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The Extraordinary Case of Bishop James Pike

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Abstract: Bishop James Pike was an Episcopal bishop (Church of England) and a mainline religious in the United States, especially on television throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Pike himself expressed doubts about the afterlife, and other fundamental precepts of Christian belief (e.g., virgin birth and the Trinity). Perhaps, Pike was at his most controversial in his book *The Other Side*, in which he described his experiences before, during and after his son's suicide. Particularly, after the suicide, he experienced what can be explained as many cases of synchronicity (meaningful coincidence) and Pike thought these were related to his son trying to communicate with him from beyond. In this article, I examine Pike's proposition, but I also argue that synchronicity is a more parsimonious explanation for the phenomena than extra-sensory perception (ESP) and psychokinesis (PK), and even after-death communication.

Keywords: James Pike, extra-sensory perception, post-mortem survival, psychokinesis, synchronicity.

WHO WAS BISHOP PIKE?

The story of Bishop James A. Pike (1913-1969) involves more than just an unexplained series of occurrences in the last chapter of his life; it is an awe-inspiring saga that is tragic in its telling, so much so that it cannot be given a fair treatment without first presenting a brief outline of the man himself. Before I do that, I must add that I have devoted a whole article to the Pike case because I see so many coincidences that are clearly synchronistic that the material itself also must be treated with due care and deserves a thorough-going analysis. But more than that, I find it remarkable (and very telling) that absolutely nobody who has written substantially on synchronicity has thought to bring this case to the fore. Of course, it is possible that I am mistaken about the renown I attribute to Pike, and that is why he has been overlooked (although he wrote many books, appeared frequently on radio and television; associated with Martin Luther King; and had highly publicised heresy charges brought against him, etc.). Indeed, my

discovery of the man may only be synchronicity to me (if not serendipity, which I define as an accidental but fortuitous event), and if not for that fact, I would be no wiser than any other who has written on synchronicity without mentioning the Pike case.

As I have suggested, most people today would not know of Bishop Pike, yet the character of Timothy Archer, in Philip K. Dick's (1982) last book, *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, was based on Pike, and E. L. Doctorow (2000) has a fictionalized version of Pike in his novel *City of God*. I came across this extraordinary real-life character as a fan of Leonard Nimoy's television series *In Search Of ...* (Landsburg, 1977-1982). It was in an episode from the sixth (and final) season of the series, *In Search Of Bishop Pike*, that the question was asked, "Was Bishop James Pike a minister, a martyr, or a madman?" There is not sufficient room here to try to answer that question, or go into every little early-life detail—there are other sources for that (see Robertson, 2004),[1] but to get an idea of how iconoclastic Pike was, readers might like to visit the website of *The New York Times*, and read columnist Raymond A. Schroth's (1976) article, "The Death and Life of Bishop Pike". Schroth records:

> … if anyone under 30 remembers Bishop James A. Pike it is as the sad character who "died lost in the desert" or "had that séance on TV." To others he was the most controversial clergyman of his day: Columbia University chaplain, Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Bishop of California, social activist, gadfly intellectual, TV personality, then—in a final behavior pattern that led some to question his sanity—ex-bishop, "heretic," worn-out self-publicist and mystic manqué.

In that episode of *In Search of ...*, though Nimoy was always sympathetic to people claiming extraordinary experiences, a number of anomalies were presented in a rather matter-of-fact way (those anomalies mentioned are included in the list that follows in the next section). In this article, I will show how this bizarre sequence of unusual events is more than anomalistic, and warrants being classed as a very unique case of recurrent synchronicity.

Jung (1951/1969, para. 984) defines and describes synchronicity in the following ways:

1. The coincidence of a psychic state in the observer with a simultaneous, objective, external event that corresponds to the psychic state or content …, where there is no evidence of causal connection between the psychic state

[1] A brief but comprehensive biography of Bishop James Pike's life by Michael G. Maudlin can be found here:
https://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2004/august/040830a.html

> and the external event, and where, considering the psychic relativity of space and time, such a connection is not even conceivable.
>
> 2. The coincidence of a psychic state with a corresponding (more or less simultaneous) external event taking place outside the observer's field of perception, i.e., at a distance, and only verifiable afterward.
>
> 3. The coincidence of a psychic state with a corresponding, not yet existent future event that is distant in time and can likewise only be verified afterward.

Jung (1951/1969) adds:

> In groups 2 and 3 the coinciding events are not yet present in the observer's field of perception, but have been anticipated in time in so far as they can only be verified afterward. For this reason I call such events *synchronistic*, which is not to be confused with *synchronous* (para. 985).

These definitions need clarification due particularly to the omission of key words such as 'acausal' and 'meaningful' (among others): According to Jung, two or more events constitute synchronicity when a *meaningful* connection—a meaningful association—can be made between the events, but I suggest it is only synchronicity *proper* once meaningfulness has been established (which may come sooner or later as synchronicity *proper* is the end product of a process that only starts with the synchronistic events). I say 'synchronicity *proper*' to demarcate it from a *provisional* meaningless chance grouping whereby the former is proved not to be a case of the latter, and to do that we need meaningfulness beyond 'shared meaning' (i.e., superficial parallels between the material).

At this stage, we have sufficient understanding of Jung's ideas about synchronicity to attempt an in-depth consideration of the evidence in the Pike case that ostensibly supports the claim for synchronicity.

THE EVIDENCE

Born James Albert Pike in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA, Pike was an Episcopal bishop (Church of England), prolific writer, and one of the first mainline religious figures to appear regularly on television. It is ironic that he had many questions about the Church and its dogma, and he was particularly critical of its failure to keep up with the times. For example, he fought with Catholic bishops over their attacks on Planned Parenthood and their opposition to birth control. However, even Pike himself expressed doubts about the afterlife, and other fundamental

precepts of Christian belief (e.g., virgin birth and the Trinity), so it is no wonder that he got into so much conflict with Church authorities. Although charges of heresy were brought against him multiple times throughout the 1960s, they were dropped to avoid negative attention against the Church as a respected institution.

Pike was married to Esther Yanovsky (they divorced in 1966) and they had four children, including their eldest Jim. By all accounts, Jim was an average student, with part of his struggle being related to career and other future choices, but that was the least of Jim's worries. In his teenage years, Jim began experimenting with hallucinogenic drugs and conveyed his serious existential concerns to Pike, who (in his 1969 book *The Other Side*) relates these issues to the reader in quite a caring, sympathetic, and understanding manner befitting a responsible father and a man of the cloth. In particular, and forming a major section of the book, Pike describes how he spent a considerable amount of time with Jim in shared accommodation in Cambridge (UK), where Jim's issues constantly came up for discussion—the original aims of the trip to Cambridge (though partly as a sabbatical) was for Pike to engage in professional work there, while Jim continued his studies at the university. Of course, Pike makes it quite clear that he invited his son to join him on the trip as an opportunity to connect with his son.

Late into their lengthy stay in Cambridge, Pike needed to return to the United States due to pressing business concerns, leaving Jim to return at a later date. In the book, Pike's own struggle with Jim, Jim's drug-taking, and Jim's difficulties with studies, friendships, and people generally, is palpable. Jim's psychological pressures ultimately got the better of him—on February 4, 1966, using a rifle purchased at a nearby gun store, Jim took his own life in a hotel room on Thirty-First Street in New York City.

After Jim's suicide, a lengthy series of peculiar (mostly physical) phenomena manifested from February 20, 1966 onwards (16 days after Jim's suicide). Most of these suggest extra-sensory perception (ESP) in the form of uncharacteristic thoughts or 'channelled ideas', psychokinesis (PK) in the form of materializations and out-of-place objects, and 'interferences' and symbolic or 'coded' representations concerning relevant persons and the environment—specifically, these phenomena are:[2]

- two postcards on the floor "lying so as to form a 140° angle with their outer edges" (p. 70);
- "bangs" (front curls) of Pike's secretary Maren Bergrud singed (occurring three times) (pp. 71, 73);

[2] This list does not include the mediumistic or psychic readings.

- Maren's bad dream about "archdeacons" (interpreted as "*archdemons*"; pp. 72-73);
- Maren waking up to find her "third and fourth fingernails were injured" as if by a "sharp instrument pressed under them" (p. 72);
- Maren claiming that Pike declared to her that he does not care for people; quoting him as saying: "You can't count on anybody…. Look out for Number 1." (p. 75);
- Reverend David Barr (Pike's friend and colleague) confessing his momentary but inexplicable feelings of worthlessness (pp. 75-76);
- two paperback books lying together on the floor at an angle of 140° (p. 77);
- souvenir picture of Beersheba (Israel) removed from its frame and 'shifted' to the inside of the closet amongst some clothes (p. 78);
- blank stationery and postcards found amongst a messy pile of clothes in the closet on Jim's side, yet the other side of the closet (Pike's side) was neat and tidy (p. 78);
- Jim's alarm clock reading 8:19, corresponding to "around 3.00 a.m., New York time", assigned by the coroner as the time of Jim's suicide (pp. 79-80);
- Venetian blinds closed differently from the usual way (p. 81);
- photo of Pike's daughter Connie shifted from a light fixture to the dresser drawer (p. 81);
- milk from the refrigerator gone sour (p. 82);
- garbage bag "attached to the disposal device on the wall by the sink" (p. 83);
- Pike, for some unknown reason, deciding to look up at a clock to see the time 8:19 (p. 83);
- the rooms in the flat uncharacteristically warm (p. 84);
- the Bible moved to the same place the postcards and paperbacks had been found earlier (i.e., between the two beds) (p. 84);
- the Church of England Year-book found moved to "behind the electric heater" (p. 84);
- two books found "moved" (p. 88);
- open windows "which had been closed" (p. 88);
- "misplaced clothes" (p. 88);
- safety pins lying open "in several places" (p. 88);
- a "broken Marlboro cigarette" (p. 88);
- "an object [a silver hand mirror, part of a dresser-set] in motion" sliding off a shelf (p. 88);
- a journal missing from the desk but found in Pike's "Samsonite attaché case" (p. 89);

- a lock of Maren's hair found between the two beds (p. 90);
- the same two safety pins (left where they were previously) slightly moved and opened at 140° (p. 90);
- a book (*Armageddon* by Leon Ulrich) found under the bed, with a postcard of Peterborough, a torn piece of paper stuck to it, and a thumb-print, apparently not Pike's, Maren's, or David's (p. 90);
- a book (*The Date of the Last Supper!* by Annie Jaubert), fortuitously found with a Beersheba camel post-card (apparently one of Jim's) stuck inside marking a chapter about John and the other apostles; of timely interest to Pike who was researching the topics (p. 140);
- Jaubert's book (*Last Supper*) found on the floor, fortuitously lying next to a UNESCO book sought by Pike (p. 140);
- An associate of Pike's, John McConnell, recalling being awakened at the time of Jim's suicide with a "terrible sense of dread" that someone outside his "own family" was dying (p. 144);
- On the same night, a female friend of John McConnell seeing "two awful faces of evil" (p. 144);
- John McConnell's female friend phoning an 'upstate' friend of hers who "had known Jim" (p. 144). Jim is mentioned though his suicide was not known at that point in time;
- Miss Anna Zacharias (who later marries John McConnell) reports "a strange episode" involving a 3:00am wake-up on February 4th to a feeling of "great fear" (p. 145);
- two of Jim's friends, Nan and Billie, awakened on the morning of February 4th with a "horrible feeling that tragedy had somehow struck" (p. 145);
- a number of "*open safety pins*" (some in pairs) 'reading' "eight nineteen" in the living room of Pike's friend David Baar's home (pp. 147-148).

Having found no earthly reasons for these 'anomalies', Pike resigned himself to no other possible explanation but that they *meant something*, and were particularly related to Jim. His reasoning stemmed from a number of facts: Jim liked purchasing postcards, and did so on their travels; Jim did not like Maren's hair-style and thought she should cut off the fringe; Jim did not really care much for people; Jim often felt worthless; Jim was messy with his clothes, often leaving them strewn about the Cambridge flat; Jim had the duty of putting out the garbage; Jim's preferred cigarette brand was Marlboro; and so on.

Of particular import is the fact that the time of 8:19 corresponds to an angle of approximately 140°, the angle at which the postcards, books, and safety pins were said to be found. However, 3:00, New York time (the

approximate time the coroner ruled as the time of Jim's death), is actually 8:00, London time; not 8:19. For whatever reason, Pike assumed 8:19 was more accurate.[3] Clearly, Pike thought the physical anomalies indicated the right time, and it would then surely have crossed his mind that the coroner was wrong. However, Pike never discusses this discrepancy. All these rationalizations led Pike to reduce the above anomalies to causal factors relating to Jim—indeed, he thought Jim had perpetrated them from the 'Other Side'. Before I consider Pike's assumptions and conclusions further, I will first consider the various psychological and parapsychological aspects of the case.

THE PSYCHOLOGY AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY OF PIKE'S EXPERIENCES

In this section I consider the psychological and parapsychological factors that are evident, or may have had influence in Pike's case. It will become apparent that not all aspects of the case are explained by a purely psychological approach.

Psychological Factors and Explanations

The psychological analyses of Pike's experiences, and those of the other players in the drama, are not offered here to be parsimonious, or reductive, or comprehensive. I merely present conventional viewpoints to give a broader perspective on the case. The experiences do seem to gravitate around a common theme (Jim's suicide). Pike, and Pike's associates (Maren Bergrud, David Barr, etc.), and others, experienced psychological and physical disturbances, and Pike collates these with Jim's mental state before and after his suicide. It should be noted that the emotional responses are the typical reactions and natural reflexes of individuals who find themselves engrossed or enmeshed in tragic circumstances. Recall that most of the players knew of Jim's suicide so

[3] The time of 8:19 actually corresponds to 135° (not 140°) between two clock hands. Pike may have gone to the effort of measuring this angle accurately with a protractor (same goes for the angles between the postcards, the paperbacks, and the safety pins), and assuming he did, his error was easily an honest mistake being out by only three or four percent each time. The safety pins are an anomaly in their own right—while the postcards and paperbacks may have been 'accidents' (e.g., they 'fell' to the floor that way), safety pins normally open at a mere 30° if left untampered. To form an angle of 140° (or even 135°), safety pins have to be physically bent by hand, all paranormality aside, and they tend not to settle at the desired angle without considerable trial and error.

their reactions (psychological and/or psychosomatic) are understood and to be expected.

There are, however, others (e.g., John McConnell, Anna Zacharias) who did not know of Jim's suicide, yet they too had similar reactions prior to learning about the tragedy. Pike preferred to regard these unfortunate moods and other emotional states as somehow belonging to Jim who projected them onto others deliberately or unwittingly. But as Pike also wondered, it is not clear why certain people would be 'chosen' by a discarnate Jim to bear his emotions for him, or how Jim's emotions could spill over into the human sphere and just happen to show that degree of selectivity. In fact, most of these people, whether they knew about Jim's suicide or not, were Pike's associates and this fact alone speaks more to Pike's psychology than it does to Jim's, but that hypothesis partly suggests paranormality and must be pursued in the next subsection (that is, while Pike's associates who knew of Jim's suicide might empathize with Pike's loss, and emote accordingly, others who did not know about the suicide, may have responded emotionally after having been triggered telepathically by Pike's state of mind).

It should also be noted that Pike introduced into his account of Jim's suicide (in his book *The Other Side*) only those individuals who were confirmed as having unusual (potentially paranormal) experiences, yet there would have been dozens, or even scores of individuals in Pike's and Jim's social world (e.g., immediate family and other relatives, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances) of whom we learn nothing from Pike, and these individuals include Pike's first wife Jane Alvies, his second wife Esther (Jim's biological mother no less), and Pike's three other children—and let us not forget grandparents, uncles, and aunts, all of whom are conspicuously and surprisingly absent in the telling. We might argue then that, statistically, all the negative mental (emotional) coincidences (the self-doubt, melancholy, unusual dreams) that we do learn about are commonly experienced in all walks of life, so the affected people we do hear about could constitute a single meaningless chance grouping similar to Jung's fish series (thus ruling out the paranormal, and therefore any synchronistic considerations).[4]

But is this argument all too familiar? Does it not bear the hallmarks of the Law of Truly Large Numbers? Diaconis and Mosteller (1989) succinctly describe this Law thus: "any outrageous thing is likely to happen" provided one has a "large enough sample" (p. 859). However, this Law of convenience is incapable of handling cases on an individual level;

[4] Jung (1952/1969) gives an example of a series of related events having a fish theme that recurred six times in 24 hours to show how meaningless chance groupings (not synchronicity) can fall "within the limits of probability" (para. 827), primarily on the basis of social context.

thus it rules out any possible assertion of meaning that might genuinely apply, both personally and in the real world. And since there are those instances for which we *can* determine meaning and meaningfulness, we can abandon the Law of Truly Large Numbers. Yet, sometimes finding something of meaning can be fraught with complications if it is of dubious causality. As will be seen, the psychic and mediumistic material is of questionable worth, but even if the Barnum Effect was at play,[5] some portions of the material may not be dregs, but may be pure distillates of psychological merit (which is to say, Pike might serendipitously have reaped some therapeutic benefit from that material—indeed, it appears he did).

Thus, some psychological explanations are helpful, but not all—in particular, the physical anomalies Pike reported, unless we resort to forgetfulness or carelessness (e.g., the postcards, paperbacks, and safety pins may have been lying there all along, but Pike, in his grief, had not noticed them earlier), human clumsiness (e.g., someone dropped the objects in their respective places), or fraud (i.e., the 'evidence' had been deliberately planted). But otherwise the disappearances or reappearances of books, postcards, photographs, safety pins, and (in particular instances) their peculiar geometrical layouts at 140° angles, are difficult to explain. Indeed, Pike went to considerable effort trying to work out how the various items might have been accidentally left there by the charlady, cleaner, etc., but his inquiries and deductions yielded nothing. Maren's burnt hair and damaged fingernails are not so easily explained either, unless we characterize Maren as a borderline type who could not admit to her own self-harm (not altogether unlikely given that she later proved to be a suicidal type).[6]

Following on from these points, there is one other psychological explanation worth exploring: 'apophenia'. Apophenia is misperception of images or sounds in random stimuli (e.g., seeing faces in clouds or burnt toast). Milbourne Christopher (an American illusionist and magic historian) holds that Pike and his colleagues may have been victims of apophenia (Christopher, 1975). He reduces the way in which the postcards and safety pins appeared on the floor to indicate the time of Jim's suicide as only having 'meaning' because Pike *et alia* created connections which were

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5 The APA Dictionary of Psychology defines the Barnum Effect as "the tendency to believe that vague predictions or general personality descriptions, … have specific applications to oneself" (https://dictionary.apa.org/barnum-effect).

6 In 1967, at the height of the Pike drama, Maren committed suicide from an overdose of sleeping pills. Pike suggests her cancer contributed to her decision to suicide, but Robertson (2004) points out that Pike and Maren were living together, in a relationship, and she took her own life after an argument between the two of them.

never there in the first place (the time of 8:19 might be a case in point since the coroner ruled Jim's time of death was 8:00, London time; perhaps Pike deferred to the time of 8:19 to suit the evidence from the clock, postcards, etc.). The problem with this explanation is that the phenomena repeat themselves multiple times in different settings for different individuals, yet Christopher seems to think this form of mass delusion could maintain itself without Pike *et alia* ever waking up to their folly. In short, there is a point at which a man can protest too much, and then the suspicions backfire. The other problem is we simply do not know that the coroner's estimated time of suicide was accurate; which is to say, the forensic evidence to hand leads a pathologist to construct a 'best fit' scenario. The materials in question, taken collectively, constitute a consistent array of objects; they do not readily form obtuse angles naturally (i.e., by chance, especially the safety pins—see footnote 3); and the postcards and books hold particular relevance (i.e., they belonged to Jim).

Parapsychological Factors and Explanations

Given the inadequacies or uncertainties of the psychological explanations, we are compelled to consider the parapsychological aspects of the case. Pike suggests Jung's two theories about the Collective Unconscious and Synchronicity might explain the personal links, though he seems prepared to class these links as "pure coincidence" (p. 147). Earlier in the book, however, Pike refers to his "lowered guard" and the "reduced effectiveness" of his so-called "selective screen" which enables "psychic communication" (p. 124). Pike is effectively describing a key factor related to synchronicity; namely, '*abaissement du niveau mental*' (i.e., lowering of the mental threshold). The circumstances are indeed pointers to a synchronistic interpretation since the main elements of Pike's accounts—his emotionally-charged and powerful psychological images of a 'discarnate' Jim and associated factors (e.g., Jim's time of death), the tangible and symbolic manifestations, and their meaningful connections to each other—are just about as obviously synchronistic as we can expect.

Prior to Pike's attribution of the above anomalies to Jim from the 'Other Side', Pike entertained the possibility of a "poltergeist" (p. 78); an hypothesis he revisited later in the book, at the suggestion of renowned reincarnation investigator, the late Ian Stevenson of the Virginia School of Medicine. Stevenson told Pike "it's just possible … that you yourself were the source of the poltergeist phenomena" (p. 293). Pike also thought that the 'horrible feelings' reported by John, Anna, Nan, Billie, and the others, "must have been Jim's just before he died … accounted for by ESP" (p. 146). This assumption emerged as a result of seeing a number of psychics or

mediums who produced allegedly veridical information that suggested to Pike mainly ESP and occasional post-mortem survival themes.

First, he saw medium Ena Twigg (1914-1984), arranged through a colleague of his (canon John Pearce-Higgins, known for his 'depossession' work). In a series of sessions, Mrs. Twigg produced some intriguing and ostensibly paranormal readings for an impressed Pike; not only were they putatively from Jim's channelled spirit, but they also came from Pike's mentor Paul Tillich (1886-1965), the notable philosopher and theologian. Twigg engaged in both direct clairaudience and trance-like mediumship, the latter of which Pike found "perplexing" (p. 122). Then, Pike followed up his inquiries with medium Reverend George Daisley (1911-2001) of the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship. More communications from Jim ensued, including channelling from Edgar Cayce, the famous trance-medium and psychic. Daisley's communications were mostly of a paranormal nature, ostensibly from Jim, but possibly telepathic, as Pike noted.

Finally, one major sitting—a séance of sorts—occurred on a network television program 'W-5' ('Who, What, Why, When, and Where'), filmed in Toronto, Canada, in September 1967, and hosted by Allen Spraggett (1967), author of *The Unexplained*. After much discussion about mediumship for the benefit of the host and the audience (pp. 191-196), a special guest medium Arthur Ford, who also happened to be an ordained minister, slipped into an altered state, and thus began an impromptu séance. Through 'Fletcher' (Ford's spirit guide), this event produced a great deal of factual and speculative material from 'Jim' and sundry other characters, including Jim's grandfather Elijah (referred to as 'Elias'), Pike's associates Marvin Halverson, Louis Pitt, George Zabriskie, Donald McKinnon, Karl Block, and others. Curiously, all these individuals (excluding Elijah) were known to Pike, not Jim. (Pike paid a second visit to Ford after the show for further psychic readings, and he took with him Diane Kennedy, his newly-appointed personal assistant.)

Along with Pike's supposition of possible telepathic links that might explain the messages (mostly the standard platitudes, misgivings, regrets, and so forth), Pike "suggests much of the psychic's own understanding is being expressed" in the communications, though he conceded much of it was possibly from "the surviving personality", which is to say Jim (p. 181). Still, he was impressed by all three mediums, and spent a considerable portion of the book attesting to their authenticity. Nevertheless, he did state that much of the psychic content could have been produced by research (he acknowledged "frauds in the field"; p. 195).

In line with Pike's suspicions, skeptical investigator John Booth alleged that Twigg knew a great deal about Pike and his family before the séance (Booth, 1986). And a few years after the televised séance, Ford was exposed for widespread fraud by his biographers Allen Spraggett and

William Rauscher (Spraggett & Rauscher, 1973). Ford's files contained many obituaries, newspaper clippings, and other information that enabled Ford to research the background of his clients. Spraggett and Rauscher felt there was sufficient evidence suggesting that Ford had faked the 1967 TV-séance. Clearly at a disadvantage in not knowing about these accusations and exposés (though, as said, he did have his suspicions), Pike remained open to parapsychological explanations.

Taking these factors into consideration, I am not prepared to give any more time to the séance material as I regard it as spurious in this instance. Besides which, it makes little difference whether or not the material was genuine (from Jim, or about Jim), for one is faced with the issue of post-mortem survival vs. 'super-psi' (where 'psi' is ESP/PK; 'super-psi' is also known as 'living agent psi'; LAP), the dichotomy of which one feels compelled to resolve, or at least make an attempt at resolving. The survival solution means there was communication between a discarnate entity (Jim) and various psychics (Twigg/Daisley/Ford) but, in a synchronicity scenario, a communicating discarnate entity is no different than a living person for the simple reason that, *if* an entity (Jim) attempts contact with the living (Pike *et alia*), or (in dispensing with the survival argument, we opt for LAP) *if* the medium is reading the minds of Pike *et alia*, *then* communication in both cases can be read as *telepathy* (following the Rhinean paradigm),[7] and I interpret telepathy as synchronicity. That is to say, when the right archetype is activated in one person, the same archetype can be activated in other persons/personalities known to that person, at any distance, at any time. As Jung (1952/1969) explains, the archetype is experienced as "affectivity" (para. 846). In synchronicity, the archetype behind the 'inner' component that is represented by a pertinent image in the experient's mind is the same archetype behind the outer component (e.g., the minds of others). Here the archetype is a uniquely human, inherited 'mode of apprehension' (a way to think, emote, and act) that results in a pattern of behaviour much like a blueprint guides action.

At this juncture, it is crucial to point out that I hold a strict definition of synchronicity that dispenses with any kind of claim for effects that involve anomalous communication based on information transmission (as in telepathy). Under the principle of synchronicity, information transmission,[8] or energy transfer, or any kind of paranormal 'perceiving' is not

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[7] J. B. Rhine (1895-1980) is the first major scientific investigator of paranormal phenomena, and he furthered the use of the terms extrasensory perception (ESP), psychokinesis (PK), telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition, thus establishing what I refer to as the Rhinean paradigm.

[8] Irwin and Watt (2007) describe Jung's theory of synchronicity as "noncybernetic"—that is, it abandons "the notion of information flow" (p. 132).

theoretically relevant to the effect; a psi 'hit' (e.g., 'equivalence' in synchronicity) is only ever an approximate *correspondence*, not to a target, but to archetypal content *represented* in the target. Starting in the individual, the archetype (having been activated, or constellated), as a superordinate factor, works as a 'categorical imperative' that limits the number of meaningful correspondences between 'inner' and 'outer' since they must fall into that archetypal category. A word on causality is needed here: Philosopher Antony Flew (1953) notes that archetypes do not have causal aspects, for to assert otherwise would strip coincidences of their acausality and they would no longer be coincidences; he believes archetypes may have an important part to play in psychological enquiry:

> it is essential to remember that however regularly he [Jung] uses causal words of archetypes—speaking of their *activities* in *constellating* and *arranging* and so on—he definitely does not want us to think of them as the *causes* of non-causal synchronicity. But rather as what provides a context and helps to give point and meaning to them. Indeed it seems that the function of the archetypes is not causally to explain coincidences.… But rather to show why certain concurrences are found striking, pointed, meaningful, even numinous; and subsumed under the concept of coincidence, while others are not. (p. 201)

On a similar thread, these words from Ira Progoff (1973) amplify the concepts quite well:

> the archetypal element in a situation cannot be encompassed in any of the usual definitions of causality. It is not causal, but rather recrystallizing and restructuring. It reconstitutes a situation across time without respect to the causal connections within it, without respect to boundaries of space, and without respect to any directive factor of the conscious mind. It moves across causality, and its effects are beyond causality. (p. 162)

Jung (1952/1969) is even more succinct, referring to such 'reconstituted situations across time' as "*creative acts*" or as "continuous creation" (para. 967).

Whichever Rhinean term one may naïvely think settles the issue on the Pike communications (for clairvoyance is also suggested in *The Other Side*), we will see there *is* no way of settling it, as Pike was to discover. More and more, we see Pike grappling with Rhinean terms, *and* the survival question, while simultaneously moving towards a synchronistic turn of mind. Even by the end of the book, Pike never avows that "Jim said …" anything (p. 307), and only admits that he *believed* Jim was "in touch" with him.

Confining myself to the physical evidence, we are left with one other conventional (Rhinean) term (namely PK), which means we may struggle, as Pike did, with interpretations and apportionments of responsibility to any and all characters in the drama (Jim, Pike himself, his associates, or even the poltergeist that Stevenson suggested), or we label these physical anomalies further examples of synchronicity. Ordinarily, we might opt for one of two possibilities—the phenomena are either materializations of matter (postcards, safety pins, etc.) out of thin air (a prominent theme in poltergeist literature), or they were apported by whomsoever, to be discovered later by Pike *et alia* (for an interesting and comprehensive treatment of these 'material' problems, see Barrington, 2018; Inglis, 1985; Jinks, 2016).

Thus, PK effects seem harder to explain than ESP because (due to cultural prejudice) we allow (in the case of ESP) a certain flexibility to the mind, and give it a transcendental aspect we would never apportion to matter, which we feel must behave itself at all times. But Jung attributed a 'psychoid' aspect to the archetype (see next subsection), which Main (2014) describes very well when he says "archetypes can structure matter as well as psyche – and not just separately but at the same time in respect to the same pattern of meaning" (p. 225). To illustrate this point, and show that Pike's is not an isolated case, there is an oft-cited event given by Jung (1961/1989) in his *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, involving his mentor at the time, Sigmund Freud, and a bookcase in Freud's study. In 1909, Jung and Freud were in Vienna having a heated argument over parapsychology.[9] Jung writes that he had a 'curious sensation':

> It was as if my diaphragm were made of iron and were becoming red-hot—a glowing vault. And at that moment there was such a loud report in the bookcase, which stood right next to us, that we both started up in alarm, fearing the thing was going to topple over on us. I said to Freud: "There, that is an example of a so-called catalytic exteriorization phenomenon."
>
> "Oh come," he exclaimed. "That is sheer bosh."
>
> "It is not," I replied. "You are mistaken, Herr Professor. And to prove my point I now predict that in a moment there will be another such loud report!" Sure enough, no sooner had I said the words than the same detonation went off in the bookcase.
>
> To this day I do not know what gave me this certainty. (pp. 155-156)

[9] Originally a skeptic, Freud later showed himself to be more accepting of 'occult' matters (Freud, 1933).

We learn later that Freud (1909, as cited in Fisher, 2011) had his own explanation for the bookcase explosions; indeed, in Jung's absence it happened again and again, and not in the context of thoughts similar to those held by Freud and Jung on the day in question. Fisher takes Freud's side and dismisses the coincidence as mere chance, and is content with Freud's causal account of the explosions. But the causality underpinning the bookcase explosions is irrelevant; we can expect a single cause for that alone. The incident is still synchronicity because the necessary inner and outer components are present—the inner component being particularly cogent in the affectivity and interaction of both players in the drama, and the outer event being the bookcase explosions (we might even propose there were two synchronicities—one for each of the players, with each getting a 'bang' out of it). Inglis (1985) is helpful here for he notes that these sorts of effects tend to carry the same phenomenology: (i) they nearly always involve two people; (ii) the two are usually relatives or friends—"one who observed, or experienced, the effect", and the other usually at a distance and/or "in a state of tension or crisis"; and (iii) they usually involve a "household appliance, like a clock or picture" (p. 104), and we might add to that list, furniture, safety pins, postcards, and paperbacks.

Theoretically, while the events in Pike's experience could equally be attributed to his unconscious, or Jim from the Other Side, or a poltergeist, it ultimately matters not as, invariably, we are playing a kind of identity politics when we go looking for a 'focus' or a culprit, when all-along we may be dealing with archetypal energies, where the psychoid aspect in the psyche/matter dyad becomes evident (here, 'psychoid' means matter *behaves* as if it had a psychological dimension that explains psychophysical events like synchronicity). If Pike unconsciously 'knew' or 'discovered' the time of his son's death, and was psychokinetically instrumental in the 8:19 sequence, he no doubt arrived at it synchronistically as a meaningful, symbolic reminder to come to an awakening—a realization—about himself (some might not be able to resist the pun that it was *about time* too, since the problem was *about* time).[10]

Furthermore, following the afterlife paradigm, only Jim could have known the exact time of his own death, so we can assume that the 8:19 array of evidence does not reduce to interfering, tricksterish poltergeistry, but is more likely Jim's handiwork, though he never admitted to it in the communications. Yet Pike (1969, pp. 293-299), under Stevenson's tutelage, still makes a case for himself being the poltergeist "focus" (p. 295).

[10] Issues with time—particularly the obsession with clock time as in Pike's case—evoke the *senex* (Old Man) archetype. The counterpart of the *senex* is the *puer eternus* (eternal child or youth). In the section below (*Enter the Archetype*) we can see this two-part complex played out mythologically as father and son (see also Tarnas, 2007, p. 58).

Ultimately, Pike cannot decide, stating "it is equally plausible to me … that either my son was the source of the various phenomena or that the source was I myself (or either or both of my companions and I)" (p. 298). One can see that Pike's reasoning reduces the poltergeist to human factors, as proffered by many (e.g., Pratt & Roll, 1958), including D. Scott Rogo, who reduced the phenomenon to RSPK (i.e., PK attributed to a focus person or persons):

> poltergeists focus on unhappy families who tend to repress and sublimate massive amounts of inner aggression and anger. This anger tends to build within the mind of one of the family members until it explodes outward in the form of the poltergeist. (Rogo, 1986, back-cover)

Australian poltergeist researchers, Tony Healy and Paul Cropper, agree that their vast collection of case studies lends support to Rogo's conclusions as being applicable in most poltergeist cases (Healy & Cropper, 2014). These conclusions are somewhat undermined by recent shifts from a 'disease' model directed at the agent (see, for example, Roll, 1977) to a 'dis-ease' model involving transliminal processes in the agent (Ventola et al., 2019), which fortunately dispenses with past accusations of mental illness on the part of the agent.

All very well, but we see that the creativity, the imagery, the symbolism underlying Pike's physical synchronicities seem uncanny and unfathomable, with attribution as to their causes beyond our ken, so that the poltergeist sneaks back in as a likely candidate, but not solely, for if there is anything like, or anything approximating, a poltergeist influence, whatever that may be, it is more a co-conspirator in the drama than anything else. That is, Pike is in it up to his neck, but in a *relative way*. German parapsychologist Hans Bender (1980) made good effort drawing out this point that the "arranging power" of the individual (albeit unconscious) is far too limited to bring about symbolic messages at a scale recognised as paranormal, and it is better to attribute such occurrences to archetypes. Pike (1969) makes a case for the process being analogous to dreaming:

> … in a dream state the full drama is produced unconsciously. For such remarkable plays, where are the producer, the scenario writer, the designer of sets, the wardrobe mistress, the director? Have those who have categorized psychic phenomena and even ESP as incredible nonsense ever pondered *that* mystery? How does the dream get put together into a dynamic production when the dreamer, unconscious, is "out of it"? (p. 304)

The same question can be asked in relation to synchronicity—indeed, Pike may not have realized just how appropriate his dream analogy was. One must concede that one is truly "out of it" when the symbolic world unfolds

and appears to us as paranormal. Even in the case of intentional synchronicity, where there is a degree of conscious involvement, the question concerning how it constructs itself is not fully answered in its details, though Jung's *unus mundus* model that describes psychophysical reality, and echoes the ancient idea of the microcosmic/macrocosmic totality, is a reasonable starting point—reality unfolds like a dream or play, and we are players in it, with our behaviours being shaped by the imaginable and the unimaginable. The answer appears to lie lurking in the depths of the unconscious—in each *individual* unconscious—which in itself resolves the diffusion problem of the 'one' amongst the 'many' implied in a macrocosmic sea of ideas and the people who have them. One's consciousness is quite plainly not flooded by the contents of that sea; rather each navigates in the relatively calm waters of their own mind.

Sure to be a sticking point for some, I have consequently nominated the 'deep imagination' as the creative source and filter (i.e., limiting principle through meaning) of the individual's ideas. This process necessarily involves the psychological domain, the so-called 'Collective Unconscious' (Jung, 1959/1968). Coming close to this idea, and to Pike's analogy, is the notion that waking-state paranormal events (psi, synchronicity) are structurally isomorphic to dreams, all underpinned by neurological structure like those cognitive processes with which we are more familiar. Only, as is merely suggested in mundane psi, when archetypes manifest in synchronistic situations, the border between self and world collapses as inner (psychological) and outer (physical) are drawn together in meaning. As Jung (1952/1969) notes:

> You can never say with certainty whether what appears to be going on in the collective unconscious of a single individual is not also happening in other individuals or organisms or things or situations. (Jung, para. 912)

However, we do see that imagination is only the link from 'our side'. Imagination *per se* is not (and cannot be) the sole explanation as to how cognitions and perturbations are propagated by the contents of that 'other' realm, and we will not have an answer until we exhaust all possible research avenues in our endeavours to fully fathom the nature of the key to that 'other', which I suggest are the archetypes in the collective unconscious; a realm Bender (1980) calls "nature in its entirety" (p. 24). Thus, when Pike (1969) notes, in reference to dreams and meaningful coincidences, that one finds oneself constantly trying to come to terms with the "totally illogical aspects of it all and the incredible absurdity of it" (p. 284), the way to undo some of the absurdity will probably prove to be archetypal.

Enter the Archetype

Synchronicity was first conceived by Jung to ameliorate the 'triadic' limitations of science, but he would not have failed to see synchronicity in Pike's tragic circumstances because the *emotional quotient*, *numinosity*, and *meaningfulness* are so apparent—the emotional quotient we find in the turmoil surrounding Jim's suicide, and the numinosity and meaningfulness we find in the arrays of postcards, books, and safety pins, and the implications inherent in those arrays. And then, of course, there is the archetype: In fact, two archetypes stand out—the first is the problematized father/son relationship that bitterly resolves into the heavy loss of the son, and the subsequent horror of the father, so that this archetype is intricately bound up with a second archetype; death, with all its associations, including trauma and grief.

For good reason we see this same father/son dynamic embodied in the myth of the inventor Daedalus (from the Greek *Daidalos* = 'to work cunningly or artfully') and his son Icarus (whose name possibly derives from the Etruscan *Vikare* = 'a substitute'). As Jung (1959/1968) has noted, these parallels are legitimate because the psychological dynamics we live out in our day-to-day lives are monumentalized in mythology (mythology *is* the first psychology). Human events, behaviours, and interactions are the same stories told over and over again across the eons of time. In the 'Pike drama', the die was already cast: Daedalus and Icarus escape from imprisonment on the island of Crete using feathered wings fashioned by Daedalus. In their flight, Icarus does not heed the pleas of his father; he flies too high, and the sun melts the wax bonding the feathers of his wings. The wings fragment, whereupon Icarus falls into the sea and drowns.

The parallels are all too clear: We can see that, for the pure thrill of it, both sons (Jim and Icarus) 'got high', dangerously and fatally so, and they accomplished this by artificial (unnatural) means. There are other parallels: We get the impression from *The Other Side*, that Pike, an assiduous worker, dedicated and proud (like Daedalus), seems all too caught up in his controversial 'inventions' (his peers called them 'heresies') to play the role of father more fully, thus raising a carefree (some may say undisciplined) son—Ovid described Icarus as lazy, and meddling, and a hindrance while his father worked on the wings, whereas Pike tells us that Jim was lackadaisical about his studies and his friendships. Fathers and sons both seem to wish for escape. After Icarus' death, Daedalus cursed his 'art'; after Jim's death, Pike resigned his position as Bishop of California.

Like Daedalus, who built the Labyrinth that housed the half-man/half-bull hybrid known as the Minotaur, Pike's unconstrained workaholism (very much evident in *The Other Side*), his intuitive flights of fancy, and his dubious (even narcissistic) relationship skills became a maze

around which 'darker' (monstrous) psychological aspects of himself were trapped—that is to say, unvented and never given a legitimate outlet. These energies can reach their zenith—all it takes is a tragedy of proportions sufficient to spill over into the world via the unconscious. What ensues is all manner of psychophysical phenomena manifesting as an unbridled series of coincidences and synchronistic occurrences. These 'externalities' can be seen as archetypally co-evolved and conjoined with the 'internalities' until the distinctions blur—the two in conjunction describe an age-old human process, reworked and refined until, ultimately, they bind to become an archetypal human experience that extends beyond the individual's psychophysiological sphere, and become psychophysical. In that sense, the paranormal aspects are normalized. It is as if that psychoid realm just mentioned manifests a connecting tissue between inner and outer; the defining rule in the tenet, 'as above, so below', is that events are bound by meaning, not cause. Meaningful 'outer' occurrences (those 'exteriorizations' Jung mentions) seem almost psychosomatic as opposed to psychokinetic. That is to say, the physical aspects of Pike's experience, given their psychoid nature, have mental counterparts that are accessible only through the mind because the two realms, mental and physical, are not separate and distinct, but are expressions of a single reality

Clearly, there is more to be concerned with in psi than the breaking of Broad's (1949) basic limiting principles.[11] The mythological parallels in cases like Pike's, that speak to archetypal factors, suggest in no uncertain terms, the likelihood that psi phenomena are synchronistic. In such cases, the archetypes play pivotal roles; they are templates for human behaviour, and once an archetype is constellated, it follows its course to the end—fate, as it may be, takes over: "Archetypes are complexes of experience that come upon us like fate" (Jung, 1959/1968, para. 62). Of course, psi in the laboratory is of a different order; but only in degree, not kind. That being said, although the archetypal soup (the collective unconscious) writ large is psychosocially, psychodynamically, and psychophysically complex, and its contents, the archetypes themselves, are "formal factors responsible for the organisation of unconscious psychic processes" (1952/1969, para. 841), these processes may nevertheless extend sufficiently, and be so organised, they are objectively observable, even in the laboratory.

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[11] Philosopher C. D. Broad (1949) introduced four major basic limiting principles (though others are given) thought to be self-evident and generally taken for granted: there can be no backward causation (i.e., no future-telling), no action at a distance (i.e., no mind over matter), no perception unmediated by the senses (i.e., no mind-reading, no distant seeing), and mind depends on brain (i.e., consciousness cannot engage in nonlocal functions).

SUMMING UP

Pike's biographer David Robertson (2004) noted

> In April of 1969, while Pike and his [second] wife [Diane Kennedy] were driving to Qumran [Israel], they got lost and their car became stuck in the dirt. After ten hours of walking, Diane made it out. Five days later the bishop's body was found.

We also learn that this trip into the desert was poorly prepared (no guide, an inaccurate map, and insufficient water). It took five days to find Pike's decomposing body—he'd fallen to his death about sixty feet off a canyon ridge onto a ledge below. Not just a sad end but an ironic end in the sense that his death was the lonely (archetypal) death of a prophet of old; a wanderer in the wilderness in search of truth, in search of an invisible God, in search of an answer to the ultimate question, Why? We'll never know what Pike discovered in his last moments, and perhaps that is fitting. One's personal voyage remains forever personal and one travels the road of one's personal myth to the end, with much left untold. And perhaps for good reason, for one's life is so often fraught with complications, that even the sincerest and sorriest telling will not prevent judgments of all kinds; and who should judge?

The Other Side does leave much untold, but we learn enough to know of the struggle Bishop James Pike had with his son's suicide. Yet at first blush, one wonders why the last chapter of *The Other Side* waxes tirelessly about the history and the mystery of humankind, the normal (e.g., higher consciousness and dreaming), and the paranormal (including an impressive defense of parapsychology)—even the grandeur of the universe, and our place in it—but with only a brief reflection on his son (only two pages in a 28-page chapter). Even the 'Afterwords', the greater part of which Pike leaves to Ena Twigg, seem perfunctory and platitudinous to my way of thinking, albeit satisfactory to Pike. While Pike had over 300 pages to come to grips with his son's suicide; particularly the horrific nature of its execution, it is possible Pike never really got over the tragedy. Did writing *The Other Side* help give Pike some kind of closure, or did he sink into denial? Was Pike so racked with remorse and guilt that he sought an answer in the way of the prophets? Does Robertson's quote suggest such recourse?

My thoughts on the how and the why of Jim's actions revolve around his drug-taking. Pike describes occasions when Jim had very frightening trips after having taken one drug or another, and Pike tells how he was always there to comfort Jim and help him get through those drug-induced ordeals. Such non-ordinary states of consciousness could be described as being out of one's mind, literally—a kind of madness—the many ghastly

types of suicide seem like temporary acts of insanity, and are legally described as such. Jim may have been of a type for whom that 'other' state of mind was, ultimately, a one-way trip. To borrow from mythologist Joseph Campbell, Jim may well have drowned "in the same waters in which the mystic swims with delight" (as cited in Lee, 1985, p. 40), but we must remember: Jim passed; it was Pike who had to struggle day after day in the shadow of Jim's monstrous madness, *and* make sense of it, *and* try to survive. But in trying to make sense of the unusual phenomena listed above, we have seen that psychological and parapsychological explanations do not entirely satisfy. What is missing is a synchronistic turn of mind that pitches from the level of meaning rather than cause. Part of that pitch requires an understanding of archetypes, of which we are perhaps making some progress that allows us to hazard a guess, at the very least.

While we ponder the tragedy, we may take comfort in the greater meaning underlying this declaration from Pike: "extra-sensory perception is a profound and wonderful mystery and gives beautiful evidence of the synchronicity of the universe—the Unus in the universe" (p. 195). And Pike made the following equation: Unus = "God". More generally, we might say that paranormal experiences give us a glimpse of an otherwise ineffable Oneness that many are urged to anthropomorphize to render possible a human connection. Pike expands on these ideas in the final chapter, and one easily discovers that Pike had written Jim's short life into those closing statements which embrace a more holistic view of our universe—a universe that is ultimately better understood with a synchronistic turn of mind.

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