

BRAZIL

To understand parapsychology in Brazil, one needs to be familiar with the cultural milieu from which it has evolved, one that is dominated by Afro-Brazilian cults and Catholicism.

Spiritism is strongly influenced in Brazil by the Afro-Brazilian cults such as Umbanda and Candomble which derived from the African religions brought to Brazil through the slave trade. Spiritism also came from France to Brazil through the teachings of Allan Kardec. Spiritists believe the influence of spirits and the effects of healing.

On the other hand, the Catholic tradition developed a system that uses parapsychology to fight and eventually destroy all the movements the church sees as superstition and threats to the established Catholic dogmas.

This system has been developed mainly through the work of Father Oscar Gonzalez Quevedo, a Spanish-born Jesuit priest living in Brazil. He founded the Latin American Center of Parapsychology (CLAP), of the Anchieta College of Sao Paulo in 1970.

The goal of this Center is to disseminate scientific parapsychology in order to clarify the misconceptions and superstitions produced by lack of understanding of psychic phenomena. The CLAP used to publish a magazine called Revista de Parapsicologia, which summarized the activities of the Center and contained mostly theoretical articles.

Another dimension of Brazilian psychical research is the

work by researchers within the Spiritist orientation. One example is that conducted by the engineer and psychical researcher Hernani Guimaraes Andrade, who in 1963 founded the Brazilian Institute of Psychobiophysical Research (IBPP). The name was chosen to make it clear that the Institute intended to explore biological and physical as well as purely psychical phenomena.

One of the most significant things about this Institute is that it emerged from within the Spirits movement and has conducted well-planned and detailed investigations of reincarnation and poltergeist cases. Andrade has also published one of the first systematic treatises of parapsychology in Portuguese entitled "Parapsicologia Experimental" in 1967. This is a basic introductory manual of the quantitative method used in parapsychology and includes a detailed description of the statistical model used in experimentation with ESP cards.

Another parapsychological group in Brazil is the recently established ECLIPSY-Instituto de Investigações Científicas em Parapsicologia. This group aims to pursue a different approach, one separate from the more traditional approaches associated with Spiritist or Catholic orientations typical of most Brazilian research centers. It received support from from the University of Sao Francisco to organize its first conference in parapsychology, held in 1990, which included participants from the University as well as researchers from Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. This group plans to conduct experimental research that will be reported in its new journal, called "Revista Brasileira

de Parapsicologia. According to its president, Wellington Zangari, it will include translations from major experimental and theoretical articles published in the English-language journals.

Boaventura Kloppenburg immigrated with his parents from Northern Germany to Brazil in 1924 at the age of four. He entered the Franciscan order and distinguished himself as a scholar, going on to teach theology for many years in Rio De Janeior, later in Medellin, Columbia and Rome. He then returned to Brazil where he served four years as bishop of Salvador before becoming the Bishop of Novo Hamburog in September 1986.

Kloppenburg has published many articles and several books. He was writing about Spiritism in Brazil, i.e., Umbanda and Candomble and the teachings of Allan Kardec, as early as the 1950's.

Kloppenburg spent some time in the U.S. studying parapsychology at the renowned Duke University Laboratory. He is currently interested in "New Age" movements in the US and Europe.