over the boxes on a “board”, each containing a letter, a number or other signs. In this way there are formed words and phrases and, at times, even discourses of some length.

Each “communication” or “séance” will henceforth be identified and referred to by an order number and preceded by a capital S (i.e. S.1 = first séance).

The entity that manifested itself that evening told us, among others:

“Gino is not here”

“Which Gino are you talking about”, I asked.

“Dad” (Gino, in fact, was my father’s name).

“Where is he?”

“I don’t know”.

“Why do you talk to me about him?”

“You want to know”.

“Were you referring to the séance this afternoon? Who intervened, claiming to be him?”

“Another”.

“Why does he do it?”

“Wants to be in the midst of things” (S.1).

I myself had had the clear impression that I was not talking to my father. As regards the subsequent communications, however, I lived them with the intimate certainty of talking with my father and nobody else.

When there is an authentic and profound bond with a soul it is impossible to be deceived for a long time. I am the first to conclude in this sense and would be the first to be surprised if it were not so.

**5. Those friends of ours
really communicated
with that illustrious soul:
in earthly life they had been friends
and that created
a psychic bond beyond death**

Let us now pass to a very different example, though still in line with the problem we are here considering. I am drawing on my own experiences, as will be the case of all the other examples I shall mention. It was, in fact, my first-ever experience in the field of mediumism.

My mother’s family has a friendship of long standing with another family, which consisted of an officer of the Italian Navy and his wife, a Russian of the days of the Tsar, as well as two offspring, a boy and a girl. I personally was on friendly terms with the daughter, about twelve years older than myself. But now all these people, with the sole exception of the son, now a very old man, have passed to the other dimension, although we remain on very friendly terms with their descendants.

In 1948 this Russian lady and her daughter, who had both remained widows, visited my mother, who lived with my grandmother, and I, too, was present on the occasion. The Russian lady was an adept of automatic writing, and thus we all had the idea of making a little mediumistic experiment.

Various entities presented themselves as the session proceeded, including the late husband of the medium. For the moment, however, I am interested in recalling another entity, namely an entity who presented himself under the name of Renato Fucini, after having first called himself Neri Tanfucio, an anagramme of his real name.

The author of *Le veglie di Neri* (Neri’s Tales) is a very likable Tuscan writer who lived between the end of 19th century and the beginning of the following one. He is well known, above all, for his sketches, which he used to paint lively pen pictures of many Tuscan environments and to recount some very enjoyable stories and anecdotes.

In the course of our communication the entity Renato Fucini told us various things and also reasoned about politics, formulating rather drastic and definitive judgments that were undoubtedly to be attributed to an anti-clerical mentality that must have been very widespread in the environment in which he had lived. In all the details and shadings the entity Renato Fucini expressed himself like a cultured Tuscan bourgeois of his day and age.

Above all, he spoke of his Tuscany with great nostalgia, so much so that at a certain point my mother, though herself a genuine and convinced Tuscan, asked how a disincarnate soul could show himself to be so firmly tied to his own parish pump. Should he not have given vent to a more universal mentality?

Here is Neri's answer: "All the world is my home, but Tuscany is my bedchamber". A stupendous wisecrack, full of significance and very worthy of him. It confirmed the impression that I had all along to be really communicating with the famous writer.

Yes, indeed, I admire Fucini in a very particular way, which nevertheless remains insufficient to explain why a soul of his standing should have taken the trouble of communicating with us, in this wholly unexpected manner, not called by anybody, so it would seem, not even by our friends.

And here is a possible explanation: Renato Fucini was not a friend of ours, but of them. Between that family and him there already existed a bond of affection that made the contact beyond death possible.

Yes, I am very convinced about the authenticity of our communication with the late Renato Fucini, not only because the imitation – if it were such – would be well-nigh perfect, but also and above all on account of the friendship that existed between him and the medium already at a time when he was still alive on the earth.

The experience of an affective bond, especially when it is strong, seems the factor that best assures the authenticity of a mediumistic communication. Although it is not sufficient to confute all the possible criticisms, in more practical, existential and human terms it is such as to justify a certainty.

6. It is far easier for Pope John to come and visit us at home now that he is dead than when he lived in the Vatican Palace

I just gave the example of an illustrious writer. Let me now pass on to examine the case of many "important" souls who, not by any means rarely, make us the gift of a mediumistic manifestation, or at least present themselves as such.

In 1992 I published an article in the "*Rassegna di studi psichici*" (Review of Psychic Studies) under the title "*I communicated with Pope John, but was it really him?*" In formulating the various hypotheses, I said right at the start that it would not be correct to exclude *a priori* that it could have been him in person, that the disincarnate entity of Pope John should come to manifest itself to one of us, humbly, deliberately and in full consciousness. Why not?.

Objection: but a Pope is too important a personage to take the trouble to come and find a Mrs. Smith! Let's not be halted in our tracks by set phrases and take a closer look.

Certainly. When he governed the Church from the Vatican, it would have been very difficult to have a private conversation with the Pope for anybody who was not a cardinal, a minister or an ambassador or a bishop or a general of a religious order or one of the monsignors of the Secretariat of State.

What is more, a visit of this high personage to our home would have been altogether unthinkable. But it should become much easier as an astral projection. And this even before he died, while he was still alive. What I am saying here calls for an explanation and I shall try to give it on the next page.

Let us assume that I convince my reader regarding the possibility that a soul projects itself to us, to manifest itself in the course of a mediumistic séance: if I succeed in putting that over, I shall have made a first step towards demonstrating the possibility of a similar manifestation *post mortem*.

It is a discourse that applies also to “important” souls, as we shall soon see.

7. Likewise, it is easier for other VIPs even while alive to come and pay us astral visits

I have no particular entitlement to being received in a private audience by the President of the Republic, and even less to making him come to visit me at home. Nevertheless, according to all appearances, on one occasion I had the gift of an astral visit by President Cossiga. On other occasions I was visited by two actresses (Sidne Rome and Claire Bloom) and two American singers, this latter an honour I am absolutely unworthy of receiving, seeing that I am not at all interested in their work, to the point of not even managing to recall their names. It is true that I have the minutes of record, but there is no point in identifying them, all the more so as their names would in any case be spelt with a certain approximation.

Leaving these singers aside, whom I encountered in a wholly unexpected manner, I am wondering what could possibly have brought about the other three encounters.

I take it to be known to my readers that, at least to all appearances, it is not only deceased who come to manifest themselves mediumistically, but at times also people still alive on the earth.

Let us therefore ask ourselves: what was it that in the course of our telewriting experiments brought about, or at least facilitated, our mediumistic contact with President Cossiga? I had taken a live interest in the government crisis that followed the famous incident of the “Achille Lauro” (October 1985). I myself had expressed the desire of communicating with the head of State. The contact was established and the unusual interview thus took place. The personage replied in a plausible manner both as regards the manner in which he expressed himself and the exactness of the answers as confirmed by subsequent verifications (S. 65).

And Sidne Rome? I confess that I like her and find her very agreeable. This certainly already created a favourable psychic atmosphere within me. What is more, I had also admired her very recently in a television programme (S.151).

And Claire Bloom? I knew nothing at all about her, except the fact that she existed. At least at the conscious level; at the subliminal level, on the other hand, it could well be that I had captured something and had subsequently elaborated it unconsciously. I asked her to what I owed the pleasure of her visit and she replied that where I found myself at that moment, at Roccamassima (between Velletri and Cori, not far from Rome), the day was as rainy and gloomy as her cottage in England. I could not verify the existence of this country home of hers. But I subsequently learnt that the actress was English and came from the theatre. She spoke to me with a great deal of sympathy for two actors with whom she had worked, both of whom, as I subsequently learnt, were English and had begun their careers in the theatre. (S. 212).

Were these personages conscious of communicating to us by means of telewriting? I presume this not to be the case. More explicitly, when I asked him whether he communicated with us at the conscious or the unconscious level, Cossiga replied: "Unconscious". This answer is in line with what other communicants tell us every time we put the same question to them. When we happen to meet them afterwards in the flesh, they prove to be wholly unaware of the mediumistic contact.

8. Parallel astral visits of less illustrious friends and acquaintances who still live on the earth

Mediumistic communications, or at least communications presumed to be such, with living people form part of general parapsychologic case history. We, too, can say to have had a fair number in our experimental group at the Convivium, even though it is much smaller than the communications, true or presumed, from those passed to the other dimension.

The living person who manifests himself may be an unknown, and in this case there is no possibility of verification at all. An exception is constituted by a ladies' hairdresser, who had a signboard at the entrance to his shop that for us was undoubtedly suggestive. But we could have captured that signboard, albeit distractedly or at the subliminal level, while passing the shop on a bus, which, though it does not stop at that point, has to slow down quite markedly. This hairdresser gave us information about himself that later, when I took courage in both hands and went to interview him, I was able to confirm as substantially correct. (S. 306).

As a general rule, however, the living who come to manifest themselves at our séances are persons with whom we have more direct contacts: they are either members of our families or friends. There is some emotive bond between us, which could be love, affection, sympathy, but also resentment they feel against us, or anxiety or worry, or something they are anxious to tell us to complete some discourse that had remained unfinished.

When paying us an astral visit, those we know present themselves with all their personal characteristics. Always the "spit image" in the manner of speaking and replying to questions and wisecracks that are addressed to them. Each shows his normal reactions and even sense of humour, if he has it.

One obtains a perfect impression of talking to him or her, as if they were present in our midst in full consciousness. And yet in all cases the person in question, on being questioned afterwards, made it clear that they were not conscious of having communicated with us in any shape or form.

And at this point we can speak, and with relative certainty, of an entity that manifested itself to us without being conscious thereof, i.e. at the unconscious level.

And it by basing ourselves on communications with living people that we can attempt to comprehend, by analogy, the communications with disincarnate souls.

We could thus pass on to setting ourselves the problem of determining the level at which a great soul can communicate with us. We could ask ourselves: at the conscious or the unconscious level? and (as it were) what part, what, aspect, what dimension of his personality manifests itself?

This is a problem to be tackled later on, after determining some other conditions that seem equally necessary for developing our theme.

**9. In what sense is it possible
for a saint or, in any case, a sacred personage
to pay an astral or mediumistic visit**

A strong sentiment can open a communication channel. This helps us to understand the particular bond that comes to be established between a sacred personage and a person devoted to him. It helps us to understand how Pope John, who was so difficult to approach personally while he was alive, can manifest himself after death with such frequency to many people.

That I am a devotee of Pope John or of Father Pius is more than sufficient for him to manifest himself to me at the mediumistic level once I have made such a communication possible.

One may thus understand why I can speak with Jesus in person or with the Virgin Mary. That the Madonna came on one occasion to communicate with me has not made me feel either a Bernardette or an elect receptacle of that standing. I did not feel encouraged to commence a new Lourdes.

The communication took place for much simpler reasons. A friend of ours, once a devotee of the Madonna and psychic subject of a certain interest, had an ordinary mediumistic communication with the one who for her is the mother of Jesus; and, since one day she came to find herself in Rome also in order to have an experimental session with us, it seemed more than normal that “her” Madonna should manifest herself also to us. (S. 611).

It is to be expected that each subject who mediumistically communicates with the Madonna or with Jesus or with any other sacred personage, or has a vision of them, should see the personage in his own particular manner: in short, have “his” Jesus, “his” Madonna, and so on. Hagiography shows us that it is vain to look for an “objective” Jesus or Madonna in the visions the saints have of them. If we turn to the Gospels, we shall already find differences of interpretation between the Jesus of the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) and that of John. And, taken on the whole, the Christ of the Gospels speaks a language different from that of the “private revelations” enjoyed by many saints.

The Jesus who speaks to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque is quite undoubtedly far removed from the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount. At least the style seems to be that of another person: “There, the Heart that so greatly loved men and held back nothing to the point of exhausting and consuming itself in order to bear witness to them of its Love. By way of recognition, however, from the greater part of people it receives nothing but ingratitude on account of their many irreverences, their sacrileges and the chilliness and the contempt they show me in this Sacrament of Love...

“For this reason I ask you that the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Domini should be dedicated to a special feast to honour my Heart, receiving holy communion on that day and making amends of honour to repair all the outrages it received during the period it was displayed on the altars...” (*Autobiography*, § 92).

In one of his visits to Saint Gemma Galgani, Jesus asks her in a tone of gentle reprimand: “Gemma, don’t you want me any more?”. And obtains by way of answer: “O my God, my God, don’t I keep looking for you? I desire you everywhere, I want you, seek you always, long only for you”.

Of a certain lady, a very devout person, Jesus confides: “How dear she is to me! You see, she suffers a great deal, does not have a minute of respite. O happy she!”

The next evening Jesus placed his crown of thorns on Gemma’s head, procuring her salutary sufferings of great intensity. The next day he came to take it away, some time ahead of the period that had been fixed for that penitence. He said to her, as Gemma

tells us: “that I had done very much, and, as I did not want to be released, since the hours had not yet elapsed, he replied that I am always little and do a great deal in this way”.

“I suffered continuously for many hours, but Jesus caressed me a great deal. At a certain point of our reasoning, I asked his advice for the Confessor; and the Guardian Angel spied for me. The morning before the Angel had told me that Father Germano knew all about me and loved me well. Without thinking, I told Jesus about it, and Jesus did not know that the Guardian Angel had told me this; he became a little serious and told me that he did not want the Guardian Angel to spy for me” (From the *Diary* of Saint Gemma Galgani, 22-24 August 1900).

From the seventeenth-century Jesus of Saint Margaret Mary we have thus passed to the more familiar nineteenth-century Jesus of Saint Gemma. The examples of such divergences between the images of one and the same personage could be multiplied many times over, applying them also to visions of the Virgin Mary, who may manifest herself in different ways to different subjects, in accordance with the receptivity of each.

Note also that in the variety of the apparitions the Virgin generally manifests herself in a version that is predominantly “Catholic”, not least in cultural terms. Anybody who tries to imagine Mary, mother of Jesus of Nazareth, as she could be and also how she could express herself at the time when she lived in Palestine, will certainly find the nineteenth- and twentieth-century “Madonnas” very different from that original personage, if we may call her such.

The fact that Jesus or Mary manifest themselves *ad modum recipientis*, i.e. according to the measure of those who receive, according to the culture and the expectations of environments that are so different and far removed from the time in which they lived on earth, does not a priori exclude any of the following possibilities:

- 1) does not exclude a contact with the original personages;
- 2) does not exclude that there may be at least a basic continuity between what the original personages thought and said when they lived in Palestine and what the respective apparitions are saying.

**10. An originally sacred personage
manifests itself in many different ways
according to the different
reception capacities of each
and, remaining one in se, establishes
a direct personal contact with each**

If I may here express a profound conviction of mine, I am a Catholic and not a Protestant, because I see a profound continuity – be it even dynamic and in continuous development, and also an enrichment and deepening – between the religiosity of apostolic times and the subsequent epochs of the history of Christianity.

But this is a personal testimony that I would not put in the scales as more than an aside for the purposes of an approach intended to be rather more objective.

According to me, Jesus (or the Madonna) of many apparitions is not a person different from the original one who lived in Palestine: I cannot see any absolute rift or detachment.

For me the original sacred personage is like the sun that enters by many different windows to illumine many, many rooms. In each of these rooms the rays of the sun assume the colour of the window glass. Thus, wherever the window has red panes, the sunlight that penetrates into the room will be of the same colour. We thus have a red or green or blue sun, but it is nevertheless always the same sun.

Where, indeed, does the sun end and the rays commence? Are the rays not the continuation of the sun, its presence? And is the green ray that comes into the room not the same as the one that strikes the glass?

**11. In what sense the sacred personage
to whom we turn
always listens to us**

At the beginning of these reflections I set myself the problem whether it was possible, in critical terms, to give a certainty to a mother who has had a mediumistic experience with her son passed to the other dimension. Anybody who has a beloved person in the other dimension to whom he was bound by a very close and intensely affective relationship – the wife, the husband, a great friend – may ask the same question.

I concluded that a certainty of this kind can reasonably be given. In this sense: occasionally there could be interferences of spirits that, for the sake of deceiving or also on account of a mere desire for a chat, would make out to be the soul beloved by the interested subject, but in the long run the strong bond that unites the latter with his beloved deceased would get the upper hand, annulling all undue interference.

At this point I may ask myself: can the devotee of Jesus, the devotee of the Madonna or any saint of the Christian paradise or of any other religion really be sure to be listened to by the sacred personage to whom he addresses a prayer or wants to talk to, or when he has a vision of that personage, or when it seems that he obtains a communication from him at the mediumistic level?

My answer to this second question would be as follows. The light of the sun that comes into my room, which becomes green or red because that is the colour of the window panes, is in no way different from the sun: it is the sun. Thus the Jesus of Saint Margaret Mary and the Jesus of Saint Gemma and the Jesus of Mrs. Rosa Proietti and my own Jesus are always the selfsame Jesus in Person. A saint is always himself, a sacred personage is always himself, no matter how different he may appear to various subjects.

One may wonder whether – with us who are their devotees – these sacred personages always communicate at the conscious level or whether they often do so on the unconscious level.

To explain this latter possibility, let us assume that a man or a woman of great sanctity and charism passes to the other dimension after having left here on earth an immense number of followers and devotees. All these devoted persons would address innumerable thoughts and prayers to their saint. At the present level of development of his consciousness, however, he would not yet be able to become conscious of all these invocations, and each in its particular individuality, in one and the same moment. Would I therefore invoke a saint who is not capable of listening to me in the selfsame moment I turn to him?

To answer this question we must first enlarge our field of inquiry a little further. First of all, let us note that parapsychology itself shows us that many details of future events can be foreknown. This certainly does not happen by chance: the probability that it should happen in any particular case is well nigh infinitesimal, in practice non-existent.

Parapsychology therefore suggests that the dimension of time is relative. We can undoubtedly say that one event follows another; but in an even more fundamental sense we can also say that all events are contemporaneous in the eternal present that is our truest dimension, the absolute dimension of God.

A sacred personage is such for us, but not per se, not for his own sake: venerating a sacred personage by absolutizing him would mean adoring him, would mean putting him in the place of God, would mean idolatry. For us a sacred personage is such inasmuch as he manifests God, the ordinary Sacred: inasmuch as he “announces” God, he is his “messenger”, his “angel”.

A sacred personage comes to us from the eternal. His true dimension is the eternal. All of us are destined to the eternal, in a religious perspective and a particularly Christian horizon. There we shall attain divine perfection and therefore, in the limit, omniscience. There we shall attain contemporaneous consciousness of all things and of all events and facts that we, human beings immersed in time, call present, past and future.

The dimension of eternity forms part of our future, but is also present: time is relative, whereas in the absolute sphere all events are coeternal, are all com-present in our present.

Each sacred personage also evolves and grows until he ultimately attains the goal of absolute perfection that includes omniscience. In the divine dimension, which is the most fundamental and true dimension, even the ultimate future is already present. And that is why we can converse with these personages, angels and harbingers of God, as they are in the very moment (both future and present) they merge with God in a complete and perfect manner.

I could add: not only a sacred personage, but also any human being, each one of us has several dimensions. If we consider a person in the dimension of his temporal living, we may see him in a limited manner; but every limitation drops away when we pass to considering the person in his absolute dimension.

In this sense we could make contact with the absolute dimension of any human and even excessively human being. This dimension is undoubtedly future in relation to our present, but is also present, no less so than the fleeting present moment.

We may be divided from a person by all the possible discords and incomprehensions; but at the moment in which we succeed in establishing communion, in ideal conversation, with the absolute dimension of that person, all the barriers disappear, everything is understood and pardoned and resolved. Such a vision comforts us and also renders us serene notwithstanding all the difficulties we have with our neighbours in our arduous everyday existence.

**12. With a sacred personage
to whom we turn
we can establish
a full and vital relationship
at all levels
living in him and of him**

When we dialogue with a sacred personage, we can be sure that, in the sense of which we spoke, he will be listening to us also in that precise moment. At this point I want to ask myself whether one can also say that we establish a contact with that being: in what sense and in what way.

I spoke of the sun and its rays that come into the room, assuming the colour of the window panes. The tenuous and altered light that comes into the room is always the sun, prolonged and made present by its rays in the first person, as it were. It is the same sun that caresses, illumines and warms us, producing also true physical effects on our physical body.

I think that the analogy with the sun holds good also when we speak of the relationship that binds us to a sacred personage: a spiritual relationship that may involve even material levels.

To illustrate the relationship that binds him to his disciples, Jesus availed himself of the similitudes of the vine and its branches. "I am the vine, you are the branches", he says to the apostles (Jn 15, 5). The branches are physically connected to the vine, they live by its lymph. And thus a true disciple of Christ, who lives in him in a total manner, is in the limit a man transformed in the spirit at all levels. The fullness of spiritual life in that Christian saint arrives even at transforming his corporeity, spiritualising it, rendering it a vehicle of the highest spirituality.

And thus we have the paramystic phenomena, where the body acts as if it were spirit. The spirit longs to elevate itself and this idea is expressed also in physical terms by the levitation of the body. The spirit manifests itself with the rapidity of thought and the saint manages to be simultaneously present in a concrete and even physical manner in two places far removed from each other.

We can consider the entire range of paramystic phenomena, from luminosity to the odour of sanctity, incombustibility, insomnia (survival without sleep), extreme fasting (survival without eating), the miracles of healing by the power of the spirit, giving also more tangible expression to the loftiest spiritual idealities.

Christ made himself present in a very concrete manner to his disciples and in them and through them. And something similar can be said of the presence of any sacred personage to his devotee, who can have himself compenetrated by the saint to the point of, in the limit, becoming the vehicle of his manifestation.

That is why we may ask ourselves: How can a person make himself present outside himself? How can his personality become prolonged into other and even material realities?

I shall try to answer these questions one step at a time. First of all, let me try to explain how a personage can express himself at various levels and prolong himself even into material objects with which he has a closer relationship.

13. Various aspects and levels at which a mediumistic personality can communicate with us

As brought out also by the overall title of these reflections of mine, we are here essentially concerned with mediumism. And we are never far removed from it even when a digression becomes necessary.

Determining the various levels at which a living or deceased personality can express itself may be of interest if we want to see also the various planes on which that personality can mediumistically communicate with us and in accordance with what aspects it can do so. Let us try to specify them in the form of a list.

1) We shall begin by saying that a mediumistic personality can express itself (and therefore communicate) at the level of consciousness, with clear awareness at least of the substance of what he is saying to us and what he receives from us.

2) A mediumistic personality can also express itself and communicate at the unconscious level, giving voice to his actual frame of mind: that is to say, at the time of the communication.

3) The personality can also express itself and communicate, always at the unconscious level, manifesting a past frame of mind (yesterday's or of twenty days ago),

which nevertheless remains within the personality as a residue not yet digested and resolved and harmonized with the rest of the personality.

4) The mediumistic personality may coincide with a more profound part of the personality of the subject itself.

5) Or, again, it may be identified with a particular mode of being of that selfsame personality.

6) Lastly, it can be that selfsame personality prolonged into one of his particular “appurtenances”.

But what exactly is an “appurtenance”? The next few chapters will be dedicated to answering this question.

**14. We can communicate mediumistically
with more profound parts of our personality
that we evoke by simply touching objects
that by long use have become
impregnated with it**

The psychology of the profound has highlighted the fact that our personality is variously articulated and anything other than monolithic. There is a subjectivity that operates at the conscious level, and then there are also more profound subliminal parts.

I realized this on an occasion (and subsequently there were others) when in the course of a communication I found myself face to face with an invisible interlocutor who told me that he was a more profound part of myself. I thus conversed with this part of myself as if it were another: a true alter ego.

According to all appearances, I had conversed with different dimensions and aspects of my own personality. The way in which I succeeded and still succeed in evoking them is rather curious: for each one of them, I do so by touching an object that seems to be impregnated with that aspect, that dimension of my ego. A series of examples will give my readers a more concrete idea of this phenomenon.

One thing that is very dear to me is an Irish rosary obtained by linking ten plus one small cubes of green Connemara marble in place of the customary sixty beads. I was told that such rosaries were used in times of persecution by those who sought refuge in those marble quarries and that the eleven pieces were adopted to avoid making the object excessively heavy.

One day Bettina and I established the conditions for our normal mediumistic séance. We touched the rosary. I asked:

“Who are you?”

“You” came the reply.

“You’ in what sense?”

“Religion”.

“Namely...?”

“When you establish contact with God” (S. 593).

Touching a copy of the *Imitation of Christ*, now badly worn with many loose pages due to long personal use, I conversed with a “more literary” and also “more subliminate” part of myself (S. 593).

Thus, placing my fingers on a keyboard that every now and again I use to compose extemporaneous themes for hobby and relax, I talked to my “musical part” (S. 567).

And touching the manuscript of a humorous poem of mine, I had a chat with what claimed to be, more generically, my “creative part” (S. 565).

“Impregnated by you” the rosary told me. I am, it added, “the one on whom your spiritual vibrations are posed” (S. 593).

The keys of my home (likewise for strictly personal use) are impregnated also with my way of feeling the home: “Your refuge... greatly beloved... live atmosphere” and other appreciations. That *alter ego* of mine, my particular way of being that impregnates that object can also feel as its own certain worries of mine and give me good advice: “Lock always!” (S. 567).

My father was a great lover of horses and an amateur sculptor, though of excellent quality. He had many bronze horses cast in his day. As a general rule, these were given as prizes at show jumping contests. Among those I have at home there is one jumping a hedge, modelled in a technically perfect manner and incredibly alive.

“Who are you?”, I asked it one day, during one of our mediumistic sessions.

“Your horsiness”, was its rather unexpected reply.

“Explain yourself better, please. It interests me”.

“All your interior patrimony about horses”.

“Is there something in you of father, your author, that is?”

“In you of him”.

“In other words, of father there is in you what there is in me?”

“You are a really intelligent horse”.

“Unfortunately, I know horses only in theory”.

“But you like them”.

“Undoubtedly. What may I call you?”

“*Cavalfilippinità* (Horse-Philipinity!)”

“Please, analyze yourself a little and describe yourself in some way, give some definition of yourself”.

“I am an interior image of yours with feelings of horsiness”.

“You are so beautiful that we often talk about you like a member of the family, a fellow inmate of our home”.

“You exteriorize me”.

“In short, excuse me if I repeat the question, what is there of father in you?”

“Your love and admiration”.

“*Cavalfilippinità*, we thank you for having come. Remain close to us”.

“I am in you”.

“Before you leave us, do you have a message for us?”

“Love us always” (S. 563).

I have dwelt on this conversation also to give my readers an idea of the vivacity of the conversation that one can have with a part of oneself, which replies and chimes in as if it were another person, even though it is rooted in ourselves.

This bronze horse seems to be impregnated in a very particular way with my personality, the personality of me, its owner; and also with the personality of my father, its author, albeit only indirectly, by reflection. Why so? I think: due to the fact that I have been its exclusive owner, as it were, for fifty years (for such is the time that has elapsed since the day my father passed to a better life). And then, as we saw, there is the fact that I have a very particular affective relationship with that object.

Up to this point I have highlighted what is very clearly suggested by certain phenomena: the personality of a man extends also into the objects that he constantly carries with him or with which he has a particular affective relationship. And thus, touching the object in question, it is also possible to enter into a mediumistic conversation with a particular level of the personality of a man or woman.

That personality may mediumistically communicate at that particular level. To be able to demonstrate this with facts is of importance. But, as we shall see in the next chapter, one must also take account of possible variants of a phenomenon of this kind.

**15. A variant is constituted by the fact
that, touching a book of mine
that belonged to one of my forebears,
I conversed with an “entity” (of that object)
that was less a creation of mine
and more autonomous with a life of its own**

The various objects I have mentioned so far all qualified themselves as a part, an aspect, a dimension of myself. But I also have the example of an old eighteenth-century book that presented itself not as a part of myself, but actually as itself. The answer given to the customary question “Who are you?” was not “You”, but rather “I”.

“Are you a person or a thing?” I therefore asked him.

“Thing”.

“And what are you?”

“Book”.

“To whom did you belong?”

“Your ancestors”.

With some hesitation, and after some partially erroneous answers, the book ended up by saying something about itself. It had indeed belonged to one of my ancestors, who had the same name and surname as myself, both written on the cover in what was undoubtedly his own hand. It is a Latin text about institutions of Justinian Roman law. I asked the book news about its former owner, who – I think – must have studied it a great deal, and it replied: “I am thing and don’t know”.

My forebear was probably a lawyer or a judge (what I know with certainty is that his son was first the former and then the latter) and it could be that he read the book several times or kept on consulting it; but at least two centuries have passed since his death, so that it is difficult for his spiritual vibrations with which the book is impregnated to make themselves felt with all their former force.

“Every time we experimented with an object”, I objected to the talking book, “it told us that it was not a thing, but a person: it identified itself with its proprietor”.

“It’s an emergence of memories”, the book replied.

“Can you concentrate and tell us something more?”

“Does not come from a single being”.

“Namely...?”

“It is not Filippo who remembers”.

“Who is it, then, who remembers?”

”You and the others are the means” (S. 600).

Reflecting about this conversation, it seems to me that three things have to be considered:

1) The long time that has elapsed since the death of the former owner of the volume;

2) The less intense affective relationship between myself, the new owner, and the book (incomparably less than the one that binds me to the bronze horse);

3) The fact in spite of this both my ancestor and I have been able to infuse a certain, be it even weak psychicism into the book.

All this explains why that object can, of itself, demonstrate a certain psychic consistency that cannot be totally reduced to the psychism of a single person. And it also explains why the book, answering the question “Who are you?”, does not reply “You”, declaring its dependency on some human subject, but says “I”: in other words “I am the book as such, as a thing of itself”.

**16. Touching a wedding ring,
we had a conversation
with a kind of collective entity
that expressed the “union”
between the two spouses**

I have just talked about an object that came to be impregnated with psychichness drawn from more than a single human subject, to the point of attaining some autonomous consistency. And at this point I cannot but mention another object that receives psychichness from both my wife and myself. The object in question is Bettina’s wedding ring. It presented itself with a fine-sounding:

“La, la la la...”

“What do you mean?, I asked.

“Ave Maria...”

“I understand”, I said, humming the theme of the Wedding March: “La, la la la...”

“Yes, yes, yes”.

“And, passing to a more articulate language...?”

“Symbiosis”.

“What do you mean?”

“Union with Bettina”.

“Whose?”, I asked, pretending not to understand.

“With you”.

“And how is this union doing?”

“Fine”, replied the ring, subsequently continuing with other and more specific appreciations, counsels and cordial encouragements (S. 563).

Much earlier we had already conversed with an entity of a similarly collective character: it constituted and expressed the union between a friend of ours and his wife, a couple who, to be quite truthful, were in an advanced stage of crisis, so that the very survival of that collective entity seemed to be in grave danger. When I asked the entity how I should call it, it provided me with a name made up of the first syllable of her name and the last of his (S. 183).

This collective entity had come forward of its own accord, without there being any need for the mediation of appropriately impregnated objects. It had therefore presented itself in an altogether unexpected manner, as if by grace, due to a whole series of favourable factors that we could not have foreseen and, even less so, have brought about.

Very different, on the other hand, is what happens when we make contact with a profound part of ourselves or some other person by touching an impregnated object. In that case the contact with a profound part of the psyche of the owner, of the person who owns the object and makes constant use of it comes about in an automatic and immediate manner, at least according to our own particular experience.

The established contact, however, is not always with a living person, for one may also obtain contact with a deceased owner of the object. That is what happened when our friend Anna gave us a guard ring that had belonged to her paternal grandmother. Bettina and I acted as communication channels, while Anna was simply present in the room. The

soul in question presented itself, addressed affectionate words to the grand-daughter and then, upon being so requested, spoke about her ultramundane condition (S. 564).

We also communicated with profound parts of the personality of other people still alive on the earth. Contact was established in the following variety of cases:

1) both when the persons in question were present at the séance and when they were absent;

2) with the entities presenting themselves either spontaneously without the mediation of any object or after we had touched an object that had once belonged to them.

Quite apart from the intrinsic value that our researches may possess, there can be no doubt that we never had a dull moment.

17. We dialogued with the profound personality of a friend of ours after we had touched his watch

A significant variant occurred when we touched the wristwatch of Gianni, another very dear friend of ours, who had lent it to us for the experiment, but was not present when we made it. I had asked him to give me an object of strictly personal and constant use, and he gave me that watch. Bettina and I, making the experiment on our own, touched the object and that gave rise to the following dialogue:

“Little”.

“What do you mean?”

“Feel”

“Feel Little?”

“Yes”

“Try to concentrate. Tell us what little you feel; hopefully, little by little, but always more”.

“Not always carried”.

“But, first of all, who are you?”

“Gianni-Watch”.

“Are you speaking at the conscious or the unconscious level?”

“Gianni doesn’t know”.

“But are you conscious or are you an unconscious reality of Gianni?”

“Unconscious of Gianni”.

“What do you feel you are, then?”

“A little unstable”. (This is, indeed, a peculiarity of Gianni’s character. It should be noted at this point that the object expresses itself as if it were its owner in person).

“Continue”.

“Free”.

“And then...?”

“Unconventional”.

“And again?”

“Without continuity”

“Tell us something about Gianni’s present problems. But, please, something that we don’t already know”.

“Practical, economic. Does not find enough time for his spiritual interests” (The object again talks of Gianni as if he were another).

“I repeat. Tell us something that we don’t already know and that we can check afterwards”.

“Perhaps the mortgage loan ...?”

“Alright. Tell us about the mortgage loan”.

“I don’t know whether he took it out or not”.

“But he already had a mortgage on the apartment he bought. But we know that he wanted to have another. But if possible let me say it once more, tell us something we don’t know”.

“It’s a weak object”.

“What is weak?”

“The means”.

“Thanks, Gianni-Watch. Keep well and get stronger. We’ll tell Gianni to wear you more often. Content?”

At this point the glass began to move rapidly and in large circles around the board: a characteristic sign that the entities who come to communicate with us show us that they are content: it has come to form part of the lexicon of our communications and expresses itself in the manner of an automatism (S. 563).

It should be noted that towards the end the entity Gianni-Watch once again spoke like our friend Gianni in person. “It’s a weak object”, the entity told us, referring to the watch in the third person.

But this does not in any way prevent it, more generally, from expressing itself as watch in the first person, as watch as such, and it therefore says “I” whenever it refers to itself, and refers to Gianni by saying “he” as if he were another person.

Everything suggests that Gianni, using the watch only occasionally, must have infused a certain psychichness, but not sufficient to reduce it to Gianni, as would have been the case if he had worn it constantly and had therefore impregnated it totally with himself. The weakness of the presence of Gianni in the watch enables the watch to lead a more autonomous existence. So that the object quite rightly presents itself to us as “Gianni” but also as “watch”.

This case is in a some way analogous to that of the book. My ancestor had infused a certain psychichness into it; but then, since I, too, had a certain (be it even limited) attachment as far as that book was concerned, I also provided it with some psychichness. And this human psychichness, derived from a twofold source and yet condensed into a single object, gives to the object something like a sense of its own identity and it therefore configures itself as autonomous of its two owners.

Let us now come back to the last cited phrase. The watch “is a weak object”, because it “is not always worn” and therefore only barely impregnated with Gianni’s personality. The entity was not able to tell us anything about Gianni that we did not already know, and this precisely on account of the “weakness” of the object.

Now, the interesting thing is this: in order to explain its ignorance or difficulty of transmitting to us information that we did not already know about, the entity had in fact told us something that we neither knew nor suspected: Gianni had worn that watch only occasionally.

He subsequently confirmed this fact. He is an absent-minded type, capable of almost anything! We simply had not even remotely suspected that he could have given us a watch that he had worn only occasionally.

**18. All this explains
how a mediumistic personality
can communicate with us
also by means of its extending
into an “appurtenance”**

The experiments we have just reviewed make it very clear that the personality of anybody whatsoever can not only express itself at various levels, but can also in a certain way extend into an object in which it becomes incorporated. This is a fact that psychic research has amply demonstrated. It has been confirmed in two types of experiments:

1) mediumistic experiments in which there manifests itself a profound part of the personality, even of a person not actually present: experiments got under way by touching a particular object;

2) experiments of extrasensorial perception got under way by the psychic person likewise touching a particular object that has been worn for a long time by somebody else.

In both types of experiment one or more human individuals, by touching an object that has been owned and used for a long time by another subject, establish a contact with his personality: a contact that enables the experimenter to obtain information about the subject that can afterwards be checked.

Acting as “inducer”, the object in question enables the psychic to identify himself with the personality of the owner and to feel the situation of that individual as if it were his or her own. The psychic can thus live the situation of the other from within, feeling the sorrows, joys, problems, etc., of the other as if they were his/her own.

An experimenter who, acting as mediumistic channel, touches an object that has been owned and used a long time by a deceased has some hope of obtaining a contact with that disincarnate soul. This is what seemingly happened in the case of Anna’s grandmother.

The described experiments, together with those that I merely mentioned in passing, are such as to provide reasonable parapsychologic support to a feeling that is rather widespread among primitive-archaic people, namely the feeling that each one of us communicates himself to the things he owns to such an extent as to become identified with them.

Such things are what ethnologists call “appurtenances”. They note that – in accordance with a mentality that is very common among primitive-archaic men – the personality of an individual extends not only into all the parts of his body, even his nails and hair (even when cut), but also into his clothing, into his weapons, all the objects of personal use, and then also his home, his family, his woman or women, his offspring and slaves, the land he owns, the tribe or people of which he forms part, the territory and environment in which the community lives.

According to the idea I am trying to illustrate, an individual not only *has* or possesses certain objects, but also *is* those objects. Primitive-archaic man feels himself to be identified with them. At the opposite end of the scale, a “modern” man of scientific training would distinguish himself from all things, even if they belonged to him and he made constant use of them. Nobody would identify himself with such a thing. Nobody would say: “I am also that thing”. Questioned in this connection, a “modern” man would reply: “That thing is not I, it simply is something that belongs to me”.

This identification of primitive-archaic man with the things that belong to him to the point of saying “I am that thing” may seem strange to so-called modern man, typical son of this scientifico-technological civilization, who fabricates things by mass

production, sells and acquires them, uses them and throws them away without establishing any kind of relationship with them.

Primitive-archaic man, on the other hand, feels that he participates in the life of things and that he both receives something from them and gives them something else, donates them a part of his humanity.

For modern man things are merely things, they are matter and that's all. To primitive-archaic man, on the other hand, things seem to be animated, pervaded by charisms and spiritual forces that render them not too dissimilar from human beings.

And thus the psychic, touching an object, identifies himself with it. In a certain way he *becomes* that object. But the object, in its turn, *is* the man who possesses it or habitually wears it or makes use of it. The object therefore acts as "inducer": it mediates the identification of the psychic with the owner of the object.

In this way there becomes established a series of identities (identities, be it clear, not in the logico-mathematical sense, but in the participative sense): I *am* also my wristwatch; the psychic who touches my watch in my absence *becomes* and *is* my watch; in *being* my watch, he *is* also myself. This identification with me enables him to live my experiences or, at least, certain of my experiences from within, as if they were his own.

The use of such objects as inducers in extrasensorial experiments, the fact that they render the desired experience very easy demonstrates in parapsychology that there is truth in the intuition of archaic man that the personality of man extends into the object he owns and keeps using.

And that, indeed, is what "appurtenances" are. It is a word extensively used by scholars of the primitive-archaic mentality. We find it especially in the texts of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl.

In magic an appurtenance (for example, an image of a certain person or his cut hair) may constitute a point of support for casting a "bind" or a "spell" to the detriment of that individual. An attempt is made to wound the person by puncturing the image or to destroy the person by burning the hair. These are beliefs that can be found all over the world and have significant counterparts in parapsychology.

These phenomena show that the will of man, availing itself of objects as inducers and symbolic gestures for better concentrating its energies, can modify even physical realities.

It is sufficient to make just a brief reference to magic here: only to recall that in the magic vision:

- 1) a human subject is generally present in all the realities with which he identifies himself by mere virtue of having some affinity with them;
- 2) the same human subject is present in a particular manner in his "appurtenance".

We saw that our personality of human beings in some way extends also into material objects that become permeated by it. And then we found confirmation of this manner of seeing things in the idea of "appurtenances", which is recurrent in the participative mentality of primitive-archaic men and also in their magic mentality. Following this, we can find something interesting in a parallel with the phenomena of psychometry.

**19. Objects impregnated by a person
to whom they belonged
and who carried them about
seem to be in some way comparable
to the inducer objects of psychometry**

Let us consider a psychic who has to carry out the “psychometry” or, to call it by another name, the “psychoscopy” of a certain person. He has to scrutinize the psyche of the person concerned, has to relive his experiences and frames of mind, try to acquire some of his knowledge. In this endeavour he will be greatly facilitated by the fact of being able to touch an object that the person carried about with him for a long time, thus impregnating it with himself.

In a psychometry experiment the psychic relives to some extent not only the present of the person, but also his past.

In those who touch it, an object can induce a “clairvoyance experience in the past” concerning not only the person to whom the object belongs or belonged, but also as regards the object per se, as such. Among the objects that have been studied there are many that never had any relationship with a person, but can reveal something of their own history.

It is as if certain “memories” have remained incised in the inducer. A subject who has developed a certain type of clairvoyance can touch an inducer of which he knows nothing whatsoever – and which is presented to him wrapped in paper – and yet relive one or more scenes relating to the history of that object and grasp some of its more dramatic moments. The descriptive details contained in the witness can subsequently be verified and found to be exact.

Apart from the experiments of J. Rhodes Buchanan, classics of this type are those dating to the 19th century of William Denton with the clairvoyance of his wife and, in the 20th century, of Dr. Gustav Pagenstecher with the similar sensitivity of one of his patients, a Mexican lady by the name of Maria Reyes de Zierold.

Two examples will give us a first concrete idea of these experiments.

Mrs. Elizabeth Denton was handed a limestone pebble bearing striations of glacial origin on its surface that had been gathered in a certain locality of the state of New York. She knew nothing about it and did not even see it.

And yet she gave a description that was found to be thoroughly plausible. It occupied an entire page, but I shall limit myself to quoting a few phrases of particular interest for our theme: “I feel as if I were under an immense mass of water... I am going, going, and there is something above me... It must be ice, I am frozen in it... It’s all dark. Now I glimpse a crimson tinge, mixed with purple. What can it be? How beautiful it is!... What frightful abyss are we approaching. It’s terrifying!” After a few more phrases she remained silent for a while and then added: “This is rather surprising. I felt desperate when we were approaching the edge of the precipice, but it was full of water, and therefore we floated past it” (William Denton, *Nature’s secrets*, ch. IV).

Let me now quote a few phrases from the similar description provided by Mrs. Maria Reyes de Zierold. The object, once again unknown to her, was a large mother-of-pearl shell bought at Vera Cruz.

“I am beneath water”, said Maria Reyes. “I see many fish of all sizes and colours. I hear the roar of waves and have the taste of salt in my mouth. On my head I feel a great pressure. This sight is the most marvellous thing one can imagine, it is so beautiful, so magnificent to behold!” (Gustav Pagenstecher, *Die Geheimnisse der Psychometrie* [The mysteries of psychometry], Vision XV, Experiment No.16). While Denton, who was a geologist, concentrated his attention on fragments of minerals or fossils to obtain

information of interest for the purposes of his researches, Pagenstecher experimented also and above all with objects fabricated by man, so that Maria Reyes has mostly visions concerned with human life. Here, however, the owner of the object is observed more from the outside: the identification with the material object tends to be lacking.

When a psychic gets ready to effect an intentional psychoscopy of a certain person, by the very fact of identifying himself with the inducer object he transfers himself into the person to which it is bound: he identifies himself with that person. This happens inasmuch as the object is impregnated by the psychicness of the person in question.

If, as in the cases we have considered, we wanted to enter into a mediumistic relationship with the object, it is to be expected that the question "Who are you?" would receive as answer either the name of the person or a "Yourself" when the question is put by that person rather than another.

But the psychic who, on touching an object, has visions of the past of that object, tends to identify himself with the psychometric object rather than with the persons who are related with it.

How can this be explained? On the basis of my direct experience and also indirect information I would develop the following hypothesis, which I have already adumbrated in my previous remarks: the degree of impregnation of an object by a person diminishes as time goes by and the object will therefore present itself as such, as that particular object, and no longer as the person to whom it belonged and whom it extended.

This is what happened at the mediumistic level with the book of my eighteenth-century ancestor, which presented itself as a book, as a thing, and not as a person, unlike other objects that had been used more intensely or were still in use.

One may here repropose the parallel, also already mentioned above, with Gianni's watch, which the personality of our friend had in some way impregnated, but where the presence of the owner was not strong on account not of a long absence, but discontinuity in use.

Here, too, the psychicness infused into the object proves to be more autonomous of the human personality from which it derives and therefore more concentrated in the object as such.

The psychic of a clairvoyance-in-the-past experiment identifies himself with the object, even though he remains himself, even though he maintains his humanity. Who speaks is the psychic, who, even though he obviously is and remains a human person, in a certain way has, as it were, "become" that object. Who speaks is a mineral or fossil fragment or a utensil that has feelings and sensations, that enjoys and admires the beauty of what it sees, marvels at it, trembles with fear, despairs and, when the danger passes, sighs with relief. Could a mere material object do all this? Let us say that it is indeed a material object, but a material object with which a human subject has identified himself.

So far we have talked about psychoscopy bound up with an inducer in the form of psychometric object. But there is also an "environment psychoscopy", where the subject, psychic or otherwise, relives a scene of the past not by virtue of the fact that he has touched a particular object, but on account of finding himself in a particular place.

It is a place that seems to be laden with vibration that past events have left there as if they were incised.

The best known phenomena of this type are best epitomized by the words of Ugo Dettore: "Pausanias tells us that, even 400 years after the battle of Marathon, the neighing of horses and the sounds of battle could be heard in the plain". Ugo Foscolo also recalls this in his famous poem *I sepolcri* (The sepulchres).

Again: Two months after the battle of Edge Hill (22 October 1624), many inhabitants of the village had visions of the furious struggle. A commission sent by

Charles I confirmed the phenomenon and recognized personages who had fallen in the battle, Sir Edmund Varney among them (*L'altro Regno*, entry "Psicoscopia").

Well known and particularly interesting in this connection is also a phenomenon that occurred in 1901 at the Petit Trianon, part of the royal residence of Versailles. Two young ladies on a visit to these monuments were walking in the gardens that surround them, when they suddenly saw a scene of the court life of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France. Both girls were psychic, i.e. were endowed with very particular capacities of paranormal perception, certainly superior to those of many persons who had visions of the previously mentioned battles. In 1928 the same vision was had in the same place by two other young women who knew nothing about the first.

A place can "recount" its history just like an object. It can tell it through the intermediary of a psychic person, just as an object can "speak" through the mouth of a medium or through a pair of mediumistic communication channels (like, for instance, my wife and I in our telewriting).

In both cases this may give rise to a discourse in the first person. The psychic describes and narrates certain facts of the history of the object in the first person as if he were one with the object: it is the object itself that speaks through the voice of the psychic. But an object can speak in the first person also through a medium.

That a material object can speak on its own behalf as if it had or assumed a psychicity of its own represents one variant among these phenomena, whereas in many other cases the object expresses itself as part of the personality of a human subject. The latter type of phenomenon is of particular interest for our immediate purposes; and yet that variant (of an object speaking on its own behalf) cannot be ignored.

**20. Not only simply possessed material objects
can be considered as "appurtenances"
but also objects
that are creations of the spirit
and even purely mental creations**

After this digression to consider the phenomena of psychometry, certainly not devoid of interest for our subject matter, it will be as well to return to the theme of the "appurtenances".

So far we have talked about the particular appurtenances that, in a more specific way, can be considered as "material" inasmuch as they consist, above all, of objects.

At this point, however, I should like to pass on to considering a different type of appurtenance, namely those in which the subject can in some way give form and concreteness to a creation of his own spirit. Let us take the example of a sheet of paper on which a poet has written some of his verses.

Undoubtedly we are here concerned with a material object on which our poet has made some signs in ink, but it still remains something material. All the same, it is matter that vehiculates a creation of the spirit. It is a material appurtenance that becomes a concrete, factual and tangible expression of what we may call a spiritual appurtenance.

If a musician has composed a symphony, this is undoubtedly to be considered as an appurtenance in the spiritual sense. And then there is the influence that he has exercised with his very personal style. All this comes to constitute a kind of "aura" (how else could we call it?) that floats somewhere, in some dimension of existence.

This is demonstrated by the fact that certain psychic subjects, psychic persons or mediums or whatever else we may want to call them, quite often grasp an atmosphere that in some way corresponds to the creativity of a poet, a musician, a writer or a painter.

Such subjects are sometimes capable, in some cases even often or habitually, of writing poems in the manner of Trilussa or D'Annunzio, painting pictures in the style of Cézanne or Picasso, playing extemporized toccatas and fugues in Bachian style on the organ, and so on.

One may say that they elaborate all this at the unconscious level. But their seeming ignorance of large sectors of literary or musical production induces the scholar to wonder whether subjects of this type do not draw their inspiration from an ambit that transcends their individuality.

Developing these concepts, let me try to explain – to the extent to which this is possible – the phenomenon of the production by a medium of a poem in the style of D'Annunzio or a piece of music in the manner of Debussy.

Who promotes the medium or presents him in the endeavour of promoting him, possibly also with a view to procuring him an income, will tend to say that it is Gabriele D'Annunzio in person who writes the poem via the hand of the subject in question. Or that it is Claude Debussy who plays the piano through the medium in whom they claim he has incorporated himself.

But is it really necessary for the great poet or the great musician to take the trouble of coming to produce a work that seems to maintain more the manner of those he produced while alive than their artistic excellence? Rather than developing the poetry or music generated while on earth, they seem to try to imitate themselves. I may be ignorant as regards this matter, but I do not think that any recognized literary critic has ever attributed a presumed *post mortem* work to a particular author: the style may be well imitated, but there is always something that is lacking.

Let us therefore be more plausible and say: rather than entering into personal contact with the author, the medium seems to have entered into contact with his “aura”, with the sphere of his style and the influence that it has exercised.

Here it rather seems that there is no personal contact with that illustrious soul, as if Gabriele D'Annunzio had, in the strict sense, personally conversed with us and composed a poem for transmission through us. But I think that there is a contact with “something of him”. And I am also convinced that, be it even in a less direct manner, there is in some way a real contact with his personality.

**21. Even the things that men of genius
have created on the purely mental plane
continue to live an autonomous life of
their own in the astral world of the other
dimension to the point of being capable
of manifesting themselves through a medium**

There remains a memory of everything that we have lived, felt, thought and created. And for some time there also remains a psychic residue, as we may call it, or – if you prefer – a phantasm, a cliché, a kind of empty shell.

We can define such a “cliché” as astral in the sense that its existence and survival take place on a far more subtle plane than that of so-called “matter”; precisely the level that occultists and esoterists call the “astral plane”. This coincides with the very ambit in which a first stage of life after death takes place, namely the phase that is still dominated by desire and the earth-like forms it generates.

Let me try to explain this better. Those who have passed on only a short time ago preserve the mental habits and desires they had on earth. They still have a strong need to see themselves in the human form they had in this world. They create it by thought.

They also feel the need for seeing the other souls in human form. Lastly, they feel the need for moving in an environment similar to the one they knew on earth, with meadows, woods and mountains, or houses in which they can enter and live.

There is no longer any physical need to find shelter against the elements, obviously, but only the psychological need we spoke about. And therefore the thought – of both the interested party and the others – always creates the accustomed human and earthly aspects.

These are forms and environments similar to those that we find each night in our dreams. And they are generated on account of similar psychological mechanisms.

According to what they attest to us in a concordant and coherent manner, the disincarnate at first see the physical realities of this earth more or less as we see them.

But then a further disincarnation process takes place within them, so that in a subsequent phase they can capture only mental realities. They may therefore have difficulty in perceiving the physical bodies of us who live on earth, and the same applies as regards physical realities in general. On the other hand, however, it is easy for them to read the thoughts of us living. It would seem that thoughts live, as it were, in the dimension of the beyond that, by definition, is a world of pure thought.

At this point both the mental realities of the ultramundane world and the mental realities that are the creation of us earthlings (our thoughts, that is) present themselves to the vision of the disincarnate as very concrete “things”. They give them the impression of being solid. The physical realities of the earth, on the other hand, seem ghostly to them. The deceased appear to us in the form of phantoms, whereas to them it is we who are the phantoms!

The astral world seems consistent, resistant and compact to the disincarnate, and so do our thoughts and all other mental realities. By analogy, the same applies as regards the creations of the human spirit, and this even before they assume tangible forms as pictures or sculptures, manuscripts or printed books, sounds emitted by musical instruments, buildings made of stone or bridges made of steel.

To give some idea of the consistency that mental creations assume already on the mental level, long before they come to be expressed in colours on canvas, in sculptured marble, reinforced concrete structures and so on, let us read the testimony of an entity: I am referring to the mediumistic author of the famous volume *The road to immortality*, which was written by the hand of Miss Geraldine Cummins in the years between 1924 and 1931. The entity, who affirmed to be the deceased metapsychist Frederick Myers (who in 1882 was among the founders of the Society for Psychical Research in London). This mediumistic author said that there existed a continuous interpenetration of thought between the visible world and its invisible counterpart; and it was this that rendered mediumistic communications with the world of the living particularly difficult. If one could separate and classify the immense and tumultuary accumulations of the thoughts intercurrent between living and deceased, thus freeing the communication channels of this encumbrance, it would be very easy for him to transmit to the communicants on earth a long current of thoughts, all exclusively his own; as things stood, however, he was always in danger of getting lost in the dense undergrowth of the fantasies of others, especially when he had to find his way in the manner of a disincarnate explorer. He was therefore always on the point of setting out on some false path of alien thoughts. With the consequence that, in disgust, he would often forego resolving a problem that was perfectly soluble. And he was not just referring to the currents that derived from earthly mentalities, but to the perpetual currents projected in myriads in all directions of the Universe...

This passage gives us an idea of how human thoughts can come to constitute a thick and dense web, to the point of seeming an immense and confused jungle to a disincarnate

who ventures into it, a place where one can easily get lost. It is a jungle of thoughts, i.e. of mental creations, that at their vibrational level assume a terrifying consistency. This consistency seems so strong as to be able to influence the thoughts of a disincarnate, to the point of obstructing them, confusing them and even obliging the subject to take other people's thoughts and make them his own without realizing it.

The density that these creations can come to assume depends, above all, on the intensity of the thought that gives life to these creations. In order that this density be maintained and strengthened, it is essential that these thoughts be stressed by repetition.

For example, a mental creation may consist of a poem or a novel or even of the complete literary work of a particular author. It may consist of a piece of music or also of the entire musical production of a composer.

If that poet is read and loved by many people, if many of the works of that composer are played or if a passage is sung or hummed by a large number of people, there comes to be formed a specific aura that, by affinity, brings together the best known poems or the best loved pieces of music of that certain author.

We can therefore say: there is a mental place where the poems of that poet are conserved and sustained by the enthusiasm of many of his admirers and fans. There they receive ever greater consistency and strength in proportion to the attention, the thought concentration that is paid to him.

From that mental place a psychic person could obtain information, possibly availing himself of an inducer, as we saw earlier on. A psychic person who does not know the literary or musical production in question could capture a motive or a series of verses that form part of it.

Personally, through the mediation of an entity (real, as it proposed itself to us, or presumed as it might be) I obtained information like the following:

1) I learnt the last word of a known literary work like Machiavelli's *Prince*, which I had read along time previously, but had forgotten many of its details (I therefore remembered the word rather than learning it *ex novo*);

2) I not only obtained this information about a well known work, but also learnt the last word of a work I knew only by name, the *Paralipomeni della Batracomiomachia* (i.e. "what people do not yet know, because nobody told them, about the battle between frogs and mice") by Giacomo Leopardi.

This information, and also a great deal more, was provided for us by an entity who affirmed that he often visited an astral library from whose books (likewise mental creations) these data could be obtained. It could even be that we are here concerned with a mere pseudo-mediumistic dramatization. There is, however, at least a clairvoyance phenomenon. In all cases there is the acquisition of knowledge by paranormal means.

My wife and I, with the other experimenters of our group, learn new and true things that the entities to all appearances reveal to us. But many other subjects learn something, including things about literary works and other creations of the human spirit, simply by means of what seem to be forms of clairvoyance.

The creations of the human spirit have a "place" where some of their elements can be passively grasped by psychics. And that is not all, for at a certain point they become capable of expressing themselves in a more active form by means of a mediumistic manifestation in the proper sense.

Let us think of the many people who read Carlo Collodi's *Adventures of Pinocchio* or those who, with like enthusiasm, go to the theatre to see Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Very well, it could be that these two personages acquire such force as to be able to manifest themselves also on the occasion of a mediumistic séance that happens to take place in those circumstances.

**22. Let us here recall
the mediumistic manifestation
of a fictitious mental reality:
a collective creation
of which we had experience
in the Convivium Group**

Let me explain things better by relating another of our experiments. On one occasion, at the height of the Christmas festivities, my wife and I were gratified by a mediumistic visit of nobody less than Father Christmas.

In what sense did we have a conversation with him? I have to say that even as a child I never believed in Father Christmas who comes with his sack of gifts just two weeks before the Befana, an old fairy-tale woman, brings some more at Epiphany. At the time of the experiment, of course, I was even less inclined to believe it. And yet I can believe, indeed, on the rational level be even convinced of it, albeit in a different sense, which will be brought out more clearly by the dialogue that took place. Here is the beginning of it.

“Can you tell us who you are?”

“Father Christmas”.

“Father Christmas, nothing less!”

“With a red gown and a white beard”.

“Are you by chance a spirit who says he is Father Christmas?!”

“No”.

“Are you one of the men with the fake beard whom we met out in the street today?”

“No”.

“Excluding these two possibilities, could you explain a little better who you are?”

“The essence, the soul of all the Fathers Christmas in the world”.

“Yes, but what brought you into being?”

“Now we have all been brought into being: this is our magic moment”. (It was, in fact, December 20).

“Yes, but if I was brought into being by my father and my mother, who or what generated you? Who generated you and how? In other words, what did you issue from?”

“I issue from those who crowd the cities”.

“It is they who created you? Is that what you mean?”

“Now that you have told us who brought you into being, could you also tell us ‘how’? Can you explain to us what process made you assume form and consistency?”

“At this time you see Father Christmas in TV, in publicity, in the press, in leaflets, and in the flesh also in the streets. All think and speak of us and our essence lives”.

“If you are alive, that means that we can also interview you”.

“Yes”.

“Well, what do you think of Christmas?”

This gave rise to a really fine interview, a true page of anthology. Our personage proved to be of a profound humanity. He was well aware that – as far as most people are concerned – Christmas has lost much of its former religious significance and has come to be reduced to a vast commercial operation. He lives badly, but that does not make him want to die: “Existing is gratifying, but non-existence makes you cease to be”. Therefore “I’d accept compromises, if only they make me be”.

Just a moment before he had said: “When you go to cheer up sick children in hospital or old people abandoned in an institution, that’s fine by me”. He added that, “in the days in which we live, consumerism overwhelms us all, us included [referring to himself and the other Fathers Christmas, of course]. And therefore, to feel just a little less

guilty, one day you make a collection for the [h]andicapped and the day after you publicize useless and costly toys for the firm who pays you”.

He seemed so ill at ease that at a certain moment we wanted to say a kind word or two to him to encourage our new invisible friend: “Dear Farther Christmas, we well realize that you, too, have your problems, your interior conflicts and, all said and done, a rather difficult life, to say nothing of the cold. Courage, don’t let it get you down and... Happy Christmas”.

He replied, more or less taking his leave: “You’re likeable, cheerful and warm” (S. 94).

As you can see, Father Christmas presented himself as a psychic formation deriving from the association of innumerable thoughts that converge on the amicable personage, especially in the days when he becomes incarnated in many white-bearded men in a red dress that we encounter in the cold streets of our cities.

Here we have a creation of the human spirit that assumes consistence and force and initiative of its own to the point of communicating mediumistically and giving wholly autonomous and spontaneous replies. What presents itself to us has all the appearance of a personality.

A personality constituted by variegated and innumerable contributions of the many different human personalities whose thoughts converge on the personage. At the moment of its manifestation this personality enriches itself with the contributions of the medium, or the human channels of the communication, and then the group of persons to whom the communication is directed, the human environment that receives it.

A contribution to the formation of the collective entity “Father Christmas” is made by all those who think of him, but at the moment when this entity comes to communicate with me and Bettina, it also integrates itself with something that clearly comes from the pair of us: it becomes completed by something that belongs to our accustomed language, also to the lexicon we use, our ideas, culture, humour. Father Christmas could manifest himself also to others, but he would do so in a different manner, in a different expressive form.

**23. Let us also recall that
we communicated with a personage
created by the fantasy
of the author of a mini-comedy
(here we are concerned
with an individual creation).**

I should like to give you another example from our experiments of the manifestation of a fictitious entity that took form and being from our thoughts, in this case a personage created by myself. At times I amuse myself by writing little poems, stories, sketches, generally of a humorous character. One day I was running a temperature and did not feel like studying. Sitting on the bed, I took pen and paper and, more or less non-stop, wrote a mini-comedy.

It is the story of two young employees of the Municipality of Rome who meet at an office party and again soon after at the bank, where they have gone to get their salaries: then they marry and have a baby; they have some violent quarrels, with an ending that could hardly be more squalid and sad, but there it is. That’s how my little comedy, which I called *A Second-Class Love Story*, turned out.

And, as I may add, it came spontaneously, of its own accord: I limited myself at the beginning to picking up the pen and writing the first few lines, without any idea of what I

was going to write, even less so of the ending.

The female character is called Cinzia, but she spells it Cynthia, English fashion, because she is a somewhat over-ambitious little person. The young man's name is Mario: a sporting type, a 'heavy' type, but with a fine brain, of a very different and opposite character.

Then there is "Cynthia's best friend", who has no name: likewise a bit off the rocker and an expert nose-parker, one of those who hide a lot of venom behind a false air of taking an interest in you. She is the third and last character, because the child, now old enough to attend elementary school, takes refuge in study and spends his afternoons at the kitchen table of their two-room apartment, and is therefore never seen.

My summary is far from bringing out the vivacity of the comedy, which – possibly facilitated by my 38° of fever that day – is very considerable, as I would say without false modesty. I had read it to my wife and our friend Gianni. The atmosphere at home was full of it. And thus, on the very first occasion that Bettina and I set out to communicate, there was Cynthia to present herself, taking care to spell her name that way.

"Who are you?"

"Cynthia".

"Which Cynthia?"

"Yours".

"And where are you? From where are you talking to me?"

"Within yourself".

"And what exactly is this Cynthia?"

"Your creation".

That was the beginning of an intense and serried dialogue between creator and creature, not by any means devoid of interest. I asked Cynthia the reason for certain ways in which she behaved, and she gave further and wholly unexpected information about herself and what had happened that was completely in line with her personality and the situation, which was thus further developed and clarified.

I admonished her at times, did not spare her my good advice, which she proposed to take into consideration, after due reflection: "I'll see what I can do".

I asked her the name of her "best friend" and she herself gave it to me: Patrizia. I reproved her a little, saying that, all said and done, it did not seem a desirable company to me. Cynthia reacted as if stung: "Don't you dare touch her" (S. 65).

In short, there was a kind of dialectic between me and the character I had myself created, but which had been brought into being by thoughts that were not just mine. Bettina and Gianni had listened with great attention while I read the minicomedy to them. Their thoughts had therefore contributed to giving consistency to Cynthia. To the point that she had taken shape as an autonomous personage, who could dispose of information unknown to me, and also assume attitudes of her own independently of the author and even in contrast with his views.

**24. We can consider among the
“appurtenances” of a given individual
also his poetical or musical work
because it echoes in all those
who interpret or follow or think it
and in one way or another
also relive it creatively**

Where do these considerations lead us? It seeks to highlight something that should be rather clear by now: even the creations of the human spirit prove to have a certain consistency at the astral level, and thence they can also manifest themselves mediumistically in a more autonomous manner.

And what does this imply of particular interest for the subject matter we are here considering? If these implications are to be seen in all their importance, we have to come back to what we said earlier on about “appurtenances”.

We had concluded that an entity could manifest itself through its appurtenances. And what are these? Let me recall that they comprise:

- 1) material objects that are simply possessed,
- 2) objects that are creations of the spirit, and
- 3) even mental creations.

Here are some possible examples of these three categories:

1) A deceased, or also a person living on the earth, can manifest himself mediumistically to us not only in a more direct and personal manner, but also through a use object that he carries with him, a ring for example, which in some way is always a vehicle of something of him, of his personality. Touched and asked to say who it is, the ring will reply in our language (which it obviously takes from us) and tell us that it is the owner in person. And will undoubtedly express something of him.

2) That personage – whom we shall assume to be a poet – could manifest himself mediumistically to us through the manuscript of one of his poems on which he has worked for a long time, for the manuscript will be impregnated with the poet’s personality. When the manuscript is touched, it will reply with human words. Asked who it is, it will reply that it is the poet in person. The personality of the poet is undoubtedly in some way expressed in the manuscript.

3) The personage – whom we shall still assume to be the same poet – becomes extended by his work, which is conserved not only in printed form in books, but also on the astral plane. This plane gathers and receives pure thoughts even before they come to be expressed in a more objective manner in pronounced or written words.

On the astral plane the work of any author, no matter who he might be, acquires such a consistency of autonomy and independence as to be able, in the limit, to express itself also mediumistically.

It should be noted however that the consistency that the author’s work acquires on the astral plane increases with the number of readers or spectators or admirers in whose spirits this work continuously re-lives.

So that on the astral plane the work of a poet or a musician, etc., receives being and force not only from the thought of the author, but also from that of his admirers. A poem is what it is not only on account of how it was conceived by its author, but also on account of the manner in which it is intimately re-lived by enthusiastic readers, critics and interpreters. On that plane a work lives on account of how it has been thought both by its creator and all the others.

The fact that on the astral plane a work is a live, active and dynamic reality implies another consequence: it was given an original form by its author, but this form receives

development and ever greater enrichment from a creative process in which there cooperate all those who re-live the work within them, talk about it, interpret it, each seeing it in his own personal manner.

In the dynamism of its astral being, the work thus acts on the foundation of all these creative acts, which are its continuous source, and also acts in continuous response to all these acts.

The realities that have been defined as “appurtenances” of a personality and its possible vehicles of expression include the following: firstly, the material objects simply possessed by that personality; secondly, the creations of his spirit that assumed the form of concrete objects; and, thirdly, his purely mental creations. To these three categories we now have to add a fourth: the mental creations of the subject in question inasmuch as they are considered, contemplated, admired, judged, criticized, interpreted and in some way re-lived by other subjects.

Indeed, the realities of this fourth category are other possible vehicles of manifestation of the person we are interested in: they can even act as the vehicle of his mediumistic manifestation.

25. A sacred personage lives and can manifest himself also mediumistically through the “appurtenance” that is constituted by his charism: an “aura” that is formed also with the contribution that his devotees make by the different manner in which each one of them lives the relationship with that personage and incarnates him in his personal existence

I have so far circled far and wide in approaching the subject matter, because I was anxious to lay the foundations for what could now be an important conclusion for us.

A religious man or woman may have entered into a close, vital, passionate relationship with a sacred personage. With a saint, or with Jesus, or with the Madonna, or with a spiritual master of even some different tradition, the founder of his own religion, his own order or community or school.

Let us assume that the sacred personage in question is Father Pius. Now, Father Pius is in heaven, but it would seem that he makes himself present with innumerable of his devotees. Each one of them sees Father Pius in his own manner. In fact, the Father Pius who seems to manifest himself mediumistically to a given person or group reveals psychological characteristics different from those with which he expresses himself when he communicates with others. Each devotee, or group of devotees, can have “his” or “its” Father Pius. And each “Father Pius” expresses himself in a manner that differs from one case to another. What is it that constitutes these differences of expression? A discourse, an invocation that we may address to Father Pius will undoubtedly reach him in some way; while a reply of his, though coming from him as the prime source, has to pass through a filter: this filter is constituted by what can be defined as the presence of Father Pius in each one of us.

The presence of Father Pius in each one of us takes form also from the idea that each one of us has of him, the manner in which each one of us feels him in his own heart. This presence, which many different factors have contributed to determine, will eventually manifest itself actively even through the mediumistic channel.

The mediumistic manifestation of Father Pius will therefore derive from the autonomous reaction of his presence in us to a whole series of stimulating factors: Father Pius as he originally is in himself, the personal manner in which each one of us sees and feels Father Pius, and other cultural, historical and environmental factors of various kinds.

If I am a devotee of Father Pius, his presence in me will be constituted to some extent by Father Pius himself, but also:

- 1) by all that is thought, said, written and read about him;
- 2) by everything that remains of him as historical memory;
- 3) by all the prayers that are addressed to him;
- 4) by all the graces that have been obtained due to his intervention;
- 5) by the entire sum of the gratitude and love that innumerable persons feel for him;
- 6) by the entire sum of psychic and spiritual vibrations that can be said to have been brought into being, directly or indirectly, by him while alive and after his death or by any other subject in relation with him.

Taken together, all these vibrations come to form a great force, a vast and impetuous current that seeks to transform each one from within and at all levels in order to bring spiritual salvation and well-being to us all.

When our relationship with a saint, with a master, with Christ himself is truly vital, it becomes a relationship with his charism. A charism that we ourselves contribute to forming and enhancing with the contribution of our thoughts, prayers and corresponding aspirations. The presence of this charism in us promotes our becoming like the sacred personage from which it derives, of whom that charism is an appurtenance and extension.

When we enter into mediumistic contact with that personage, we undoubtedly establish a relationship with him, but we do this through his charism within us. Such a charism is the presence of the sacred personage in each one of us *ad modum recipientis*, in accordance with the receptivity of each one, which is always different. And thus in each one of us, and also in each group, the presence of that sacred personage with his charism and even his mediumistic manifestation comes to be determined in many different ways.

26. A communicating personality can express itself also through the intermediary of another entity that in some way mediates it

I had to digress and consider the theme of the “appurtenances”, “material” or “spiritual” as they might be, in order to motivate what I would now epitomize as follows: in certain mediumistic communications the mysterious invisible subject who expresses himself during the séance can be identified with, if not the deceased in person in the strict sense, but with something that belongs to him as property and into which his personality is therefore in some way extended, or with an aura that he himself has brought into being with his creativity.

That the communicating personality can be identified with a material or spiritual affiliation is one of the possibilities that I enumerated above. But that does not yet exhaust the list. There are other possibilities.

The communicating personality may be identified with an entity other than the one it says it is, but which nevertheless acts as a kind of medium with respect to it. If there are mediums in this dimension, there can also be mediums in the other. Why not?

Let us imagine that a certain entity wants to manifest itself to us humans, but forms

part of such an elevated and remote sphere that its message needs a mediator, possible even a whole chain of mediators, if it is to reach us. A less elevated and illustrious entity would therefore act as the medium of a message coming from a very high and lofty entity and presents itself in the name of that entity, who might be, say, Saint Augustine or the Archangel Michael.

The lest elevated entity would act as medium well aware of having accepted to exercise that function and would therefore present itself as “Saint Michael” not because convinced to be the Archangel, but rather because convinced that it is Saint Michael who manifest himself, thanks to the mediumism that the less elevated entity performs in a humble manner, in a pure spirit of service, wholly forgetful of itself.

Suggestions of a chain of intermediary souls who convey the message of a very elevated entity to us humans can be found in the accounts of communications that I and my wife had with Arab-Islamic entities. I have collected these minutes and comments in the Text of the Convivium entitled *A line with the paradise of Allah*.

I asked the deceased camel driver Ali, who lived in an unspecified epoch in an unknown place, to make me talk, if possible, with an important soul, and he took a great deal of trouble and in the end would seem to have succeeded of getting into contact with a famous Persian poet who lived in India at the same time as our Dante, said to be Amir Khosroe.

Relata refero, without being able to say anything about the precise identity of this soul, who however conveyed to us some very lofty teachings in the course of a further twenty-three sessions.

Let me quote a passage of the dialogue between me and the deceased camel driver after he had made us talk to the poet of antiquity.

By the way, it should here be noted that the thoughts of our Arab friend came to be expressed, through us, in our language, though the syntax conserves characteristics of the Arab language (something that I subsequently verified, even though at the time I knew nothing about it).

“Very very proud very important man poet made you know. Is useful for your study?”

“Extremely useful. Is it true that Amir is in a more elevated stage than you?”

“Yes, yes, yes. Chain of love makes him come down to you”.

“Is it like a ladder made up of many souls that enables him to come down?”

“Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. We not yet at his level.”.

“We have to be grateful not only to you, but also to many other souls. I ask you to tell them how grateful we are”.

“Given love of energy and help of Allah. If He does not want, nothing happens” (*A line with...*, Dialogue XIII; cfr. also XVII).

Another possibility is that the entity closest to us acts not so much as a medium, but rather as a channel of inspiration, in the sense of *channelling* that is so much talked about today. The medium is generally conceived as more passive and less cognizant; the channel is more cognizant and active. The inferior entity who acts as channel for a superior one does not have the presumption of being the other and knows to be a mere channel, giving the name of the other entity; because it is this other entity that counts, given his message, for which the channel has to make itself transparent to the point of annulling itself.

What difference can there be between a channel and a medium? The latter is less cognizant, less aware of the message that he conveys. He can transmit even in an unconscious manner, during a state of trance, as also in a waking state, but always in a purely automatic manner.

When a séance is recorded on magnetic tape, the medium fallen into a state of

trance may become aware of it only after waking and listening to the recording.

Likewise, when the medium is not in a trance and expresses himself by means of a form of pure automatic writing (not combined with any form of clairaudience), he will realize what he has written when he reads it later on.

Unlike the medium, the channel is a transmission vehicle relatively aware of what the Source of inspiration is rendering manifest through him. An example of a channel is Pietro Ubaldi, who wrote under the dictation of an intimate Voice. Swami Kriyananda defines his spiritual master, Paramahansa Yogananda, as a great channel of our time.

Arnaud Gourvennec, a French youngster who passed on at thirteen years of age in 1989, sends messages of high spirituality from the other dimension. And, referring to Pierre Monnier, who died seventy years before him, he says that at certain moments the thought of Pierre becomes united with his own: "It is my Master who talks to me and instructs and I transcribe it in my language" (testimony of the mother, Nicole Gourvennec).

Yet another possibility is that an entity will communicate and give the name of another not in order to usurp his place, but rather to turn himself into the vehicle of his presence, of his charism and his teaching as a follower, as a disciple. Here the disciple feels himself solidary with the master like the branch with the vine, to use the evangelical figure I cited earlier on. He feels one with him and, even though he acts as his channel, knows very well that his function is limited to being just that. This possibility is very close to the one I characterized a moment or two ago, when I said that one entity turns itself into the channel of another. The passage from one to the other may be imperceptible.

In this connection I should like to recall another episode from my own researches. In March 1988 I had occasion to experiment with a young friend of ours, whom I will call S., the initial of her name, who was a good medium for automatic writing. This friend, a young woman of sterling character (what greater praise could I give?), was at that time wholly unprepared as regards the topics I am about to relate.

On one occasion an entity claiming to be Saint Rita of Cascia presented itself through the writing of S. What she told us in answer to the various questions put to her seemed very interesting, but various reasons suggested that her identity might be doubtful.

So much so that at a certain point I said to her: "May I be completely sincere with you?"

"Of course", she replied.

"It seems to me to me that 'Saint Rita' is a kind of *nom de plume* for you. You don't talk like a Catholic saint. What century did you say you lived?"

"I said fifteenth century and died in the sixteenth".

Although I am an impassioned reader of hagiographies, I have to confess a great lacuna: I knew practically nothing about her, not even the century in which she had lived.

I therefore went to consult an encyclopaedia I have at home. With volume still open, I returned to the table where our friend S. was waiting and replied to the entity: "I have a book here that says that Saint Rita was born in 1381 and died in 1457. You are wrong by a century".

There was a pause before the entity replied to me, and this was followed by the words: "It does not matter". And then an even longer pause. In the end she told me: "Listen, it matters very little who comes to your aid, always provided that it is a happy soul. In any case, my name is Rita".

"So", I insisted, "why don't you introduce yourself as Rita? I am called Filippo, but that doesn't make me Saint Filippo Neri. If I say I'm Filippo Neri, I claim to be another. Why do you present yourself as Saint Rita?"

“Gives more authoritativeness”.

“When you meet unprepared people, undoubtedly”.

“But I don’t usurp anything, because she who is better known does not preclude me from presenting myself in a more elevated manner”.

What can one say? Entities do not have identity cards. No soul can commit the crime of “personal falsity” (as our Penal Code calls it) when it uses the name of another. The memory of earthly names is for the most part lost or suspended. The individual soul does not have any dominion of its own, does not have a territory to defend. Between one soul and another there do not exist precise confines. One may live in the other, of the other, as it were. One may be the medium of the other, or its channel, and in any case its means of expression. One can operate in its wake, be the vehicle of its presence, extend it.

To define such a manner of being related to the others, one would have to apply to the souls not so much the logic of the philosophers and scientists, but rather the pre-logic of primitive-archaic man. For logic each reality *is* itself in an absolutely rigorous manner, just as in an equally absolute manner it *is not* any of the other realities. For the pre-logic of primitive-archaic man, on the other hand, each reality communicates itself to the others and, in some way, also *is* the others. Each reality lives the intimate life of the other realities, is immersed in them.

This mentality and this sense of life help us to understand how and why an author at times has preferred to remain unknown, making his master and teacher figure as the author of a book written by him.

Let us recall that Plato puts his dialogues in the mouth of Socrates, his teacher, and this not only to express the ideas effectively attributed to him, but giving greater authority to the more personal and original ideas of the great disciple.

We may also think of the works attributed to Saint Dionysus the Areopagite, whose real author is today considered to have lived in a much later epoch and is therefore called the Pseudo-Dionysus.

It is an idea that is also applied a great deal in the religious environment. If we want to limit ourselves to Christianity, we have already seen that Jesus affirmed to be united to his disciples by a participative relationship: the vine and its branches.

Let us consider the presence of Jesus in the sacraments. Minister of the sacrament is the priest, but the real priest is Jesus himself who – through the priest – baptizes, confirms, absolves from sin, confers holy orders. In marriage the ministers are the spouses, who represent or, better, *are* Christ and the Church. In the Eucharist Christ is present in the most real manner; he himself is the consecrated bread and wine.

In Jesus all are united in an intimate vital communion (the “communion of the saints”) to the point of forming the “mystic body of Christ”. Each individual Christian is another Christ, *alter Christus*. Jesus is present in each man and woman, who – taken all together – constitute our neighbour: so much so that all the good we do to one of them is done personally to him.

Following this parenthesis, I should like to conclude the present chapter, which is rather long on account of the variety of cases and ideas that have been considered. But first I should like to complete the discourse by recalling two typical cases of souls who present themselves in the place of others who find it impossible to intervene in person.

1) A soul has passed on but a short time ago and passing through a stage of regenerative repose, from which it is not possible to communicate with us. Or it may not come because it happens to be engaged in some mission or an ascesis of elevation. And that is where some other soul willingly intervenes to provide news about the first and possibly even bring us a message.

2) The same thing happens when a soul finds it impossible to enter into contact with

friends of ours who are present, even though the soul is bound to them by ties of family or affection. What is it that could render such contact difficult and even altogether impossible? In these interested persons present during the séance there could be impediments of a psychological nature that render them not very receptive and contribute to the formation of a real barrier. Even in this case it may happen that some other soul intervenes and in a certain way speaks as if it were the one that finds it impossible to communicate with us.

In the cases I have mentioned the soul that intervenes in place of the other will have immersed itself in the situation of that soul to the point of becoming identified with it. Between one and the other there is thus established a relationship of identification, participative identification. Even without coinciding in all things with the represented soul, the representing soul will be one with it, take from it, in some way live by and of it. Though maintaining its own identity, though aware of being distinct and different from it, it will speak in the name of the other, acting as its channel, at least on that particular occasion and for the duration of the mediumistic communication.

**27. Lastly, a soul could delude itself
to be the one in whose name
it presents itself**

Let me now close the series by mentioning a possibility of a different order. In certain cases a spirit could delude itself to be that superior entity. Let us now try to reconstruct the probable dynamics of a phenomenon of this kind.

Speaking of themselves and the modalities of their *post mortem* existence, the entities insist on saying that they tend to lose much of their memory of life on earth. Some of them explained that this was not a definitive loss, but something temporary. Many attachments are connected with these memories: and the suspension of certain memories is a true shortcut to being freed of these attachments.

A suspension of memories could therefore aim at an ascesis of purifying the spirit from all earthly attachments. Memory could then be fully recuperated at a subsequent moment, when this no longer constituted a danger of regression for the spirit, but only a sign of greater perfection and fullness.

An entity already devoid of a good part of its earthly memories could lose other memories when it comes to communicate. Above all, it loses them when the entity's memory can no longer base itself on that of human subjects, and it cannot even be replaced by the phenomena of telepathy and clairvoyance by means of which the missing data may in some way be made available.

An entity that has forgotten its past can reconstruct another for itself, and may even do this in good faith, as response to questions that are put to it or the things that those present expect from it.

The entity of a young man called Tonino once confided to me: "You have to know that there are many who want to communicate. When the moment at last comes, you want to speak like a waterfall. Instead, all you hear is. 'What is your name?' 'Where did you live?' 'When did you die?' ... At this point, for simple fear that you may cut things short, one says the first name that comes to mind" (S. 85).

Here, to be quite frank, there could also be just a little ill faith, though this is denied in other communications regarding this aspect. Venanzio, a postman who had died as a pensioner at the age of ninety-five years (at least according to what he said about himself) certainly expressed himself in a different manner: "Not remembering it [my name], I would have to pause and, for fear of losing the contact, you just say another".

“But in this reaction of yours”, as I went on to ask him, “is it not that some craftiness begins to play a part at the conscious level?”

Here is Venanzio’s reply: “There is no time for being wily”.

“In that case,” I continued, “it is the unconscious that tries to be crafty: in other words, a part of you that acts without your being aware of it”.

Venanzio confirmed that this was exactly what happened (S. 144).

Sirio, who presented himself as a guide, said that very often a soul deceives itself in good faith about his personal details and earthly memories, because “it believes them to be true”. Can a soul brainwash itself while it is communicating? “Could be, but in an unconscious form”. If in these cases the soul provides some incorrect information, “it is not a lie: it is an automatic response” (S. 152).

Another guide, Tito, brought us further elements of explanation: “Since you are carrying out an identification research, the soul that talks to you becomes influenced (or could we say hypnotized?) by your expectations: it says a fictitious name and on that name it then constructs a story with unconscious elements of yours and its own distant worldly memories”. And then he added: “I think that the soul acts like a hypnotized human subject. When you ask its personal details, it enters into a hypnotic state. It takes the name it gives you from your own unconscious. Or the name is a synthesis of a person dear to it and the surname of a friend it had on earth. At this point you act as the hypnotist with the suggestive power of the questions” (S. 154).

Thus, as was explained to us by another entity who used the name Joyous Energy, “the entity captures your expectation of a precise answer and therefore, by virtue of an automatic force, says a name on which it then [implements] an entire construction” (S. 153).

We can also assume that a soul without personal memories will take over the memories of others as if they were its own. I told Sirio, the guide, about the case of a soul who introduced himself to us as a deceased chaplain of our army who died during the Second World War. I could not find any confirmation of the data it had provided. “Was it a lie that he told me?” Sirio replied: “Not a lie. An automatic answer”. A lie would also seem to be excluded by the highly spiritual character of the message.

And now a more global explanation of the case: “It could be the superposition of two souls: the lofty and spiritual words of a priest now without his earthly memories and the soul of another that slips in with data that are either true or which it believes to be true” (S. 152).

The biography taken on loan, as it were, could also be imaginary or contain imaginary elements. A fine complication, no doubt about it! But by now we have a fairly clear idea of the extreme complexity of these phenomena and cannot but accept it. Such an intricate tangle can be unravelled only delicately, by degrees and with infinite patience.

I found confirmation in another explanation given me by this selfsame Sirio on a previous occasion in connection with a soul that came forward as a deceased chair maker and claimed to have lived in the Transtiber quarter of Rome during the second half of last century. Titta (diminutive of Giambattista) had given us biographical data about himself that turned out to be at least partly fictitious. Sirio commented: “He could have come from Transtiber, but gave you some other street; or the chair maker could have been his brother and he simply attributed that trade to himself” (S. 60).

To come back to a theme already touched upon: as we saw to some extent a little earlier, the entity that comes to communicate with us may have completely lost its memories. It comes to us as if by chance and in a wholly unexpected manner: undoubtedly due to the action of a psychic mechanism, but one of which we have no idea at all.

The entity in question thus comes to find itself in an environment in which there is a great expectation of Pope John and a strong desire to identify the first entity that gives some sign of life with Pope John. And thus our entity, wholly without memory and therefore as mysterious to itself as to others, unwittingly ends up by identifying itself with Pope John to the point of impersonating him and believing itself to be him.

We all know, more or less, who Pope John was. Even though not everybody has understood his true and profound concerns, a certain cliché of him is making the rounds, duly accompanied by some well known episodes: the visit to a Rome's prison and the children's hospital, the speech by moonlight made from the window in St. Peter's Square, the calling of the Council, the stigmatization of the "prophets of ill fortune", the "suitcase ready", his last days and death. And thus the entity, drawing upon the memories of those present, could impersonate the Good Pope, falling into line with that well known cliché without committing any striking errors.

Possible gaps that would readily be noticed by somebody prepared to make a detailed analysis would be filled by the faith of those present, a faith that will seem as live, strong, consolidated and unshakeable as their expectation was frenetic.

28. What a mediumistic personality communicates to us depends on the different levels, aspects and modes by means of which it establishes contact with us

One of the questions that I asked myself was: "How can one define a personality that communicates through a medium?". I have already suggested an entire range of possibilities. But at this point I should like to set myself a second question, closely connected with the first and, indeed, capable of being derived therefrom: "What does such a personality communicate to us about itself in the various cases?"

The answers will be of various kinds, all capable of being derived by gradually developing the thesis with the necessary rigour.

Inasmuch as it communicates *at the conscious level*, the personality will tell us about itself precisely what it wants to communicate, but always within the limits of what it knows, remembers and believes about itself.

Inasmuch as it communicates *at the unconscious level*, it will express its frame of mind in the most spontaneous and immediate manner. In an equally spontaneous manner, however, it will hide everything it is loath to let us know.

Whether and to what extent the personality communicates depends on *its present frame of mind*, and it is this frame of mind that will be spontaneously expressed.

But whenever the personality is beset by a *past frame of mind that has not yet been "digested"*, it is this past frame of mind that will spontaneously come to the fore.

Inasmuch as the communicating subject is animated by *a more profound part of the personality in question*, it will give expression to these more profound instances.

Likewise, to the extent to which there comes to the fore *a particular way of being* of the communicating personality, it is this latter that will find expression.

Whenever the personality is expressed by *a particular "appurtenance"*, no matter what its "material" or "spiritual" level, it will express that appurtenance, but always as an appurtenance and extension of that personality.

When the subject is a different entity that in the other dimension performs the function of a *medium*, it will yet always express the message of that personality in question; but it will be a message that in some way has been altered by the fact that it had

to pass through that mediation.

The same may be said of the case in which the entity acts not so much as the medium of another, but rather as its *channel*.

Let us now consider the case of an entity closer to us that feels itself to be solidary with an entity of a superior level to the point of identifying itself with it and acting as its vehicle. It will certainly act as *vehicle of its teaching and charism*. The transcendental message of which it will become the bearer will however be altered to some extent by the personal interpretation that the “inferior” entity will give to it and also by any developments it will want to add to it or end up by adding to it without realizing it.

Lastly, let us take a look at the case of an entity, subject of the communication, that *at the given moment deludes itself to be another, namely the one of which it uses the name to present itself*. In a case of this kind, once again, the subject will in good faith express at least something of the message of the “superior” entity”: more precisely, the part that corresponds to a certain cliché of that personality. In one way or another, however, it will once again express the message altered by a personal interpretation and possible additions and developments.

29. What we receive from a mediumistic personality in terms of communication

So far I have formulated two questions that, put in a nutshell, I could re-express as follows: the first is “How can we determine the peculiar subject of a mediumistic communication?” and the second is “What does that subject communicate to us?”

I have already made it clear that the possible answers depend on the level or the manner in which the mediumistic personality intervenes. When the level or the manner of the communication varies, its content may likewise vary.

The moment has thus come for passing on to a third question: “What do *we* receive in terms of communication?”

More in general, one may say that, no matter what the communicated content, we shall receive it *ad modum recipientis*: that is to say, according to the receptivity of each one of us.

More specifically, we shall receive in accordance with our intuitive capacity, in the manner of our culture and in the limits of our knowledge and the information in our possession. The sum total of what we contribute will come to constitute a kind of base on which the communication will find a foundation, a point of support.

When we lack the necessary information, culture and interior maturation, the gap may be filled by paranormal capacities of extrasensorial experience. These may reveal themselves and, as it were, suddenly come into play within us in a wholly unexpected manner. In that case it will fall to our capacities of paranormal experience to convey certain contents of the communication, which otherwise would remain blocked.

30. What the mediumistic personality in its turn, receives from us

I formulated the third question and tried to answer it, at least in general terms, and now it only remains for me to formulate a fourth: “What does the communicating personality, in its turn, receive from us in terms of communication?”

In trying to answer the first two questions, I distinguished a variegated range of

possibilities that it will now prove helpful to reduce to just two.

First possibility: our invisible interlocutor is the entity itself at the conscious level.

Second possibility: our interlocutor is not aware of what he communicates to us, and this irrespective of whether it is communicated by the subject itself at a different level (or in one of its different parts or ways of being or appurtenances) or by some other entity (follower or disciple, performing the function of channel or medium) without the knowledge of the entity in whose name the communication is made.

One may say that in the former case the communicating soul will receive our message “live”, whereas in the latter case this message will be received as a “recorded broadcast”, as if we had written a letter that the soul in question will undoubtedly receive sooner or later inasmuch as it is the addressee thereof.

If not in the imperfect sphere of the finite, this will undoubtedly be the case upon the advent of a Kingdom of absolute perfection, where truth will triumph and everything that is hidden will come to light.

**31. When communicating with us
and for as long as the
communication lasts, an entity
becomes enriched by a part of
ourselves and thus comes to
constitute a composite personality**

The always a little mysterious personality that comes forward to communicate with us through a medium does so, as it were, to incarnate itself within us. It is thus received in a particular way by the medium. It assumes something of us and, more particularly, of the medium.

In the particular case of telewriting, where the human channels are two in number, the disincarnate personality X, which normally lives in its own sphere and condition, the while it communicates with us enriches itself with something that belongs to the human channels Y and Z.

We can therefore say: the personality of the deceased X – or, better, “something” of the personality of X deprived of many personal memories that it no longer carries with it – comes to be composed with “something” of the human subjects Y and Z.

There thus comes to be formed a composite personality that I shall call X+Y+Z, symbolizing by each of the three letters not the integral personality that corresponds to each, but only the limited contribution of each of the three personalities.

This is something that was confirmed to me by the entity Agostino when – referring to his coming to communicate with us humans, it told me: “I carry a part of you” (S. 127).

It was also confirmed to me by another entity, which I shall call Honoré de Villefort, i.e. a name partially altered with respect to the one I was actually given (one may never know... it is therefore best to be prudent). The entity claimed to be a deceased French general and was one of the very few (two in all!) who addressed me in the third person singular. Villefort explained to me that, in communicating with me through me (I should here add Bettina, whom I omit only to avoid complicating matters), he comes to form with me (and, of course, Bettina) a kind of composite personality. Through me (or, better, through us) he thus expresses himself as perfectly in our language as if it were his own and, better still, proved capable even of correcting errors.

It is interesting to cite the dialogue that took place between us in this connection.

“General, did you already know Italian when you lived on earth?”

“A little...”

“When I re-read the phrases that came spontaneously in Italian through the minds of Bettina and myself, I have the impression that you express yourself as if you knew Italian well”.

“Certainly”.

“How do you explain this?”

“One might say that you become me during the transcription”.

“Therefore I lend to you the knowledge I have of my mother tongue”.

“That is why, whenever a verb is mistaken or a comma is missing, you-I will correct it”.

“You-I with a hyphen”.

“Yes” (S. 269).

32. The formation of a mediumistic personality composed of both the entity and us human subjects seemingly also occurs in certain communication experiments with plants

I can propose yet another confirmation of this phenomenon, and a rather curious one at that, on a somewhat different plane. It is still concerned with the formation of a composite personality (or, if you prefer, a “personality” in the wider sense) deriving from the aggregation of the one of a certain entity that manifests itself mediumistically and what it can receive on loan from the human channels. In this case the communication is no longer with a human person, more or less disincarnate from its physical body, but rather with a plant.

My readers will immediately ask me: “But is it possible to communicate mediumistically with a plant?” According to our results, the answer is yes. We operated in the manner I shall now tell you about, albeit in summary form. You will then be able to judge from these results.

On various occasions we sat down as we usually do, just two persons, one facing the other across a table on which there was the usual letter board; but the new fact was that on the table we also kept a plant pot within easy reach and tried to establish a mediumistic contact with it by touching it.

A moment or two later the glass began to move. To all appearance, the plant was responding in its own manner. To the question “Who are you?” it reacted by tracing on the letter board a kind of pattern of itself and its principal ramifications.

It did this not only with Bettina and myself, but also with other subjects who acted as mediumistic channels while we had gone to nearby rooms: that is generally sufficient for the spirits not to feel our presence any more.

What type of conversation can one have with a plant? I think it is very difficult to come to grips with political and social problems or complex literary or scientific questions. With a plant it is much easier to have conversations about... plants. More or less of the type that follows.

“Who are you?”

By way of answer the glass traced the pattern of the plant in a very simple manner, a kind of gestural way of saying “Here I am”.

To be more precise, starting from the “pause” square, it moved to a certain square and then returned to “pause”, subsequently moving to another square, and so on. When one afterwards takes the letter board and draws the various moves made by the glass, one finds that one produces a very elementary pattern of the plant in question.

That it is the pattern of the plant, i.e. the articulated manner in which the plant perceives itself, is confirmed by the fact that, every time I pour a drop or two of water onto the end of a branch, the glass moves and comes to rest again on the square that corresponds to that branch.

And if I pour some water onto the soil contained in the pot, the glass leaves the “pause” square three or four times and comes to rest at a point off the board. These moves trace a radial pattern and reach a series of points that seem to represent the ends of the various roots.

There is also a particular reaction when I scratch a part of the plant: in that case the glass repeats these rapid swinging movements within the pause square, almost as if it wanted to express the sensation it had.

A plant that had lost its leaves, expressed this fact graphically by first reaching a point high up on the board and then moving to a lower square, and repeating this movement by first reaching some other point at the same high level and then returning to the lower square. It was as if the plant wanted to say: “This leaf dropped... and this other did likewise...”

The plant does not only express sensations, but also what we could in a certain way call feelings. Feelings like satisfaction, felicity, cordiality, etc., seem to be expressed by means of the glass tracing large circles on the board. It also seems to express a certain affection for us.

The sensation of pleasure that the plant feels when its soil is watered or partially changed can express itself by means of an oval movement in the horizontal direction, sometimes also off the board, i.e. in the position of the roots. The plant seems to feel pleasure when we remove its dead leaves without making incisions or ripping parts that are still alive and sensitive. But when you tear a live leaf, the glass starts rotating in the “No” square, as if the plant were suffering in a spasmodic manner or, possibly, were terribly frightened.

This said, we have to bear in mind that the plant can react in two different ways according to whether human subjects do or do not have a particular feeling for plants. I formulated the following hypothesis.

With human subjects who do not have “green fingers” or, even though they sympathize with the plant kingdom up to a certain point, do not have any particular propensity for it, the relationship would remain distant and detached: the communicating plant would realize with the human subjects of the communication a very limited and relative communion. This fact, this limitation would prevent the subjects from lending the plant more than a tiny fraction of their humanity. The plant would therefore limit itself to giving expression to elementary reactions: as a plant, and that’s all.

But with persons who have a special sensitivity for plants, a particular feeling and therefore the famous “green fingers”, a far more intense communion would take place. In a communication in which Tom and Dick act as the human subjects, there would thus come to form itself a more integrated mediumistic personality “Plant+Tom+Dick”, and the language would become correspondingly enriched.

My wife and I certainly have a liking for plants, we have quite a few of them at home, but our interest in them is limited. In a mediumistic experiment our integration with plants is not therefore very great. The plant will therefore express itself as a pure and simple plant.

At the very most, it will learn to shift the glass to “Yes” or “No” or make it dance circles of joy on the letter board, something that can be done by any entity in accordance with what are now well known automatisms. If necessary, it may do a little more, borrowing a few symbolic expressions from us; for example, it will make the glass rock if we, treating the plant with affection as if it were a child, sing it a lullaby. This is an

automatism that clearly has its origins in us, since one cannot but suppose that the plant has no idea at all as far as cradles and lullabies are concerned.

When communicating through human channels who have the aforementioned special propensity for the vegetal kingdom, on the other hand, the plant will express its reactions in human words.

This will give rise to a dialogue of the following type:

A subject pours water on the soil of the pot and the plant (or, more precisely the composite entity "Plant+Anna+Gabriella") says "I drink" and then "Water good". Lastly, it will answer the question "Do you have enough water?" with "Now happy".

Question: "What are we? How do you feel us?"

Reply: "Persons", and immediately afterwards "Great persons".

"Do you feel us good or bad?" "Good". "Have you a thought or a message for us?" "Joy life". "How do we have to look after you to make you feel fine?" "Tranquil". "That is to say...?" "Peace" (S. 561).

As can be seen, the expression is human. But some of the contents are in some way likewise human, even though their elaboration may have had a some more elementary reaction of the plant as its first impulse.

It seems to me that everything that has just been said about our communications with plants suggests and confirms, and even does so with a certain force, that an entity, the while it communicates and for as long as the communication lasts, borrows something from the human subjects, with whom it even comes to constitute a kind of composite personality.

33. When it passes from its normal condition to the condition of communicating with us an entity experiences an alternation of states of consciousness

We have already spoken about the kind of composite personality that on the occasion of a mediumistic communication is formed by the entity and the human subject or subjects.

This composite personality is of an ephemeral nature. It continues to exist only for the duration of the relationship between the entity and the human channels. And, of course, it is re-actualized every time the communication is re-established.

The entity will therefore be obliged to alternate between two different modes of being. While yet maintaining continuity of consciousness, it will alternately enter into two different personalities. Indeed, two different states of consciousness will come to alternate in one and the same subject.

Let us think of what could be the state of consciousness of the entity when it is in its normal condition: either incarnate in a physical body during life on earth (in the case of a mediumistic manifestation of a living person) or disincarnate in the other dimension after death. Very well, such a state of "normal" consciousness would be different from the state of consciousness that the same entity enters every time it comes to communicate with us humans.

When passing from one of the two states of consciousness to the other, it is possible that the entity may lose memory of either a part or practically the whole of what it lived in the previous state. This resembles to some extent what happens when we dream and then wake up: it takes only a few seconds for the dream to be forgotten. And we may forget either the whole or just a part of the dream.

As it is lived by the entity, a mediumistic communication that takes place just once is similar to a dream that immediately disappears upon re-awakening. (It is of no immediate interest here whether the dream is forgotten or wholly or partly remembered).

A communication that is renewed on several occasions is like a dream that one may at first forget, but which can later be resumed and of which, every time it is resumed, one may also remember the precedent under the impact of the suggestions that, as it were, have become crystallized and therefore fixed.

Be it clear that a dream that can be conceived in these terms will become renewed only for as long as between the disincarnate soul and the person (or persons) of our earthly world there is maintained the particular relationship that makes it easy for the mediumistic communication to be renewed.

34. The alternation of the two states of consciousness of the entity may have its counterpart in the alternation of a “communication memory” and the ordinary and accustomed “sphere memory”

Examples of a twofold memory and its alternate phases can be found in the series of some seven hundred fifty mediumistic communications of which the Convivium’s experimental group has preserved records. There may be the phase that one of our invisible interlocutors called “sphere memory”, which is the memory that corresponds to the state of consciousness with which the entity is normally endowed. But when the same entity comes to communicate with us, it enters a different state of consciousness, the one that has been called “communication memory”.

The entity Ugo, for example, told us on one occasion: “In space [i.e. in my sphere] I have a more vivid memory [of the life passed on earth]. Not so much of data, but rather sensations: atmospheres, as it were, in the manner of Proust”.

I replied to him: “This reference is highly suggestive as far as I am concerned: Proust who eats his ‘madeleine’, a kind of biscuit, and its flavour brings to mind certain childhood experiences”.

“Yes, yes”, replied Ugo, with a certain enthusiasm. And then added: “When I enter into syntony with you, the communication memory is different: it seems to be drowsy and dominated for the most part by the channels”. (“By the channels” clearly means by the human subjects who act as mediums in the wider sense).

“Is it a little as if you were hypnotized by us for the duration of the communication? I don’t know whether I have expressed myself with sufficient clarity”.

“The question is clear, but I prefer the theory of the two memories”.

“Do you mean that a somewhat different memory begins to operate within you when you communicate?”

“Or dominated by the memory of the [human] channels”.

“When you say ‘dominated’, that makes one think of hypnosis, where the subject is, in fact, dominated”.

“Yes, but it is not hypnosis”.

“The other day a guide, communicating with us as you are at this moment, agreed that it was a kind of hypnosis”.

“But I don’t exclude your theory. I only have difficulty in accepting it. I speak, as you will have noticed, in the first person”.

“You are expressing a personal opinion, is that what you mean?”

“Yes: mine” (S.155).

The guide to whom I referred is Tito, who – as I said above – accepted the term ‘hypnosis’ without demur (S. 154), while Gill did not seem to think it very appropriate and commented: “I would rather say ‘influenced’” (S. 167).

What is said and what happens in the course of a communication may be remembered, in whole or in part, or may also be forgotten by the disincarnate soul, who afterwards returns to its own sphere and habitual condition.

Let us now assume that the soul, on being asked the name it had when an incarnate on earth, remembers some other name and communicates it to us in good faith as if it were the true name. What will the soul think of this on returning to its own sphere?

“That depends on the degree of loss of memory”, explained François. This entity distinguished three cases:

- 1) “I could say: ‘Confound it, what did I say’ when I remember my true name”.
- 2) “Or [I could] continue with that name [in the conviction that it was true]”.
- 3) “Or [I could also] forget it” (S. 163).

These descriptions and testimonies provide some ground for thinking that there may be a parallel between this alternation of states of consciousness and the phenomenon of alternating personalities.

35. A parallel with the phenomenon of alternating personalities is possible but in this case it would take place in a non-pathological form

We have just considered a disincarnate soul that every now and again comes to communicate with us and then returns to its ordinary condition in an alternating process. We are here concerned with an individual who is always the same; and yet at the two poles of this alternating process there are two different states of consciousness and, as it were, two different personalities: a simple personality, which we shall call “X”, alternates with a composite personality that we could call “X+Y+Z”.

Thus we here have an individual that is always the same, namely the entity we are talking about, at first in its ordinary condition, then in communication with us, subsequently to return to its ordinary condition and, some time later, another communication séance, and so on, a kind of alternating process. Now, at the two poles of this alternation there are two different states of consciousness and seemingly two different personalities: X alternates with X+Y+Z.

This fact has a certain analogy with the phenomenon of alternating personalities. A difference is constituted by the pathological nature of the latter, which is in contrast with what we might call the more normal character of state of consciousness alternation.

We have already noted that while the entity tends to conserve memory of the state in which it normally remains or to which it returns, it tends to lose the memory of the different state that it has abandoned, be it even only temporarily.

In the pathology of the alternating personalities, likewise, the subject will generally remember clearly whatever he has lived in the state in which he finds himself at present; on the other hand, however, he will forget what he lives in the other (temporary) state (or states, if the alternating personalities are more than two).

Let us take some examples from the well known and classic work of Frederick Myers, *Human personality and its survival of bodily death*. I take them from the Appendix to the second chapter.

Mr. K. attests: “Up to that time I was thoroughly conscious, but after that I recall

nothing – all was oblivion – till six months later when ‘I came suddenly to myself’ in a distant city in the south, where I knew no one. I found myself driving a fruit-waggon on the street. I was utterly astounded. Why I was there, how and when I got there, where I came from, what I had been doing, were puzzling questions to me”.

Here is what the author says about the case of Emile X: “Sometimes... he would seem to his companions to undergo no loss of consciousness, but would lose the memory of all his past life during a few minutes or a few days, and in this condition of secondary consciousness would lead an active and apparently normal life on foot or on horseback, in his friends’ houses or in shops. From such a state he woke suddenly, and was entirely without memory of what had happened to him in this secondary state”.

Félida, an adolescent, brings out a variation with respect to what has already been said: when she enters the secondary state, “she remembers perfectly all that has happened on previous occasions when she was in the same state, and also all the events of her normal life; whereas during her normal life she forgets absolutely the occurrences of the secondary state”.

This phenomenon, too, is confirmed by many other individual cases. It is perhaps less interesting to point out that the suspended memory of the other state, i.e. the one in which the subject does not find himself at that moment, be it primary or secondary, can be recuperated under hypnosis.

36. Unlike the alternating personalities which in earthly existence represent a clear and well known pathological phenomenon the alternation of the states of consciousness after death can constitute a positive and functional phenomenon

Though continuing to make reference to the phenomenon of the alternating personalities, we can now concentrate attention once again on the previously mentioned alternation of the two different states of consciousness in a disincarnate soul.

Here it has to be stressed that a more ordinary state of consciousness has to be well distinguished from another and different state that is assumed only occasionally, namely when the entity in question communicates.

At this point we shall make use of other information that seems to come to us from the other dimension.

It would seem that there is a whole succession of stages in life after death. At the beginning the soul remains close to our earthly sphere, but subsequently tends to become more and more detached. This detachment seems functional to the purification of the souls, their spoliation of all egoism and egocentrism. The soul has to become emptied of itself if it is to be wholly of God and God alone.

During the early stages, communication may be a service that the souls offer to us on earth. For several centuries now, our science and culture have tended to concentrate in an ever more exclusive manner on the realities of this earth, while the other dimension has become relegated into the most remote background and the margins of our vision of the world, practically pushed out of our field of view as if it did not exist.

At long last, and above all today, the other dimension is once again manifesting itself in a powerful manner, especially due to the “manifestation of the “children of light”, which later gave rise to the Hope Movement.

And it is a moment of grace in which there manifest themselves, above all, these

young souls as new angels of God, come to reveal to today's humanity that there exists another dimension, which in the last instance is the beyond of God and eternal life.

The manifestation of all these souls can in some way anticipate and prefigure, be it even in a limited manner, the ultimate reunion of the other dimension and our own that, according to both Judaico-Christian and Islamic eschatology, should take place upon resurrection at the end of time.

In the course of the communications that we receive at the Convivium, the souls tell us that, by way of preparation for this final encounter, it is the task of those who live on earth to assure the progress of the sciences and every form of knowledge, the technologies, the arts, the civilizations, while the souls of the deceased are committed on a road of sanctification, of religious and mystic ascesis.

When each of the two dimensions will have attained the highest peak of perfection as far as its specific commitment is concerned, the reunion of the two dimensions will lead to an exchange of gifts. Each dimension will donate to the other the fruits it has gathered, so that the other may acquire and assimilate them, make them its own.

While in our own world we pursue humanism, that is to say, human progress and the development of all man's faculties and potentialities, in the ultramundane world the souls aim at emptying themselves of all egoism and egocentrism in order to be able to fill themselves with God and be all in Him, to transform themselves into vehicles of the Divine and thus to attain the highest degree of sanctification: deification.

We are told that in the other dimension we have to appropriately detach ourselves from the earth and everything that is earthly and "too human" in the worst sense. Now, as the entity Giuseppe, another guide, puts it, "if the spirit is occupied by continuous earthly memories, it does not succeed in acquiring a profound spirituality" (S. 41).

Detachment from the earth therefore also passes through loss of memories: or, better, through their suspension, because these memories will be fully reacquired in the end, when they can no longer constitute a negative conditioning or a danger, but only a sign of completeness and perfection of the spirit at all levels.

Let us therefore bear in mind not only the positive function that mediumistic communications may have, but also the drawback that may derive from them, namely keeping a soul excessively attached to the earth and therefore hindering its process of gradual disincarnation and elevation.

It could be that a certain doubling of the personality could prove helpful at this point. The person who has remained on earth may still stand in need of being assisted by communications from the deceased, but the entity has to concern itself also with its own elevation, not least by gradually forgetting the earth. Only an alternation of two different states of consciousness, each with its specific memories and oblivions, will enable the soul to be fully itself in communicating with a beloved person left on earth, while yet forgetting itself in its ordinary existence in the celestial sphere.

Subsequently there could come to the fore another problem, not so very different in basic principle, but at a different level.

Indeed, there comes a moment when the person left on earth, if for no other reason than a law of nature, will itself have to pass away. It could be that this person has relatives in the ultramundane sphere, even close relatives, with whom there subsists only a very tenuous relationship; sometimes, indeed, these relations are distinguished by their complete absence. In such case it is more probable that the newly deceased will not seek these souls in the other dimension.

But he will extremely need for finding the souls who were really dear to him, and especially the one to whom he is bound by a particular and unique love. The new disincarnate will long to meet this soul and, what is more, will want to pass at least some time with it or, if you prefer, at least a phase, a stage of ultramundane existence.

How can that soul satisfy such a strong instance and expectation of the new disincarnate without desisting from the detachment and oblivion it has to pursue and maintain as preparation for its sanctification? Here we have a problem that, once again, can be resolved only by a new alternation of states of consciousness.

The soul we were talking about, the one that first crossed the gates of death, will come toward the beloved new disincarnate to stay with him (or her), at least from time to time, or even for a period of adequate length. If he is to do this, he will have to recuperate some of his worldly memories at least to such limited extent as may be necessary to re-establish in some way the former relationship.

But then, when he returns to his own sphere, the first deceased soul must not remain conditioned by those memories to such an extent as to slow down his own progress towards sanctification. He must be capable of recuperating his previous condition fully and in all its immediacy and spontaneity, without stress or strain, without turning back or suffering interior conflicts.

Here, once again, a good disposition for alternating the soul's states of consciousness can be of considerable help. At this stage, obviously it would not be a pathology, as in the phenomenon of alternating personalities with which psychiatrists have to grapple, but a positive and functional quality.

**37. How it is possible to remain
in communion with a disincarnate soul
in the same moments and
periods in which an entity for
the purposes of its own elevation
has to temporarily forget itself**

The alternation of the two states of consciousness that we spoke about will necessarily include even very long periods in which the disincarnate soul with whom we have a very special relationship of love will be wholly unaware of us and our love for that soul, and this all the while the appropriate memory remains suspended. How should one conceive a communion of love with someone who does not remember us, does not think of us, even though the soul in question may from one moment to the next recuperate awareness of us and the relationship that binds us beyond death?

I think that, all considered, such a relationship is perfectly conceivable. There is a strong potential of love for us in that soul. It is a potential ready to become translated into fact as soon as the proper moment comes. At present the memory of us is hibernating in that soul, but ready to re-awaken.

Some examples will help us to understand the situation by analogy. Sometimes at night it may happen that I don't feel sleepy at all and prefer to read a book, and I may also study or write some notes. By my side, or in other rooms, persons very dear to me are fast asleep. What happens to our communion?

I would say with absolute certainty that our communion continues, even though the profound sleep in which these persons are immersed does not permit them to speak to me or even to think about me. I look forward to the moment of their re-awakening, which will enable us to resume in full a relationship that, in any case, already exists between us and was never interrupted.

And in the meantime I continue to work, seeing that I just don't feel like sleeping. And it will be all the more enjoyable for me to return to greet these people with the satisfaction of having done something good, to have made progress with my research, with my spiritual elevation or my creativity.

Another example is the letter that I could write to a greatly loved person at a moment when that person not only does not think of me, but – obviously – does not even know that I am writing the letter. If I then mail the letter and it arrives, there will be a moment when the addressee will open it and read, thus acquiring consciousness of my message and all its contents.

Thus, the while I write the letter I could already imagine and live ahead of time the frame of mind in which the beloved person will receive the letter and then open it and read my words, sentence by sentence. In some way I could already live the reactions of that person.

I shall therefore ask myself: Does the fact that the addressee knows nothing about the letter and does not even think of me while I write it in any way belittle the communion that exists between us? There again I would say: “No, not in any manner or wise!”.

In both cases there already exists a potential reality that is only waiting to become effective. There already exists the substance of that communion.

And thus the communion already exists as a reality that is partly already effective and partly as yet only potential; but in the background there is a future in which it will be fully and perfectly implemented. In the end we shall be bound by an absolute communion, in a perfect awareness that will never come to lack.

It is an ultimate point of arrival that we can identify as the full advent of the kingdom of God that Judaico-Christian and Islamic eschatology promises us in its prophetic vision of the end of time.

**38. At any moment, moreover, we can
be in perfect communion with
every reality with all and with each
in the dimension of the eternal
present that is always contemporary with us**

At this point it becomes possible for us to take another step forward. If there exists an ultimate point of arrival of evolution and history at which time flows into the eternal, one can readily conceive an absolute dimension, a single universal act of absolute and eternal consciousness in which everything that has happened and happens as time goes by receives its sense of being and becomes actualized or re-actualized and, in any case, remembered.

Parapsychology shows that, in certain conditions, future events can be foreknown even in many of their details. This fact renders infinitesimal the probability that these events can be guessed by chance: it therefore deposes in favour of the reality of a dimension in which the future is in some way already present.

And thus parapsychology opens for us the vision of a reality in which everything that we call present, past and future is compresent *en bloc* and in one and the same instant: an immutable and therefore eternal instant.

Here we are in God’s antechamber: we can get ready to consider the Divine Mind in its absoluteness. And if in the Divine Mind everything is compresent and taking place as of this moment, it follows that mere thinking of that dimension will already enable us to find the ultimate future of all things, to find the future even of the relationship of love we have with our dear ones and, potentially, with each and all.

In the dimension of time our love is always imperfect, will always lack something; in the dimension of eternity it is perfect and without limits.

In the dimension of time we ignore each other, if not in everything, at least to a very

large extent and at many different moments of our life; in the dimension of eternity each one of us has full and ageless awareness of all the others.

In the dimension of time we are divided by incomprehension and far too often by rivalries, rancour, hate, aversion, antipathy; in the dimension of eternity we are perfectly reconciled and live in total and perfect sympathy and full solidarity and each one lives the life of all the others as if a sole being with countless ramifications.

The essential thing is that the dimension of eternity, being coeternal, already exists for us as of this moment and at each and every moment.

This brings us back to the distinction that we formulated earlier on in connection with the problem of defining who or what can be our mediumistic interlocutors and the various modes, aspects and levels of their manifestation. It will now be helpful to group the various cases into a scheme or pattern that envisages two possibilities of a more general order.

First possibility: our interlocutor is the entity itself at the level of consciousness.

Second possibility: our mediumistic interlocutor is not at this moment aware of what is being communicated; and this may happen both when the entity expresses itself at a different level (or in a different mode of being or part or appurtenance of his), and when the message is communicated by some other entity (follower or disciple, with function of channel or medium) unbeknown to the entity in whose name the communication is taking place.

What will be the outcome in the first case and the second? I would say that in the first case the communicating soul (or the soul in whose name the communication is taking place) will receive our message “live”, whereas in the second case it will receive a “recorded” version thereof. The soul is like the addressee of the letter I spoke about earlier on: it will certainly receive the letter and read it sooner or later. But in the dimension of eternity this “later” is already present.

It is a dimension into which our researches have taken us. And thus there is an entire horizon that opens for us: a grandiose vision that comforts and exalts us, because it confers a sense of eternity and absoluteness upon our entire existence of men.

**39. Conclusions like these may be reached
by means of a scientific and philosophic study
based on an intuition that penetrates
into the very heart of the phenomena
to grasp their intimate significance**

How does one arrive at a vision like the one here expressed and developed? One arrives there by means of an inquiry to be undertaken at various levels.

There is a scientific research that studies and classifies the facts, interconnects them and notes the relationships between them.

And there is also a philosophic research intent on interpreting the significance of these facts.

But the ultimate significances of reality can be attained only by means of a mystic and religious illumination, something of an even higher level.

An interior maturation is needed at all these levels. Who seeks and searches must not only objectivate the facts in order to study them from outside, but – above all – must be capable of penetrating them and re-living them from within, in the intimacy of his own being.

This illumination is obtained by means of the refinement of one’s sensitivity and the deepening of one’s experience: it is a maturation to which rationality is called upon to

make an irreplaceable contribution.

There is an abstract rationality that mortifies the research and renders us less receptive to the phenomena, which therefore tend to escape our grasp and leave us empty-handed.

But there is also a more concrete and mouldable rationality, a rationality more appropriate for grasping the subtle expressions of the paranormal and to order them into a system of concepts that confer a unitary and coherent sense upon the entire phenomenology without mortifying anything at all.

The first thing is to refine and deepen the intuition. Analysis to corroborate the intuition is an obligatory point of passage. But the intuition remains the most important thing: it is what founds all the rest and renders it possible. If the analysis does not have a sure intuition as its point of reference, it will remain out of gear and idle.

It is only in the light of an adequate intuition that the analysis should take shape and all its implications fully developed. And if it is to remain in line with its task, the analysis will have to take account of all the phenomena and the entire variety of their nuances.

It must not be burdensomely and pedantically geometric, but rather acute and flexible, sagaciously articulated, capable of insinuating itself into all the meanders of certain realities.

Necessarily, rigour but not rigidity. Every research thus has its own rigour when it proceeds with the ever different method that the matter under consideration calls for.

Now, the phenomena of parapsychology, especially those that suggest the other dimension, are among the most tangled, they present themselves to us like a skein that is particularly difficult to unravel. Following the thread is impossible without the help of an adequate and mature discernment.

We often have to move in a kind of fog, where only a really subtle intuition can guide us. If this intuition is to remain permanently vigil and operate to the best of its possibilities, it is essential that the analysis, rather than suffocating it, should seek to assist it, follow it with humility and discretion at every step, constant in serving it, without ever prevailing.

To conclude: it is the finesse of the intuition that enables us to grasp the heart of certain realities, no matter how subtle they may be, and to feel certain relationships, no matter how complex, intricate, shaded and ambiguous they may appear.

The refinement and sharpening of one's intuition develops in step with the refinement of one's sensitivity and analytical and critical faculties. It is, let me say it once more, an overall interior maturation.

It is a maturation that enables us even to discern the contribution that we ourselves make to mediumistic experiments. It enables us to become clearly aware of the limits where the objective manifestation of the entity terminates and there commences the unconscious contribution that we humans make to the creation of the message.

The mediumistic message will therefore no longer seem to us to be an unassailable and objective absolute, valid *en bloc* and in all its parts, as if it had been formulated by a divine being right down to all its details, all its syllables and commas. We shall no longer be beset by the literalism, the fundamentalism, the parapsychological totalitarianism that I spoke about at the beginning of this essay.

**40. A mediumistic communication
is always conditioned
and even hindered in some way
by its human channels**

If it is true that we help the entity to perceive, remember and express itself, this means that there will always be something of ours in what the communicating entity perceives, remembers or expresses. It means that the entity will always and to some extent perceive, remember and express itself in our manner. In other words, it means that we always condition the communication in some way.

First of all, we inevitably interpret the communication with our own parameters. Many years ago Bettina and I were in London and one Sunday went to a religious service in a spiritualist church. The cult in these churches follows the general pattern of service in Presbyterian churches: prayers, hymns, readings and sermon. But there is also something more: at the end of the service a psychic describes the deceased who appear in human form, visible to him, by the side of individual participants and interprets their messages.

Now, my father manifested himself on that occasion to give me a message that I greatly needed at that time. That same evening, communicating with an entity called Renato, I asked: "Would you say that it really was my father?"

"It could well have been your father", the entity replied, "but the difficulty lies in the difference between the thoughts that your father expressed in mental Italian and the English psychic interpreted in his own manner" (S. 19).

The human subjects not only interpret the message, but unwittingly also influence it.

"All are entities", we were told by Tommaso, "but at times they are not as they were in life on account of the channel that exerts an unconscious influence" (S. 146).

Such an influence is exercised not only by the channels, but also by those simply present in the room in which the experiment is taking place, and this even if they remain silent and at some distance from the table where, say, a telewriting experiment is being carried out.

I said to Tito: "A friend sustains that I can influence the entity's reply even if I do not touch the glass".

Reply: "That is true, because you think about it".

"Are you saying that I condition the answers?"

"The attitude".

"How can that be?"

"Because you influence".

"Even if I remain silent?"

"Yes" (S. 122).

A human channel (but, as we saw, also a human subject simply present in the room) influences the experience with his mentality and culture. With his knowledge.

The wealth and precision of the contents of a message depend "on the knowledge of the channels", said Artemio, and also on their "culture".

I asked him what would happen if the human communicant, or the entire group of persons present in the room, had no knowledge whatsoever of the spiritual world.

Reply: "There would be no answers".

"Why?"

"Because he knows nothing of our world and does not ask appropriate questions" (S. 123).

Indeed, lack of knowledge constitutes a formidable obstacle within us to the transmission of information by the entity. We are often told that it is an authentic

“barrier”.

I find a significant confirmation of this concept in a passage of a mediumistic dialogue between the entity Arnaud Gourvenec (already mentioned earlier on) and the parents.

At a certain point Arnaud said to the father: “Contrary to what you think, I do not reveal to you any term that you do not already know; and, if you don’t know a word, I can’t make you learn it, because it needs a resonance within you. Certain words are hidden in your memory and suddenly re-emerge. What happens is this: a series of transmitted words carry a thought; these words are pebbles thrown into your memory and bring out your words just as bubbles come to the surface of water” (Arnaud Gourvenec, *Vers le Soleil de Dieu* (Toward God’s Sun), communication of 4 June 1990).

Not knowing the language or the dialect spoken by the entity in life on earth will in the greater part of cases block the transmission of the message in that idiom.

It is true that there are cases of xenoglossy in which a medium, though not knowing a word of a certain language and operating in an environment where nobody speaks it, begins to express himself in that idiom in form that may be perfectly correct and even stylistically agreeable; but these are extremely rare phenomena that presuppose a very high level of mediumism. Very few experimenters obtain performances of this kind and our own group has certainly not obtained them.

41. Each new entity that comes to communicate does so on the tracks of preconstituted automatisms: which are movements and words and phrases and other modes of expression but also thought contents that have already been acquired in the course of our researches

Among the factors that in various ways influence mediumistic communications there is, lastly, the fact that they are bound up with a series of preconstituted automatisms.

Let me explain this better. Whether or not the entity actually realizes it or not, it expresses itself through the hand of one or more subjects who trace signs and letters on a sheet of paper with a pen or move a glass over a board full of squares with letters and numbers, and so on.

We shall now continue this line of thought by concentrating on our own experiences, which are of telewriting. The entity gives signs of presence by making the glass move within the “pause” square, its rest position. It then “studies the letters” by running up and down the various rows of squares, an operation that seems to serve to strengthen the contact between the entity and ourselves. Thereafter it passes on to formulating one phrase after another, stopping in the “pause” square after each word. All these are automatisms, that is to say, automatic movements of which the entity may even be unaware. Each new entity repeats these movements, adopts these automatisms.

A new entity may adopt the manner of expressing itself of another entity that communicated with us on an earlier occasion. In certain cases it may adopt a consolidated manner of expressing itself: words and phrases already used, sometimes on many occasions. A mysterious principle of economy seems to govern the choice of certain words, which is always made automatically, following what seem to be roads already open, practicable and tested.

In this sense an entity inserts itself very readily on the rails of preconstituted automatism. And this, be it noted, not only as regards certain expressions, but also as far as certain contents are concerned.

There are contents that our experimental group, and particularly Bettina and I, have already acquired. They are intuitions that, taken as a whole, form our vision of reality, especially those aspects of reality that concern the paranormal and the other dimension, survival and eternal life.

It is a vision that keeps maturing and developing and deepening in us, this in parallel with the deepening of the entire approach that we adopt with our invisible friends.

In this approach no one entity can ever constitute our sole interlocutor: because the approach makes progress with the collaboration of all, where each entity makes its limited and yet precious contribution.

It should be noted that every new entity that comes forward proves to have the capacity, though not all to the same degree, of immersing itself in an aura of thought that has already assumed consistency. It seems as if they have been handed the results already attained in our long dialogue with the other dimension.

In other words, each entity that presents itself for the first time seems to be capable (though, as I said, not always in the same way) of inserting itself in the results previously attained in the course of the research that we undertake by means of the dialogue with the other dimension, by means of all these interviews with souls of widely differing conditions and origins.

The sum total of these acquisitions undoubtedly facilitates the new entity: at least in the course of this first communication, it proves to know far more than it would know if it had not had the opportunity of drawing information and ideas from this common deposit of ours. While the entity is thus facilitated, it is undoubtedly also conditioned and, let us admit, also limited by it. It cannot therefore be excluded that certain of our acquisitions could represent some kind of limiting prejudices. So here we have yet another phenomenon that can prove to have both positive and negative aspects.

**42. Though the limits of the human channels
may condition and hinder
the communication of information
they are not such as to prevent it**

It may happen that certain language elements not known to us become to some extent conveyed in the communication. As I mentioned earlier, Bettina and I have had a series of communications with Arab-Islamic souls. Given our lack of acquaintance with the Arab language, the thoughts of the communicating entities came to be expressed, through us, in our own language.

But just as my father – on the occasion of his manifestation in London – had to formulate his thoughts in a “mental Italian”, the souls of Allah’s paradise undoubtedly formulated their thoughts in a “mental Arab” of which there remains some trace in the syntax of many of the phrases that we recorded.

We knew nothing whatsoever about the Arab language, and therefore nothing about its particular syntax, which I subsequently studied sufficiently to note that the answers of the entities have an almost continuous series of Arab constructions, especially when the entities in question had been rather simple people in life on earth, as was the case of three of them.

Together with certain peculiarities of Arab syntax, we received a great deal of

information about the traditional way of life of the Arabs, and about their religion and usages and customs. Above all, there came to the fore the typical Arab emotivity and mentality, indeed, these came to be expressed in many significant overtones. In short: these communications taught us many things that we either did not know or knew only in a rather vague and superficial manner.

As explained earlier, not knowing things constitutes a barrier, but not such as to prevent fragmentary information from seeping through. We can thus obtain some information about facts that happened or entire situations, descriptions of places and also information about what is to be found there, and also about uses and customs and the way of thinking of certain people.

At times there even come into play phenomena of telepathy and clairvoyance in a very spontaneous manner. Such phenomena take place, above all, when the human channels of the communication are person who are endowed with psychic powers in a very particular manner. Such people are the ones we call “psychics” in the strictest and strongest sense that this term can assume.

We also call them “mediums”. Mediumism is an extremely mysterious phenomenon. If the concept can be expressed in just a few and undoubtedly schematic words, it would seem that mediumism is realized when a soul incarnate in a physical body is capable of issuing or emerging from it to some extent. By virtue of the fact of issuing from the body, and to the extent to which it does so, the soul becomes disincarnate. Emerging from the body, exteriorizing itself, the soul separates from it. It certainly does not separate itself completely, which would be death, but in some relative or partial manner. Inasmuch as the soul becomes to some extent disincarnate, it becomes capable of:

- 1) perceiving things directly, without passing through the mediation of the senses (extrasensorial perception, i.e. telepathy and clairvoyance);
- 2) providing the energy an entity needs to manifest itself mediumistically.

From this we see that that sensitivity and mediumism are closely associated, because they derive from a common phenomenon: partial disincarnation from the body of the soul (if we may take the liberty of calling it thus, with the kind permission of many psychologists who regard the term “soul” as taboo).

It should be borne in mind that the existence of a condition of this kind in the human channel or channels of a communication does not necessarily imply that paranormal phenomena will be obtained at will, by command as it were. Certain phenomena can be obtained in quite a ready and normal manner, but many others can be made to occur only on exceptional occasions as if “by grace”, if it is licit to borrow this term from religious language.

In this connection I should like to recall an astral visit that our friend Gianni paid us while Bettina and I were engaged in a mediumistic communication (S. 117).

As I said earlier, in that condition Gianni could not recall the name of his mother, which was not known to us, but remembered that of his sister, with which we were familiar. Up to this point we simply have an example of the general principle that communicating entities draw upon the memory of us human channels.

But I failed to mention that Gianni also told us other things that we did not know until that time, but subsequently found to be true and correct. At the moment of the communication he was at home and in a state of repose and relax, particularly appropriate for facilitating the “doubling” and his astral visit to Bettina and myself; but in the afternoon he had been “to a lecture” in a hall situated “near Piazza Cavour” (Cavour Square), where “a professor had talked about vacuity”. We knew nothing about this, and only afterwards did we notice the invitation (which I still conserve), which contains, among others, the following information:

- 1) the date, 3 February 1986, the same day we received the communication;
- 2) the place, Via Pietro Cossa 40, “near Piazza Cavour”;
- 3) the lecturer, Doctor Martin Kalff;
- 4) the title of the lecture, “Reflections about vacuity and grace”.

In the course of the same communication Gianni replied in an exact manner about his economic problems, about which we had likewise known nothing at all.

All this enables me to make a distinction between two orders of phenomena:

1) The entity Gianni remembered certain things (like the name of the sister, using the memory of us human channels as support; but did not remember other things (the name of his mother, for example), where he could not count on us. This is an example of a fact that recurs quite frequently in these experiments, at least as far as Bettina and I are concerned, who, all said and done, are far from being outstanding mediums.

2) The same entity revealed to us things that we knew nothing about. We owed this to a paranormal phenomenon that although rather difficult to define, comes into play at a certain point due to a combination of circumstances and factors that are extremely mysterious to us. They are things that occur at times, by way of exception and in a spontaneous and gratuitous manner.

As second example, let me recall an experiment that we carried out on another occasion with an entity called Petulia (yes, indeed, not Petula, S. 159), who in life had been a young American woman. The bedroom of our apartment in Rome has a hotel room as its neighbour, since the adjacent building is in fact a hotel. We asked Petulia to go there to give us a description of the room.

On the basis of what she told us we were able to draw a plan that we subsequently found if not completely correct, at least what I would call sufficiently correct, though with some imperfections.

Analyzing the result, I concluded that the errors of the plan could be attributed to my preconceived idea that the double bed in the hotel room had its headboard against the wall that divided the room from our own bedroom (rather than against the opposite wall, as was actually the case).

This shows us that our lack of knowledge cannot only create a barrier that prevents the passage of information provided by an entity, but that a wrong or preconceived idea of ours can actually distort the content of that information. And yet we can receive correct information by paranormal means: at times very precise and correct, at times at least substantially if not literally right.

These phenomena of extrasensorial perception occur in an unpredictable manner, seemingly as and when they want to occur. But we can improve our capacity of obtaining these phenomena to the extent to which we succeed in refining our receptivity by means of exercise and the use of special techniques.

We thus succeeded in “reading” (not with the eyes, be it clear, but with the mind) words that we could not see in a closed book.

We have been given descriptions of objects that likewise we could not see.

Objects drawn by chance have been indicated to us in an altogether unequivocal manner and with a succession of “hits” such as to make the probability of a successful guess practically infinitesimal.

We also received information regarding facts, places, linguistic peculiarities and details of every kind.

All this does not mean that we are magicians endowed with extraordinary powers. It is true that we can now obtain certain results almost at will. But they concern realities close at hand with which we can establish some form of physical contact, even though they are kept out of our field of vision and we have no possibility of seeing them with our eyes.

We can also capture realities more distant in space and time, but only in an occasional, fragmentary and rhapsodic manner, certainly not whenever we want, but only when there comes into play the particular mechanism I talked about and which remains wholly mysterious to us.

**43. Particular importance
attaches to our questions
which in the other dimension
provoke and trigger a well
defined response mechanism**

We can capture these more distant and less graspable realities by means of an act of invocation and entrusting ourselves to what seems more in the background, a dimension further removed from us.

We manage to do all this by means of the questions. We address ourselves to the other dimension, which at that particular moment seems to reveal itself to us through the communicating entity.

By asking we open ourselves to the answer that will be given to us by the other dimension through that means.

We render ourselves receptive to the response. We entrust ourselves to it. This fact sets in motion the mechanisms by means of which the other dimension gives itself to us.

The extent of this giving is defined by our limits, by our capacity of receiving. The capacity of receiving an answer and understanding it, becoming conscious of it, depends on what we ourselves are at that particular moment, the degree of evolution we have attained.

The spiritual universe is governed by the great principle of affinity, by virtue of which like and like go together, become spontaneously associated. Thus, a truth of a superior level is communicated more easily to a subject prepared to understand it or in whom, at least, there is a potential capacity therefor.

More than the absence of problems of any kind, it is, above all, the question that triggers the mechanism of a response by the other dimension. Man may not know, but the fact that he sets himself the problem already suggests an implicit knowledge that by affinity attracts a further revelation.

**44. Entities may make themselves
vehicles of transcendental revelations
to the extent to which
we on earth render ourselves
receptive to those revelations
thanks to greater awareness and the desire
for more refined and elevated knowledge**

Entities may reveal to us what they themselves know, but can also manifest to us what they do not yet fully understand, because it forms part of a truth that transcends both them and us.

On several occasions I asked an entity questions regarding things that, so it would seem, go well beyond the limits of their present knowledge. The entity concentrated for a few moments and then passed on to formulating a reply that seemed satisfactory to me.

But I have a clear impression that in these cases it was my question that set the

reply mechanism in motion. In some way may question already contained a vague notion of the possible answer.

In this connection I remember the words with which Benedetto Croce commences his *Breviary of Esthetics*. The question that he specifically asks himself is: “What is art?”. The philosopher comments that “this question could be jokingly answered (but it would not be a stupid joke) by saying that art is what everybody knows it is”. In fact, as he goes on to say, “if one did not in some way know what it is, one could not even take the question as one’s starting point, since every question implies a certain notion of the thing about which one is asking, designated in the question, and therefore qualified and known”.

A question about something that really concerns me in existential terms does not limit itself to engaging my cognitive faculties, but involves the whole of my being. Remembering questions that on various occasions I put to my invisible interlocutors, I note that in my question there always was – sometimes more and sometimes less – a tension, a desire, a longing that, by affinity with the desired good, undoubtedly opened a road for it or contributed to opening it.

All this, as also all the things we considered in the previous chapter, clearly explains and motivates an answer I received from the entity Corrado Quario (son of our dear friends Gastone and Franca).

I had asked him why it was that our experimental group at the Convivium managed to obtain information, seemingly from the other dimension, that was not obtained by others. I was specifically referring to information about the final universal resurrection. Whether or not it is talked about “depends on who communicates and who receives”, was the young man’s reply.

About the final resurrection Corrado then went on to tell me: “These are themes with which we do not concern ourselves at the moment, because we help our loved ones”.

Indeed, these are themes that the young souls will have to face only much later, and that is the reason why for the moment they say little or nothing about them. They are still outside their field of vision and do not even interest their parents. One should here bear in mind that even historical Christianity has long since confined them in a kind of shadow zone.

I asked Corrado why these themes cropped up in the communications obtained by the Convivium. Reply: “Because you ask the questions” (S. 680).

The answers are undoubtedly solicited and – as I would even say – rendered more potent by “who is receiving”: by what, using a comprehensive term, we could call our receptivity. But, as we have seen, they also depend on “who communicates”. Above all, however, it would seem that they have to be related to the fact that the communicating entity draws inspiration from an ambit that transcends it (just as it also transcends us humans).

Let me now recall a passage of another mediumistic dialogue I had with another “son of light”, likewise called Corrado and, more precisely, Corrado Paradiso (son of Laura).

In the course of two communications (522 and 523), the entity Corrado Paradiso gave me some very significant answers about both the final resurrection and some other themes that I am greatly interested in. In the end I asked him: “Whence do you get these fine intuitions?” The reply was: “From the infinite Intelligence of which we partake”.

“Your answers are therefore inspired”, I added. To get the following delightful final reply: “Yes, we are wide awake”.

Three elements would therefore seem to contribute to determining a certain quality of reply: there is a transcendental Source of inspiration; the communicating entity has a good attitude for conveying this inspiration; and, lastly, there is the receptivity of us

humans, which depends on our maturity and sensitivity and also on our need and our desire for obtaining answers of the particular kind, of that particular level.

A friend of ours had lost her son as the result of an accident, but then found him again in a mediumistic experience that, for her, was first and foremost a spiritual experience. In a moment of solitude and desolation, she suddenly felt the need for taking pen and paper and to start writing: she was thus able to receive a first message from her son, as it would seem, and then received others for several months thereafter.

The content of these messages is intensely religious and they are extremely elevated in tone. Our friend, a cultured person with a scientific formation, was far removed from any kind of religious commitment, but the messages ushered in a true conversion.

Following that first intense period I mentioned, her strictly personal experiences of automatic writing were few and far between and took place only in what were more or less particular occasions. But, though it is true that those wholly unexpected experiences had the purpose of soliciting the religious conversion of our friend, but later, when the conversion was well advanced and consolidated and the purpose had been attained, a communication that was an end in itself would have had far less sense.

Three years after this important episode of her life we made her acquaintance, became friends and had one of our customary telewriting experiences with her (C. 500).

The son presented himself once again on this occasion. This time he no longer spoke with the elevated tone that had characterized the messages he had sent the mother by means of automatic writing. Rather, he resumed the manner in which he had normally expressed himself in worldly life: he now spoke just like any one of the many boys we know and with the verve he had while alive and with the same humour.

Let us note that, on being asked, he provided information about his *post mortem* existence and then replied to informal and homely questions, expressing very affectionate interest, but no longer used the religious language and tone of his earlier messages to his mother.

She therefore said to him: "In those messages you spoke of God and spiritual things. Can you tell us a little more about them this evening?"

"Read", was the reply, not devoid of a certain perspicacity.

A moment or two before that I myself had asked the following question: "The tone of the messages I read was more... spiritual and mystic, while in this communication with us you express yourself like a normal boy. What is this difference due to?"

"Here we are among ourselves", was the youngster's reply. Likewise formulated with a joke-like touch. But, once again, not a stupid joke, as Benedetto Croce would have said.

Why? I would explain the matter as follows: the context of the previous messages was different, less "private". The mother did not limit herself to speaking to the son in a homely manner (even though in the presence of three strangers). There the mother was face to face with God, face to face with the dimension of Transcendence and the Sacred that was mediated by the son.

The son acted as channel of Transcendence: he was something like a medium for it, albeit conscious of the fact, and yet bearer and channel and vehicle of things greater than himself. The contact with Transcendence, mediated by the son, had been obtained by our friend in an unforeseen and unexpected manner, as if by grace.

That contact had been made possible not only by Transcendence gratuitously giving itself, but also by the present need and ardent desire of the mother: need and desire of finding her son again, but also giving to her life the sense she no longer succeeded in deriving from her positivist philosophy.

In other words: deep within her, the mother had matured the necessary receptivity. The place of the void was thus taken and filled by a plenitude. The son had thus spoken

to the mother as the “angel” of Transcendence, as “messenger”.

That state of necessity had long since been left behind at the time of the communication with us. In these more recent circumstances the son had come to us “on leave”, as it were, without any specific angelic or prophetic mission. He had come privately, like the boy he had always been for his mother. Albeit a little remodelled and corrected by the experiences he had had after his demise.

From this different context of a simple family atmosphere he could readily return to the context of the powerful religious experience that his mother had talked about. Inspiration cannot be obtained at will. We had by that time become tuned in to a particular station, and changing would have been a difficult, perhaps even impossible operation.

We have now analyzed the entire range of the levels at which the phenomenon of mediumism can explicate itself with all its possible modalities and variations, eventually arriving at considering mediumism as the vehicle of a superior, transcendent, divine inspiration. And we can see that there it truly attains its peak, its loftiest point, for the entity itself becomes the channel and medium of the absolute Spirit, the supreme creative Energy that confers being and sense upon all things.