

**ANOMALY:
JOURNAL AND CONFERENCE
PROCEEDINGS**

VOLUME 46

assap.ac.uk

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ANOMALY:

VOLUME 46 EDITORIAL

Anomaly 46 has the distinction of being the first edition to operate a professionally managed, formal peer-review system. Previous editions have operated a form of peer-assessment but edition 46 is the first edition under the new system. ASSAP is committed to accessibility to both quality writers and readership so Anomaly include a section of 'articles' that, for whatever reason, were not suitable for peer-review. The distinction is clearly drawn so readers are aware which articles have been subject only to editorial guidance and assessment rather than formal review.

Anomaly 46 carries essential updates on key areas of debate such as the paranormal photography, investigation methods and infrasound debates. Also included are more personal accounts as well as a wider variety of discourse on issues such as spirithood, language and time. A key theme of edition 46 is Ufology, several articles resulting from ASSAP's Seriously Unidentified conference at University of Worcester on 17 November 2012.

Finally, edition 46 carries the distinction of publishing ASSAP's Code of Ethics that forms the bedrock of the charity's professional body status.

ANOMALY:

JOURNAL OF RESEARCH INTO THE PARANORMAL

The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena was formed in 1981 to study a wide range of paranormal phenomena. These fall into the broad categories of psychic phenomena, Earth Mysteries, Ufology and Fortean phenomena. ASSAP holds no corporate views and the views, wording and images used by individual authors are their own responsibility.

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SURVEY OF PARANORMAL PHOTOGRAPHS: AN UPDATE

Maurice Townsend

In 2009 I wrote an article for *Anomaly* entitled 'Survey of Paranormal Photos' (vol. 43 p53, Nov 2009). The informal study on which that piece reported, consisting of receiving and analysing alleged paranormal photos through the ASSAP website, still continues. This article is an update on the survey featuring new trends that have emerged since the original article.

Since 2009 the collection of anomalous photos received has more than doubled to over two and a half thousand, sent in by over 700 individuals, using dozens of different camera models. Much of what was said about the collection in 2009 remains true, so please refer to the original article for details. However, there are definite changes now apparent in the type of photographs being received. For instance, more photos are now being sent in by ghost researchers whereas it was almost entirely members of the public before.

Orbs remain surprisingly popular, despite the fact that most paranormal researchers now accept that they are photographic artefacts. It therefore comes as no surprise that most orb photos now come from members of the public, for whom these anomalies may be novel. One oddity is that, though most paranormal researchers accept that orbs are artefacts, there remains a diversity of opinion on their technical cause. Despite the success of the Orb Zone Theory (*Anomaly* vol. 38 p2 May 2006, *SPR Journal* vol. 76 p17 January 2012), there are still people who do not appear to realise that orbs are actually out of focus!

MOTION BLUR

Long exposures make up one category of anomalous photo that has become more common recently. While unusually long exposures have always been a source of apparent ghostly figures in photos, this was mostly due to people moving in or out of the frame during the shot. Now, however, there are frequent cases where the camera itself moves during an exposure, sometimes **'bringing in' someone who started off outside the frame!** Digital cameras appear to make this sort of photo look less blurry than with film. If you point a digital camera steadily (even without a tripod) at a one scene for half of a long exposure and then swiftly move to point it elsewhere for the second part (holding it still once again), the result can look surprisingly sharp, like a double exposure.

Image stabilisation mechanisms no doubt assist with this kind of accidental **'transparent figure' photo**.

There is also a trend towards more obviously motion-blurred photos being submitted as ghost photos. Photos that might once have been seen as obvious **photographic 'mistakes' are now sometimes seen as possibly paranormal**. This is probably because motion-blurred photos often contain apparently transparent human figures that some people interpret as ghosts.

This idea of transparent figures as ghosts is odd, since the vast majority of eye witness descriptions of apparitions have always reported them as looking perfectly solid. It is in TV dramas, movies and video games where ghosts are most commonly depicted as transparent, which might be where the association comes from. These are, of course, fictional representations of ghosts. One **might speculate that the theatre 'invented' the transparent ghost in order to make characters who were apparitions obvious to audiences (Pepper's ghost)**. Whatever its origin, the idea of transparent ghosts is widespread despite the lack of compelling evidence from eye witnesses for their existence.

Certainly, if someone actually SAW a transparent figure with their naked eye, they could reasonably assume it was a ghost! However, the overwhelming **majority of 'transparent ghosts' reports come not from eye witness accounts**, but from photos. And close examination of these reveals that most are the result of long, or double, exposures.

With these newly common blurred anomalous photos, often the only object not obviously blurred is the alleged ghost, monster or alien! And this is a big clue to what is going on! If a camera moves while taking a shot of a still scene, every object will be blurred in exactly the same way. So, if a tree has a faint double image of itself to its right hand side, so every other object in the picture will. The degree of blurring will vary depending on the **object's distance from the camera**. If an object does NOT look blurred, in an otherwise completely blurry photo, it means that it was either moving at exactly the right speed and direction to compensate for camera shake or (which is much more likely) it is an artefact **created by two blurry images overlapping to appear like 'something new'**. This **'something new' is purely a photographic artefact which does not correspond to any single real physical object in the scene being photographed**. Even a truly paranormal ghost, if present, should be blurred! One object may be blurred into another nearby to produce an artefact that may accidentally resemble something that was never in the photo in the first place.

Consider the following example. In fig 1 you can see vegetation blurred by camera shake. In the centre of the image you may be able to make out what

looks like a mask with square eyes or glasses, a dark moustache and a pointy chin, looking (to our) left. **In fig 2 the 'mask' is arrowed, in case you can't see it.**

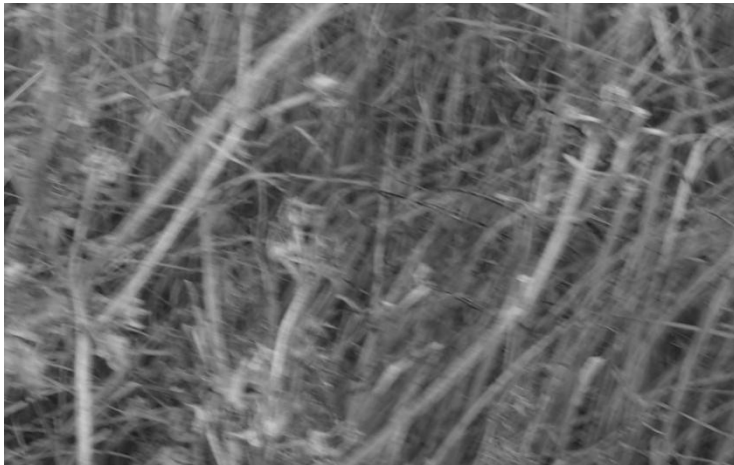


Fig 1: Weird pointy 'mask' in motion blurred photo

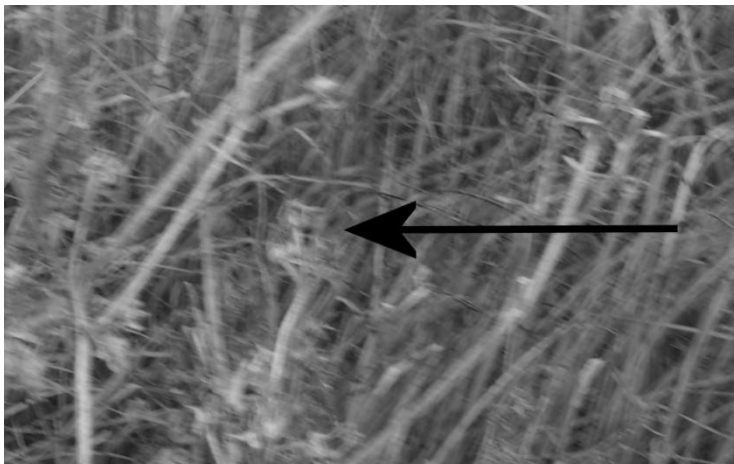


Fig 2: Mask arrowed



Fig 3: Same scene without motion blur

Now look at fig 3, which shows the same scene (from a very slightly different angle) with no motion blur. There is no sign of the 'mask' any more, just a bit of dried vegetation. **The 'mask' is clearly an illusion created by objects blurring together.** If had been a real object it would have looked more blurry than it actually appeared. **If you can't make out the 'mask',** try looking at the version on the web (go to ASSAP website, **follow link to 'paranormal photos' then scroll down**).

IMAGE NOISE

Many more photos are now being received which feature a lot of image noise. One group of people, in particular, are mainly responsible for most of them – ghost researchers!

All digital photographs contain some image noise but it is only noticeable in certain circumstances. The most likely situation where you will see image noise is in photos which are heavily under-exposed and/or you are using a high ISO (sensitivity to light). When you zoom in to a noisy photo, you will see that it contains small-scale random variations in lightness and colour. These tiny variations do not correspond with anything in the original scene photographed; they are generated entirely within the electronics of the camera itself.

Electronic noise is most apparent when photographing or videoing very dark scenes. The darkest area of an image will show the greatest degree of noise. Using a high ISO setting also increases the level of noise so that, in extreme circumstances, it can become noticeable even in reasonably well-lit

photographs. Digital cameras vary a lot, from model to model, in their susceptibility to electronic noise.

Image noise, when present at high levels, swamps real features in an image and **introduces its own spurious 'detail'**. Blobs, bands and other vague shapes, seen in areas of high noise in an affected photograph, are generally entirely spurious. Such bogus detail can usually be eliminated by removing noise with photo editing software. However, with high levels of noise this is not possible as there is too little of the original image left to recover. Attempts at 'enhancing' such images will just result in further spurious 'detail'. In short, you cannot trust the detail in highly noisy photographs to correspond with anything real in the scene being photographed.

With high noise videos, some objects may appear to be in motion when they are quite still. This is because the shape of the noise changes all the time giving the illusion of movement.

FROZEN ACTION

Still photographs capture a tiny slice of a scene for a fraction of a second. Sometimes they capture things that we never normally notice because they are either over too quickly or are blurred by fast motion. You cannot, for instance, see the exact flapping motion of small birds or insects because they are motion-blurred.

Such 'frozen action' shots represent another class of anomalous photos that is being reported more frequently. Some apparent photos of lake monsters and UFOs may fall into this category. Ordinary objects caught in unfamiliar poses by a fast shutter speed can produce puzzling shapes that may suggest something mysterious and novel. If you could see a video the same scene, it would be obvious that there was nothing mysterious present at all.

Take the following example. In fig 4 you see a strange shaped object on a lake with heavy water disturbance around it.



Fig 4: Weird water monster!



Fig 5: Little Grebe

Fig 5 shows what the ‘monster’ actually is – an aquatic bird called a Little Grebe. The first view is strange and unfamiliar because it shows the bird diving from the surface of the water, an action that is over in fraction of a second. The bird dives from the surface of the water to catch food below. If photographed at just the right moment, as in the first photo, the shape looks unfamiliar, even

mysterious. Indeed, **it could be interpreted as the 'head' of some**, mostly immersed, unknown animal! The water disturbance could be interpreted as a **'wake' created by the 'head' suddenly breaking the surface of the water**. Many reports of lake monsters, including photos, are assumed by their observers to be just a small part (**head or 'humps'**) of **much larger submerged creatures**. In **some cases they may have captured unfamiliar 'frozen action' of an otherwise familiar aquatic animal**. Often people only notice something odd when they examine the picture well after the incident, nothing weird being noted at the time of the exposure.

Flying objects, like birds and aircraft, can also appear weird sometimes when captured in photos. Planes and helicopters seen from unfamiliar angles can look like something quite different and be taken for UFOs. Again, this is most likely when the odd object is only noticed in the photo.

PHOTOS OF INVISIBLE ANOMALIES

One thing that remains the same since 2009 is that, for the overwhelming majority of photos, the anomaly was not seen by the photographer at the time of exposure. We humans, often distracted by personal concerns, tend to notice very little that goes on around us. Even so, some of the anomalies noted in photos, like orbs or lens flare, could hardly have been missed if they had been physically present at the time of exposure. This suggests that such anomalous photos are probably photographic artefacts. They result from differences between the way the photographic process works and how people see things with their naked eye.

However, many people view this quite differently. They see the very fact that the anomaly was NOT obviously visible at the time of exposure as a positive indication that it must be paranormal! The implication is that cameras can reveal paranormal phenomena which are invisible to the naked eye. However, this idea is not supported by the results of this informal survey. The overwhelming majority of anomalies analysed could be positively identified as photographic artefacts.

There were very few examples, in the survey, of an anomaly seen with the naked eye that was NOT recorded by the camera. There were also very few examples of anomalies seen by both the photographer AND the camera. For both categories, all such photos showed nothing obviously unusual; suggesting that the photographer was misperceiving a natural object at the time the photo was taken. **I have photos of 'ghostly figures' that I've seen myself which show only trees or reeds!**

CAMERA PHONES

The number of photos taken with camera phones has, unsurprisingly, swelled considerably of late. Since many people go everywhere with their phones, this trend improves the exciting prospect of people photographing ghosts they are actually in the process of witnessing! The same thing was anticipated when the use of CCTV cameras became widespread. Sadly, that development led mainly to a crop of videos showing spiders and insects crawling across the glass in front of CCTV cameras! The difference with camera phones, however, is that their use can be intelligently directed. People can take a photo only when they actually see a ghost!

Unfortunately, so far the results from camera phones have not been encouraging. Most photos received, taken with camera phones, have suffered from low resolution and/or high compression. Also, EXIF data is often far less detailed than that available from dedicated cameras, sometimes even omitting vital exposure information. And, so far, **no photo of ghosts as they're being watched** has been received. Most such photos simply continue the trend of only seeing oddities in the photo after the event.

Another problem are the apps available on smartphones that allow users to **easily add simulated 'ghosts' or 'UFOs' to existing photos**, directly on their phone. Though these manipulations are sometimes quite obvious, they have fooled some people. While it has always been possible to manipulate digital images on a computer, these phone apps make it so much easier. As a result these photos are becoming common.

AUTOMATION

Automated cameras are not new. However, new features are being added all the time and anyone analysing paranormal photos needs to be aware of them and their possible effects. While it is great to be able to point and shoot and expect the camera to produce a near perfect shot every time, it does mean that, in many cases, the photographer is not aware of exactly what the camera is doing.

For instance, in many photos examined for the survey it was obvious that a flash was used for a daylight shot, even though the photographer insisted it was not. **It was possible to confirm the use of 'fill-in' flash using EXIF data.** Similarly, many night shots used a long exposure in addition to flash, quite unknown to the photographer at the time of exposure. In such cases, a photographic artefact was produced, like a light trail, without the photographer realising the camera was producing the conditions for such artefacts.

More recently, image stabilization has become popular in digital cameras. This reduces motion blur and allows quite long exposures to look sharp. Any objects actually moving during such an exposure will look blurred and possibly transparent and, to some, ghostly.

In the days of manual cameras, you had to select long exposures or flash deliberately. **Now these things happen without the photographer's knowledge.** It might explain why, despite photos in general looking better than ever before, there are so many unexpected anomalies being reported.

MOTIVATION

It may seem ungrateful to question the motives of people freely supplying us with useful photographic data. However, such information is important in gaining an understanding of what actually constitutes an anomalous photo. It can sometimes be gleaned from the emails accompanying anomalous photos.

A camera is a machine – in any given set of circumstances it will always produce the same results. In contrast, a human may perceive the same scene differently depending on what they are expecting to see. For instance, someone may not notice a quite significant change to a scene if they are momentarily distracted while the change occurs. **This 'change blindness' obviously does not affect cameras!**

Whether a photo is considered anomalous depends, not on the camera, but on the person who is viewing it. For example, suppose a particular photo shows some orbs. To one set of people, the orbs are annoying photographic artefacts that have ruined the picture. To another group, the orbs are an intriguing **novelty whose cause they don't know.** To a third group, the orbs are a clear sign of paranormality. A fourth group of people may not even notice the orbs presence. It is the interpretation put on the orbs by their viewers that decides whether they are reported as an anomaly or not. So, to understand why any particular photo is considered anomalous, it helps to know a bit about why the person submitted it.

Though data gathered on this aspect is patchy, some tentative trends were noted. Some people, for instance, intimated that they were just curious to know **about 'something odd' on their photo,** venturing no opinion on what it might be. Others appeared to have examined their photos closely, apparently expecting to find something weird. They may, for instance, have been taking photos at a known haunted location. The exact same anomaly, when shot somewhere else, might never have been submitted to ASSAP for comment.

In some cases, it was the occasion when the photo was taken, or the people pictured, that drew the attention of the photographer to any anomalies present. If something important had just happened in the life of the person pictured, for instance, **a photographic anomaly present may have been seen as a 'sign'** associated with the event. Without that association, the anomaly might have been ignored or not noticed. For instance, several people mentioned that, though they frequently got orbs in their photos, they only submitted ones for **examination where the occasion pictured was 'significant'**. These particular orbs, however, did not look unusual in any way.

In some cases, **the actual 'anomaly' was so unobtrusive that it took some effort** to find! This suggests that the photographer either routinely examined their photos very closely for anomalies or was acutely sensitive to anything unexpected. The former is likely to be true of photos taken at haunted locations. In a few cases, even when the anomaly was pointed out by the photographer, it was still not apparent to those examining the picture! This was particularly true of apparent faces and human figures.

The survey provided limited evidence for people's motivations in submitting photo anomalies, relying on unprompted remarks accompanying the pictures. There is also some informal evidence available from examining people's **photo** albums (both on- and offline). **This shows that some people either don't notice** photographic anomalies or, if they do, **they don't care about them**. For many, it is clear that the importance of the subject matter overrides any possible **'spoiling'** effect from the presence of a photographic anomaly. For example, if a photo of a wedding or holiday is covered in lens flare, it would be endured because the occasion is not easily repeatable! There is also evidence for one group of mostly serious photographers, who routinely delete photos containing anomalies, **in their pursuit of 'perfect' images**.

ADVICE ON TAKING PHOTOS ON INVESTIGATIONS

Taking one-off still photos on ghost vigils is a waste of time! When a photo, taken in such a situation, apparently shows something paranormal, there is a high chance nothing weird was seen by the photographer at the time of exposure. This, in turn, means there is a very high chance that it is a photographic artefact. In many cases, like orbs, this is obvious straight away. But even with less clear-cut cases, one photograph, on its own, will never provide enough evidence to rule out all plausible natural causes.

So never take just one photo of a particular scene at a time. Take several, ideally from different angles and with various levels of illumination. **And don't** take photos in very dark conditions as you will get lots of image noise, camera shake as well as focus problems. **This applies not simply to 'official'**

investigation photos but also casual ones, taken as a memento. It is just such photos which often produce the most interesting images. If a number of photos are available, taken at the same time and location, much more can be gleaned than ever could from a single image.

CONCLUSIONS

There are many limitations to this informal study. For instance, the people sending in photos elected to do so themselves, so they are not a representative sample of the population. Nevertheless, the photos submitted were broadly similar to others available on paranormal group websites, so they are probably fairly representative of most anomalous pictures.

In general, the study suggests that the vast majority of anomalous photos are, in fact, photographic artefacts. There are certain easily recognisable situations that repeatedly produce anomalous photos, such as: long exposure, objects out of focus, image noise, frozen rapid action etc. What all these things have in common is that they are not readily observable with the naked eye of the photographer at the time of exposure. It is their unfamiliarity that leads to their being labelled anomalous.

INFRASOUND AND THE PARANORMAL

Steve Parsons

The end of the 19Hz myth & a look at parapsychology's attempts to study this (in)audible phenomenon.

Infrasound is generally considered as audio frequency energy that lies below the range of normal human hearing, typically 20 Hz (Leventhall, Pelmear & Benton, 2003). Ambient infrasound within the environment is produced by both natural and man-made sources. Natural sources include weather related effects such as wind and storms; surf and wave action, volcanic eruptions and upper atmospheric phenomena (i. e. the jet stream and meteors) (e. g. von Gierke & Parker, 1976; Gossard & Hooke, 1975). Man-made infrasound is associated with vehicles, aircraft, machinery, and the interactions of weather on buildings and other structures (Blazier, 1981; Stubbs, 2005). Ambient infrasound levels from natural and man-made causes are variable in intensity and to date, there has only been a limited number of measurements of ambient environmental infrasound (e. g. Bruel & Olesen, 1973).

DEVELOPING A CASE FOR INFRASOUND

Early paranormal investigators were aware that vibrations might play a significant role in the production of some reported paranormal experiences. In the 19th century B- House investigation (Goodrich-Freer & Bute, 1899), which involved several founders of the SPR, it was suggested that a seismometer might be usefully employed as part of the investigation. Indeed, reading through the details from that particular case, there is a great deal to suggest that infrasound was a candidate in many of the reported experiences. In the 1930's, psychical investigator Harry Price included a bowl of mercury in his ghost hunting kit in order to detect vibrations (Price, 1942). In 1961, SPR members Tony Cornell and Alan Gauld carried out a series of experiments at a condemned house in Cambridge (Gauld & Cornell, 1979). They used a device that sent powerful vibrations through the building to test the theory that minor Earth tremors and geophysical disturbances might be responsible for some of the physical effects reported in poltergeist cases, such as the movement of objects. Although they were not testing an infrasound hypothesis, their equipment would have been producing large quantities of low frequency sound energy. Unfortunately, the records of their earth-moving experiment do not make any mention of psychological or physiological effects being experienced by the experimenters. In 1974, Dr Michael Persinger, a neurologist at the Laurentian University, Canada, suggested that there might be a direct causal link between Infrasound

and reports of anomalous experiences (Persinger, 1974). Specifically, Persinger suggested that vague feelings of foreboding and apprehension were reported by some individuals prior to Earthquakes. He drew upon existing infrasound research, primarily conducted by the military and NASA, which demonstrated that powerful levels of infrasound were capable of inducing a range of disturbing and unsettling experiences that affected many of the test subjects. These included feelings of fear, apprehension, depression, nausea and dizziness. He suggested that:

“WEAK INFRASONIC OSCILLATIONS FROM AMBIENT SOURCES MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO ELECIT FULL BLOWN SYMPTOMS BUT COULD EVOKE RESPONSES OF A LESS SEVERE NATURE.”

This idea that infrasound might be responsible for creating paranormal **experiences was revived in the late 1990’s by engineer Vic Tandy following a** series of experiences in a workshop that had gained a reputation as being haunted. Staff members, including Tandy, had a series of anomalous experiences that included a strong sense of fear, depression and the appearance of vague apparitions. Tandy was a keen fencer, and one morning he arrived at the workshop in order to prepare his fencing blade for a forthcoming competition. Upon placing the blade into the vice, he noticed that the free end of the metal blade was vibrating frantically up and down. Recalling his recent experiences, he nonetheless realised that if the blade was vibrating, it must be receiving energy in the form of acoustic energy. There was a lot of background noise but Tandy realised that sounds can be infrasonic and therefore effectively inaudible. He decided to experiment, and placing the blade on the floor, held in a moveable vice and moved it around the workshop. He observed that the blade vibrated strongly in the centre of the room and ceased vibrating at the end of the room. He realised that they were sharing the workshop with a strong acoustic standing wave.

In 1998, together with Dr. Tony Lawrence, he produced what has become a **landmark paper “The Ghost in the Machine” (1998)**. In the paper, he documented some of the experiences of staff members and his discovery of an infrasonic standing wave within the workshop. As an engineer, Tandy realised that low frequency vibration could cause the rapier blade to vibrate and that any sounds produced by the low frequency vibration would be inaudible. Using the known length of the workshop, he calculated the frequency of the low frequency vibration as being close to 19Hz which was infrasonic and therefore below the threshold of human hearing. The cause of the apparent infrasound was quickly traced to a newly installed extractor fan in the workshop. Tandy drew upon previous research in which test subjects exposed to high levels of infrasound had reported effects that seemed remarkably similar to his own experiences and that

of his colleagues; and in particular a NASA report that a frequency of 19Hz caused eyeball oscillations and vision smearing. As a result of these discoveries, Tandy and Lawrence suggested that the inaudible infrasound at 19Hz was causing the unwelcome sensations of anxiety and sense of presence, and significantly that the effects of the infrasound on the eyeball was responsible for the appearance of apparitions in the peripheral vision which he himself had experienced.

The following year, Tandy made field measurements of infrasound levels at a 14th century cellar in Coventry. The cellar was the site of numerous reports of paranormal experiences. He was surprised to discover that the previously noted frequency of 19Hz was present at higher than expected levels. This apparent confirmation of his earlier hypothesis led to a 2nd paper titled **“Something in the Cellar”** (Tandy, 2000). Incidentally, the author was fortunate enough to visit the location prior to its closure in 2007, and made a series of infrasound measurements at the same positions within the cellar that Tandy had used. On that occasion, no infrasound peak at 19Hz was found. Sadly Vic Tandy died before he could conduct any further work on his infrasound hypothesis.

Tandy’s hypothesis lit a fuse that quickly exploded within paranormal research and parapsychology. It was readily accepted as being the cause of many subjective paranormal experiences, ghostly sightings and haunted locations. For instance, a Google search will reveal more than 100,000 page links to **Tandy’s work**, much of it repeating the original idea that infrasound, and in particular infrasound with a frequency of close to 19Hz, is responsible for many paranormal experiences. The hypothesis has been reported and repeated in several mainstream science journals, blogs and media as well as countless internet sites dedicated to the paranormal. It has been described in books and reported in newspapers. Investigators and leading parapsychologists from the UK and the USA have been brought in to demonstrate and explain the paranormal effects of infrasound on various TV shows. Mostly these investigators were content with merely measuring the infrasound levels, at other times they set up infrasound generating equipment in order to produce the necessary 19Hz. There is even a movie in production - “19Hz” dedicated to this “Frequency Of Fear”. **Tandy’s infrasound hypothesis**, the suggestion that infrasound with a frequency of around 19Hz had in a short time become a de facto explanation for many types of paranormal experience, used by paranormal investigators and parapsychologists alike. So should we now accept this explanation?

CAN INFRASOUND AT A FREQUENCY OF CLOSE TO 19HZ EXPLAIN SO MANY PARANORMAL EXPERIENCES?

Let's re-examine Tandy & Lawrence's original paper. . .

$$f = v / \lambda$$

$$\text{where } \lambda = 2 \times l$$

f = frequency of sound

v = velocity of sound (1,139 f / s)

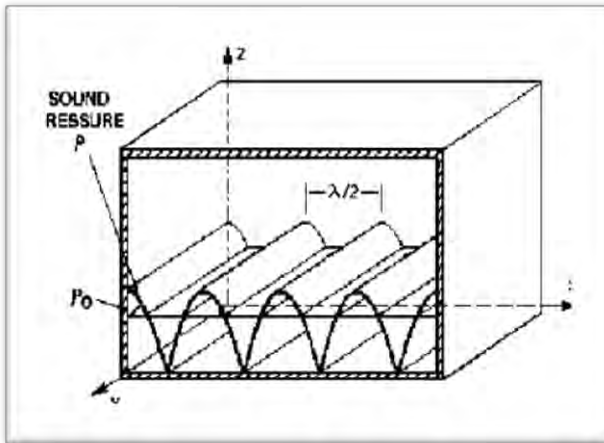
λ = wavelength ($l \times 2 = 60\text{ft}$)

l = length of room = (30ft)

so we have $f = 1,139 / 60 = 18.98 \text{ Hz or Cycles per second}$

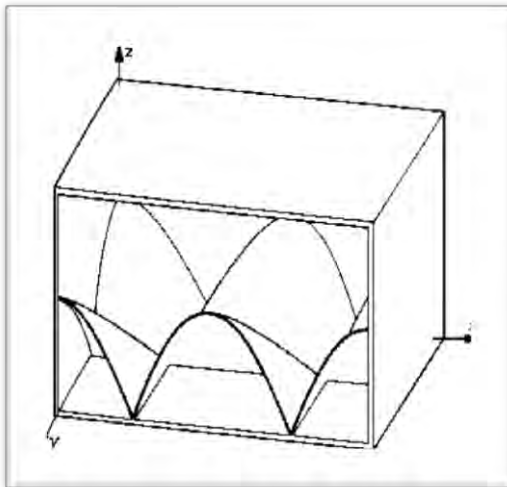
Tandy & Lawrence's formula used to calculate the infrasound within the workshop

Based upon the length of the workshop, which was 30 ft. , Tandy calculated the frequency of the standing wave. This formula provided Tandy with the lowest fundamental resonant frequency of the workshop, in this case 18.98Hz. Tandy recognised and made clear that his calculations were subject to some degree of inaccuracy but were within a margin of error of plus or minus 10%. In making his original calculations, he apparently failed to take account of either the height or width of the workshop, presumably as he recognised that the fundamental frequencies of these dimensions would be higher in frequency and therefore audible. However, in order to properly determine the acoustic properties of any space, and therefore accurately calculate the frequency of any acoustic standing waves within those spatial calculations involving all three room dimensions must be undertaken. Broadly speaking, three types of standing wave will exist inside any space, the most powerful being the axial waves which involve any two parallel surfaces, such as any two opposing walls or the floor and the ceiling.



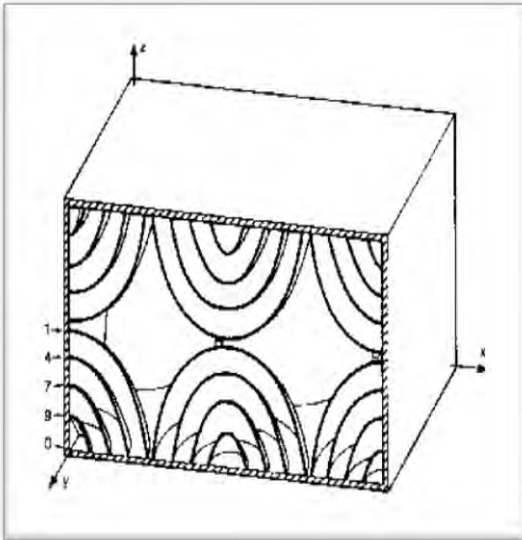
***Representation of a longitudinal (x-axis) axial wave (mode).
Further axial waves exist on the y & z axes***

In the diagram above, we see a representation of the fundamental frequency axial wave formed by the walls that form the longest dimension of the room. Of course in reality, axial waves will also be formed by the opposing short walls and between the floor and ceiling. A total of nine axial waves or modes therefore will exist in such a space.



Representation of an x-y axis tangential wave (mode) formed between the four walls. Further tangential waves exist on the x-z & y-z axes

Tangential waves or modes involve any two sets of parallel surfaces. In this case, the tangential waves are formed between all four walls, or any two walls, the floor and the ceiling. In the diagram, we see a representation of the fundamental frequency tangential wave formed by the four walls on the x-y axis of the room. Tangential waves will also be formed between the walls, floor and ceiling on the x-z and y-z axes. A total of sixteen tangential waves therefore will exist in such a space.



Representation of an oblique standing wave (mode) formed between all six room surfaces

An oblique standing wave is further formed between all six surfaces – the four walls, the floor and the ceiling. Two oblique waves would be present within such a space. Furthermore, the multiple standing waves that existed inside **Tandy's workshop** would each interact with one another, resulting in a chaotic soundscape with numerous regions of higher or lower sound pressure being present throughout the workshop. If we could visualise these interacting sound waves it would appear more like the surface of a stormy seascape, with perhaps one or two of the more dominant wave systems imposed upon the general

chaos. Fortunately, modern computer programmes allow us to calculate these complication interactions and the resulting frequencies.

Frequency (Hz)	Mode	Frequency (Hz)	Mode
<i>18.8</i>	<i>Axial</i>	88.3	Oblique
28.3	Axial	92.7	Tangential
<i>34</i>	<i>Tangential</i>	94.2	Tangential
<i>37.7</i>	<i>Axial</i>	94.2	Axial
47.1	Tangential	97.9	Oblique
<i>56.5</i>	<i>Axial</i>	98.3	Oblique
<i>59.6</i>	<i>Tangential</i>	98.3	Tangential
<i>63.2</i>	<i>Tangential</i>	101.9	Tangential
<i>65.9</i>	<i>Oblique</i>		
67.9	Tangential		
73.5	Oblique		
75.3	Axial		
79.9	Tangential		
80.5	Tangential		
82.1	Oblique		
84.8	Axial		
84.8	Oblique		
86.8	Tangential		

Partial table of acoustic standing waves

Fundamental frequencies are shown in italics.

Tandy did not provide the other workshop dimensions, but in order to illustrate the numerous standing waves present I have assumed the workshop to be of fairly average proportions. Using the provided length of 30ft, an assumed width of 20ft and an assumed height of 10ft, provide a reasonable basis for our own standing wave calculations, and we obtain the following information. The table shown above only considers those acoustic standing waves, their frequency and

orientation, at frequencies considered to be infrasonic or having a very low frequency of less than 100Hz. Moreover, the lowest frequency, the 18.98Hz noted by Tandy provides only 50% of the total acoustic power that is present within the workshop, the remainder being made up from all other acoustic frequencies. Tandy claimed to have traced the cause of the infrasound within the workshop to a recently installed one metre diameter extractor fan. He observed that turning off the fan caused the sword blade to stop vibrating and the reports of the anomalous experiences also ceased. This certainly indicates that the fan was implicated in the production of the infrasound standing waves, but it does not necessarily indicate that the fan itself was the cause of the standing waves. Infrasound is present from many sources, both man-made and natural, and is capable of travelling long distances and penetrating structures without significant attenuation.

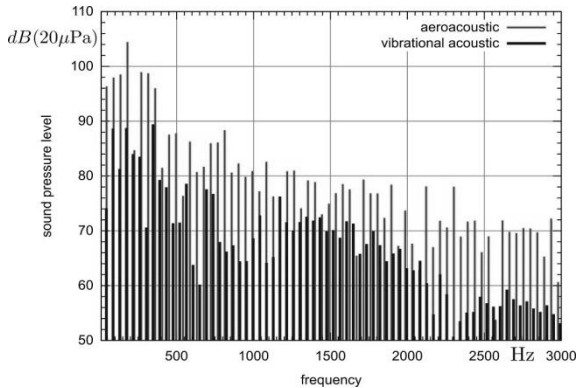
It is therefore likely and highly probable that the acoustic standing waves within the workshop were actually the result of the complex interactions between the extractor fan and some unknown external infrasound source. Tandy himself noted the considerable amount of background noise within the workshop, and from my own infrasound measurements at numerous sites throughout the UK, high levels of ambient infrasound from other sources are the norm rather than the exception.

In trying to assess Tandy's hypothesis, an additional difficulty is encountered. Although no information about the dimensions of the fencing sword blade is provided, we can assume that as Tandy was a competition fencer, the blade would conform to the sports regulations and its length being between 80cm and 90cm. Therefore the resonant frequency of the blade can be easily calculated using the same formula that Tandy used for his room calculations as being between 190Hz and 214Hz. Using the room mode calculation programme, we find three standing waves existing within this frequency range and 16 further standing waves. Within plus or minus 10% - the margin of error suggested by Tandy for his own original calculations, there are an additional 16 standing waves.

A final problem in assessing Tandy's claim is that only a proportion of the total available acoustic energy will be transmitted to the sword blade. In order to accurately carry out the computations required to calculate the actual amount of energy transmitted to the blade, detailed information is required about the sword blade and the workshop, their dimensions, structure and materials.

The graph shown below is based upon the previously assumed dimensions of the workshop and shows a representation of the amount of acoustic energy (shown in black) that is transmitted to a 90cm blade (shown in grey) at different

frequency bands. Note that the maximum amount of acoustic energy transfer **takes place close to the blade's resonant frequency of around 190Hz – 215Hz**. The efficiency of the energy transfer between the sound source and the blade falls dramatically as we move away from the blades resonant frequency range.



Representation of aeroacoustic / vibrational acoustic relationship of a standard competition specification fencing foil blade

19 HERTZ, THE MYTH!

Taking all the above into consideration, there is little to suggest that Tandy and Lawrence's hypothesis that the extractor fan was directly producing infrasound and causing the fencing blade to oscillate is correct. There is also little to support the hypothesis that infrasound close to a frequency of 19Hz is involved in the production of subjective anomalous experiences or that continued infrasound studies based around the frequency of 19Hz can be of any particular value to psychical research.

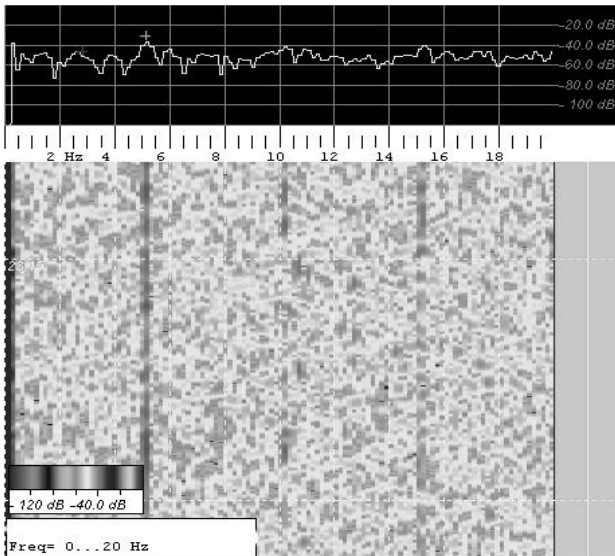
Does this mean that all of the research into the potential causal link between infrasound and paranormal experiences is just a dead duck? On the contrary, in a number of experiments conducted by myself and other researchers, infrasound has been shown to be a significant factor in the production of subjective anomalous experiences.

THE DUCK, IT SEEMS, IS VERY MUCH ALIVE AND WELL. . . .

During an investigation by Para. Science of a former shipyard on Merseyside (Para. Science, 2004), it was discovered that large levels of infrasound were present throughout the location and in particular an office block that had gained

a strong reputation as being haunted. The chief source of the infrasound was discovered to be from ships running their generators and engines in the adjacent repair basin. Staff working there had reported numerous instances of anomalous experiences, including a sensed presence, feelings of being watched, anxiety and apparitions. The first field study of infrasound using the calibrated measuring system under development system was carried out in the autumn of 2006. The measurements showed that there was a series of powerful infrasonic frequencies present throughout the location.

Levels across all the infrasound frequencies were in excess of 60dBs with peak of around 80dBs around 5Hz, 10Hz and 15Hz. These peaks were discovered to be from the diesel generators onboard a ship in the repair basin.



Example of Infrasound observed using ARID 1 (pilot study) Shipyard Offices - Ship in Repair Basin

At other times, when no ship was in the repair basin or when the ship had its generators or engine turned off, the infrasound within the location was still around 60dBs across the full infrasound spectrum. The infrasound within the main part of the building, a large empty drawing office, was measured at two-metre intervals. Unaware of the infrasound measurements, members of the investigation team conducted a routine paranormal investigation, which consisted of sitting in pairs and documenting their experiences, thoughts and feelings.

As part of the infrasound exposure pilot study, the investigators were positioned in areas of lower infrasound, while others were placed into medium and high infrasound areas. The team members noted their individual experiences in their personal investigation notes. Those sitting where infrasound levels were lower (less than 60dBS) reported fewer unusual experiences and sensations than their colleagues who were placed in areas where the infrasound was higher. Although this was only a pilot study conducted during the early field trials of the newly-developed infrasound-measuring equipment, the anecdotal reports from the investigations team did indicate that there was a difference between the experiences of those who were exposed to increased levels of infrasound compared to those with exposure to lower infrasound levels. Using information from the shipyard staff, it also seemed to be the case that the staff working in the building were also more likely to report paranormal encounters at times that generally coincided with ships being present within the repair basin and thus producing greater levels of infrasound.

During the 2007 Mary Kings Ghost Fest, an infrasound generator was used in the largest ever field study of infrasound exposure to date (Para. Science, 2007). The experiment was designed to test the idea that infrasound might be responsible for producing paranormal like experiences for visitors to The Close. A powerful infrasound generator array specially designed and built for the experiment was located out of site of the visitors inside the notoriously haunted **Chesney's House**, which meant the operator had to spend hours alone in that part of The Close!

The experiment exposed visitors to either the ambient infrasound found within The Close or added high levels of infrasound at a frequency of 18.9Hz, selected **to test Tandy's hypothesis that this frequency was key in producing increased** reports of anomalous experiences and in particular the visual effects and resultant apparitions. The addition of infrasound was decided by a random series of dice throws, and visitors were not informed that they were being exposed to additional levels of infrasound. In total, more than 400 visitors were surveyed over a week long series of experiments.

THE MARY KINGS GHOST FEST 2007 – RESULTS:

Group A

249 people experienced both ambient & generated infrasound (18.9Hz).

Group B

190 people experienced only ambient infrasound.

Number of people reporting a single experience:

33.33% of people in Group A.

35% of people in the Group B.

Number of people reporting multiple experiences:

36% of people in Group A.

16.4% of people in Group B.

Out of a total sample of more than 430 individuals only one person reported any form of visual anomaly.

At the end of the weeklong experiment, there was a significant difference between the two exposure groups:

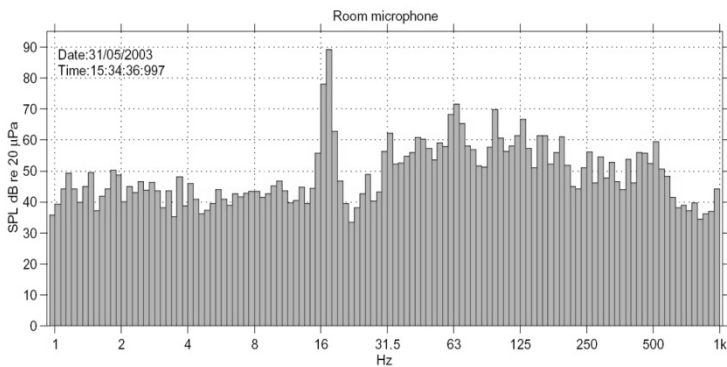
- In Group A; 249 people experienced both the ambient infrasound and the experimentally-produced infrasound.
- In Group B; 190 people experienced only the ambient infrasound.
- 1/3rd of those in Group A and just over 1/3rd of those in Group B reported an anomalous experience which they thought was paranormal. This showed little difference between the two exposure groups.

However, when the number of people reporting multiple experiences was investigated, there was a clear difference between the two different exposure groups. This is a very significant difference. The experiment failed to **demonstrate any of the visual effects predicted by Tandy's hypothesis**. Just one person reporting a visual anomaly and no reports of apparitional experiences were received at any time during the experiment.

The experiment strongly suggested that infrasound was responsible for producing some of the experiences that people might associate with being paranormal.

The experiment also indicated that infrasound does not affect everyone, with only around 1/3 of the sample being affected, regardless of the level or nature of their infrasound exposure.

The results from the GhostFest experiment confirmed an earlier mass infrasound exposure experiment led by Prof. Richard Wiseman. During a series of "Soundless Music" concerts 750 concertgoers were played live music, some of which was laced with infrasound (Soundless Music, 2002). When added to the music, infrasound caused a range of weird effects, even among those who were unaware of its presence. Strange reactions included an extreme sense of sorrow, coldness, anxiety and even shivers down the spine. The researchers concluded, "on average, infrasound boosted the number of strange experiences by around 22 percent. It also increased the intensity of any feelings reported." However, the researchers seem to have overlooked that substantial levels of infrasound from sources other than their infrasound generator was present, although their measurements clearly showed that to be the case.



Sound plot taken during Soundless Music shows substantial amounts of infrasound across a broad range of frequencies

(17Hz peak from infrasound generator)

THE HAUNT PROJECT

Tandy's hypothesis that infrasound may be responsible for inducing anomalous sensations was also tested in 2009 by 'The "Haunt" Project' led by Prof. Chris French (French et al, 2009). They generated infrasound to investigate the possibility of creating an artificially "haunted" room. Specifically, the project sought to investigate whether exposure to infrasound, complex electromagnetic fields, or both in combination would lead to an increased reporting of anomalous sensations in the participants compared to a baseline condition. The room was a circular chamber of wood, fabric and canvas built inside an empty room approximately 4 x 4 metres (based upon the plans of the experimental

area). A pair of electromagnetic coils were hidden outside the chamber together with a single infrasound speaker positioned outside the chamber in a corner of the main room. The infrasound was generated by combining two sine waves at 189Hz and 22.3Hz output via a “purpose-built cabinet”. These frequencies were chosen to be representative of the infrasound measured by Tandy in the Coventry cellar.

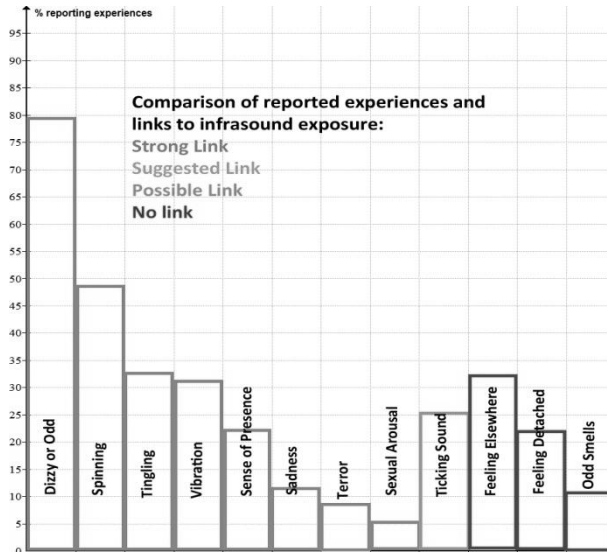
Participants each spent 50 minutes in the chamber, recording on a floor plan a brief description of any anomalous sensations they experienced, also noting their position within the chamber and the time the sensation was experienced. The participants were randomly allocated either an infrasound-absent or infrasound-present state in combination with an electromagnetic field-absent or present state. Many of the participants reported having anomalous sensations.

The researchers failed to find any support for a link between the presence of infrasound and the experience of anomalous sensations, suggesting, “the case for infrasound inducing haunt-type experiences now appears to be extremely weak”.

However, many of the reported anomalous sensations reported by participants have been strongly linked by previous research studying the effects of infrasound exposure:

79.9% reported feeling Dizzy or Odd, 49.4% reported they felt as if they were Spinning around, Tingling sensations were reported by 32.9% and 31.6% described Pleasant vibrations through their bodies. Other sensations linked to Infrasound exposure were also reported including the Sense of presence - 22.8%, Sadness 11.4%, Terror - 8.9% and Sexual arousal - 5.1%. Sensations that may be associated to Infrasound were additionally reported such as hearing a 'ticking sound' (25.3%) which may have been due to changes within the air pressure caused by the Infrasound acting on the ear drums or some structural component within the room or chamber resonating due to the Infrasound acting upon it.

Some sensations were reported that have no association with Infrasound exposure such as Feeling they were Somewhere else - 32.9%, Feeling Detached from their bodies - 22.8%, and Odd smells -10.1%.



Unfortunately, the experimenters failed to properly address a number of issues relating to the measurement and physics of infrasound. A serious error was the incorrect assumption that there was no infrasound present when the **experimenters' infrasound generator was turned off**. Measurements that were made were stated to be 50dB with all the equipment turned off, 65dB with the air-conditioning switched on and 75dB when the infrasound was switched on again. No information about the range of ambient frequencies that were present within the chamber were presented, and crucially no information was provided about the sound measuring equipment that was used and what, if any, filter weighting was applied to the measurements. In fact, the experimenters would have inadvertently produced significantly more infrasound than they realised by using two frequencies - 18.9Hz and 22.3Hz in combination. Whenever any two frequencies are mixed together, they produce secondary frequencies known as beat frequencies. One is formed by the addition – or sum of the two frequencies, and would have been at the barely audible frequency of 41.2Hz, the other formed by subtracting the two frequencies would be at the deeply infrasonic 3.4Hz. It is therefore perfectly possible, and indeed highly likely, that significantly higher amplitudes of low frequency ambient sound and experimentally-generated infrasound would have been present throughout the entire experiment without being measured by the experimenters.

The experiment also did not consider interactions of infrasound from ambient and created sources within the room itself caused by reflected and refracted sound waves bouncing off the walls, floor and ceiling, as well as the possible effects upon the participants as they walked through what might have been large variations in the sound frequencies. Although interestingly, the experimenters noted in relation to the electromagnetic field that "the nature of the field itself can vary infinitely and the participants movements through the field will add an extra level of complexity to the field as experienced."

Without these crucial pieces of information, and especially the levels of ambient infrasound, the argument against the role of infrasound being a causal factor in the production of the anomalous sensations reported by the participants must be seriously questioned. In fact, when considering the reported anomalous sensations, it would appear that there is actually quite substantial evidence within the data for infrasound playing a significant role in the production of many experiences.

Given the current state of our knowledge of infrasound and its links with subjective paranormal experiences, some possibilities are suggested:

- Around one-third of the population appears to be susceptible to the effects of ambient environmental infrasound. This seems to be more pronounced in cases of exposure to man-made as opposed to naturally-produced infrasound.
- Infrasound exposure manifests as a wide range of physical, physiological and+ psychological sensations without any obvious cause being apparent to the percipient.

Many reported sensations resulting from ambient infrasound exposure are similar to subjective paranormal experiences including:

- Sensed presence
- Feelings of anxiety, fear, and uneasiness
- Unexpected physical sensations

Therefore we conclude that with respect to the location, personal belief, expectation and prior knowledge, exposure to a broad range of infrasound frequencies is likely to result in reports of paranormal experiences.

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USEFUL RESOURCES:

This article was extracted from the recent paper published in the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, (JSPR Vol. 76. 3 No. 908, July 2012). A copy of the original paper is available online at the Para. Science website: <http://www.parascience.org.uk/articles/INFRASND.pdf>

Tandy & Lawrence's paper, The Ghost in the Machine, first published in the JSPR is available online as a pdf file to download: <http://www.hauntmastersclub.com/files/ghost-in-machine.pdf>

Tandy's follow-up paper, also first published in the JSPR, is available to download as a pdf: <http://www.richardwiseman.com/resources/Something-in-the-Cellar.pdf>

The Haunt Project published in Cortex, is available to download as a pdf: <http://www.ime.usp.br/~rvicente/HauntProject.pdf>

GHOST WRITING

Ken Taylor

A séance medium will, before ever making their first public appearance, undertake a long and arduous training. They will explore thoroughly the theoretical framework of what they do, and they will also gain a wealth of personal experience in their chosen task of mediating between disincarnate spirits and ordinary people. Anything less is almost guaranteed to result in a shambles when they attempt to perform.

A medium's role can be as delicate as that of a diplomat in that each are tasked with delivering a message faithfully to a potentially hostile audience. Add in the common additional complexity of translating the message into a different language (from telepathic to verbal, for instance), and we can begin to appreciate the scale of the challenge facing anyone trying to communicate between two disparate sets of people.

A writer, who is tasked with retelling somebody else's experience, occupies the same difficult position, being stuck firmly in the middle. On one hand is the witness with a story to tell, and on the other hand is everyone else who might read it (either now or in the future). In the publishing industry, such an author is known as a ghost writer (regardless of whether there is anything overtly paranormal in the story being told).

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

When an ordinary person has an extraordinary experience, an event that is utterly alien to their normal everyday life, they may have little choice but to label it as paranormal or supernatural, or even spiritual. In attempting to describe it, the witness may easily struggle and become confused. They may ramble into what appears to us to be unconnected matters (but which to them holds some key similarity that may yet only be linked subconsciously). Such a witness is unlikely to present themselves in a wholly credible and creditable manner, yet their testimony may hold valuable insights into the strange phenomenon.

Debriefing a witness is an art in itself, and the subtleties are beyond the scope of this essay but one of the basic tricks is to keep quiet. Allow the witness plenty of time to repeat instances several times, turning it over in their mind to look at it from different perspectives – after all, they're probably still trying to understand it themselves. A personal encounter with the paranormal can be a life-changing event, so hurrying a witness along is profoundly disrespectful. Rushing can

jeopardise goodwill and cooperation, and will never produce a good, well-rounded story, so if there isn't enough time to do it properly, it's best to say so, and reschedule.

Phrasing questions carefully makes a big difference. Closed questions that can get a yes or no answer are fine for ticking boxes in a questionnaire, but life rarely conforms to a tick-list, so use open questions instead. For instance, instead of asking 'Is that when the room went cold?' try 'What happened next?' or, better still, 'How did you feel?'

Some witnesses may be reluctant to talk about their experience because they don't want to re-live the memory. One way of side-stepping that mental barrier is to think laterally and ask about what they were doing just before it happened, or about neutral subjects like the weather; such tactics should help them cast their minds back, and become comfortable opening up about an intimate experience. Your patience and support may give the witness the strength they need to face their fears afresh, and perhaps even overcome them completely.

At the conclusion of the best interviews, the witness will be positively glad to have talked it through. That is an end in itself, but it can also open doors because they will be happy to facilitate contact with their friends who have their own tales to tell.

I've had thirty years experience writing true stories of the paranormal for publication, and although when I started out I always placed an advertising article in the local newspaper (or in other media such as local radio or special interest magazines – and more recently on the World Wide Web) inviting people to contact me, I soon realised that 95% of new stories come through personal recommendations and word-of-mouth.

COMBATING SENSATIONALISM

The ethical standards of newspaper journalism are a subject recently making the news in the Leveson Inquiry, but journalists have long been criticised for sensationalising stories. Accusations against them include being selective about what they say, or pandering to the bias of their readers by using deliberately provocative language. Some unscrupulous journalists take things a step further by twisting what a witness tells them, and conflating fact with opinion (usually ill-informed), merely to make a more entertaining read. No wonder most witnesses are initially reluctant to trust a writer.

A good way of overcoming that inevitable and healthy scepticism is to undertake to show them and give them the chance to comment on, the story before it goes to be published. Although that can be a logistical nuisance, especially if there

are multiple witnesses to a single event, it is well worth the effort. It is almost always the case that when the witness reads the story it will prompt further memories that will improve the value of the written record. Very often also, minor details such as spellings of names of places and people, can be corrected at this stage, saving embarrassment after the story appears in print.

Another common concern is the ease with which stories can now be published on the Internet. Many people suppose that once a story appears online, it may be freely copied onto other websites where it may be taken out of context, and even misquoted. While those fears are often groundless, it is true that once a genie has escaped into the World Wide Web, it is notoriously difficult to contain it again. There are important ethical and legal reasons for an author to be clear from the outset about what could happen to the story (as we shall see, below).

Showing the witness the draft of the story not only demonstrates the author is acting in good faith but when the correspondence is conducted by email or letter, the author has the legal protection of physical evidence that the witness was happy with the story. Unfortunately, few writers other than those writing for their own websites enjoy the autonomy of having their work published exactly as written. Most authors have an editor who can take all sorts of liberties with a piece of writing (for example by reduce the amount of text to make it fit the available space in the book/magazine/paper). Both authors and witnesses are therefore a hostage to fortune, but there is much that can be done to minimise damage to what is arguably a person's greatest asset – their reputation.

UNDERSTANDING OBSTACLES

There is a moral obligation on writers to protect their sources, and an author is expected to know more than the general public about the potential risks of being bathed in the spotlight of media exposure – not least of which is that it can be dazzling.

Putting personally identifiable details into the public domain can have serious consequences. For example although the parents might be willing to have their ghost story published, their children might find themselves relentlessly bullied about it – and in extreme cases bullying can prove fatal (there's a thought to haunt the inconsiderate author). It is the responsibility of the author to ensure such issues are discussed prior to deciding what information should be published.

First and foremost, an author needs to get their facts straight, and one of the most obvious of these is getting people's names right. Simple misspellings of names are acutely embarrassing to all concerned, but mixing people's names up

can be much more serious. If a story involves more than one person, but only one of them actually had the experience, to publish the wrong name could result in a claim for defamation of character. A prospective employer, for instance, using a quick Internet search, might balk at the idea that the candidate talks to ghosts, and give their job to someone less unconventional.

It should go without saying that it is vital to observe confidentiality. For example, to publish the address of a haunting, after being told not to, could easily result in a legal action for an invasion of privacy. Also, when a haunted house is put up for sale, it may not achieve the same price as a comparable property with a clean reputation (many if not most purchasers check the address of their prospective new home online, and for some people the discovery of a troubled past would be a deal-breaker).

Confidential details that aren't published still need to be stored securely. For instance it's not best practice to leave sensitive information on a computer connected to the Internet. An author dealing with paranormal situations is custodian to material that needs special precautions for the sake of the wellbeing and even the safety of the witnesses.

BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Just as a story needs a good introduction to set the scene, so the business of writing needs to have essential groundwork in place before it can work effectively. In a discursive article such as this, which is drawn from experience rather than training, and which is offered with the caveat that no part of it should be taken as a substitute for legal advice (if in doubt seek professional help); it is impossible to go into all the legal issues that surround writers in general, or even writers about the paranormal in particular (especially with regards to overseas markets, where legislation can be markedly different to English law). But the legal system usually seeks to reflect civilised behaviour, so being considerate of people's feelings and avoiding doing anything you'd not want done to you, tends to meet most contingencies. There are certainly some basic things to do, and things not to do. .

As soon as something is written down, it is automatically protected by copyright (Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988). So, if a witness sends an email or letter describing their experience, then explicit permission should be obtained before publishing it or even quoting from it. Some writers demand exclusivity, meaning nobody else is allowed to publish the same quotes, but that is rarely justifiable in the circumstances we're dealing with here. So, to leave the witness free to publish their story elsewhere, all that's required is they grant a royalty-free perpetual non-exclusive sub-licensable licence to publish their writing in whole or in part in any media anywhere. In return, it would be usual to offer the

assurance that their story should be credited to them wherever it's practical to do so. Wherever possible, permissions should be signed by hand, but an emailed agreement is a lot better than a verbal contract, which is still better than none at all.

If you are recording an interview, it is important to inform the witness first to they can mentally prepare themselves. Begin the recording with a repetition of the fact you're recording it, give the name of the person being interviewed, the date and location, and get the person to confirm it's all correct. Ask if it's ok to quote from the recording for publication (assure them that if they indicate something is 'off the record' then it will be respected and not published). It is good practice to give them a copy of the whole interview (usually either by email or on a CD-ROM).

If the witness has a photograph of a ghost (or a recording in any media), their permission to publish it is needed. At very least the permission should have your name and address, their name and address, a note describing what the media is said to contain and what sort of media it is (e. g. digital photo, CCTV, data log, etc), who took the photo, when, and where it was taken.

If someone other than the witness took the photo, the photographer's permission will usually be needed in order to publish. And if the photo was taken other than on the witness' own property or in a public place, then the landowner's permission will probably be required too. Also, before publishing, it may be necessary to blank-out identifiable features (e.g. the face) of anyone who may reasonably object to having their privacy infringed by publication (ideally, they should be traced and their consent obtained).

Permission from the landowner is also required when the author wishes to take their own photos or make other recordings for publication (unless it's in a public space). Naturally, if the photos etc include a person, then the above issue regarding an individual's right to personal privacy, will also apply, and consent should be sought prior to publication.

It is important, where practical, to allow people a cooling-off period of at least seven days in which to change their mind and withdraw their agreement to publication. This is not an obvious thing to do because it means the writer could end up wasting all the time and work that went into the interview etc, but it is the right thing to do. I've very rarely had to veto a story completely, as it's almost always possible to negotiate something worth publishing. There's no difficulty in presenting a story where the name of the witness or the location is withheld (particularly if a child or vulnerable person is involved, or the event occurred at a family home), because the core experience can still be fully described.

The importance of getting all these permissions in writing as early as possible cannot be overstated – just ask any writer who finally gets a publisher interested in an illustrated book of fifty or so stories collected over many years, or even decades.

RIGHTING COPYRIGHT WRONGS

An imperfect remedy for the lack of an agreement to publish is to take reasonable steps to secure that permission. This may be as simple as writing a letter asking for consent, and sending it to the witness's last-known address – and waiting (more in hope than expectation) for a reply. If the envelope is returned through the post marked something like 'not at this address, return to sender' then the fates have smiled. Do not open it. It is proof that you tried to do the right thing. Then, add a note in the publication itself to the effect that reasonable efforts have been made to contact all witnesses to secure permission to publish their stories, but if anyone was missed out ask that they make contact straight away.

Of course, once the story's in print, there's no going back, so if someone complains it may be necessary to offer them the commercial rate for the number of words quoted, or photos used, etc. If the witness is not satisfied with that, but instead invokes the spirit of the litigation culture, seeking to milk the situation, then that sealed letter can be offered as evidence of good faith – which counts for a lot in negotiations of this sort. In fact, few people are unreasonable, and many would be content with an apology and a promise that they'll receive preferential treatment should the story be carried in a new edition.

In the very worst case scenario, the complainant might sue for damage to their reputation (and perhaps also to their health – including consequential loss such as loss of earnings). They might also secure an injunction requiring the immediate destruction of all unsold copies of the book (or magazine, DVD, etc). Usually the publisher will have given the author a contract in which there is a clause that says the author indemnifies the publisher against being sued. The full price (including legal costs) of such a suit can be astronomical, so personal bankruptcy is a theoretically real, but thankfully remote, risk. Some people create a limited company as a legal buffer against such a contingency (limiting most if not all of the costs to the company's assets, rather than the author's personal assets). Insurance is another option that could be considered.

I am personally unaware of a case where that extreme example has actually happened, or even a case that has been brought but settled out of court. Perhaps the lack of litigation is because authors instinctively know the value of words and are careful about using them appropriately, but I suspect it may have

more to do with the technical difficulties of bringing a case based on the paranormal, most of which the law officially regards as nonsense.

GROUP DYNAMICS

Sometimes witnesses are interviewed and their stories written up as a prelude to a vigil by an investigation group. In such circumstances, in addition to the above permissions from the witnesses and landowner etc, it is sensible to get each participant in the vigil to sign a declaration granting permission for the group to use any notes, photographs, etc produced during the vigil.

Just as it's vital to record everything during the vigil, it's also important to record the debriefing. If this is done with a sound recorder, someone needs to take notes – unless they know shorthand, this can simply be achieved by jotting down the name of the person who starts speaking, then the name of who speaks next, etc etc. Occasional notes, for instance of a topic introduced by a particular speaker, will help just in case the record slips slightly, allowing a transcription to correctly identify who's speaking at all the key moments.

It must be borne in mind that sometimes groups and their members fall out, and a member may find, perhaps through no fault of their own, that they no longer have access to the group's records. Groups should carefully consider their policy regarding such circumstances. Just as legal battles between members of music groups may arise after the band splits up, when different members each claims the right to form a new group using the original name; ownership of the group's copyright permissions can become a serious bone of contention.

A simple solution is to agree in advance to give everyone who attended and/or contributed to the vigil (with the proviso that they remained a member in good standing at its conclusion), the same rights to the group's records as the group itself. Each qualifying member should then be given a complete copy of the archive (complete with copies of the permissions) without delay. Because the permissions are non-exclusive, no member could stop anyone else publishing them, and alternative interpretations can be aired independently.

That may seem a high risk strategy, but groups are built on trust, and to deny **contributing members' free access to the group's archives is a serious step**. Sharing the archive, rather than having it exist in only one central place, can also prevent losses through the disbanding of a small group (or even simple computer crashes), which often results in nothing ever being published.

One safeguard would be to enable members to exercise their right to be anonymous, and to prohibit publication of recognisable images of themselves. Such precautions ought, perhaps, to be the default position.

HONOUR AMONG WRITERS

If a story has already been published, you can still mention it in your writing, but to avoid any infringement of copyright, it is safest to use all your own words in the retelling (The British Library). Usually it is enough to summarise the story and give the reader a full reference in the bibliography so they can find more details if they wish. And yes, a bibliography really is an essential in any modern book of 'true' paranormal stories (as is an index) – the Harvard system used by Anomaly itself is a widely favoured format.

Incidentally, the adjective 'true' was separated because, as we have seen, there is no legal basis to call many reported paranormal phenomena – such as ghosts – true or real in the scientific sense of being established fact. It may be sensible therefore, to avoid possible confusion, to add a simple sentence somewhere at the start of a book of collected stories. For instance, it might read somewhere along the lines of – although these stories have been collected as honest descriptions of real experiences, and are presented here in good faith, the author cannot vouch for the validity of any interpretation given to them, or for the objective existence of any paranormal phenomena mentioned.

Returning to the theme of including previously published stories – if the author is still alive, then writing to them can secure the necessary permission to quote from their work. An author may usually be contacted through their website, or through the publisher (addressing a covering letter to the publisher explaining the reason for writing to the author). Most publishers are very happy to assist in this, because it publicises and therefore promotes sales of their book. But it can take a surprisingly long time for the request to reach the author, so it's not a course of action to leave to the last minute.

A lot of academic writers habitually quote each other, apparently without seeking specific permission each time, even though copyright is still in force. I suspect they probably rely on a legal right to fair use of a published work. However (again with the caveat that I'm no legal expert, and that this article is no substitute for professional advice), fair use in this context seems to apply more to reviews (where brief quotations are certainly allowed) than to compilations or collections of stories. If in doubt, it is always safer to rewrite something than to risk a charge of plagiarism (and always give credit to the original author and their book, etc).

If the author died more than seventy years ago, their copyright protection will usually have expired (there are exceptions to this rule that reduce the length of time, but assuming seventy years errs on the safe side), which allows the existing text to be quoted in full. One of the very few cases that require more than seventy years is the Authorised Version of the Bible (Cambridge University Press) which, of course, contains a wealth of paranormal experiences. That book remains under perpetual Crown copyright – but only in the United Kingdom (elsewhere it is in the public domain). Happily, I may say I've found the administrators, Cambridge University Press, to be both prompt and cooperative whenever I've needed permission to quote particular verses or even chapters.

This might be as good a time as any to mention blasphemy which, because it is so subjective and difficult to interpret in a strict legal sense, is best covered by the famous aeronautical injunction – avoid avoid avoid! Fortunately, few seasoned researchers into the paranormal would be so dogmatic and insensitive as to make a statement that could land them in serious trouble. But I sometimes wonder how long it will be before someone in, say, a Spiritualist church sues a gutter press newspaper for ridiculing a ghost.

Even if an author died so long ago that their writing is out of copyright protection, and is available to be retyped and published verbatim (or even reproduced in a facsimile copy), care still needs to be taken. If the published work to be copied is relatively modern (i.e. less than seventy years old), then the design such as the typeface and layout etc is covered by copyright held by the publisher themselves. And there is an additional difficulty in dealing with such texts because although the author's death more than seventy years ago means his/her writings are no longer controlled by copyright law, a modern edition of their text may contain changes introduced by the modern editor – and such changes are subject to a new copyright period of seventy years.

Even if the text and design of a work is not protected by copyright, the right to make and publish a facsimile of it, in whole or in part, resides with its owner. If the book is in the possession of a private individual, then seeking permission is usually relatively straightforward, but public libraries, record offices, and museums often have complicated rules governing reproduction of their holdings. While many institutions allow reproduction free of charge, or in return for a complimentary copy of the new publication, some charge quite large fees, so it is always prudent to enquire at an early stage.

Fundamentally, the same rules apply to copyright on images. The equivalent to re-writing is re-drawing, which must be done manually as a creative act, without tracing or any similar mechanical or digital copying assistance.

Maps are often worth including, and the Ordnance Survey has recently produced a set of up to date maps that can be downloaded and used under a free licence. Copyright on their printed maps expires after fifty years. (Ordnance Survey)

RIDING THE DRAGON

Many authors are somewhat solitary by nature, and may be more fluent in writing than public speaking. As such, they are often the worst people to invite to talk about their writings, so it is not unusual to have difficulty coping with the media storm that can be raised by, for example, a publisher's publicity department.

Most publishers are operating a business, and they have no special sensitivity to the delicate nature of many paranormal cases. Newspaper journalists in particular may ask the author for a photo shoot at an inappropriate location such as a graveyard (the ethical grounds for refusing this would include it being disrespectful to the relatives of those interred there to use their memorials to sell the author's book). Journalists may seek to persuade the author to fall in line, but they are essentially pragmatic and so, will almost always accept an alternative location.

Media management is an extensive topic in its own right, and cannot be explored properly here. Suffice to say we learn by our mistakes, and it can be easier to remember the painful lessons rather than all the times when things went smoothly – but we should strive to keep a balanced view of these things. Each time we challenge the old stereotype of the paranormal as an object of ridicule, we help to set the future free.

LEGACY

Publishing a collection of local stories of paranormal experiences is often the only way these events are recorded. Such a book is a museum of folklore. Scrupulous accuracy, attention to detail and a non-partisan approach will ensure future generations (who may have a very different understanding to ours) will find the contents valuable and trustworthy.

To produce work that stands the test of time is an important achievement, and such accomplishments are rarely won quickly or cheaply. Simply taking the time to read what you've written, re-read it, and re-read again, and yet again – each time improving it even ever so slightly – can bridge the gap between what the writer likes and what the reader likes. That gap is the difference between the amateur and the professional writer.

Just like a ghost writer working for a celebrity, wherever possible quote them in their own words, but not if that makes them seem silly or ill-informed. Rearrange their comments to create a chronological and coherent story. Introduce the story as concisely as possible, but be sure to include the relevant details of time and date, location, what was happening, who was there, etc. Plausible explanations are generally acceptable, so long as reasons are given why one explanation seems more appropriate than another.

It can be very difficult for an author to convey another person's experience without colouring it with the author's own favourite interpretation, skewing it with their own ideas of what's important about it, and clouding it with their inability to capture it fully. Perhaps it's actually impossible. But it's still well worth making the attempt. For one thing, it teaches humility, but more importantly perhaps it hones compassion, promotes altruism, and offers a real service to people who would otherwise be unable to communicate their experience in such an open and respectable way. It is almost magical for someone with no special writing skills or talent to read about themselves, having their own story presented in a professional way.

The perfect ghost writer is invisible. The reader should be unaware the story is anything other than exactly the way the witness told it. A ghost writer needs such a light touch that even if for an instant someone feels their presence, it is shrugged off without a second thought. It may be all an illusion, but for both the witness and the reader – the more convincing the illusion is, the better.

No-one is ever likely to ask 'Do you believe in ghost writers?' But, if anyone did, the best reply might be a secret smile – and a swift change of subject.

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ANOMALIES I HAVE KNOWN

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Paul Devereux BA, FRSA is Managing Editor (and a co-founder) of the academic publication, *Time & Mind – The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* (www.bergjournals.com/timeandmind) and a research associate of the Royal College of Art. He has had 28 books published since 1979, including *Re-Visioning the Earth*, *The Sacred Place*, *Stone Age Soundtracks*, *The Long Trip*, and, his latest, *Sacred Geography*, and written dozens of articles for general publications and a string of peer-reviewed papers. Three of his key research areas are archaeoacoustics (the study of sound at archaeological sites), ecopsychology, and the use of mind-altering substances in prehistory. He has also had a decades-long interest in parapsychology, mysticism and many types of anomalies.

ABSTRACT

Anomalies are things that happen outside the normal frame of our lives. Odd intrusions, glitches, call them what you will. They are instructive precisely because of this; they tell us that there is more to the nature of reality than we are normally (literally) aware of. Hopefully, they goad us on to making further enquiry, deeper thought, and perhaps, eventually, to finding answers to **questions we didn't know we had before we experienced the anomaly**. In this article, I describe just a few of the anomalies I have experienced at various times in the several decades of my life. I also indicate the effects they had on me and the questions they raised.

CURTAINS I and II

In old gangster movies a villain about to shoot some hapless victim would say **something like: “It’s curtains for you, buddy!”** The metaphor of “curtains” for death has been in common usage for goodness knows how many years – think of Sinatra’s “final curtain” in *I Did It My Way*. I experienced two synchronicities in which curtains in association with death became a living metaphor, a literal reality. The first was in the mid-1960s. I was sitting in a **fairly bare room in a rented students’ house talking with Bill**, an up and coming rock musician who was suffering with severe mental illness. The late afternoon sun was streaming through the curtain-less bay windows. I was trying to find out from Bill what he was actually experiencing when he had his episodes of mental distress. As he was trying to explain, there was a deafening explosion

that made me jump with alarm, while Bill sat calmly with a slight smile. The explosive sound had been caused by a brass curtain rod ping-pong off its brackets and flying across the room with considerable force. That night, Bill hung **himself in a shed in a builder's yard next door.**

The second instance occurred a few years later, in 1969, **at my mother's funeral.** The cortège was waiting in the street, but my father was too distressed to come out of the house. It was becoming awkward. I went up to find him sitting in what had used to be my bedroom. He was weeping, **and wouldn't respond to my** urging him to come downstairs because people were waiting. Then, without warning, without rhyme or reason, the curtain rail fell down, dumping the curtains in a heap on the floor. This had never happened in all the years I had used the room as a youngster. Both my father and I looked up startled. Then, out of the folds of the fallen curtains, fluttered a colourful butterfly. **"That's Kath," my father said,** referring to my mother. He instantly became calm, got up and went downstairs to join the funeral party.

Like most synchronistic events, these seem pretty minor happenings (one reason they tend to slip under the radar of our awareness), but taken together they had a big impact on me. They seemed to have their own internal meaning, to me at least. They prompted me to find out more about synchronicity, as the following experience indicates.

FISHY BUSINESS

My ensuing decades of interest in synchronicity obviously led me to the work of the Swiss psychologist C. G. **Jung who actually coined the term "synchronicity"** to refer to meaningful coincidences, instances when subjective and objective factors come together in a significant way without any logical connections. He **wasn't the first to ponder on such phenomena,** and was greatly influenced by **Paul Kammerer who spoke of "seriality", which he considered to be "ubiquitous and continuous in life, nature and cosmos",** and Arthur Schopenhauer, who **wrote on "the simultaneous occurrence of causally unconnected events".** Jung **defined synchronicity as an "acausal connecting principle" and recounted** several of his own experiences that alerted him to the phenomenon. His seminal synchronicity experiences revolved around fish. During a time when he had been studying the symbol of the fish in history, six quite independent fish-related events surfaced for him within a single twenty-four-hour period commencing on 1 April, 1949. It was a Friday, the traditional day for eating fish, and the psychologist had eaten fish for lunch, during which someone discussed **making an 'April fish' out of someone (the Swiss version of "April fool").** That morning he had chanced across an inscription referring to the symbol of the fish which was particularly relevant to his research. In the afternoon, a former **patient of Jung's,** whom he had not seen for months, showed him some

“extremely impressive” pictures of fish, which she had painted in the meantime. In the evening, he was shown a piece of embroidery with fish-like sea-monsters on it. The next morning another patient, whom he had not seen for years, told **him of a powerful dream she’d had in which she was standing at the edge of a lake watching a large fish swim towards her.** Jung later noted that coincidences often come in what he called **“swarms”**, and there was more to come later in this particular case. He was writing up notes about these fish-related events while sitting by a lakeside, attempting to explain away the sequence of coincidences in a rational (causal) manner. After closing his notebook he had gone for a meditative walk. He came across a fish lying in his path. It was dead but apparently uninjured, and it had not been there when he had passed the spot earlier. Jung had no idea how the fish had got there, but in **any case that didn’t matter as far as the fact of the synchronicity was concerned.**

In the **thirty-five or so years after my 1960s’ synchronicities**, I had read many books on the subject, **including Jung’s**, and had even given talks on it, and right now I was completing an essay dealing with it. **I wasn’t sure what title to give the piece. I was debating with myself whether or not to call it “Fishy Business” in reference to Jung’s shoal of fish-related coincidences.** But would that seem too trite a title? I mentioned my minor dilemma to my wife one afternoon while **sitting in Marlow’s tea room in Stratford-upon-Avon**, a local town we frequently visited. We were sitting at a table in a bay window overlooking the street. At precisely the time I was discussing my title problem, a white delivery van pulled up on the opposite side of the road to the tea room. The only words emblazoned **on its otherwise plain white side were “Fishy” and “Business”**. We were both rendered speechless – **the vehicle hadn’t even parked outside of a fishmongers and we had never seen it previously.** I could not have been more stunned if the **shade of Carl Jung himself had got out of the driver’s cab.** Fishy business indeed.

Jung was frankly amazed when he came to find out how many people had **experienced synchronicity and tellingly noted “how carefully the secret was guarded”**. Indeed, synchronicity is another of those open secrets we do not register because we are told to dismiss them as meaningless chance. However, this is a purely learned reaction, a cultural thing. As Jung once caustically observed, though synchronicity is not generally accepted as significant by Western mainstream thought, **“that does not hurt the facts”**.

All my synchronistic encounters I think of as pulled threads in the fabric of reality, and the full nature reality it something we haven’t by any means as yet got the measure of. Synchronicities constantly make me wonder what is going on behind the scenes of everyday life.

UNEXPECTED SPECTRES

I have seen two very different types of ghostly apparitions, and it is that difference which makes me question their nature.

The first incident took place when I was about nine years old. Everyone was talking about the news that a little girl had been found murdered – such a rare and shocking event in those days (sad to say less rare today). When I went to bed my mother told me to say a prayer for the little girl, and being then a good little Catholic, I did so. In the middle of the night something awoke me. I looked around. At the far end of the broad windowsill next to my bed was a soft-edged blue glow glittering with white points of light contained within it. Its shape was vaguely that of a small human figure but there were no details – no face or other features – just a shimmering shape. I somehow knew what it was – the murdered little girl. It was too weird for me to cope with and I yelled out, waking up the household. The sparkling figure of blue light vanished. My parents and brother came running, wanting to know what the matter was, but I was unable to speak. My parents tucked me up again in bed, with soothing words.

The second incident didn't occur until a quarter of a century or so later. I was driving down an almost deserted M6 motorway near Birmingham towards London in the wee morning hours. I knew the route well. As I approached a slip road, a down ramp, I noticed a mini-pick-up truck about to come onto the **motorway and I pulled over into the central lane so I didn't have to slow down to let it on.** Going at a faster speed, I started to pass the small truck. I could see it in every detail, and it had a somewhat battered appearance. I glanced into the **driver's cab as I went by but could not see anyone in it.** Odd, I thought. I pulled clear of the truck and checked my rear-view mirror before turning back into the lane ahead of it. **But I couldn't see it in my mirror.** Not there. Confused, I knew there was nowhere for it to have gone to; I glanced back over my shoulder. The motorway was empty behind me, an eerie emptiness I could almost feel pressing on my back. Christ, I thought, **I've just seen a phantom vehicle! I pushed the accelerator to the floor – I just wanted to get out of there.** Later that day, I met up with John Michell and told him about the incident. He felt I had witnessed a modern version of the spectral stagecoach, a reported ghost motif that had been prevalent in past centuries.

These anomalous events forced me to think hard about apparitions. I've always had problems with ghosts being the spirits of the dead. I know I am me because I have a body, a brain, and a social, time-space persona. If I die and all that has gone, how can I appear as an apparition that looks like me? And what, exactly, would "I" be? Nevertheless, I did feel the blue shape glowing in my bedroom all those years ago was somehow the dead girl appearing as just

a vaguely anthropomorphic, glittering shape. But what about ghosts that appear dressed in clothing? Does cloth have a spirit? Rather, is a ghost a sort of extra-dimensional energy node that uses mental imagery held within the witness's brain in order to present itself in our spacetime continuum? And what about my M6 apparition? Do battered mini-pickup trucks have souls? That latter incident pushed me into a lot of research on road ghosts, some fruits of which appeared in my book, Haunted Land.

THINGS SEEN IN THE SKY

I've seen several unidentified skyborne somethings in the course of my life, most of them being strange lights. The two instances I recount here, though, were more distinctive somethings.

The first happened in the early 1950s, just past noon on a school day. A school-friend and I were going home for lunch, walking along a path that lead uphill from the village school. I suddenly noticed, up ahead, a huge airship hovering above the brow of the hill. It was almost black, with the sunlight catching the angles of its body formed by its structural ribbing. A dirigible. At its left end from our viewpoint there were tail fins, and slung underneath was what looked like a cabin or gondola. I had seen pictures of the old airships, but there was one floating in the sky! I turned to my friend to see her staring at the object with her mouth open. **"See that? See that?" I shouted at her excitedly.** Still staring and gaping at the object, **she didn't respond.** I turned back to look at the airship, but it has vanished. I ran to the top of the hill, which offers views across half the county, but there was no airship to be seen anywhere. My friend did not speak again as we walked onward to our homes. Later that day I told my elder brother and my father about the airship. They assured me there was no such thing then flying in Britain, nor had done for many years.

The other event occurred on May 16th 1967 and I can never forget it. It is burned into my memory. I was an art student, **and working late in the art college's top floor studio.** It was late afternoon merging into early evening, and I went to the north-facing window to mix paint colours by the slowly diminishing natural daylight within the studio. The window overlooks the fields between the college and the town of Bromley, in Kent. Something caught my eye – a light in the sky, a rich, deep orange light like the embers of a fire. **I couldn't figure out** what it is. **It's moving,** getting closer. It is an upright, door-shaped rectangle of light that comes to a halt above the fields. I called out to the several other students also working in the studio. Initially, **they didn't even look up from their work.** But the thing was still out there; it had perfect right-angle corners. **It wasn't possible,** but it was out there. **I shouted for the students' attention again,** more loudly and urgently this time. They muttered at me, and reluctantly sauntered to the windows. They stopped in their tracks, transfixed. I noticed that

students were coming out of the ground floor workshops four storeys below and into the car park area, looking and pointing up at the object.

Motionless in the sky, the glowing rectangle collapsed in on itself, losing its perfect geometry. It churned, and reconstructed itself into the featureless, fiery shape of a human figure with its arms outstretched. Not possible, but there it was, in the sky. **As an art student I realised this was a “universal man” kind of image**, and that the door-shaped light was known as a root-2 rectangle, the proportional system to be found in the human body. It was as if an archetypal sequence was taking place! Too much. I instinctively backed away a few paces from the window.

The thing’s glow gradually dulled, then it collapsed in on itself again, but this time it slowly dissipated. After a while there was just a rosy smudge left in the sky where the thing had been. The next day the word had got around, and I was questioned by a young ufologist who told me that the previous late afternoon there had been numerous sightings of an object flying low over the Thames. It was reported to have then turned south, which is the direction our college was in. Other witnesses, one in a bus, saw it passing over Bromley Common. We also learned that the previous evening, roughly around the time of our sighting, a film crew from the college filming at Keston Ponds, a couple of miles from the college, had seen a sphere of bright white light fall out of the sky and hover over one of the ponds before flying off. Something objective and truly remarkable had clearly taken place, but what?

Events like these forced me to take a strong interest in “flying saucers” as they were then called, and later a more mature involvement in ufology. In the process I learned that there had been a spate of “mystery airship” sightings in the 1950s, and, by and large, I went along with the misperception, hoax and “psycho-social” schools of explanations proffered for them, and I think that was probably appropriate for many of the reports. But the fact remains, I did actually see an airship, which for a brief time appeared fully solid and detailed. I further learned from my research that over a 20-year period in the very district I saw the thing (Humberstone area, Leicestershire), there had been a series of reports of “cigar-shaped” objects.

As infuriatingly tantalising as this incident was (and remains) to me, the Bromley incident deeply marked me in a more profound way. After the sighting, I experienced deep shock – ontological shock. This event belonged in some biblical record, surely, not real life. I was torn – it couldn’t have happened, yet I saw it and everyone else around me saw it. I began to doubt my everyday reality. With dread, I feared that I might actually be in a mental ward somewhere, hallucinating my whole life, hallucinating everything that I took to be reality. I underwent something of a mental breakdown for a few

weeks before slowly pulling myself together. The experience has never left me; it has ever since stopped me living a normalised life, and driven me into the range of anomaly research that has occupied me for decades. I wrote two books, Earth Lights, and Earth Lights Revelation, directly inspired by the Bromley event. But I don't think I've ever, as yet at least, got anywhere near understanding what it was that happened. The only thing I am sure of is that the aerial anomaly was nothing to do with alien spaceships – it definitely touched on greater depths of the nature of reality than even extra-terrestrial contact would be.

Like unpalatable medicine, anomalies can be good for us, pushing understanding toward the wild frontiers that have to be explored if we are to ultimately fully discover who and where we are.

(An essay by Devereux will be published as “A Life in Visions” in an anthology in 2013, provisionally entitled *Ecology, Cosmos and Consciousness* [ed. David Luke] and will include these and numerous other anomalies, some even stranger than these.)

ASSAP PROFESSIONAL CODE OF ETHICS

*National Investigation Committee
Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena*

Applicability Note: This code applies to members of ASSAP that choose to join the National Register of Professional Investigators. Members of the NRPI should follow the code in all cases, regardless of whether they are ASSAP cases, except where they opt out of NRPI rules for any case. In such cases the opting out should be made clear to clients and in any publicity and subsequent reports. It is accepted that members of the NRPI may be bound by overriding Codes of Ethics by professional bodies, such as the British Psychological Society or those of individual University departments.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CODE OF ETHICS

The investigation of anomalous phenomena is an unregulated field that has an inconsistent approach to ethics. Investigators are capable of being either professional or amateur in their approach to cases.

ASSAP is a Learned Society and Professional Body for investigators of anomalous phenomena. The National Register of Professional Investigators and the Code of Ethics at its core provides an ethical benchmark for those who join it.

The Code of Ethics is designed to ensure a minimal ethical standard amongst investigators in order to make sure that clients are not harmed by the activities of investigators.

The NRPI is not designed to provide a ‘gold standard’ for rational and ethical investigators, separate facilities are available for this purpose, but is designed to be accessible to all investigators and raise the ethical standard of the field of investigation.

As such the code is split into two parts. Both parts apply to vulnerable cases as these involve clients needing the highest ethical protection. However in cases where venues involve interested clients, where there is less chance of possible harm, the ethical requirements are lower but still present.

The new code was subject to a consultation exercise both before and after draft publication. The code will be reviewed within its first year of publication.

ASSAP has provided an Ethical Toolkit for members of the NRPI so they can use sample forms and paperwork to fulfil ethical compliance without reinventing the wheel.

We hope you find this code useful and we earnestly hope it will help to raise the ethical standard of our field.

HOW TO USE THE CODE OF ETHICS

The level of ethics that applies to a particular case will dictate which part of the Code of Ethics is relevant.

The use of this code applies to any cases an investigator choosing to join the National Register of Professional Investigators undertakes, regardless of where the case came from. If investigators have to opt-out of the code for any specific case this should be made clear to the client and their links to the NRPI should not be promoted.

There are broadly four types of case:

1. Statutorily vulnerable cases. These include cases where the client is under 18, is frail due to old age, has mental health issues or learning disabilities or where the client had a relevant bereavement within twelve months of making contact. Clients should also be considered temporary incapable of providing informed consent when they are under the influence of alcohol and/drugs.

It is not appropriate to have contact with statutorily vulnerable clients unless working with their local authority approved care providers. If approached by such clients they should be sign-posted to responsible local authorities.

2. Non-statutorily vulnerable (hereafter known as ‘vulnerable’) cases. These are cases where investigation is of an individual’s private home or where the client is emotionally invested in the case.

In such cases use both Part 1 and Part 2 of the Code of Ethics.

3. Non-vulnerable cases. These are cases where the client is not emotionally invested in the case; they may or may not be interested in the case. This may include where a venue is hired for an investigation or a venue well-accustomed to investigators.

In such cases use Part 1 of the Code of Ethics.

4. Cases with no client. These are often cases that involve a geographic area, outdoors location, ruin or topographical feature.

In such cases use Part 1 of the Code of Ethics.

The investigator should make an assessment of which category a case falls into before proceeding. Investigators should make every effort to establish if a client is statutorily vulnerable before deciding whether to take on the case. Where a **client's vulnerability is withheld from the investigator the investigator should** withdraw and make an appropriate referral where they discover a client vulnerability.

There will be occasions where it is unclear whether the client is vulnerable or non-vulnerable. For example a pub that runs related events but where the client lives in the pub might be non-vulnerable, as might a castle that hires itself to investigators but the caretaker lives on site. Conversely a public building that has never been investigated where the client is concerned about the case may be **a vulnerable case. The term 'client' should also extend to any persons affected** by an investigation. For example one individual in a private home may not be statutorily vulnerable but another person in the house might be. A disinterested building owner may not be vulnerable but their staff affected by a haunting may be, in which case rules for vulnerable clients should apply.

There will often be grey areas where an investigator needs to make a judgement. For example Freedom to Withdraw may or may not apply where the investigator is hiring a venue under a contractual arrangement. In such cases that contract should be consulted. In general if a hired venue wishes investigators it is wise to comply with the instruction but to refer to the hiring contract for any form of redress.

Public events are classified as 'non-vulnerable' (a public event would never take place in a vulnerable environment). This Code of Ethics can help guide conduct during public events, but some elements of such events fall outside the scope of this code. For example people organising public events have a duty of care and statutory consumer responsibilities to members of the public which are not covered in this code.

It is incumbent on the investigator to establish what category a case falls into, and apply the relevant level of ethics, at the earliest opportunity.

PART ONE – ETHICS IN ALL CASES

This section applies to ALL cases undertaken as a member of the National Register of Professional Investigators.

1.0 CLIENT PROTECTION

1.1 TREATMENT OF CLIENTS

All clients are to be treated in a respectful manner at all times. Consideration should be shown if the client has cultural and religious/beliefs or customs, however, the investigator is encouraged to remain impartial.

1.2 USE OF LANGUAGE

It is advised that when communicating with a client via email, phone or in person, creating an even powered relationship between the investigator and the Client is paramount. Please ensure that you use appropriate language which will not offend or confuse the client. Always provide explanations for any expressions or vocabulary that is not understood and avoid the use of jargon where possible.

1.3 DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY

Securing any personal data pertaining to the client is vital and assurances must be made by the investigator that any data relating to the client and the case complies with the Data Protection Act (1998). Investigators should ensure there is no way information can be divulged to a third party without consent. Third parties may include newspapers, TV production companies, radio, social network groups, et cetera.

1.4 INSURANCE

ASSAP holds public liability and professional indemnity insurance that covers all members of the National Register of Professional Investigators following this Code of Ethics.

1.5 INFORMED CONSENT

You should gain informed, written consent from your client before commencing a case. Informed consent means the client should know exactly what working with the investigator involves, including details of methods employed. Permission should also be explicitly obtained for use of filming or audio recording.

Investigators should take care to explain the purpose of the investigation, including its scientific basis and ensure the client knows that a resolution of any kind is not guaranteed.

In cases with no clients – or outdoors locations – investigators should only proceed with the permission of the owner or relevant authority. Any outdoors location should be approached as either owned privately or in the care of a **relevant authority**. **Even locations considered to be to be ‘open access’ to the public** require permission for fieldwork. Investigators should consider the possible **impact of ‘cold calling’ landowners, or indeed any building owner**, as they may be unaware of alleged haunting reports of a site or building.

The document and the consent process should cover:

- Possible benefits and risks of your investigation.
- Privacy and data protection.
- Insurance indemnity arrangements.
- What is expected of the client.
- Both parties' understanding of the brief and relevant facts associated with the case.
- How and with what frequency information is provided to the client throughout the research process.
- Assurance that the client can withdraw at any time.
- The procedure for re-consenting if longitudinal research is involved.

1.6 DECEPTION AS AN INVESTIGATIVE TOOL

The default position is not to deceive clients or colleagues, and deception should never be used in vulnerable cases. However, if research questions call for deception in non-vulnerable cases, the investigator must consider: a) the potential harm, b) the benefits to the research, and c) the quality of the research. Deception is never appropriate when working with vulnerable clients. In other cases proposed deception should be considered by a separate body. ASSAP intends to form an Ethics Panel that would be available to consider such matters on request. Any agreed deception should always be followed by a full debrief where its use is justified and explained.

2.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

The importance of protecting personal details

2.1 DEFINING WHAT IS CONFIDENTIAL DATA

This type of data refers to private information, evidence gathered on investigations or organisational information that has been recorded by the investigator and used to describe a person, details of an event or a location. Any unauthorised access to this data could result in a considerable incursion of privacy and would have an unfavourable impact on our reputation. Several privacy laws protect such data. Any breach in confidential data should be reported to the NIC (National Investigations Committee) immediately.

2.2 WHEN EXCLUSIONS APPLY

Permissible disclosure of confidential data can arise in certain instances such as an investigator discovering that an illegal act or crime has taken place and if harm, abuse, or threat of harm has been exposed whilst a case is in progress. In such cases disclosure may be permitted if a referral needs to be made to an outside agency such as the police, council, mental health team, Approved Social Worker, etc. In such cases an investigator has a duty of care and should not delay in alerting the relevant authorities. Investigators should co-operate with Police or relevant authority as required.

2.3 THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998

Any organisation or individual gathering information about individuals and is obliged to protect data under this statutory law. It deals with how to process the data in a fair and lawful way, how it should be obtained, the importance of accuracy, the rights of individuals, organisations and businesses, effective storage of the data, the movement of such data and exemptions. For more information on this act please visit this website: www.ico.gov.uk

2.4 WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

Both parties should sign a tailored written agreement covering confidentiality. The default position should be confidentiality of the case details and anonymity of both client and individual investigators. Clients can waive the right to confidentiality and anonymity where they specifically agree and where the investigator feels this is in the interests of the general research community and where it is not against the interests of the client.

2.5 TYPES OF PERMISSIBLE DISCLOSURE

This refers to information that is required by law or court order. It may consist of information that is both tangible and intangible that specifically relates to the client or the case.

2.6 AVOIDING LEGALESE IN CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

To avoid a situation in which a client is perplexed or intimidated by an agreement that you give them, we suggest that you refrain from using overly formal legal jargon in your content. This can also impede comprehension of the document. Please use a concise and clear writing style to avoid any problems.

2.7 EXTENDING CONFIDENTIALITY TO THE CLIENT

It is recommended that you advise your client to refrain from discussing the details of the case to third parties such as the press except where otherwise agreed. This is to protect your reputation as an investigator, and that of your colleagues who may not consent to having their details shared with the media. Clients may also not be aware of the full potential implications of approaching the media. Even local press articles can be picked up by national and international media with results that are more intrusive than the client may have originally anticipated.

2.8 DATA BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CLIENT

If the client asks to view the records of an investigation that involves them, you are legally obliged to make these available to the client.

2.9 WORKING WITH THE MEDIA AND RELEASE FORMS

When working with the media, we encourage that you present a rational picture to the world. Likewise, if reports are made available on websites, to clients or to anyone else, reports should be scientific and rational to safeguard the reputation of the field. If in doubt about involving the media, it is better to not involve them due to the risk of inaccurate reporting, sensationalism and the possibility of causing distress. Always avoid sensational, libellous or derogatory remarks. If a client has consented to involve the media it is good practice to ensure they are kept abreast of the interest of any specific media.

2.10 OFFERING CENSORSHIP IN PHOTOGRAPHS

In the event of publicising a case in the mass media (including internet), you should censor any visual data (such as photographs or video) to ensure the agreed level of confidentiality and anonymity for the client.

2.11 INFORMATION FORMATS

Whichever format(s) you choose to work with, take into consideration the needs of the client. You are welcome to use the ASSAP report template, which represents good practice in presenting information to the client.

3.0 INVESTIGATORS' PROTECTION

3.1 RISK ASSESSMENT

Part of your initial evaluation should be to carry out a risk assessment of the property that you are investigating in order to identify areas or objects that could prove to be harmful to you or others.

3.2 MEDICAL ISSUES

Lead investigators should be aware of any medical issues relating to other investigators and be able to respond to emergencies.

3.3 LONE WORKING

It is not advisable that you attend a case alone. Ideally you should attend with another investigator, ideally of the opposite sex. More often than not you will be **walking into a stranger's home or a venue that has not been previously vetted.** However, if you find yourself working under these circumstances unavoidably, please ensure that you give a colleague, bound by the same confidentiality, the details of where and when you intend to carry out your investigation.

3.4 EFFECTIVE BRIEFING

All investigators should be fully briefed by the lead investigator prior to the initiation of an investigation. Investigators should understand what is expected of them and understand all methods used.

3.5 EFFECTIVE DEBRIEFING

All investigators must allow time at the end of an investigation for a debriefing session; this gives each member the opportunity to discuss any problems or

worries that surfaced during the investigation. It also helps to ensure that each colleague leaves the site in the same state in which they arrived.

3.6 ANONYMITY IN REPORTS

All details contained within your reports should be held privately unless specifically decided otherwise. Colleagues must be informed of confidentiality policies that are in place. Names of colleagues and clients should be anonymised as well as the names of locations, except where agreed otherwise.

3.7 WHISTLE BLOWING

From time to time you may encounter investigators who have acted inappropriately. For example, they may have used practices that we have not endorsed and that have caused distress to the client. An investigator may have been pressured or bullied into doing something that they are not comfortable with. If you observe any unethical behaviour, it is your responsibility to confront the investigator involved, and to remove yourself from the unethical situation. If the behaviour is on the part of a member of the NRPI, you should inform ASSAP if it is not resolved. ASSAP offers anonymity to all whistleblowers. Complaints, whether from investigators, clients or members of the public, will be dealt with **through ASSAP's internal** procedures.

3.8 PROTECTION OF THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

A conscientious and trustworthy research group should always present their conclusions in a rational and logical manner. If this is not adhered to, it may impair the reputation of the field and research may suffer as a result of this. If you present your findings/reports on the internet you are rightly open to criticism, scrutiny and opposing opinions. Protect yourself and your colleagues by using a rational and prudent approach at all times.

3.9 INVESTIGATORS AND THEIR RIGHTS TO WITHDRAW

It is perfectly acceptable for investigators to withdraw from a case if they feel that they can no longer continue. Investigator briefings should include details of right to withdraw.

4.0 THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Providing assurances to the client about their rights

4.1 CLIENT REQUESTS WITHDRAWAL FROM A CASE

The Client can request a case ceases with immediate effect. This can either be accepted verbally or in writing. They are not required to offer an explanation. In the event of this happening, please treat their decision with respect and please do not make any attempt to approach them or try to persuade them to let you carry on with your investigation at a later date. The right to withdraw should be set out in the signed pre-investigation agreement and should be explained to the client prior to the commencement of the investigation. Discontinuing participation should not result in any penalty.

4.2 REQUESTS FOR DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

In the event of the Client withdrawing from a case, you may wish to ask them whether or not they wish for the case records to be destroyed. Please honour any request that is made for the destruction of notes, reports, etc. that you may have in your possession. After you have complied with their request, please contact them in writing stating that it has been carried out. By doing this you have provided an assurance that will hopefully prevent anxiety or stress relating to data about the case.

4.3 PROXY AGREEMENT

A proxy is a person who can give consent on behalf of someone else who is unable to do so for legal or other reasons (e.g. status as a minor or lack of capacity to understand what is being presented to them). We do not recommend working with clients for whom you would need a proxy agreement in order to proceed with a case.

5.0 IF THINGS GO WRONG

5.1 ETHICAL CHALLENGES

Should any problems arise when following this Code of Ethics it is recommended you contact ASSAP for guidance.

5.2 COMPLAINTS

Any complaints arising from investigators using the Code of Ethics should be referred to ASSAP. Clients should be made aware that this source of redress is

available. Investigators, either involved in not involved with a particular case or group or investigator, are encouraged to challenge breaches of ethics; however the complaints procedure is primarily for use by clients rather than investigators.

PART TWO – ETHICS IN VULNERABLE CASES

6.0 ADDITIONAL CLIENT PROTECTION

The safeguarding of clients, use of terminology and importance of methodology

6.1 CRIMINAL RECORD BUREAU (CRB) CHECKS

Especially when working with vulnerable clients it is vital that investigators are background checked. Part of the process of becoming a member of the NRPI will involve a CRB check (available through ASSAP) which will provide the NIC with details of convictions, cautions, warnings and reprimands which are recorded in central records. This also provides reassurance to the client.

6.2 THE USE OF EQUIPMENT AND PSEUDO-SCIENCE

In vulnerable cases the use of equipment to test unscientific theories has the potential to cause harm. When dealing with vulnerable clients investigators should always err on the side of caution and never use equipment to test unscientific theories.

6.3 THE USE OF SPIRITUAL METHODS

Likewise the use of any spiritual methods is potentially distressing to vulnerable clients and should not be used in these circumstances.

6.4 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

It is important to present the findings and conclusions of your case to the client in a presentable format that is comprehensible to them, explaining terminology as needed. Avoid using unhelpful assumptions, which could be misinterpreted. When going through your report with the client, ensure that this does not turn into a lecture. Instead, you should allow the client to ask questions. Do not always assume understanding; clearly explain concepts, techniques and operational issues where necessary. When explaining your conclusions, be sure to stick to the evidence and be ready to explain the rationale behind these conclusions. Always respect clients opinions, even when they disagree with your own.

6.5 COMPLEX (PERSONAL) RELATIONSHIPS

If there is an existing personal or business relationship between an investigator and a potential client, please carefully consider issues of impartiality and sensitivity before accepting the case. It is not appropriate to pursue a new close personal relationship with a client while a case is underway. If a close relationship does develop during a case, we recommend that you pass the case on to a colleague. Similarly any contractual relationships with vulnerable clients should be avoided.

6.6 BEREAVEMENT

Bereaved clients are automatically vulnerable. If a client has suffered a relevant bereavement within twelve months of making contact the case should not be accepted except in exceptional circumstances.

6.7 WORKING WITH CHILDREN

We recommend you do not come into contact with minors (under the age of 18) during a case as they are classed as statutorily vulnerable, except in exceptional circumstances. For protection of client and all concerned no investigator should be in the presence of a minor unless: a) they are CRB checked, b) another CRB checked investigator is present and c) a parent or guardian is present.

6.8 PUTTING RESEARCH SECOND

When working with vulnerable clients the investigator's primary concern should be reassuring that client. Research aims should be secondary to this aim. Where a client becomes distressed it is important that any investigation cease and the investigator sign-posts the client to the relevant authorities.

6.9 THE DANGERS OF HISTORY ASSOCIATION

We recommend that you do not research the history of a property as part working with a vulnerable client. There is no proven association between historical events and anomalous activity, and as all data pertaining to a case must be shared with a client, you may unintentionally cause distress if you uncover historical information of which the client was previously unaware. There are occasions where historical research can be useful and ethical, or example when the geology of a site is relevant.

6.10 LIMITATIONS OF INVESTIGATOR TRAINING

If investigators encounter a situation they are not prepared to deal with – for example, clients with mental health needs or other complex issues – contact your local authority for a list of services that are able to offer support and advice for individuals with social needs or help with certain disorders. Only investigators with training and experience should undertake a vulnerable case. Investigators should strongly consider only having in person with vulnerable clients in the presence of a trained professional, for example counsellor, psychologist, social worker or interviewing professional. As little formal training is available in this field an investigator should make a reasonable judgement as to their level of skill and experience.

6.11 THE USE OF PSEUDONYMS

It is strongly advised that when writing a report, the author should use a **dissimilar name that differs to the client's original name, in order to screen their** real identity. This assures protection to the client. The same can apply to the investigators too if they prefer anonymity. It is also important not to inadvertently disclose the identity of a particular person or place through publication of general identifying details.

6.12 REPORTING

It is ethically important that a client receives a debriefing and full report of the case without unavoidable delay, and should be made aware of contact details for post-case support.

OUT OF CONTROL: THE VALIDITY OF GATHERING CONTROL DATA DURING INVESTIGATIONS

Dave Wood

The validity of data collected during anomalous investigations is weakened by the infrequent gathering of control data. Amongst those investigators that do gather such data, especially within ASSAP, there has been recent debate about the value and validity of the method. There is also a longer standing debate about whether control rooms or control sites are more valid.

The present paper will evaluate questions around this validity and usefulness. In particular the questions of how to place percipients, the value in non-psychical cases and the ethical implications of gathering control data were examined.

The conclusion was drawn that these methodological challenges need to be acknowledged but that control data is still useful, where it is ethical to gather, and its use should be widened to more psychical cases and non-psychical cases.

Lack of control data collected in anomalous phenomena fieldwork – commonly referred to as paranormal investigations – could be seen as a totemic example of how such investigations typically fail to satisfy the basic requirements of behavioural scientific enquiry. The basic error of failing to collect control data may be one of the hallmarks of the derogative pseudo-science label attached to such investigations.

Houran & Brugger (2000) noted that most investigations into hauntings and poltergeist failed to gather control data, that is to say that they only focussed on testing for anomalies in sites labelled as haunted.

ASSAP has long advocated the gathering of control data in anomaly studies (e.g. Townsend, 2008) both for pairing of monitoring equipment and for placement of percipients.

In recent years informal but intense debate has been stimulated by the use of control rooms and their efficacy in scientific fieldwork. Specifically, the following questions have been raised:

- Is the gathering of control data appropriate and useful
- **Are control rooms within an ‘active’ fieldwork location more appropriate than control sites separate from ‘active’ site**
- Is a between-subjects or within-subjects design most effective

- Does control data have a role to play in the investigation of non-psychical phenomena
- Is the gathering of control data appropriate in non-statutory vulnerable client cases
- Given the uncontrolled nature of fieldwork, is the use of control rooms or sites effective at all

This paper will examine the merits of each question but will start by clarifying what control data means in the context of anomalous phenomena fieldwork.

WHAT IS CONTROL DATA?

Control data is information gathered about a non-active group, from instrumentation in a non-active area or from participants in a non-active place. To draw a medical parallel this might involve giving one group of patients a new drug and the other a placebo pill whilst telling both they are receiving treatment, to examine the effect of the new drug.

In the anomaly fieldwork context ‘active’ or ‘target’ places mean those with previous reports of haunting phenomena whilst ‘control’ or ‘inactive’ places are those with no previous reports of haunting phenomena (Houran & Brugger, 2000).

In practical terms this might involve gathering data about electromagnetic fields by employing two identical spectrum analysers simultaneously gathering data, one in a room purported to be haunted and one in a room which is not in order to compare the data. More often this may involve deploying blind percipients (or investigators) in one room which has reports of hauntings and in another room that does not, in order to compare reports between the two locations.

WHY IS THE COLLECTION OF CONTROL DATA SCIENTIFICALLY USEFUL?

One of the primary principles of science is that of neutrality. The aim of science is to establish the truth without the bias of preconceived ideas and assumptions. What Houran & Brugger (2000, p34) referred to as “only testing for the presence of anomalies at target [active] sites” means a biased, assumption-led approach. This means entering an allegedly haunted location with the sole aim of proving that paranormal events are taking place. As Houran & Brugger (2000) note, this can lead to a ‘type I error’. A type I (one) error exists where we believe something that is not true, similar to a false positive. Practically, this might mean that we conclude a natural event is paranormal, or that a naturally-caused equipment reading has no normal cause and may therefore be paranormal.

In effect, control data helps to tell us whether any conclusions we are drawing are accurate; is the cause of the effect we have established accurate. For example an investigation may involve a Room A where an out of place figure has been reported. Percipients may be shown Room A and percipient X reports a figure. The conclusion might be then drawn that as current reports match previous eyewitnesses accounts – a witness saw a figure in the room and so did the investigator – that an verified, unexplained event might have taken place. This risks being a type I error. If percipients had been deployed in active Room A and non-active (control) Room B and percipients had seen figures in both rooms, including the non-haunted one, the explanation is more likely to be that the percipients are predisposed to seeing figures, regardless of whether they are in a haunted room or not; the explanation is an internal, psychological event for the percipient. If, conversely, the figure is seen only by the blind percipient in Room A we know it is more likely the reason has something to do with Room A than with percipient X.

In the case of monitoring equipment, control data allows us to create a positional baseline. For example if a spectrum analyser in isolation in a haunted room registered a particular abnormal data set the conclusion might be that the strange reading relates to the haunted room. If there was a simultaneous set-up **in a 'control' room that shared that reading that could have been a type I error** averted.

DEBUNKERS CAN MAKE TYPE I ERRORS TOO

Type I errors do not have to be normal events mistaken as paranormal events by investigators who lack a scientific approach. Investigators too keen on debunking a case can also make type I errors. For example an investigator may **be concerned with a pile of books in a 'haunted room' that are apparently** knocked over on occasion. The investigator may observe a truck road next to the room and conclude that the vibrations of the trucks are knocking the books over. Hypothetically if the investigator had set up books in a control room not adjacent to the road the same knocking-over may take place. The cause for this might be natural vibrations that affect the whole house, or something less obvious, but a type I error has still been made. It could be argued that is it **better to make a 'safer' mistake by claiming something has an inaccurate but** normal cause. But it is better still to be accurate and not jump to any false conclusions.

An individual investigator visiting a building (not blind, with full knowledge of events) purely to test debunking hypotheses without gathering control data is not acting neutrally in a scientific sense. They have an assumption-led approach to the case which might be necessary, but neutral science is not being done.

ARE ‘CONTROL ROOMS’ OR ‘CONTROL SITES’ MORE APPROPRIATE?

Houran & Brugger (2000) note that on the rare occasion fieldwork does involve **gathering control data that this tends to be ‘control rooms’ within the same building rather than ‘control sites’ away from the ‘active’ building.** Houran & Brugger assert that control sites are more appropriate, and their arguments have been influential as subsequent literature has made greater reference to **‘control sites’ (e.g. Terhune et al, 2007; Cornell, 2002).** The crux of Houran & Brugger’s argument that control rooms are **‘inadequate’ seems to rest on the nature of poltergeist cases.** Specifically they cite a Gauld and Cornell case in which a separate building is used as a control. In that case a house that was shortly to be demolished due to excessive vibrations was used as a comparison **to an ‘active’ building experiencing apparent poltergeist activity. In their case the ‘control’ house saw objects moving short distances, not comparable to the larger distances objects travelled in the ‘active’ house. This is compelling but only seems to apply to poltergeist cases, rather than general haunting cases.**

Terhune et al (2007) also present a compelling example in support of control sites rather than control rooms. In that case the researchers managed to secure **the house next door to the ‘active’ house as the ‘control’ house. They reasonably asserted that the similar context of the neighbourhood, similar physical building and close proximity made for a compelling choice for a ‘control site’.** In some ways this would seem to be something of a coup in control data terms; however the choice might **not have passed ASSAP’s Code of Ethics (ASSAP, 2012).** Involving a private home with vulnerable clients in formal research is inappropriate for a variety of reasons, as discussed below, and alerting a **next-door neighbour to a ‘haunted house’ next door would also seem to be ethically questionable.** Insufficient information is presented to make a judgement on the second point, it might be possible that the next door neighbour knew the case and were keen to help. However on the first point of possible distress to the vulnerable client the ethical question mark would seem to be upheld, as Terhune et al reported extreme distress in the part of the client that led to **early abandonment of the study. In Terhune et al’s defence, however, a psychiatrist was on hand to assist, so they could be satisfied that they took all steps necessary to minimise the possibility of harm.**

Terhune et al, whilst advocating the use of control sites, unwittingly set the **scene for the argument against control sites. They note the quality of a ‘house next door’ as a control site because the context of the neighbourhood is the same, the design of the house may well be similar and there is physical proximity. These are valid points because a ‘control house’ in another part of town would be seen in a wholly different context to the ‘active house’ and therefore peoples’ preconceptions (that can colour their judgement and**

experiences) would be different. Similarly a house that is further away would not allow such close comparison of environmental factors that may be at play for the active house. These are precisely the reasons why control rooms are seen as more appropriate than control sites.

Control rooms within the same building have already overcome the problem of contextual impact of the neighbourhood and the building itself, and have the benefit of close proximity. It is often also easier for researchers to choose rooms of a similar size and style of decoration.

In conclusion, for reasons of context and geographical proximity the use of control rooms rather than sites would seem to be more compelling. However there are exceptional circumstances where a control site might be more appropriate, such as the Gauld and Cornell case, or potentially where a building is too small to accommodate a control room.

BETWEEN-SUBJECTS OR WITHIN-SUBJECTS DESIGN?

In this context the question refers to whether the same percipients are shown **both the active and control room (observing a difference ‘within-subjects’)** or whether one set of percipients are shown the active room and another set the **control room (observing a difference ‘between-subjects’)**.

Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. For example using the same percipients is compelling because the same participant effects will be at play. Specifically each individual will perceive context in a particular way, will have an individual complexity of paranormal belief and disbelief and differing schematic life experiences. As such if one participant had a different experience of the active room rather than the control it would be hard to tell whether it was the differing room that led to the experience or whether it was the unique person experiencing things in a unique way.

Conversely, using the same percipients is flawed because they cannot be in two places at once, whereas two different percipients can occupy two rooms simultaneously. This may be important because of the spontaneous nature of haunting phenomena. If a noise is heard within a building that could be perceived as anomalous it could be heard simultaneously in both the active and control rooms. Simultaneously observation of the event from both rooms would be a strength. Otherwise data is not being compared on a like for like basis.

One hybrid solution sees two sets of percipients on a ‘rota system’ moving between the active and control rooms so that both sets perceive both rooms and each room is always under observation. This approach minimised some of the methodological issues, but not all. For example perception of context is a linear

experience. So where an individual percipient observes a control room their perception of the room will prime their overall contextual impression of the building, including the active room they subsequently observe.

CONTROL DATA IN NON-PSYCHICAL CASES

This author can find no precedent for the use of control data in non-psychical phenomena cases. The use, scant as it is, of control data in psychical cases is probably explained by the closeness of the study of psychical anomalies to the psychology of anomalous experience; a behavioural science that would call for the use of control data.

Some cryptozoologists and UFOlogists may see themselves as attempting to study a tangible physical phenomena and therefore, ostensibly, have less need for control data. Zoologists do not need a control room to study animals in, unless some other form of study is at play. Similarly astronomers are less likely to move telescope from one side of their building to another to gather control data. Both UFOlogists and cryptozoologists may feel they are studying something physical and tangible rather than psychical and intangible.

There would seem to be a siloed approach between these disciplines, emphasising their differences rather than their similarities. However all anomaly studies hinge on the psychological rather than the physical. Seeing UFOs is an issue of perception, as often is seeing strange beasts. The perception of experiences is worthy of study in both cases. If a UFO group were to organise **a 'skywatch' at a location known for UFO sightings and the assembled** percipients were to observe a UFO, a type I error may be at play. Was it something tangible and unidentified in the sky or was it something about the **person's own perception that caused them to report something? Having a** control site (in the absence of rooms) would be useful in establishing whether UFOs were a matter of individual perception rather than objective reality.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN GATHERING CONTROL DATA

Gathering control data involves the use of 'blind' percipient and, ideally, 'blind' experimenters or investigation leaders too. This means that people in the active and control rooms do not know what the past reports are and neither do the investigation leaders. This is so percipients do not behave or perceive differently when they know a room is classified as active or control.

This **clearly rules out the gathering of control data in peoples' homes. Blind** percipients and experimenters would possibly be disorientating to a client. **Generally it is not acceptable to conduct research in a persons' private home. In** Terhune et al (2007) they only did so because they had qualified mental health

professionals as part of the experimentation team, and even then there was client distress to deal with.

Contact with private homes is likely to be one-to-one support at a distance rather than experimentation. In helping a client to find normal explanations to their home experiences (for example by use of phenomena diary) the investigator is essentially debunking in order to provide reassurance, which in itself unscientific (although necessary). Ethically, research methods should come second in such cases (ASSAP, 2012).

CONTROL DATA IN UNCONTROLLED FIELDWORK ENVIRONMENTS

The physical context of a room is important to how and whether haunting phenomena is reported (Lange & Houran, 1997). For example the size of room and general decor (Wiseman et al, 2003), draughtiness (Nickell, 2001) lighting levels (Wiseman et al, 2003) and number of reflective surfaces (Kelly & Locke, 1981) can all have an impact on whether anomalies are reported. Researchers tend to be mindful of selecting control rooms or sites as similar as possible to the original, to minimise these factors (Terhune et al, 2007).

However problems exist where rooms of the exact same size, level of spookiness, same lighting levels, etc, do not exist to be selected. It is clearly better to have an inexact control room rather than no control room at all – noting these limitations in the report – but do these factors always challenge the notion of gathering control data?

It is worth considering the differing types of anomalies in psychical cases and the value of gathering control data in these cases. In all cases having a similar context is useful, but may not be the defining factor of control data gathering:

Anomalous sounds and smells: unusual sounds and smells that are often mistaken for hauntings would not depend on the precise context of the room, but may rely on geographical proximity. For example a noise which is seen as being atypical in one room may have a more obvious explanation in another room.

Anomalies requiring environmental monitoring: for example weak, complex magnetic fields. In these cases the context of the room is important in how unusual sensations are interpreted or, indeed, noticed at all (Braithwaite, 2008) but control data regardless of context is more important because the presence of fields are being monitored independent of that context.

Anomalous movements: these do not depend on the context of the room but may depend on the positioning of the room within the building, for example the

pile of books in the room next to a main road. Control data, be it from an adjacent control room or a distant control site, does not necessarily derive its validity from geographic proximity. Control data gathered adjacent to active data may tell you as much about the conditions of the active room – if both suffer from the same vibrations – whereas a more distant room may help you to establish the facts through its unsimilarity – e.g. a room at the opposite end of the building that does not suffer vibrations would not lead to a pile of books collapsing.

Anomalous sensations and sightings: often these might depend upon the context of the room but, equally, may depend upon the individual perceptions and expectations of the person. An individual may experience an anomalous sighting because of their own level of belief or expectation, regardless of whether or not they are in an active area. This data in itself is useful and justifies control conditions.

All efforts should be made to establish control rooms that are similar to active rooms, but there is useful data that can be drawn from any control room about either the environments themselves or the people within them.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INVESTIGATORS

One clear implication is the ethical problem of gathering control data in private homes. A scientific field study is not appropriate to these cases. Support will more often be provided one-to-one at a distance, helping clients to understand how the normal can be misunderstood.

Investigators should also bear in mind that there is rarely a justification for not gathering control data. In group investigations one possible method is to build a rota of observation between active and control rooms, which percipients observing blind in each setting. If use of a control room within a building is not possible – if it is too small, or each room is purported to be active – then the use of a control site should be considered.

Investigators of non-haunting phenomena should also strongly consider gathering control data as part of their investigations.

SUMMARY

Failing to gather control data is a significant weakness of many field investigations. In most cases it is justifiable to employ a within-subject design using control rooms rather than control sites, however there will always be particular circumstances in individual cases which require a different approach. In non-psychical cases control data is typically overlooked but when UFO cases

are similar are considered as possible issues of perception rather than objective observation, gathering control data becomes useful.

Gathering control data in private houses raises significant ethical question marks and research in such places should be avoided. Whilst there are difficulties in exact replication between active and control areas often this does not matter, or worthwhile comparative data is gathered nevertheless.

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SERIOUSLY UNIDENTIFIED AND THE RUMOURED DECLINE OF UFOLOGY

Robert Moore

In 2012 ufology gives the impression of having gone from a significant, even dominant, **global anomaly during the 1970's to a minority interest by the first decade of the 21st century**. Although UFOs (or, more precisely the *concept* of UFOs) still attracts **regular media attention in the 2010's**, much of this interest is focused on decades-old classic cases, books, works of fiction and publicised appeals for “disclosure”.

This, therefore, raises the question as to whether **UFO research and investigation has somehow “lost its way”**. **Is the subject in a state of flux, stasis or terminal decay?** If Ufology *is* dying what is the cause? If the subject remains a living concern why does it give an impression of decline? If changing, what is the profile and process of this transformation?

Acknowledging the importance of this controversy ASSAP organised *Seriously Unidentified*; a one day conference hosted at the University of Worcester on the 17th November 2012 that focusing on this issue. This is likely the most significant question relating to Ufology in 2012; but is there any indication of an answer...?

As with many controversies relating to ufology, the precise definition of “decline” is crucial here. Does it relate to a decline in UFO sightings or a decline of the social movement that grew around them...?

While it appears an absurd proposition to even consider the possibility that the “UFO phenomenon” could recede into insignificance, past “aerial mysteries” hint that such an outcome is far from impossible. Mystery “airships” were reputedly seen throughout the US during the late 1890's and elsewhere (most notably Britain) throughout the early 20th century, but sightings were no longer recorded, thereafter (Story 2001, Watson 2000) Likewise, the “ghost flyers” reportedly seen over Sweden during the 1930's (Liljegren and Sven 1988), the “Foo fighters” of WW2 (Roberts 1990) and the “ghost rockets” seen over Sweden, Norway and Greece during the late 1940's (Liljegren and Sven 1987, 1988) only manifested over (at most) a period of several years before ceasing without any further notable occurrence.

Therefore, **the idea that the UFO phenomena could “end” is not without foundation** as this has usually been the outcome with other prior aerial mysteries. However, there are also plenty of reasons to conclude that this is **unlikely in regard to “flying saucers”**.

A new era in the chapter in the on-going procession of aerial wonders opened on 24th June 1947, when fire extinguisher salesman Kenneth Arnold observed a formation of unusual objects while flying over the Cascade Mountains in Washington State, USA. Arnold compared **their motion as being akin to “a saucer...skipping across the water” – inspiring the term “flying saucers”** which has been used to describe such events ever since (Shough 2010). This was followed by a flood of comparable events occurring throughout the US and eventually the world. Even in the early years, sightings alluded to a wide variety of shapes; numerous variations of a disc form (most notably inverted plates and **convex lenses**), **points of lights, hemispheres, spheres, tubular and “cigar”** like forms.

As a consequence of this diversity, the USAF - the most significant party to monitor such events - coined the more generic acronym UFO (or *Unidentified Flying Object*) **in the late 50’s to encompass this diverse collation of claimed aerial anomalies**. The USAF studied this topic (mostly from a sceptical viewpoint) from 1952 to 1969, terminating its final study effort, *Project Blue Book* in 1969. This cessation was a consequence of the findings of the *University of Colorado UFO Project* (popularly known as the *Condon Report* after its director, the physicist Dr Edward Condon). The final summary of the Condon study concluded there was little scientific merit in continuing to monitor UFO reports - even though the project evaluated around 23% of the UFO reports it **studied as “unknowns” (NCAS, 1999)**.

The project’s widely noted negative conclusions resulted in what some commentators described as a ufological “dark age” (Rimmer, 1970). But such socio-political events seemed to make little impact on the *quantity* of UFO reports. MoD accounts statistics infer there was usually well in excess of 150 sightings made to it per year from 1980 through to 1992. The years 1997 through to 2009 (the last year MoD formally collated and archived reports), although not formally tabulated, also lie within that range. The highest quantity of UFO reports reported to the MoD were in 1978 (750 events), 2008 (634 events) and 1981 (600 events). (MoD 201, Oliver 2009). Sighting quantity **figures from Britain’s largest UFO society BUFORA (The British UFO Research Association)** for these periods are equally comparable, although the degree the same events were reported to both the MoD and civilian groups is difficult to determine. In regard to the very recent past BUFORA noted around 500 reports over the last twelve months (BUFORA, personal communication), while the American UFO group MUFON claims to receive around 700 reports a month in

recent years (Marsh 2012). It is generally accepted that (at least) around 90-95% of these can be ascribed rational causes with relative ease (i.e. Hendry 1980).

Thus, it is pertinent at this juncture to ask, why UFOs remain socially significant despite official dismissal and disinterest. To begin with, the *concept* of UFOs is **sufficiently broad and “future proof”** to resist being easily dispelled. In terms of **cited populist origin, this has changed from the “flying disc” era explanation of experimental Russian or American aircraft, to visitors from nearby planets within our solar system by the 1950’s; to (following American and Russian missions to Mars and Venus) unknown and remote extra-solar worlds.**

Past aerial scares, in comparison, were associated with distinct episodes of **social stress, most relating to fears of “secret weapons” by earthly powers. Their context also markedly reflected the technology of their era; i.e. mystery airships during the 1890’s and 1900’s, phantom aircraft in the 1930’s and ghost rockets during the late 1940’s. It appears that once those fears had sufficiently abated the relevant aerial panic ceased, or proved to be less appealing.**

Of course, there is the classical UFO advocate’s viewpoint that these past aerial panics were actually of sightings “flying saucers”, described in a period context. This seems a questionable assumption – as many “phantom airship” and “ghost flyer” reports (when sufficiently detailed) described forms clearly resembling an airship or aircraft (or the conception of same), while the ghost rocket reports allude to forms perceived as high altitude rockets complete with trails.

Another factor in favour of the UFO’s durability is one of definition; the term (in its broadest sense) encompasses anything a given observer which they are unable to explain. Even if one takes a prosaic view of UFOs there are ample natural causes **capable of instigating such events. Menzel’s famous list of rational causes for UFOs notes around 150 manmade objects and natural phenomena capable of generating IFO incidents (Menzel, 1972). Hendry’s late 1970’s study of American UFO reports largely vindicated the premise of this list, although the majority of spurious events were found to be instigated by only two dozen or so distinct prosaic causes (Hendry 1980). Technological and social innovations since 1972 has since added further cause to the causes noted by Menzel and Hendry; most notably drone aircraft, laser displays, Iridium satellite “flares”, Mylar balloons, solar airships and Chinese lanterns.**

One notable anomaly is that, the cited quite reasonable yearly sighting totals seem strangely at odds with the trend within contemporary ufology of focusing **interest mainly on several venerable “classic” events; most notably the Rendlesham Forest incident (occurring in December 1980) and the supposed**

“saucer crash” occurring at Roswell, New Mexico in July 1947 (Randles 1994,1998, Randle and Schmitt 1991).

While there has been continuity, there have also been notable changes within the context of UFO reports after 1980. After 1980, UFO events associated with **physical traces and sightings of “silver suited entities”, most notably associated with the now-infamous “Welsh Triangle” events of 1977-78** in the UK (Pace 1979, Paget 1979) became notably rare (Rimmer 2010). After this period **UFO entity claims tended to feature claims of “UFO abductions” in increasing quantity**. Many such instances feature a distinctive class of UFO entity – a diminutive **large-headed being with dark eyed termed a “Gray” in UFO jargon**, with much abduction testimony being acquired through the use of hypnotic regression (Hopkins, 1988).

Reputed physical UFO evidence now takes novel and extreme forms; **cattle mutilations, alien implants and “alien autopsies”**. **In 1972 UFO crashes were unknown or disregarded; in 2012 they effectively dominate the subject**, albeit in the context of relatively **venerable incidents**. **Lastly, while reports of “saucer” shaped were still reported**, a growing quantity of sightings from 1989 onwards alluded to observations of triangular shaped mystery craft; a trend continuing onto the present (Story 2001).

One unfortunate consequence of technological development is that digital processing software has reached such a level of sophistication that virtually any form of visual image can be faked, merely using the computing resources available to most people. Ufology now exists in an age typified by countless instances of hoaxed UFO footage hosted on sites such as Youtube.

In almost a perverse mirror image of the previous issue, debate still rages as to why casual and ubiquitous image capturing devices such as CCTV cameras, tablet and camera-phones do not convincingly record any notable UFO events. At this juncture it should be acknowledged that some commentators claim that such image captures have been achieved, most notably represented by the 2010 Chile movie footage (Wenn, 2012); but this example (as with the others) remain highly controversial, and is certainly far from incontrovertible proof for any **“exotic” UFO**. **Other commentators feel that domestic quality image capture devices**, while useful for the social purposes they were designed for, lack the resolution to capture sufficiently clear and convincing images of aerial objects. This, of course, fails to answer the question as to the lack of no convincing images showing a UFO abduction or similar in progress.

Thus, it appears that while UFO reports continue at a reasonable quantity and the phenomena appears sufficiently robust to continue indefinitely (even if one adopts a sceptical interpretation to such events) there is notable change in context and content within **UFO claims made throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s**.

Substantial proof for UFOs of exotic origin also remains as elusive in 2012 as it was in 1947...

GETTING WITH (AND WITHOUT) THE PROGRAM

It therefore seems pertinent, then, to consider that any problem may not lie with the quantity UFO reports, but with organised ufology. So what could be lie at the root at these issues...?

The first national civilian UFO societies appeared in the US six years after the appearance of “flying saucers”; *APRO* and the *International Flying Saucer Bureau* both being established in 1952. *NICAP*, a group that adopted a confrontational attitude towards the USAF’s involvement with UFOs, was founded in 1956 (Story 1980). In 1952 the British Flying Saucer Bureau became the UK’s first UFO society; however, the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA), founded in 1962 now represents the most significant English UFO society in 2012 (Clarke and Roberts 2007). These groups comprised (then as now) of interested amateurs who, by publishing a regular of record, hoped to become conduits of information relating to UFO sightings and concerns. They were mostly financially supported by membership subscriptions and usually took an advocacy role in relation to UFO’s. Local societies were also formed based on the same model.

UFO societies remained significant players for several decades and are likely to have played a role in raising the public profile of UFO and popularising belief in their actuality. The findings of the Condon Project are reputed to have adversely affected public interest in the topic for several years. One summary of its effect on the British UFO scene of the early 1970’s describes this situation;

“Ufology in Britain is dead. The UFO phenomenon is not dead – yet. It manages to struggle on against a torrent of public apathy. The shadow of Condon lies long over the land. But the people it seems to envelop deepest are the ufologists..... As someone once remarked about something else, the British UFO scene is a vast wasteland. The little local groups are sad, lost in the wilderness, held together by camaraderie, a feeling of obligation and little else. Their meetings consist of an elite lecturing each other in turns, repeating the same tired bromides and listless clichés (Rimmer 1970).”

This pessimism was misplaced, however, as this ufological recession was eventually broken by several national waves of UFO sightings in 1973 (within the US) and in 1977-78 (in the UK). Nonetheless the influence of Condon seems to have left ufology, at least in Britain, with a notable sense of insecurity:

“...Compared with the freebooting days of the 1960s, when UFO groups rose and fell in marvellous disarray, the 1970s were to see a centralisation of activity and an almost obsessive concern with bureaucracy and paperwork. This ufology was often self-consciously respectable. On the surface its aim was to win friends and influence people. But from my own observations at UFO conferences there is an almost frantic desire to keep to the trivial, and mention the actual topic of enquiry as little as possible.” (Rogerson 1981).

While Rogerson believes post Condon Ufology adopted a possibly overtly sanitised approach towards the subject he does add the following notable observation:

“...This “scientific ufology” quickly dispenses with the contactees’ overt salvationist message, but it certainly contained its own covert message that there was a glorious technological utopia, that someone in the cosmos had survived the perils of the immediate future, and that humanity could follow suit... “(Rogerson 1981).

Unfortunately, this cultural zeitgeist of technological optimism was not to last. **The 1980’s witnessed a widely perceived collapse of radicalism in the US and UK; both countries governed by conservative administrations in excess of 10 years apiece. Where the 1960’s was typified by the hippie, the 1980’s was conceptually represented by the Yuppie and an end to the post war consensus. Faith in science was dented by the rise of AIDS and other high-profile incurable afflictions during the 1980’s. Enthusiasm that manned spaceflight represented humanity’s outward urge into space was eroded by the cancellation of the Apollo programme in 1972 and the 1986 *Challenger* disaster. Further blows came with the discovery of the ozone layer hole in 1985, the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 and the general acceptance of anthropomorphic climate change throughout the 1980’s and into the 1990’s.**

By 1990 the British UFO scene was dominated by two national groups, BUFORA and YUFOS, which, at this time, were seemingly in conflict over the soul of British ufology. BUFORA were generally perceived as representing the more cautious side of British ufology, while YUFOS gave notable support to the extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH) of UFO origin along with advocating a variety of extreme governmental conspiracies. By that time interest in UFOs was notable but hardly electric. Both factions also had glossy magazines, seen at that **time as both the “gold standard” of magazine publication and an important group status symbol.** Several years earlier BUFORA had taken the decision to support a moratorium on the use of hypnosis in UFO abduction claims. This was an attempt to avoid British UFO research becoming dominated by close **encounter narratives based on “recovered” memories. YUFOS had no so such**

qualms and were more comfortable in discussing abduction accounts. (Moore, unpublished and Townsend, 2004)

UFO magazine became a colour newsstand publication and hence a notable public UK conduit for extreme American trends; notably abductions, alien implants, crashed UFOs and cattle mutilations. The US TV series “*The X Files*” (in the UK broadcast on the BBC from 1993 to 2002) embodied those same ideas through the medium of fiction. Controversy over various cases during the mid to late 1990’s resulted in a notable quantity of UFO researchers abandoning “big group” based ufology as a consequence and opted to be independent of their influence.

Many of the UFO groups founded in the 1960’s and 70’s had begun to vanish by the 1990’s this. By way of example in the late 1970’s there were three active UFO societies in Warminster and the same quantity in Bristol. By 1990, however, there were no active UFO societies in Warminster and only one (seemingly semi-inactive) in Bristol (Moore, unpublished).

At around the same juncture it also seemingly became a consensus view that **Ufology could be resolved by focusing on significant “classic” UFO reports; and thus began the subject’s obsession with the Roswell “crash” (Randle and Schmitt 1991) and the Rendlesham Forest incident (Randles 1998).**

Further decline was augmented by a noted loss of interest in the subject following the **September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre “Twin Towers”**. This seemingly evoked a conceptual pail over populist conceptions of UFOs. Whereas esoteric commentators once speculated about UFOs, aliens and a better world resulting from open alien contact, the context changed to discussion of conspiracy theories relating to various powerful concerns with hidden agendas; i.e. the “New World Order”, the Bilderberg committee, even extra-dimensional “Reptoids”.... **powerful interests groups blamed for worsening the human condition and exercising control for their own selfish ends.** By 2003 *UFO* magazine’s editor, **Graham Birdsall** was dead, while the magazine itself ended publication in 2005 (Townsend, 2004).

While the past decade has been one of notable decline, it did not mark a total secession of British Ufology. By 2012 this process had resulted in a fragmented subject consisting of a mosaic of local, independent groups. It also left a significant number of independent researchers unwilling to commit themselves to either a regional group, national society or even a commonly shared ethos. Furthermore, many started to call themselves “**Fortean**” and **expanded their remit to other subjects. In 2012 the popular image of “the UFO” as much a triangular form as a saucer shaped one; the latter often ironically perceived as symbolising a more technically optimistic era. UFO sighting claims (when they**

do occur) are dominated by naïve observations of aerial Chinese lanterns. Most **sightings are more swiftly resolved than in the 1970's or 80s due to the Internet** providing easier access to relevant intellectual resources.

In 2012 the average study group is often an admixture society, studying paranormal topics in conjunction with UFOs; a once taboo trend that began in **the late 1990's. Societies once purely ufological in intent now focus on a variety** of anomalous claims – even including cryptozoology, conspiracy theories and **historical anomalies. In this regard it may be significant to note that Carter's *X Files*** followed the same approach – each episode featuring a different class of anomalous phenomena. It is thus difficult to ascertain whether this is a response to a decline in UFO reports (or at least specific types of reports) events, or merely reflects a conceptual change encouraged and propagated by media stereotypes.

Admittedly, some progress has been made within contemporary Ufology. The most significant breakthrough is represented by the release of UFO data retained by the MoD via use of the 2000 *Freedom of Information Act*. In some **respects the Internet era made reporting "UFO" sightings easier. While** representing greater witness autonomy it also, more often than not, removes the sighting from the sphere of informed comment and verification. Such reports thus remain forever as unverified visionary rumours floating in cyberspace.... Furthermore, the Internet allows any individual to easily acquire gain considerable information relating to UFOs without becoming having to approach a UFO society; a factor which has doubtless reduced the quantity of **new "recruits" available to those groups. This medium also allows witnesses to** directly approach their peers - effectively kindred spirits as opposed to investigators or researchers who are sometimes perceived as being over critical, bureaucratic and bereft of the gift of direct experience. Indeed, some witnesses have achieved the status of notable figures within the community, albeit one **existing in parallel to "organised "ufology"**.

The *X Files* also promoted greater awareness of conspiracy theories, although the Internet became more widely available during the same period. This has lead to a **greater acceptance of "the UFO cover-up" and other related** conspiracies. This occurred at the same time Ufology began to significantly focus on major historical classical sightings. It could be argued that the belief **that the government "knows more" was encouraged** by this inclination.

Of all these developments, the *Exopolitics* movement has the likely potential to redefine priorities and definitions within ufology (Salla 2003). This has been defined as **"the art or science of government as concerned with... influencing governmental policy towards extraterrestrial phenomena and extraterrestrial beings"** (BBC.co.uk, 2010). In essence, the guiding principle of Exopolitics is that

the “UFO debate” is effectively over – UFOs are extraterrestrial, with “disclosure” of their presence merely awaiting official verification.

The most fitting hypothesis thus seems (at present) that the above factors have colluded to create a “perfect storm” that has reduced traditional ufology to a shadow of its former glory.

SERIOUSLY UNEXPLAINED; ASSAP’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE “UFO DECLINE” DEBATE

Aware of concerns that ufology may be in decline, ASSAP hosted a one day conference at the University of Worcester on the 17th November 2012 devoted to this issue. The decision to host this conference proved controversial. Even in 2012 it seemingly remains contentious for ufology to be discussed by a body **more known for its involvement with “the paranormal”**. By conceiving this event it appears ASSAP breached conceptual boundaries in more than one respect!

Seriously Unidentified was intended as a forum to discuss the current status of British Ufology; to ascertain whether it is in a state of robust health, stasis or decline. **The idea was to acquire a snapshot view of 21st century ufology**, by reviewing the underlying undercurrents of events, situations and experiences various that comprise ufology. To gain a balanced view ASSAP decided to feature sceptics and UFO advocates in equal quantity.

The science writer **Ian Ridpath** (who adopts a sceptical stance towards the UFO phenomenon) presented evidence supporting his contention that all UFOs have prosaic causes. In particular, he noted how advocates of the scientific study of UFOS (such as Hynek) were naive in regard to the extent that manmade and natural objects can be misinterpreted as exotic phenomena. Ridpath described the attributes of various man-made and natural phenomena known (by example) to be responsible for generating UFO events. He further outlined in detail his contention that the Rendlesham Forest incident was initiated by a series of unrelated prosaic events. He concluded that the most important message UFO events embody is about us, our weaknesses and our desire to believe in extraterrestrial visitation.

Paul Vella presentation covered cinematic depictions of UFOs and how these may have potentially impacted subsequent ufological discourse. He proposed the idea that changes in government within the US (from Democratic to Republican administrations) may have influenced the depiction of alien visitors in what was mostly a US-dominated medium. Vella speculated that (from the **mid 1950’s onwards**) **cinematic extraterrestrials were represented in an increasingly more outlandish, absurd manner as a means of discouraging individuals from making formal UFO sighting reports**. Vella felt this was

consistent with the recommendations made by the CIA directed *Robinson Panel of stripping flying saucers of their “aura of significance”* by what could be interpreted as the use of adverse propaganda. He further noted an (albeit uneven) pattern in the manner which fictional movie extraterrestrials were depicted that seemingly matches a decade’s perceived élan; namely optimistic in happy times, pessimistic during periods of social stress. It is notable that many American-produced films depicting hostile visitors from “the red planet” were made at the height of 1950’s anti communist hysteria!

Sacha Claire Christie, a notable figure within the “experiencer” scene, presented an overview of her February 1997 encounter at a cottage in Glyn Ceiriog, Wales in Feb 1997. This involved a multi-witness close observation of a complex luminous circular form and a glowing sphere surrounded by a luminous mist. The event was further associated with strange sensory impressions of a seemingly “paranormal” nature. She noted her bemusement at finding a cause for her experience and frankly noted her personal difficulties that resulted in her being unable to find a context for her experience. Sacha further described and presented to the audience several instances where she had photographed anomalous objects near her residence.

Trystan Swale presented a talk on the rise, decline and afterlife of the crop circle controversy, and its relevance to contemporary Ufology. While elaborate crop circles still manifest it is now generally accepted that they are man-made. Nonetheless, several commentators continue to attempt to make a connection with UFOs - although Swale indicated such connections remain unconvincing.

Kevin Goodman, author of *Warminster, Cradle of Contact*, detailed his experiences at Warminster most notably at skywatches and at Starr House during the 1970’s (Goodman and Dewey 2012). He detailed examples of unusual events at Warminster prior to the manifestation of “The Thing” in 1964. Goodman cited his opinion that he feels only around 0.02% of all sightings can be considered as unexplained.

Cal Cooper discussed possible links between UFOs and paranormal events. Cal’s presentation is detailed in a separate article in this issue of Anomaly.

John Wickham, BUFORA’s Press secretary, gave a general overview of ufology. He initially detailed examples where UFOs and “ancient astronaut” like imagery have appeared in historical illustrations. He detailed the development of the modern UFO phenomena, citing evidence supporting his contention that some events could have been instigated by experimental aircraft developed by the Third Reich. He also outlined BUFORA’s work in the subject and gave examples of some case studies. This included one recent photographic case

study (mentioned in the national press that the association conclusively explained as being instigated by an elevated artificial light source.

Pre-conference news-coverage aside, *Seriously Unidentified* was therefore not intended as eulogy or wake for British Ufology. The after-**speaker's panel** (comprising of Kevin Goodman, Sacha Christie, Ian Ridpath, Robert Moore, John Wickham (on behalf of BUFORA), Cal Cooper and Dave Wood, and featured some light-**hearted comments (such as “do ghosts fly UFOs”?)** along with more serious issue. Ian Ridpath was asked, for example, whether he could **explain Sacha's experience; he replied he was unable to propose solutions he felt unqualified to give.**

The panel was asked about the reluctance of scientists to commit themselves to **the study of UFOs; they replied (in general) that it was a matter of the subject's** poor intellectual profile. In regard to the lack of conclusive evidence from phone cameras and other sources, Robert Moore and John Wickham believed it was down to their low resolution, although Ian Ridpath felt they were of sufficient quality to capture a suitably clear image. In regard to a question as to why MoD UFO related evidence released via the FoIA was far from earthshaking, the panel was in general agreement that this was due to the MoD data consisting predominantly of sparsely documented cases. This in itself was attributable to the military establishment being disinterested in the scientific potential of such reports, as their only concern **was to assess their possible “defence implications”.**

One attendee asked whether the speakers believed that a focus on the extra-**terrestrial hypothesis “holds back” UFO research; they replied that, as a** generality it did in some instances, but that there was a sufficient diversity of opinion and outlets to avoid such a conceptual straightjacket. Another asked the speakers where they saw Ufology in 10 years time. Ridpath replied that it was likely to remain where it is now; but Moore said it could experience decline, stasis or expansion depending on what transpires within Ufology in the next decade or so. Moore also noted that there is likely to be a growth in spurious reports instigated by drone aircraft.

In regard to a question relating to the degree of objectivity and subjectivity of various types of UFO experiences, Moore replied that some hypothetical classes of **“True UFO” (i.e. UAPs) could encompass both, as per the *sphere of influence*** theory advocated by Jenny Randles (Warrington and Randles 1979, Randles, 2012). **When the speakers were asked as to whether “the truth may be out there”, one replied it is, but we may not like its composition! Both Moore and Wickham generally agreed that one significant problem in contemporary Ufology was a shortage of individuals willing to become activity involved in the subject, thus suggesting one factor in any perceived decline within the subject.**

Dave Wood pointed out that given the number of UFO groups have declined, it therefore follows that there would also be a decline in UFO sightings, given that there are fewer groups to act as a conduit for reports. On the other hand, Moore felt that individuals could just as easily report such events to internet UFO reporting websites or groups such as BUFORA.

CONCLUSION

“...Ufology is really a thing of the last century. The end of the X-Files series didn't help, and there has been a decline since the televised alien autopsy of the mid-1990s. Basically it was a hobby that broke into the mainstream... Ultimately there was only a hardcore following...” Andy Roberts (Quoted in Townsend, 2004)

It is apparent that UFO sightings are still reported in 2012. But...even taking this into account there seems to a slight smell of neglect, possibly even decay, in relation to the subject. But this decay seems to emanate strongest from the **“UFO movement” rather than from the UFOs themselves. The main factor underlying a sense of “decline” appears to relate to a decline of activist interest in this topic.**

Since the 1970's the number of local and national UFO societies have notably declined; with many familiar groups having vanished from the scene over the past 3 decades. This has occurred at the same time as the media profile of other paranormal topics and conspiracy theories increased and the context of UFO reports seemingly morphed into something more grim. The subject in 2012 is **seemingly based on a less attractive and “optimistic” premise than the ufology of earlier decades.** It may be that an addiction to bureaucratic procedures present **within the subject by the 1970's created a perceptual barrier isolating ufologists** from UFO reports. This may have thus set a trend for interest to be directed towards peripheral issues as opposed to the sightings themselves.

UFO reports will continue for as long as people can see the sky and are unable to comprehend what they see. In that context the UFO phenomenon could continue indefinitely. However, it appears that (at least within in the UK and other European countries) ufology has entered a period of stasis, where advocates believe there is little more to be done other than to cover old ground. Being dependent on cycles of interest UFO societies may be adversely affected when the subject experiences a downward trend in its popularity. Such declines detrimentally impact their most significant role, investigating the claims they **have been formed to document. Countries that have somehow retained a “big group” structure, such as the US, have not have been so adversely affected by** this trend but have still succumbed to a degree of torpor in relation to

expanding ufological study into new areas and even in regard to seeking new case studies.

This should not be deemed surprising that Ufology has followed the pattern of other social movements elsewhere (within religion and politics, for example), which are instigated, sustained or smothered by external social factors. While such concerns emerge from modest roots and become significant elements of the human cultural landscape their fate is that they either wither (i.e. Methodism and the Shakers), become socially dominant (i.e. Protestantism) or be absorbed into the social mainstream – **as has been the case with “new age” beliefs and 60’s era counter-cultural concepts. The 2010’s may thus represent a period where active study of UFOs takes a backseat and most interested in the topic become passive consumers of “UFO culture” as the subject becomes absorbed into the backdrop of contemporary culture.**

Hence, while it is likely the concept of UFOs will continue into the foreseeable future we may well witness a time when few people bother to document those **sightings, and the “UFO movement” may be effectively dead in regard to being a vehicle for their research and investigation.**

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INVASION OF THE LOGIC SNATCHERS

Lembit Öpik

Lembit Öpik is best known for just about everything except his scientific background. However, his personal credentials on space are literally astronomical. He's the son of accomplished physicist Dr Uno Öpik, and grandson to world renowned astronomer Ernst Öpik, who pioneered research ranging from cosmology to the threat posed by Near Earth Objects. In this article, written specially for the UFO conference hosted by the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena, Lembit considers UFOs, Hollywood movies and whether the Martians are already here.

CONSPIRACIES AND ALL THAT

It must be very hard for conspiracy theorists to muster the courage to leave home every morning. After all, think of all the things to be afraid of. The man with the blank expression in the car next to yours – is he a zombie? Down in the neon lit carriages of the London Underground are the others innocent commuters – or sun fearing vampires ready to drain your veins? That scruffy **looking fellow in the pub: is he staggering because he's drunk, or because he's just been zapped by a mysterious Death Ray?** And the rumble beneath your **feet... a passing lorry** - or Chinese drilling machinery, inscrutably constructing a monumental 10,000 kilometre tunnel under Britain in preparation for an invasion?

Yes, **I think it's fair to say that society is awash with an army of commentators** who claim to have the inside track about **'what's really going on.'** **This invasion** of the logic snatchers has left rational folks vainly preaching common sense, leaving passers by shaking their heads at all this evangelical faith in stuff like **'data' and 'facts.'**

At the heart of this phenomenon one subject has shown a remarkable staying power. **It's also turned into an enormous industry.** I am, of course, referring to Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) and their little green pilots.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not a UFO sceptic. That would be illogical. By definition UFOs do exist – **because that's what they are: Unidentified** Flying Objects. The whole conundrum stems from our inability to identify them, leaving the door open to a maelstrom of speculations embracing everything from the meteorologically sublime to the cosmologically ridiculous.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

What does the voice of the people say about all this? Well, as ASSAP as **demonstrated (1) there's been a decline in the belief that UFOs originate from a galaxy far, far away.** But anyone who's spent any time at all listening to ordinary conversations around the country will know the widespread feeling that 'aliens' have come to earth, arriving in fantastically advanced spaceships for benign, or other more sinister, reasons. **Some say 'they' live amongst us for research purposes, while others basically fear that one day our alien chums are going to eat us.**

The problem is that, despite official interest in the subject, these speculations rarely attach themselves to unequivocal, solid data. While some serious reports have hinted at extraterrestrial origins, much of the time it involves a news report with a dodgy piece of footage from a news report and general speculation (2).

The same goes for most conversations I've had about UFOs consist of some geezer with a pint of Magners saying something like 'well, my mate's father was in the army when they did these secret tests in the New Forest, see, and he says his dad actually *saw something landing from space and it wasn't the Russians.*' Further cross questioning usually leads to a comment like 'well, I don't know exactly what it was because he was told not to talk about it, but the government obviously knows what went on, **so they've got to be hiding something.**' Any further inquiry leads to either a repetition of the same story - or a slightly awkward discussion about football instead. **That's gossip, not science, yet it's often interpreted as much more than an urban legend.** At exasperating times like that, when no useful intellectual result has been achieved, **I'm drawn to quote the character called Pogo from Samuel Beckett's famous play, *Waiting for Godot*: 'we have seen the enemy and they is us.'** (3)

I've also noticed some other things about conspiracy theorists who are adamant that 'something's going on with the UFO cover-up.' Firstly, they often mix up 'astrology' and 'astronomy,' in the same way that some people say 'let me be quite pacific about this.' when they really mean 'specific' and not an ocean at all. Secondly, **they're prone to doubt the 'moon landings.'** Once, I pointed out to a 'moon landing sceptic' that my grandfather had actually been involved in the Apollo programme - and that he was pretty sure Neil Armstrong didn't fake it. **The sceptic replied suspiciously: 'well maybe he had to sign something so he had to keep it secret.'** Thirdly, individuals who are sure the aliens are buzzing us are genuine, **and to them it's as real as Jeremy Kyle, The X Factor and taxes.**

A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF UFO MANIA

So, **let's take a look at some real facts** with a brief tour back through the recent history of UFOs – starting on 7th January 1948. This was the tragic occasion relating to an alleged sighting of an unidentified flying object over Kentucky, in the United States. Three pilots from the National Guard were instructed to give chase to the airborne enigma. 25 year old Captain Thomas Mantell climbed higher than his fellow aviators. Minutes later his aircraft plunged to the ground in a fatal descent.

This incident made big news and was instrumental – but not solely responsible – for driving the modern fascination with UFOs. The American media ran riot with all kinds of stories, including the ominous spectre of Mantell being shot down by an alien craft.

The cause of his fatal crash was never formally established. Yet this, together with a spate of reported sightings in the immediate post war period, established **Ufology's place in the minds of lay people and government officials alike**. Let's take this case as a good example of how UFOs are promoted to iconic status, with little or no follow up in the media as other facts come to light.

Is it possible that Captain Mantell did meet his doom at the hands of aliens? Yes, of course it is. Statistically speaking, there is a **non-zero** probability that little green men took a shot at the Captain. However, **the application of 'Occam's Razor' is relevant here**. This reasoning tool is very simple: Occam's Razor advises that, when faced with various explanations for a particular phenomenon, the simplest one is most likely to be correct. **Occam's Razor has a proud record of reflecting how the world seems to work** – whereby the simplest way to do things is usually the right one. In the Mantell example, aliens **aren't** the simplest explanation for his demise. For instance, there were claims that **he'd piloted his P-51 Mustang aircraft to a great height without oxygen**, ignoring advice given to him by air traffic controllers not to climb to altitudes where the air was dangerously thin. There are contrary reports to this claim, and extensive reports covering both sides are abundant (4). This serves to show how hard it is to get to the truth of the matter. Nevertheless, oxygen starvation is a plausible cause of the accident, and far more probable than alien attack. Secondly, on that day some reports suggest that certain weather balloons may have been airborne at that time, **creating the impression of a 'flying object.'** Again, the argument has travelled for and against, just as with the question about oxygen starvation. The truth is nobody really knows what Mantell may have been chasing – or indeed if a weather balloon which they could never reach was at play. These are the classic hallmarks of many UFO sightings – where the vacuum is emphatically filled by a speculation relating to alien presence.

One more factor may have been relevant. America and the world had just **emerged from history's bloodiest conflict**. Tensions were high and growing over the new Cold War. People were scared. It is easy to see how these fears led to a kind of transference of terror towards space beings who might be as bellicose as humans. With the advent of nuclear weapons, a war of the worlds is an understandable expression of fear by those afraid of another a war in *our* world.

The Mantell case is not untypical of very many UFO stories. **Most people who've** cast an eye in the direction of Ufology will be very familiar with the tales told of **'Roswell.'** **A common theme here is the vague belief that that flying saucer** wreckage has been both found and stored around that part of America, coupled with rumours that aliens have been interred in the secretive caverns of the U.S. Military. Again, **let's consider the facts.**

From an alleged incident in 1947, (5) Roswell has been something of a Mecca for Ufologists. **A publication 33 years later entitled 'The Roswell Incident'** maintained a characteristic approach to this kind of reporting. The book suggested that unusual debris had been replaced with debris from a weather balloon. **It also said the press weren't allowed** to inspect the debris at close quarters. Hmmm, **how conspiratorial...**

In connection with this, the famous footage of an alien autopsy was released in 1995. After sensational coverage, its progenitor admitted that much of it was not original footage, though he still held that some fragments were genuine. (6) This is not at all surprising to sceptics - who agreed that the general opinion is the video was clever and audacious - but a hoax all the same.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the United States conducted a large number of tests involving metallic, shiny balloons. Some of these balloons carried intrepid pilots to great heights in order to test the feasibility of using parachutes for returning astronauts. The tests were called Project Man High and Project Excelsior. Joe Kittinger set altitude, free fall and speed records on 16th August 1960. Two of his records remained unbeaten for 52 years, until Felix Baumgartner achieved his extraordinary descent in October 2012. Despite this, **one of Kittinger's records** remains intact to this day. Literature relating to these experiments suggests that the remains of some balloons were mistakenly labelled by some as wreckage from alien vehicles. Again, the original story will always gain more currency than the less dramatic truth - and thus a legend was born.(7)

As already mentioned, a third example of the relentless march of conjecture is found in the moon landing conspiracy theories. I suggest that this particular ruse owes a lot to the same process of rumour and repetition. In the early 1970s some literature was published claiming the landings were a hoax. (8)

However, a seminal 1977 film, *Capricorn One*, appears to have been the main driver in the public consciousness, prompting a conspiratorial view of the moon landings. (9) In the film, astronauts are conscripted to fake a Mars mission, with ominous consequences for all concerned. So, as often happens, Hollywood drove popular thinking and the myth has enjoyed a remarkable longevity ever since – despite the fact that the lunar vehicles are there for anyone with a big enough telescope to *see* - still positioned where they were left by the astronauts.

Incidentally, **I've been a political beneficiary of this very same phenomenon.** Having campaigned hard to get the government to take the threat of Near Earth Objects seriously, it was only when two films dedicated to the subject – '**Deep Impact**' and '**Armageddon**' – were released by Hollywood that people started saying to me, '**I went to see those films**, Lembit. Wow, so it **is true what you've been saying!**' Given the plethora of movies on UFOs ranging from the classic '**War of the Worlds**,' to the apocryphal '**The Day the Earth Stood Still**,' the terrifying '**Alien**' and the deliciously amusing '**Galaxy Quest**,' earthlings have been told a hundred times over that ***we are not alone*** ('**Close Encounters**'). All these films need no reference notes – they are instantly available through the most elementary of internet searches, underlining the attraction of the genre to the general public. And there are so many of them. Eventually, if you say something often enough, it sticks.

Faced with such a tsunami of pro-alien propaganda, **it's easy to understand why** a phenomenon as other worldly as flying saucers remains a popular source of gossip and allegation. **It's got all the juicy elements: amazing machines**, scary life forms and government cover-up. And, in keeping with the mechanics of conspiracy, the more one tries to point out the lack of solid evidence, the more **the UFO believers exclaim 'that's exactly what they want you to think!'** Faced with such dedicated loyalty to the cause, the chances of a serious change of heart – on either side – are low indeed.

HUMAN MOTIVATIONS FOR BELIEVING IN ALIEN VISITS

What's the human reason this UFO cult displays such an energetic core of enthusiasts? Well, for a start, it seems to me humans like to jazz up their lives by believing in the exotic as a kind of antidote to the mundane existence felt by many homo sapiens all over the world. Secondly, given the frequency of alien abduction stories, **there's clearly a group of people who share a common 'claim'** – and this in itself **is** a common experience, regardless of the actual nature of what that experience truly is. (Although I suspect alien abduction has more to do with the need for personal affiliation or self-esteem than about little green men, others are more qualified to comment in greater depth than me.) Thirdly, **there's a lot we don't know about our cosmos** – in fact I think we know almost nothing about it, despite the valiant progress made by our scientists across the

last 2,500 years or so. As such, it is easy to languish in the possibilities – to conjure up strange and intriguing creatures (though for some reason they usually seem to look roughly human in shape when they come from the movie makers). **It's hard to prove they don't exist, because there's a whole universe out there we haven't visited.** Psychologically, **to claim they've popped over to earth for a visit is really only 'one small step for man,** albeit one giant leap for alien kind.'

And thus it's all possible: the saucers, the green men, the visitations. It's all possible because the universe is just so damn huge and with trillions of planets out there, it would beggar belief is the conditions for **life didn't exist somewhere** other than earth. But even so, and applying responsible science, flying saucers are just not the simplest explanation for at least 98% of UFO sightings (1) – as the report by the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena so authoritatively demonstrates.

THE CONUNDRUM OF A FERTILE UNIVERSE

This prompts an obvious question: am I of the belief that we are alone, a solitary beacon to life in a dead universe? Not at all. My personal opinion is that the universe is teeming with life – **though we can't have any real idea what it looks,** sounds or thinks like. And this leads to a troubling anomaly which does require an answer, **even though we don't seem to have one yet. Here's the problem.**

To an extent, this scenario – of a fertile universe - is the strongest single argument ***in favour of extraterrestrial visitations (though it's not one an*** argument that seems popular with Ufologists). They ***could*** argue that, across the billions of years since the Big Bang, other civilisations have had enough time to evolve to sufficiently sophisticated levels to want to travel – and to be able to do it across vast distances. You can travel quite far in a million years. **So if they've** been knocking around for, say half the age of the universe, **surely they'd have** gone to a lot of places by now, including earth.

This would appear to be the most plausible argument for pro-alien Ufologists to use. **And what's the rebuttal? I can only offer pointers.** Firstly, if other species have enjoyed the benefits of millions of years of sentience and technological progress, **I believe they'd be so far ahead they'd easily be able to evade detection** by us. So, even if they did come here, **I doubt very much they'd be stupid enough** to inadvertently blunder out from behind some bushes or accidentally forget to press the cloaking device function on their flying saucer key fob, before leaving the woods for an incognito night on the town. **They'd be as able to evade** detection by humans as David Attenborough would be when observing an ant colony.

Secondly, **if they've been around for a very long time**, this answers an age old question: can sentient beings survive without blowing themselves to smithereens? Since the answer in this scenario is by definition yes, it would indicate a benign species – and one which would reasonably be expected to have developed a sufficient love of life to let our faltering species carry on evolving without interference, just as a responsible environmentalist always tries to avoid damaging the eco-systems they study.

Thirdly, **they're unlikely to break down. I simply can't accept that**, after a marathon voyage to earth from who-knows-how-many trillion miles away, the visitors are going to run into technical problems when they get here. Of course **it's possible**, but again, **it's unlikely such a smart race would be too dumb** to arrive here without the galactic equivalent of fully comprehensive get-you-home breakdown cover.

Despite this, **I don't dismiss of the possibility of alien visitations**. In fact, quite the opposite. **I'm very willing to believe that life has turned up from far away** – but **not** by saucer. Even if they had popped in using such vehicles, I doubt we could have tracked sentient extraterrestrials because their security systems would make it impossible.

'WE HAVE SEEN THE ALIENS...'

However, while flying saucers would be undetectable by humans, we could **detect extraterrestrials who arrive... by rock**. We know that meteorites from Mars have landed on earth. These are chunks ejected from the other **planet's** surface by massive impacts in the distant past. **It's not impossible that simple** life could be contained in such meteorites: and a debate has raged for some years about one such object which some believe did show signs of containing microbiological activity. **(10) This theory of 'seeding' life was promoted by the** lateral thinker and gifted astronomer Fred Hoyle. **In Hoyle's model**, life could thus seed its way around the solar system – or galaxy. **(11) Any one such seeding event – known as 'panspermia' - is improbable over a short period of time, but given the lengths of time involved – billions of years – even improbable events will occur from time to time.**

This seeding concept carries with it an interesting possibility; and one which has not been lost on Hollywood. There is a scenario whereby life may have started somewhere else – such at The Red Planet - and arrived here through some process of transfer – an idea postulated in the erratic and scientifically flawed **film 'Mission to Mars'**. **This doesn't** answer how life started, or if it has started elsewhere. All that matters for a fertile universe is that life either starts independently in different eco-systems, or that it can be transferred from planet to planet. Both are possible, and in the absence of an answer to the former,

asteroid impacts will do nicely as a plausible seeding mechanism. This is a far cry from the flying saucers so beloved of alien films, but life is often less glamorous and more crafty than the movies suggest.

Should we discover that life has indeed flourished eons ago on Mars, **we're left** with a curious prospect. If it began there and fell to earth later, then, our search for extraterrestrials delivers a positive result. In this case, to *misquote* Samuel Beckett's character, Pogo, from **Waiting for Godot**: **'we have seen the aliens - and they is us!'** **In this case**, the alien hunters were right all along.

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IS THE FUTURE DUNNE & DUSTED?: “AN EXPERIMENT WITH TIME” REVISITED

Christian Jensen Romer

An Experiment With Time by J.W. Dunne, published in 1927, was a remarkably successful book. It influenced J. B. Priestly, Aldous Huxley and many other “public intellectuals” of the inter-war years. Dunne’s book was to inspire short stories by C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien and apparently infuriated H.G. Wells, who remarked that Dunne had taken his ideas (from *The Time Machine*) far too seriously and “brooded upon it” (Dunne 1927, p. 130). The book recounts a series of anomalous experiences and seemingly precognitive dreams, and Dunne’s new model of the nature of Time designed to account for them. So what about this book caused such a sensation in the 1930’s and what relevance does it have to the study of anomalies and the work of ASSAP today?

Born in 1875 in County Kildare, J.W. Dunne was from a wealthy upper middle class Anglo-Irish family. A soldier invalided out of the army by a heart condition, he took up aeronautical design and developed a series of early powered aircraft in the period 1902-1912. Dunne’s planes sought stability by developing tailless designs with aerodynamic swept back wings. While his aircraft were innovative, and impressed even the pioneer of powered flight Orville Wright, aircraft design was to take other paths, and of his planes only the D8 was ever to see brief military service. Nonetheless a D8 crossed the Channel, and Dunne himself was an experienced test pilot and early member of the RFC and Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society. He is still considered an **important figure in the history of aviation with his work on “flying wings”** arguably far ahead of its time. In the 1920’s he cooperated on designing the Pterodactyl series of aircraft under lead designer Geoffrey Hill and by the time of *An Experiment With Time* (1927) Dunne had made his name as an aeronautical engineer and inventor.



Dunne in the D8. Picture from Wikimedia Commons.

Dunne moved in the hunting, shooting and fishing set. His first book *Sunshine and the Dry Fly* (Dunne, 1924) is a guide to fly fishing, or more specifically to the custom creation of flies using a silk called Cellulite (!) which was produced by Wardle & Davenport Ltd, London. When the manufacturer closed, Dunne's book became pointless; as the angler could no longer replicate his elaborate instructions. He used his mathematics and engineering parlance to explain the design of each fly and the exact shades of silk he called for were no longer readily available. (Herd 2012)

Dunne was also enamoured of what we would call today Science Fiction. As a boy he admired the works of Jules Verne, and later the 'scientific romances' of H.G. Wells.

It was in 1927 that Dunne approached a rather more intriguing, from the viewpoint of ASSAP, topic in his *An Experiment With Time*. The experiences that make up the book, along with the philosophical and mathematical investigation, covered however many decades of Dunne's life and reflections upon his experiences. Dunne noticed that sometimes he seemed to dream of the future and that events he dreamed about came to pass after he had dreamt of them. The example that is almost always cited, because of its spectacular nature, is the dream he had of the explosion of the volcano Mount Pele on May 8, 1902. The explosion destroyed the city of Saint-Pierre with tremendous loss of life. This dream, often cited in popular books on the paranormal, is often paraphrased incorrectly and given its importance in the development of Dunne's ideas it is worth considering here in some detail.

THE VOLCANO DREAM

Dunne was near Lindley in South Africa with his regiment the 6th Mounted Infantry in May 1902, during the Second Boer War. Dunne served firstly with the Imperial Yeomanry who had sustained heavy losses during the siege of the nearby Lindley in 1901 and then in 1902 with the Wiltshire Regiment, commanded by his father General Sir John Hart Dunne. A search of the military records of the British Army reveals a John William Dunne and the Sixth Mounted Infantry was presumably a battalion of the Imperial Yeomanry volunteer cavalry force. **Some of this force was garrisoning “blockhouses” in an attempt to put down the Boer's guerrilla actions.** The Imperial Yeomanry were still heavily involved in the fighting at the time in question.

A confusion arises here. **The Imperial Yeomanry were a sort of “Territorial Army” force comprised of,** by the conclusion of hostilities, 34 battalions of volunteers from Yeomanry units all over Britain and Ireland. A 3rd contingent and 15 more battalions arrived just after the peace was signed. The 6th was drawn from Scottish Yeomanry Regiments but The 1st were from Dunne's father's regiment, **the Wiltshire's.** Dunne was Anglo-Irish, and there were a number of Irish units but Dunne himself seems to have served previously in the **Wiltshires and not been a “regular”.** The most likely explanation was that he was actually serving with not the 6th but the 16th Mounted Infantry, a unit drawn from the Wiltshires, and designated 16th/1st, arriving in South Africa on March 1st 1900. If this supposition is correct, it would throw considerable doubt on the accuracy of Dunne's memory. Presumably most ex-soldiers can recall which units they served with so perhaps Dunne is correct? The Imperial Yeomanry had a reputation for attracting in this 1st contingent romantic upper and upper-middle class recruits seeking adventure and glory. Dunne seems to fit that type well.

To return to the events of late April/early May 1902, Dunne states he had been **“on trek” and newspapers and letters had been infrequent,** when one night he had a peculiar dream. He was on an island and steam was rising from the ground of the mountainside on which he stood. **In the dream he gasped “It's the island! Good Lord, the whole thing is going to blow up!”** He immediately set about trying to save the 4,000 unsuspecting inhabitants. Then in the dream he was on a neighbouring island, trying to warn the French authorities that they must send ships to evacuate the first island - but to little avail. The dream ends **with him clinging to the horses of one “Monsieur le Maire” who is trying to drive to a dinner engagement and tells Dunne he should return the next day when his office is open. He was shouting “Listen! Four thousand people will be killed unless--”**

At some point thereafter the next batch of papers arrived including the *Daily Telegraph*. Their headline read “Volcano Disaster in Martinique; Town Swept Away; An avalanche of flame; Probable loss of over 40,000 lives; British Steamer burnt”. Dunne misread the headline as 4,000, and saw this as a fulfilment of his dream. We will return to this point later. The first question which arises is how much could Dunne have known before the disaster about the threat to Martinique? He was on active service and news from Martinique thousands of miles away probably had little impact in the Free State. The recent destruction of a British column by Boers would have been a matter of much greater immediate concern.



Photograph of the remains of St. Pierre by Angelo Heilprin, 1902.

Several questions must be addressed in considering this story as evidence for precognition. Firstly, when did the *Telegraph* headline Dunne cites appear? I believe the news arrived in London at the earliest on May 9th 1902, the New York papers carried the story on the 10th and the Australian on the 12th, as news passed over the telegraph wires. I have located a story in the *Evening Post* dated 12th May 1902 which reports “The Volcanic Eruptions in the West Indies;

A Tremendous National Disaster; Forty Thousand Lives Lost; 'A Rain of Fire'; Destruction of a British Steamer." *The Evening Post* article is prominently entitled "Cable News – by electric telegraph, copyright" and one wonders at the similarity of this to the headline Dunne reproduced and if he could have misremembered. However, it is quite likely that the *Telegraph* article does exist and the similarities are simply are from both relying on syndicated news wire services.

Unfortunately that leaves us little wiser; as we do not know the date Dunne had his dream. All we can say is that at the time in April or May 1902 he assumed the dream was inspired by his having read about the Krakatoa explosion as a boy. That had occurred when Dunne was eight years old and made worldwide headlines. Could Dunne have known of the rumblings in Martinique before the eruption? The news would have been transmitted by the *Telegraph* all over the world. There was a delay occasioned by the *Telegraph* office at Saint-Pierre being destroyed and other cables were disrupted by the eruption on the island of Saint Vincent. On Martinique Mt Pelée had been causing concern since 1900 and since 23rd April had been erupting in a manner sufficient to cause many to leave the island in alarm. By May 3rd the steamships were fully booked with refugees. On May 7th a volcano erupted on the neighbouring island of Saint Vincent causing great ash falls, a hazard to shipping in the area.

I have so far located no stories relating to these precursors outside of local papers in the West Indies. It is entirely likely that the story could have been reported for some 2 weeks before the cataclysm of May 8th when a pyroclastic flow emerged from the side of the mountain, moving at speeds of hundreds of miles an hour, wiped out the city of Saint Pierre. A diligent study of British newspapers may reveal exactly how much could have been known to Dunne, and at what date, but given the lack of a written record or any date for the dream this seems sadly less than useful.

What is important is that Dunne felt his dream presaged the report of the disaster - though possibly not the disaster itself. He also felt it was not the disaster itself he foresaw, but rather that his apparent 'precognition' was of his own reading of the newspaper report. The 4,000/40,000 confusion he felt was proof of this. In fact while the exact death toll for the May 8th disaster is unknown it is generally believed to have been in the region of 28-30,000 and subsequent newspaper accounts soon corrected the numbers given to this level. Dunne's dream was inaccurate in another respect as the French authorities, while widely criticised in the aftermath for their inaction, had in fact been very aware of the potential danger of an eruption. The Governor Louis Mouttet had met with a commission the previous day which decided the danger from the volcano was negligible to Saint Pierre. He and his wife met with the commission in the city and he died while on a ship preparing to inspect the danger to

another settlement bordering the volcano. Mouttet's wife died in the hotel in the city. Also it is to be noted that Dunne felt the neighbouring island was (like Martinique) French, but at no point declares the island where the danger was as a French island.



Further eruption Mt Pelée on May 26th 1902, photograph by Angelo Heilprin.

Whatever the strength of the case as a precognition it had a great impact on Dunne. He considered the possibility he could have read about the danger before, and forgotten it, but felt this very unlikely. He considered if he could have learned the information by telepathy from the journalist at the *Telegraph*, or some other paper, but rejected that hypothesis too. For the next two years he did consider the possibility that he might be a Spirit Medium. He rejected out of hand the suggestion he had “astrally travelled” to the scene of the disaster. The conclusion he came to, after a careful analysis of this and his various other prophetic dreams, was that the dream was in fact a reflection of his own future and the dream was caused by his own subsequent reading of the newspaper article.

DUNNE'S THEORIES

Part Two of *An Experiment With Time* contains a rather sardonic assault on contemporary philosophy, and Dunne's contention that philosophers have neglected the implications of time. He surveys (then) modern physics, and gives

in detail his own mathematical examination of the nature of time. Dunne purports to show by deduction from first principles (rationalist not empirical) that time is in fact not as we perceive it. Each of us has our own timeline (a fourth dimension) which begins as we are conceived and measures our duration on the planet. Dunne asserts that our awareness of time passing is contrary to what is actually happening. In reality we are currently living every moment we will ever live and have ever lived in this time dimension. We perceive time as **“passing” as our brains produce a filtering effect on consciousness to make us aware of our timelines sequentially.** So we perceive time as a river, flowing endlessly on, but it is only our awareness that is moving, as everything we have ever done and will ever do is already in existence. When we sleep, our subconscious can sometimes escape these filters and we perceive parts, fragments, **of our own “past” and “future”.**

Of course past and future are illusions to Dunne – because they all are happening now. There is only an eternal now, and to Dunne this explains his prophetic dreams, the sense he knows what is about to happen, and the common feeling of *deja vu*. Every human being has such a time dimension, marking their duration, but the timeline is in reality a monad, it only becomes a line through our observation of it. All our personal time dimensions branch off - yours branch off from your parents, so we end up with an evolutionary tree of times, all part of one longer time dimension. He infers from this that we have a Time 2, **against which the “branching” can be measured and,** it was suggested, an infinite regress of other further time dimensions to measure each other. So time can only be measured by the invoking of multiple time dimensions in infinite regress. In sleep our mind sometimes moves to Time 2, from which we see all of Time 1 at once, and hence catch glimpses in dreams of our future.

Dunne then goes on to draw conclusions and state that his philosophical/mathematical argument for his Serial Time agrees with the empirical evidence of the experiments he conducted which will be described later. He then looks at the implications of his mathematical models. If every individual has their own time dimension, how do they interact? His discussion is too complex to explain fully in this article, but he believes interaction is possible, and despite the seeming immutability of the future he also believes Free Will, or at least the appearance of it, exists. The action of Free Will on decisions made in Time/Space by an observer external to Time/Space is not particularly problematic. If I, standing outside of Time, decide to become a rugby player, then my whole timeline when I enter Time is and/was that I was/am/will be a rugby player. The sum of all free decisions are made outside of Time will simply be instantaneously the time dimension - nothing changes. Dunne however seems to allow for change, though he also seems to regard, like some modern philosophers, consciousness as a best subservient to and possibly merely a *post*

hoc rationalisation of brain activity. He escapes the determinism of some modern thinkers by invoking quantum effects (Dunne 1927, p. 116).

He also invokes a Super-Observer who has existed from the beginning of time, and whose observations are necessary to hold the whole structure together. He allows the reader to infer this Eternal Super-Observer is the being we usually call God. (A Super-Observer is also to Dunne required by the infinite regress of my mind observing my mind observing my mind and so forth). We have a Soul as well, an eternal part, which exists in a different but related time dimension to **that in which we experience bodily death and argues he has achieved “proof of the unity of all flesh in the Superbody and of all minds in the Master-mind (:)** **this supplies the logical foundation needed by every theory of ethics” (Dunne 1927, p. 120).** This quote from the page where he summarises the implications of his theory sounds like the ravings of a fanatic or grandiose cranks through the ages and sadly the rest of the page is similar in tone. Yet it is also alien to Dunne's usual critical and self-aware style and I suspect reflects him in a particularly ebullient and optimistic moment.

I have struggled to convey much, if any, of Dunne's thinking, but if you look at the line below, which all exists from **B** to **D**, and realise that **B** is your Birth, and **D** your Death. Then, imagine this is all set out, but you are progressively observing it through your mind, with only one part of the line being revealed to you at a time sequentially, the moment you are experiencing now, you might find it easier to envision. The line does not grow as you live – it is all there from the start but your observations of it change. All free will decisions you make in your life happen like everything else instantaneously so the line reflects the sum of the free choice decisions from the start.

B-----**D**

So let us take the movie *Sliding Doors* (Howitt 1998). In that film the heroine misses a train and her timeline splits in two. However let us assume instead we take the film from the point where she catches her boyfriend in bed with his ex, and she makes a Free Will decision to kick him out. Both their timelines are affected by this decision but because everything happens simultaneously, there is no *Sliding Doors* alternative universe. The decision point has always resulted in subsequent events and our sense of causality is violated.

I wish to note that while I think I understand Dunne's arguments in *An Experiment With Time*, I am far from certain I actually do. Like Hawking's *Brief History of Time*, Dunne's book may be more admired than read and more read than understood.

Dunne's mathematical drawings and logic appears straightforward but as you work through them you discover they are extremely complex. I have noted that while several physicists of Dunne's time felt his work was interesting, and seem to have encouraged him, and to this day Dunne's book receives attention from physics science writers. Some have praised it, others critiqued, and while John Gribbin's (1981) *New Scientist* review praised it as a classic, I am not sure that Dunne really made any contribution to our understanding of time in Physics. For a modern critique and discussion of how Serialism has fared since Dunne, see Randall (1988). Nonetheless Dunne's theories are certainly of interest, and the notion that dreams can foreshadow events in our lives is clearly open to testing.

HOW TO EXPERIMENT WITH TIME

Dunne proposed a number of experiments to test his idea. The first and simplest is based on the fact that our dreams sometimes reflect what has happened during the preceding days. Dunne believed that similarly dreams can provide a glimpse of events yet to come, in many cases things that happen within 48 hours of the dream, though in one case 20 years before. One can test this by keeping a dream diary; a journal in which you record your dreams every day when you first arise - indeed before you have even fully awakened.

Dunne notes several common objections to this idea. Many people state they do not dream or they forget their dreams very quickly (something I find to be true). His advice is the moment you wake up grab a pen and jot down the bit of your dream you can remember, constantly repeating a phrase of it so you can keep it in mind. As you write it down, you will recall more and more of your dream. Then, after a while you will become proficient in keeping a dream journal, and have detailed accounts to refer back to. Every so often refer back, and check if your dreams contain specific images or clear representations of things that actually happened to you subsequently. You can mark on a scale of 1 to 10 how close the dream was to the experience, and how uncommon or surprising the event was, and then grade them from trivial to outstanding in terms of evidence for the hypothesis. Dunne tried this and claimed to have good results from a number of his friends and relatives, and the results appear in the Appendix of *An Experiment With Time*. Some, like some of Dunne's own experiences, appear striking, often more so than the Martinique volcano dream.

Dunne gives a criticism of psychical researchers in his day, by which he means the SPR (Society for Psychical Research). He notes that they are willing to accept very unusual, very rare, **well recorded and witnesses' testimony as "supernormal"**. However, they choose to disregard everything that does not meet their standards, and that they can possibly attribute to coincidence or other natural causes. Dunne points out it is not the strength of any individual

case but also the frequency of the dreams that matters. He seems to hold that a **large number of “one in ten” chances is statistically more compelling than one “one in a million” coincidence**, and he is of course correct, if the former can be multiplied. So when judging your dream journal evidence, do not be too harsh in the standards of evidence you require, instead see if you have sufficient experiences of the type to make a case that you are looking in to your future. Dunne gives detailed instructions for your experimentation so, if you plan to try this for more than a month, I really would suggest getting his book and reading the relevant section.

Dunne also proposes a second experiment, where again he claims to have had significant results. You can easily try this at home, assuming you are about to read a novel or watch a movie or listen to a radio show and know little about what is to come. Take a pencil and a piece of paper, try to clear your mind and write down the first images that appear in your mind's eye. Do not try and guess the plot, or what is likely to appear, and do not allow yourself to rationalise about it. Just record your strong images, and if you start to think about it, stop and try to clear your mind. Dunne asserts that you may well find your phrases relating to the book you now read! There is no reason why you cannot try this now, so go do so, and if you have significant results feel free to share them by letter or email to ASSAP or the author. Such things, like the 'Book Tests' of 19th century Psychical Research are notoriously difficult to assess evidentially, but Dunne claims that you will see clear results. One is of course reminded of the recent *Feeling the Future* paper which seemed to show a much more immediate presentiment effect (Bem 2011), though the results of that are now looking questionable owing to a number of failed replications.

DUNNE AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

Dunne who was a member of the SPR for some years seems to have disliked “supernormalists” and psychical researchers, possibly because they, and philosophers had among their number the most hostile critics of *An Experiment With Time*. Physicists, men of science and the intelligentsia generally lavished praise upon the book. For an example of a noted philosopher and psychical researcher's critique see Broad (1935). He resisted with some impatience all attempts to critique his evidence, though he himself was very critical at times, and shows considerable scepticism. He was interested in time slips and other cases that appeared to provide evidence for his view of time and even provided a Note for an edition of Jourdain and Moberly's classic case of an ostensible timeslip at Versailles, *An Adventure* (1931). He had no time for the spirit hypothesis, and believed that ESP was simply a misunderstanding of the actual way in which consciousness and time worked, and that his Serial Time explained all evidence for telepathy and precognition naturalistically and better. He had no time for astral projection, occultism or mediumship, and derides the

idea that spirits had anything to do with his foreknowledge. Curiously Ruth Brandon in her 1983 *New Scientist* piece *Scientists and the Supernormal* asserts that in his last work *Intrusions?* (1955), which was completed by his wife Dunne admits to having been a spiritualist for a time. This is perhaps hinted at in *An Experiment* where he describes a period of two years after one of his early experiences where he sought answers and his relief at developing the idea that our understanding of time was actually at fault rather than having to accept any supernatural explanation.

Dunne occupies an uneasy space between the “professional” psychical researchers, and the world of Science. Certainly many scientists still enjoy his book, and even Sir Arthur Eddington wrote to him and allowed a small section of correspondence to be published in the 3rd edition. After being something of a celebrity in the 1930's, in resisting both the *psi* hypothesis and the spirit hypothesis and instead offering a naturalistic explanation for extraordinary human experiences, he has become increasingly neglected. His book is not easy to read in places, but for those who can follow the maths, it is certainly intriguing, and while at times he appears philosophically naïve, his ready acceptance of infinite regress as possibly just the way things are does allow him to make what appear to be rational deductions. The closest thing in modern psychical research are the works of Anthony Peake (for example Peake, 2009) which have the advantage of eighty years developments in modern physics and philosophy to draw upon, but which are very similar in some ways and far more readable). **Yet perhaps it's time to re-evaluate Dunne.** If both physicists and psychical researchers read Dunne again we may gain some new insights into his idea or be able to more clearly refute it. Still when it comes to *An Experiment With Time* the real onus is on you, the reader, to test the claims for yourselves and the two experiments described above provide a very simple way to do just that. I hope some readers will undertake the experiment.

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THE TONGUES OF ALIENS: REPORTS OF LANGUAGE USE BY EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL ENTITIES

Mark Newbrook

Skeptical linguistics is the critical study of non-mainstream (often ‘fringe’) claims regarding language matters. For a broad survey of such claims see my upcoming book (Newbrook, forthcoming). An important branch of this sub-discipline of linguistics involves linguistic or quasi-linguistic material which **arises from mysterious sources. This material may itself be otherwise ‘normal’** language or else what appear to be manifestations of unknown (sometimes very unusual) languages or of altogether unfamiliar individual linguistic items (words, etc.). Chapter 5 of my book deals with matters of this kind.

Phenomena of this type include glossolalia (‘speaking in tongues’), oral and written ‘channelling’ (from spirits, etc.), automatic writing, xenoglossia (competence in languages which one has never learned), etc. Glossolalia in particular is the subject of an extensive, partly skeptical literature. There are also some outstanding individual cases of special interest, notably that of the supposedly angelic language and an otherwise unknown script, both labelled ‘**Enochian**’, which were allegedly channelled to an associate of the Elizabethan mystic John Dee, **and also that of a ghostly mongoose known as ‘Gef’ which** allegedly interacted with the Irving family at a remote location in the Isle of Man during the 1930s, speaking intelligently in English, Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, Welsh, etc. These cases are discussed and referenced in my book.

In this present article, I focus upon a particularly modern manifestation of this general phenomenon: languages (spoken, written, etc.) reported as used in the context of alleged contact with extra-terrestrial entities. As a matter of policy, I am not assuming here, by way of background, that any such entities have ever interacted with human beings, or that this has never occurred.

Numerous reporters who identify as UFO-contactees or abductees – some as early as George Adamski (1956) and also George Hunt Williamson (1959, 1991) – have reported hearing samples of the languages used by the aliens and/or seeing samples of written language (or of what appeared to be written language). Some contactees and abductees have even claimed that they have learned such extra-terrestrial languages (often, it seems, by mystical means such as **‘telepathy’ rather** than by any known means; see below). These reporters produce texts written in these languages (supposedly by alien associates, or by

themselves) and/or volumes of speech. (Some reporters also provide non-linguistic semiotic material.)

Some older cases of this general type involve entities intermediate between extra-terrestrials and spirits. One such case was that of the claimed channelling of a deceased person, now living on Mars as a spirit being, by the medium H  l  ne Smith, as reported by Th  odore Flournoy (1994 [re-print]). The spirit **communications were in an unknown ‘Martian’ language, with an accompanying exotic script. This unidentifiable ‘language’ is in fact modelled** (consciously or unconsciously) on a language familiar to the channeller; French. **The grammatical and phonological structures of ‘Martian’ are clearly based on** those of French, the script is alphabetic and corresponds with the Roman alphabet as used to write French. Only the vocabulary is novel although even this is partly derived by cipher from French, Hungarian and other languages **known to Smith’s polyglot father.**²

In contrast, most of the more modern reports refer to entities more simply **identified as ‘extra-terrestrial’. These are very numerous and varied.**³ Linguistically-informed comments on this material are few, but Christian Mac   (http://www.ufodigest.com/news/1106/aliensymbols.html) provides a comparative account of various claims of this kind. Mac   examines possible links with other (allegedly) mysterious linguistic material; for instance, he relates characters reported by Adamski to those described in a very different context (alleged ancient South American inscriptions) by Marcel Hom  t (1963, etc.). Assessment of such claims would be of more interest if at least one out of two or more allegedly related sets of texts could be established as undeniably alien in origin; but of course this has never been accomplished, and in any event the similarities adduced are typically superficial and unsystematic, and thus not especially persuasive.

Since 1999 Gary Anthony, latterly in partnership with me, has been developing **the ‘Alien Semiotics Project’**, an endeavour to question and cooperate with abductees, witnesses and researchers, to explore the UFO abduction narratives and literature, and to involve unbiased qualified experts in the relevant fields so as to give alleged alien languages and symbols a fair appraisal using scientific methodology.

Anthony was inspired by the work of Mario Pazzaglini (http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/vida_alien/esp_vida_alien_54.htm), who was more at home with semiotics than with linguistics proper. The linguistic **conceptualisation in Pazzaglini’s material is often weak. Most strikingly,** he confuses matters of script and language, the distinction between types of script (alphabetic, syllabic, logographic; in addition, Chinese and Egyptian scripts are wrongly described as ideographic), the issue of the iconic transparency of

logographic symbols (pictographic/non-pictographic), and distinctions between specified named types of script (hieroglyphs, cuneiform etc.). He also states that an unknown script cannot be assigned to any type; but in fact this can be done with a high degree of reliability – even if the language itself is unknown – by applying statistical tests. Pazzaglini is also too ready to accept sensationalistic explanations for doubtful data or reports rather than psychological or other less dramatic explanations.

For our part, Anthony and I seek to consult any interested parties (whatever their roles) on the relevant issues. We request samples of as great a length as possible. Frequently, samples of alleged alien speech or writing are not long enough to permit useful linguistic analyses; shorter samples are useful only if translations – **preferably ‘literal’** – are available. (See below on the issues **surrounding ‘holistic’ understanding of such material.**) We have asked for assistance through the ufological literature, seeking:

a) samples of alien scripts and of texts written in these scripts, with statements regarding script-type and ductus (left to right or right to left, top to bottom or bottom to top, starting where on the page) and (for alphabetic or syllabic scripts) identification of word-boundaries;

b) samples of spoken alien language, ideally recorded on tape but, if this is not possible, **in the form of transcriptions either into ‘imitated spelling’ (where the sounds are represented using the spelling of English or of the reporter’s own strongest language, with identifications of the reporter’s language and/or accent) or (better) into the International Phonetic Association Alphabet;**

c) translations into English (or other human languages).

Responses have been disappointingly limited, but the project remains active. Our initial material, along with my own extended comments on strictly linguistic aspects of this matter, is available in various papers (Newbrook & Anthony, 2002; Newbrook, 2004, Newbrook, 2005).

One issue here is that of the physical and psychological nature of the alleged alien users of the languages: either humanoid to a considerable degree (and inhabiting planets similar to Earth), or markedly different (or of course of an intermediate nature). In the former case, the languages envisaged, like those represented in this context in science-fiction or fantasy, might be relatively **‘normal’ languages which happen not to exist in the real world as human languages which developed on Earth.** However, even the languages of humanoid aliens, being as they would be totally unrelated to any actual human language, **might still infringe some of the main ‘typological’ patterns which prevail across the range of human languages (such as prevailing word order**

patterns) or indeed some of the few really well-**established 'human-language universals'**.

These issues are obviously highly relevant to the possible fraudulent invention of languages of this kind. It is more difficult than most non-linguists imagine to invent, convincingly, even a novel human language (as opposed to an unstructured set of vocabulary items); and this applies also to more exotic **'languages' such as those in question here (even though it is somewhat more difficult to be confident about matters of plausibility where alleged non-human languages are at issue)**. Expertise in linguistics is needed in such acts of invention if the languages are to appear possibly genuine to an examining linguist. Few fraudsters and few reporters of alien languages would actually have such expertise, **which suggests that if any such 'languages' really appeared to linguists to be plausible they might very well prove to be genuine languages (whatever their actual origin; there might be possibilities other than extra-terrestrial origin)**. In contrast, languages which had in fact been fraudulently invented might appear too similar to known human languages, structurally and phonetically, to be genuinely of alien origin, or might simply appear implausible. (This also applies to openly invented non-human languages in fiction.)

If the alien users of the alleged extra-terrestrial languages were instead markedly non-humanoid – and this might be considered more plausible, given their wholly exotic planetary and evolutionary origin – the languages themselves would very probably be even more dramatically different from known human languages. They would be such as would fit the alien physiology, psychology, home planetary environment etc.; partly for that reason, they would be very likely to infringe some of the main typological patterns which prevail across the range of human languages and indeed some human-language universals. They would also, in all probability, display some unfamiliar phonetics, including sounds not found in any human language or indeed sounds which were unpronounceable for humans.

One of the basic distinguishing features of human language (not found in the **communication systems of any other known species**) is its **'double articulation'** into a) individually meaningless phonemes and b) meaningful morphemes/words made up of sequences of these phonemes. This is what enables language to express very many word-meanings with such a limited inventory of individual sounds. Another general linguistic universal is the existence and indeed the dominance of syntax (syntactic structure), by means of which words and morphemes are organised into phrases, clauses and sentences; while human languages vary typologically in respect of syntax, it is hardly possible to imagine a human language without syntax. It is plausible for

features as basic as these to be absent only in cases where utterly non-humanoid beings are described.

In such extreme cases, non-human languages might not be similar to human languages even in more general/superficial terms. For instance, they might not be uttered with remotely similar speech organs, **if the alien users' overall** physiology were as different as might be expected. Even if such beings used the auditory-acoustic channel of communication, as with human speech, they might have vastly different vocal apparatus, auditory acuity and frequency range, etc.

In fact, the vocal apparatuses and acuities/hearing ranges of some physically possible types of alien would allow (for example) the avoidance of double articulation, by permitting a language to have thousands of distinguishable phonemes and hence thousands of single-phoneme morphemes without thereby displaying excessive amounts of homophony and ambiguity. But without linguistic expertise the invention of such an utterly alien system, would be extremely difficult; indeed, the possibility of such a system would scarcely occur to most non-linguists. As things are, however, there are (perhaps predictably) currently no quasi-factual reports of languages of this kind which manifest the required degrees of expertise and plausibility (as opposed to openly invented cases in fiction).

If any such truly alien languages really do exist, these enormous differences which will probably obtain between alien and human systems will surely hinder the analysis of these languages, especially if little specific information about the users of these systems is available (for example, if a system is presented only as performed by human contactees, possibly with ensuing modifications of its more markedly alien features). But linguists might expect to make some progress as more was learned, even if contactees had themselves learned the systems by currently inexplicable means (see above).

Most unfortunately, the linguistic expertise in much of the literature in this area is, as noted, scanty. Little work on the issue has been done in ufological circles, although it has been a more salient focus of attention in SETI (Search For Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) circles, often in the context of informed speculation regarding alien intelligence and psychology.⁴ Even here, however, the discussion, though interesting, is often seriously lacking in specifically linguistic expertise. For instance, it is often assumed (as it is in much science-fiction) that core notions in science and especially logic and mathematics – believed to be very generally shared – will permit rapid movement towards overall decipherment/ mutual understanding. However, given the diversity of structures and concepts even among human languages and cultures at comparable technological levels, this may be over-optimistic, at least in some

respects. The grammatical and semantic systems even of human languages, if these are unrelated, can certainly differ very dramatically.

We turn here to the actual content of the reports of alien language use. Many of these involve communication allegedly emanating from extra-**terrestrial's by means of 'telepathy' (without specific linguistic forms) or some form of mind** transference, sometimes involving advanced technology. Telepathy is a **'convenient' feature** of the scenario if the material is in fact being fraudulently invented, because it negates the necessity of inventing the many specific details of a language (see below on another strategy of this kind, **involving 'holistic'** translations). On the other hand, it is not agreed among researchers that telepathy **ever** occurs, either amongst members of one species or between species, or if it is possible in principle; the advantage gained by fraudsters who adduce telepathy is thus doubtful.

One especially prominent advocate of the reality of extra-terrestrial languages of **a more 'orthodox' nature is** Mary Rodwell (Perth, Western Australia). Rodwell **organises support groups for 'experiencers' (most of them 'abductees') and** produces books, videos etc. on the subject, with samples of the written and spoken forms of alien languages as well as alien-inspired artwork (see for example Rodwell, 2002). Rodwell promotes the view that these experiences represent actual physical happenings. Her ideas are discussed at length in the **'Alien Semiotics Project'** papers mentioned earlier. The spoken and written **material cited by Rodwell is produced by 'experiencers' rather than directly by** aliens; the forms and sequences are outlined in largely self-reported case studies, notably that of the repeat-experiencer Tracey Taylor. The written **material has the appearance of text written 'grass-stroke' style in a range of large** alphabets, syllabaries or (parts of) logographies. There is too little material in each sample to be more confident, especially in the absence of useful translations. In fact, the translations offered for both the spoken and the written material are typically holistic only; they represent entire messages rather than individual words or phrases. Morpheme-by-morpheme translations are not available, and this point is actually emphasised by Rodwell. This conveniently excuses Taylor and others from being asked to assist linguists seeking to analyse the languages in the normal way by breaking utterances down into meaningful units and analyses using substitution and other such exercises.

Other cases involving alleged extraterrestrial languages include one presented by Janet and Colin Bord (Bord & Bord, 1992), who report the alleged finding (by John Reeves) of paper bearing an unintelligible manuscript; as this finding immediately followed a UFO sighting (in 1965), the material was interpreted as **alien ('Martian') in origin. A decipherment was later offered but with no** authority or conviction. A similar case, also reported by Bord & Bord, involves

the ‘Silpho Moor Disk’ (eighteen centimetres wide) found in Yorkshire, UK, in 1957, containing copper foil sheets and bearing ‘hieroglyphic’ inscriptions on both disk and sheets. These too were ‘deciphered’ as containing extra-terrestrial messages. Bord & Bord refer also to the similar texts presented by George Adamski and to the supposed links with Marcel Homet’s work (see above).

One very forthcoming reporter was the 1960s contactee Bernard Byron, who claimed fluency in seventeen written and spoken extra-terrestrial languages (some of them extra solar) and was happy to provide specific translations. He was interviewed by the skeptical astronomer Patrick Moore, but unfortunately his material was never recorded at sufficient length for useful linguistic analysis (see Moore, 1976, 148-149, **which includes a reproduction of some of Byron’s written material**).

Allen Greenfield (1994) commences from the alleged oddity of the names reportedly given by extra-terrestrial aliens for themselves, and argues that aliens (and now contactees) are in fact using a Kabbalistic cipher which is related to the Roman alphabet as used to write English.

The experiences recounted by Alec Newald (1997), **who had a ‘missing time’/UFO-abduction experience, involved ‘telepathy’; but he does report a series of written single numerical symbols corresponding with the integers 0-12 (suggesting that the aliens use Base-13 or a higher base, see below on Jim Sparks).**

Another set of claims involves the ‘Wingmakers’, extra-terrestrial beings (‘a specialized training faction of the Central Race that – for the most part – is not incarnate in a physical form’) who have allegedly provided contactees with large amounts of information ‘translated from a language that does not easily translate to human definitions’. This belief system arose from the claimed discovery in 1996 of an alien artefact near Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. See for example Grahn (2001).

As noted earlier, the ufologist George Hunt Williamson claimed to have experienced many communications with aliens – some through devices resembling Ouija boards. Although he uses the term *tongue* (‘language’), the linguistically novel elements of these communications very largely involved only individual alien names and other single words. In addition, Williamson presents a series of some 81 symbols, channelled to his associates in 1952 and **identified as the ‘Solex-Mal’ system. Each symbol is linked with an alien word spelled out in the Roman alphabet. Some of the symbols form structurally-related series, and, where symbols form such a series (and thus share features), the associated words are phonetically similar. A number of the symbols/words are provided with English glosses (words or phrases). Williamson also**

promotes bizarre etymologies and analyses involving the mystical significance of the positions of letters in words, such as English *ladder* and its earlier form with initial *h-*; he links these claims with his views on alien contact with humanity extending **over the centuries**. **See also below on Williamson and the ‘Rocks of Writing’.**

Another case involving alphabetic writing is that of Jim Sparks (2009), who claimed to have been taught an alien alphabet in which the number and direction of the strokes making up each character was crucially important (or so perceived). Suspiciously, the characters correspond directly with the letters of the Roman alphabet (except Q, X and Z) – or with integer symbols, but only 1-6 (this might suggest use of Base-7, comparable with the Base-13 suggested by **Newald’s data as reported above**). **In writing**, the alien users of the system would place one symbol over another, until only a black spot was visible, although Sparks believed that the aliens could still resolve this into characters when reading. Sparks was initially taught to read alien texts from right to left but was later presented with texts arranged in circular form.

There are various cases in which no coherent account of alien language could be provided but where individual alien words or unintelligible alien speech were reportedly heard or where witnesses later attempted to imitate or reproduce alien speech-sounds without any understanding, and other cases involving unintelligible symbols (sometimes possibly non-linguistic in nature) reportedly observed on alien craft. M.H. Edwards (1970) discusses such cases.

Some reports of entire UFO-related languages involve alleged ancient visits to Earth by extra-**terrestrial’s; otherwise unknown scripts presumably encoding** otherwise unknown languages of alien origin are described. For example, George Hunt Williamson (see above) reports that some Amerindian tribal **peoples live close to rock faces (some of them known as ‘Rocks of Writing’) upon which mysterious ‘hieroglyphs’ are carved; they deny any connection with these symbols, regarding them as ‘timeless’. Williamson attributes the symbols to** extra-terrestrial entities who visited the area in ancient times. However, it is not in fact clear that these symbols are linguistic or even symbolic in character, still less that they are of genuinely mysterious origin

One especially dramatic case of this kind (albeit ultimately lacking any corroboration) involves not written language but 716 grooved stone disks thirty centimetres in diameter, hardened with cobalt and displaying central holes, which were reportedly discovered in the Bayan Kara Ula mountain range in Western China in the period 1938-1962. It is suggested that these disks can be compared with vinyl records and may contain much data. The story presented recounts that a scholar called Tsum Um Nui (whose existence has not been confirmed) claimed that the grooves contained script and eventually announced

a decipherment; the translation offered (the details were later disputed) indicated that the disks were artefacts of the inhabitants of an extra-terrestrial spacecraft which landed in the area around 12,000 years BP and was unable to take off again. The oral legends of local tribes-people apparently referred to a massacre by their remote ancestors of small-statured, ‘ugly’ newcomers; this description was interpreted as referring to the aliens. The case was allegedly **published in 1965 by Chi Pu Tei as ‘The Grooved Script Concerning Spaceships Which, as Recorded on the Discs, Landed on Earth 12,000 Years Ago’**. **This matter has been a ‘favourite’ among believers in extra-terrestrial visits to Earth;** see for example Coppens (web-site).

One Karyl Robin-Evans (1980), supposedly published posthumously, allegedly contacted a small-statured tribe known as the Dropa in the same general area. The Dropa believed that their ancestors were not human but had come from the Sirius system; after a crash-landing in the remote past which brought them to Earth, many were massacred, but the community was able to survive and eventually became the Dropa. This legend was interpreted as referring to the Bayan Kara Ula event. The story appeared suspicious to interested parties of all persuasions, and much later David Gamon (1995) admitted that he had been the hoaxer. It appears probable that the entire case is itself a hoax; but, in any event, if the disks ever existed they have now apparently disappeared, and further study is thus (at present) impossible.

Some other claims of this general type are even more extreme, for instance the **utterly implausible claims (linguistic and other) surrounding ‘Mantong’**, which is said to be an ancient language/script reconstructed from the English names of the letters of the Roman alphabet and various short English words associated **with these. The background story (often termed ‘the Shaver Mystery’) involves alleged subterranean humanoid but non-human beings known as the ‘dero’ (degenerate and wicked) and the ‘tero’ (good)**, the products of a disaster which occurred 20,000 years BP. For a summary see Wright (1999).

In like vein, **Alexandre St. Yves d’Alveydre reported that the ancient ‘Vattanian’** language, along with an alphabet of 22 letters (suspiciously corresponding one-to-one with those featured in Indian, Hebrew, Roman and other human scripts), was revealed to him in 1885 by a race of beings living in the paradise of Agartha (see for instance Jay, 1997). The Vattanian vocabulary allegedly expresses archetypal notions and some of its words and concepts supposedly persist in human languages; there is, predictably, little attention to matters of grammar.

Some Latter-Day Saints sources (Nibley, 1988; Larson, 1992; etc.) continue to **promote the veracity of the ‘Reformed Egyptian’ in their *Book of Abraham*** and other texts associated with *The Pearl of Great Price* (Smith, 1966 [re-print]). Some of the texts are read as referring to other inhabited planets, which feature

in LDS theology (Heinerman, 1990) – notably, **the supreme planet ‘Kolob’**. When the early LDS leaders claimed that this was the language of the plates which an angel lent to them to be mystically translated, Egyptian had not yet been deciphered, but the small pieces of genuine Egyptian text presented in LDS sources were already known at the time and have subsequently been interpreted quite differently.

There are also cases where alien linguistic items are said to have been **‘borrowed’ into human languages (spoken and/or written)** – or where humans themselves are said to be of extra-terrestrial origin, which is reflected in some linguistic features. For instance, Brian Crowley and Anthony Pollock (1989) hold that **the builders of the alleged monuments on Mars (such as the ‘Face on Mars’) were themselves human; the species initially evolved (contrary to all appearances) on Mars and only later migrated to Earth as local conditions worsened**. They trace various names and other words, found in Welsh, Irish Gaelic, Egyptian, South American languages, etc., to a Martian language. Of course, **as with channellers of ‘Atlantean’ and other such material**, they are free to propose any forms which they believe might lie behind the human language data, claiming that their extra-terrestrial sources provide corroboration.

If extra-terrestrial aliens genuinely visit Earth, it is obviously possible in principle that they may be able to learn to use contemporary human languages, and indeed it is frequently reported that aliens have been able to learn and use the languages known by the witnesses, or other human languages ancient or modern. For example, Marc Tolosano (1990) reports a (single-witness) case **where ‘ufonauts’ allegedly encountered in 1983 in France spoke French fluently** (and claimed that their species was familiar with all human languages).

There is a sub-set of cases of this general nature which involve alleged contemporary extra-terrestrial knowledge of unexpected human languages, notably ancient languages such as Latin and Greek. M.H. Edwards (see above) discusses several cases of this kind. Obviously, one possible explanation for such ability (if genuine) involves visits to Earth in ancient times and the subsequent transmission of the knowledge acquired at that time (or the retention of the knowledge by aliens with very long life-spans).

John Dean (1970) reports contact with aliens from various planets, notably one known as Korender. His account involves a common interplanetary language called Galingua, which, is allegedly the source of Latin by way of ancient contact, or else has a common ancestor with Latin. Galingua and the language of Korender are both spelled alphabetically (with thirty-nine wholly novel letters **with names bearing no relation to their phonetic values) and ‘phonetically’ (presumably this means ‘phonemically’); in Korendian**, however, pronouns and numerals (cardinal and ordinal) are apparently represented logographically,

with single symbols, despite being polyphonemic. Dean offers (often using non-standard terminology) a brief summary of Korendian grammar (very regular but otherwise suspiciously Indo-European in character, with only a few intriguing features) and punctuation, and a vocabulary.

Paul von Ward (2004 ascribes special status and universal applicability to the *devanagari* script used for Sanskrit and to the language itself. Like many non-mainstream writers on Indian matters, he ignores/rejects what has been learned about the Indo-European origins of the language, and he implausibly interprets Sanskrit and its script as the ultimate ancestors of all later languages and alphabets, which have allegedly deteriorated and suffered from loss of phonetic range and expressive power. He attributes the invention of *devanagari* to ‘Advanced Beings’, extra-terrestrial or inter-dimensional beings whose activities are reflected in myths around the world. Von Ward is more widely read in **linguistics (as in some other disciplines) than most such promoters of ‘ancient astronauts’, but his ‘understanding’ of the subject is very uneven and idiosyncratic.**

One example of alleged extra-terrestrial knowledge of ancient human languages involves the work of Paul Potter (2008), who upholds the veracity of the very **strange ‘messages’ which well-known abductee Betty Andreasson (now Luca) reportedly received (over a long period) from alien entities.** Those which are not in English are simply strings of words familiar or otherwise, drawn (often with some distortion) from Latin, Greek and other languages; most of them are Latin or Greek words or English/pseudo-English words based or apparently based on these languages. Where a word exists in inflected forms in the source language, the citation (dictionary) form is virtually always the one which appears here, and there is no grammatical structure. The sequences do not exemplify language in use; they are lists of words. **Potter translates the ‘messages’,** adding grammar as is convenient to his proposed message. It is not at all clear why aliens would communicate like this; if they knew Latin or Greek, they could surely write in these languages. Human fakers (who may not actually be familiar with Latin or Greek but who could easily possess dictionaries and a conversion table for the Greek alphabet) must be suspected.

There are in fact other cases involving UFOs where a string of the citation forms of words taken from a foreign language is presented as if it were a meaningful sentence. One such case arose in the Garden Grove abduction case of 1975, later acknowledged as a hoax. The sequence (allegedly channelled) was *nous laos hikanō* (early Greek: ‘mind’, ‘people’ as in *we the people*, ‘[I] come’). **A gloss ‘I come in the mind of man’ was offered; but all three forms are citation forms,** and the grammar has merely been added by the translator. (See Larson, 2002.) Another case involves what appears to be a single Modern Greek word (in Greek script) in the written material displayed on artefacts supposedly associated with

the Roswell Incident/Alien Autopsy case (video available at http://www.metacafe.com/watch/321906/look_at_this_ufo_crash, accessed 20 February 2011). However, the word includes a common spelling error grounded in the ignorance of many less-educated native speakers about the origin of the form. This again suggests the possibility of fakery.

Other UFO advocates also proclaim human languages (ancient or modern) as currently used by aliens. Often, the actual origin of the favoured language is said to be extra-terrestrial (which would obviously require adjustment to **accounts of the relevant human language ‘families’**). **The best current example** is the Aetherius Society, founded by George King. The Society – like von Ward (see above) and other non-mainstream writers on India – ignores what has been learned about the Indo-European origins of Sanskrit, and regards it not merely as the ancestor of all human speech but as vastly ancient and the main *lingua franca* of a whole series of inhabited planets. They consider that it was **‘scientifically and metaphysically’ devised and is derived from fifty primeval sounds** (which, by way of misconceptualisation, they confuse with the **‘alphabetic’ letters used to write the sounds of the language**); **these sounds themselves are derived from features of the Chakras** (supposed energy vortices **in the ‘subtle’ body of a human being**). **(These matters are discussed on the Society’s web-sites; see for example http://community.livejournal.com/aetherius_path, accessed 19 February 2011.)**

The extra-terrestrial **‘master’ Aetherius was extensively channelled by King, providing links with this complex inhabited universe and normally using King’s own Southern English English**. The skeptical astronomer Patrick Moore exposed **King’s claim that Aetherius/King could handle questions in any human language**; the medium was nonplussed by very simple questions in Norwegian and even French (see Moore, 1976, 98, etc.).

As matters stand, the provisional skeptical conclusion on the reality of extra-terrestrial languages (spoken and/or written) and on extra-terrestrial knowledge of human languages must be that no known case is truly convincing.

NOTES

1) For summary general skeptical comment on Adamski and Williamson, see Kossy (2001).

2) For more readily accessible samples of the written material, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%A9%C3%A8ne_Smith (accessed 23 March 2011); for a brief skeptical comment on Flournoy, see Carroll (2003, 43).

3) For brief surveys of the literature, with links, see http://www.anomalies-unlimited.com/Alien_Writing.html (accessed 18 February 2011), <http://www.abduct.com/symbols/s20.php> (accessed 23 March 2011), etc.

4) See for example Holroyd (1979) and sections of many other books, articles and web-sites on this theme over recent decades.

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DID E.T. PHONE HOME, OR WAS IT THE DEAD?

BRIDGING UFOLOGY AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH WITH ANOMALOUS PHONE CALL EXPERIENCES

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Parapsychology is seldom involved with the investigation of phenomena related to UFO experiences, though there have been several convincing arguments to suggest that the cause of fortaean phenomena (i.e. UFOs, aliens, mythical creatures, etc.) may be linked with psi. To argue this point, the authors expanded on a previous review and argument for this relationship (Foley, 1996) while using examples of anomalous telephone calls, to explain how psychical phenomena and ufological experiences may be associated. This link may be made either by common rational psychological means or from the unconscious production of psi.

INTRODUCTION

While recently conducting research on the history of anomalous contacts via electrical devices and machines allegedly built to contact the dead (Cooper, 2012; Cooper & Parsons, in press), a curious letter was found in the Harry Price Library of Magical Literature at Senate House Library, University of London. The letter was addressed to Harry Price - the late and famous ghost hunter of the twentieth century - from a Mr. Ernest B. Rogers (1920). The letter itself discussed a curious issue, suggesting contact with extra-terrestrials (ETs) via wireless signals. It seems Price had claimed at some point to have been in telepathic contact with Martian intelligences by means of devices referred to as the Psychomotorimeter and Telepathograph, while Rogers claimed to possess a device of similar purpose called the Polaris Wireless Receiving Set. After initially receiving what was interpreted as Martian contacts via wireless signals, Rogers ran a series of tests in an attempt to develop more messages from the **alleged ETs to determine the signals' origin**. It was concluded by Rogers that the signals received were not produced by any device on Earth, communication occurred on request, and yet he stated that he made no definite conclusions as to the origin of the messages. However, the suggestion and interpretation is **clearly imprinted into the tests carried out and discussed throughout Roger's**

letter, referring to the messages as “inter-planetary contact,” “Martians” and “extra-terrestrials.”

[The authors had the letter examined by a telecommunications expert, who has had many years of experience with such forms of technology; several points **need to be noted with Rogers’s letter**. With the letter dating from 1920, there was a lot of ignorance regarding early wireless communication which would frequently lead to errors of assuming anomalous contact. Most importantly, no aerial technology was available at the time powerful enough to direct a radio signal to Mars, and certainly not with very-low frequencies (VLF wave band).]

To briefly summarise another somewhat similar case to that of Rogers, David Wilson, a solicitor from London published in the annals of *Light* (Wilson, 1915) a report which claimed that he had received anomalous messages through his own wireless telegraph device without a receiving aerial connected. Wilson was an amateur wireless telegraph operator and modified his device adding a galvanometer so that the Morse code signals would be produced as audible beeps. Additional people were asked by Wilson to sit and wait for the signals to come in so that there was no disagreement in the translation of the Morse code signals, and therefore multiple witnesses could verify them being received over **Wilson’s device**. Rational explanations were explored such as vibrations within the surrounding environment causing what was interpreted as signals/messages, or even another wireless telegraph machine in close vicinity causing **Wilson’s machine to pick up on stray signals**. The machine itself began to **produce messages such as “Great difficulty, await message, five days, six evening.”** After following these messages and waiting, nothing significant appeared to happen. There are various subtle suggestions, even by Rogers, that telepathic thoughts might be causing the messages, and therefore we could even assume that if no rational explanation can be produced, was some form of psychokinesis (PK) manipulating the device being used? The origin of the messages **themselves in Wilson’s case was left to the readers’ interpretation**, but the report was published at a time when several people were popularly claiming to develop electrical devices to contact the dead.

The most notable work discussing anomalous telephonic communication was published by Rogo and Bayless (1979) in a book entitled *Phone Calls from the Dead*. This book offered numerous theories for the occurrence of anomalous telephone calls, suggesting that many of them may be psychically generated. However, the emphasis of their study and book was on communication between the living and the dead, via the telephone, which led to several theories for discarnate contacts. On the other hand, Foley (1996) reviewed the work of Rogo and Bayless (1979) and highlighted the many links that ufology and psychical research unknowingly have. When trawling through the literature, and not just the very early historical accounts of Rogers and Wilson, some people who have

claimed at some point to have witnessed an unidentified flying object (UFO) or even claim to have been abducted by aliens, have also reported some form of ET contact via the telephone. But what actually leads to this interpretation of the call being from the dead, ETs or psychically generated? It could just be circumstantial depending on experiences that the percipient has had, which lead to their interpretation of the call. By exploring this matter further, we should ask ourselves, does ufology have more of a place in psychical research than previously thought? To answer this question, there is a need to review some examples of anomalous telephone cases to understand the interpretation of the calls, the context in which they take place and the characteristics of the voices heard over the telephone.

With that in mind, ufologists have historically associated reports of anomalous aerial objects and case related phenomena to that of aliens and their spacecraft. As an interesting parallel, the survival hypothesis has often predicated the work of psychical research. Indeed, an examination of classic UFO and survival related *psi* cases provides some evidence to support these respective contentions from a theoretical perspective. What is also evident is that similarities exist with respect to the phenomena reported in *both fields of inquiry*. The presence of similar phenomena, as found in some UFO and psi related cases, carries an implication that such occurrences may have a common origin and perhaps **paves the way for the discovery of a 'unified psi theory,' bridging the gap** between the two fields.

CASE EXAMPLE 1: DISCARNATE CALLS

Anomalous telephone calls from the dead can vary in their characteristics. Following a content analysis which was applied to sets of fifty investigated accounts of such phenomena (Rogo & Bayless, 1979; Cooper, 2012) several categories of call types were found. To briefly explain the call types, the following experiences may be reported:

- 1) **Simple Calls** - Brief words heard on the phone after the recent loss of a loved one.
- 2) **Prolonged Calls** - Prolonged conversations of up to half an hour with the caller later discovered to have been dead at the time of the call.
- 3) **Answer Calls** - Calls are made **to** the dead with response and prolonged conversation.
- 4) **Mixed Calls** - Involving a mixture of **Simple** and **Prolonged Call** characteristics.
- 5) **Intention Calls** - The intention is made to make a call but the call is delayed for some reason. Even so, the intended call is still received at the time the intention was made, yet it was never consciously - or even physically - carried out (these calls primarily involve anomalous communication between living individuals).

In many cases, these events could involve multiple witnesses to the calls taking place. Also, percipients have at times reported that the ringtone of the landline phones can be different or that only the phone closest to them in the house rang. With these oddities in mind, let us consider an example of a typical anomalous phone call event when contact with the dead is presumed. The following example was discussed by Cooper (2012, p.56):

My wife's mother had just died 11 July 1978 from cancer. It was just about a week after she passed away we were getting ready to visit my wife's grandmother in West Virginia. I had gone to the store and my wife was out back in our garden picking vegetables to give away so they wouldn't go to waste while we were gone. She heard the phone ringing, she said it rang several times and she didn't think she would get to it in time but it kept ringing. When she answered it the voice on the other end said:

"Jessy (only her mom and brother called her that) this is mommy don't you worry about me now cause I'm all right."

At the time my wife went into hysterics and we thought someone was playing a very sick joke. Mr. D. Byrd, June 1981

As mentioned, these strange call events could occur in a variety of ways, but the most common are those reported straight after the loss of a loved one, as with the case of Mrs. Byrd. The events are very real for the receiver of the call and involve at least some physical aspects, such as the telephone ringing. However, most importantly, they occur without conscious expectancy or suggestion that a telephone call from the dead will take place. This in many respects can be related to the experience of apparitions of the dead, especially from the classical psychical research literature where the experience was truly spontaneous without conscious expectancy of seeing a ghost (e.g. Tyrrell, 1953). Some oddities are generally noted in calls from the dead, such as hearing static on the line, or the voice sounding hollow or distant, but generally, the voice is clear and instantly recognised as that of a close friend or loved one.

PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

The survival hypothesis is clearly implicated by Rogo and Bayless (1979) who posited that discarnate entities, **or "theta agents," may be responsible for some of the "dead call" cases. Complicating matters is that they also concluded that** there was no reason why living individuals cannot produce such calls (albeit unconsciously) when alive, using direct PK action on the telephone. In fact, there are several theories we can turn to when attempting to explain paranormal telephone experiences, such as from a psychological basis, to parapsychological and parapsychical theories (Cooper, 2012).

In many cases, Rogo and Bayless (1979) postulated that the agency responsible for creating an anomalous telephone call - often presumed to be a discarnate entity - had used direct PK action on the telephone to create the experience and communicate. In support of this theory, they provided a detailed analysis of the reported odd sound of the ring as well as other peripheral effects such as the dimming of lights and the failure of satellite phones to be activated at the time of the call. In those cases, Rogo and Bayless tentatively concluded that for the **duration of the call the phone itself was 'haunted'**. The agency responsible for this form of haunting is of course subject to much debate. While proponents of the survivalist hypothesis posit that discarnate entities are responsible for some of these calls, reasoned speculation must consider the possibility that a form of secondary personality unconsciously produced by the witness, may also be at work.

Indeed, a similar dilemma presents itself when we analyze some poltergeist cases. Circumstantial evidence suggests that a living person, who is sometimes **referred to as the 'poltergeist agent'**, may unwittingly produce phenomena within the vicinity of nearby witnesses. These cases are suggestive that a **secondary 'personality' may be at work (though detached from the agent)**, while it manipulates the physical world. Conversely, it has been demonstrated that some poltergeist cases also have attributes that are associated with hauntings and the survival hypothesis, though the presumed agent is deceased in such cases. Curiously, many hauntings, however, seem to require the presence of a living agent to trigger some phenomena, while for periods of time a haunt may lie dormant during a particular tenancy. Regardless, the disturbance of electronic equipment has been commonly reported in both poltergeist and haunting incidents. Such electronic malfunctioning is also a common feature in some UFO witness cases. Furthermore, some of these occurrences also involve the telephone.

Psychical research has implicated PK as having acted on matter in a variety of peculiar ways, resulting in various electromagnetic effects as well as the bending of metal and the disruption of electrical circuitry, for example. The idea that PK may act on the telephone or other electronic communication devices is certainly a valid hypothesis. The complicating factor is that there is often an intelligence displayed in the communication, or at least it is interpreted that way. These events may take the form of either: 1) anomalous telephone communications, 2) the purposeful or accidental recording of strange sounds and voices known as electronic voice phenomenon (EVP) or 3) strange experiences with the radio, televisions and other electrical equipment, which is commonly referred to as instrumental trans-communication (ITC). However, no matter what explanations parapsychology provides, when all rational explanations are ruled out, the source of the psi component producing the telephone conversation is

not always easy to identify. And yet, the presence of psi is strongly suggested by the involvement of possible PK and information relayed on the telephone that the receiver of the call could not possibly have known about but was known to the alleged deceased caller.

CASE EXAMPLE 2: ET CALLS

Possibly even rarer than the reported phone calls from the dead, are those allegedly from ETs. Such cases have appeared in several works on ufology including *The Mothman Prophecies* (Keel, 1975), *The Haunted Universe* (Rogo, 1977), *Mysteries of Time & Space* (Steiger, 1977) and *Electric UFOs* (Budden, 1998), to name but a few. However, let us discuss an example of one of these unusual inter-planetary contacts and the characteristics of the call, now that we are familiar with discarnate calls.

The author Gray Barker (1956) reported an extravagant case from New Zealand that occurred in 1952, which involved the silencing of a UFO researcher by way of telephone harassment and paranormal activity that later plagued his property, as well as that of his assistant.

The witness was UFO investigator John Stuart. He answered a telephone call **one evening in which a voice that sounded ‘monotone’ with a machine like quality, warned him to cease his investigation of “flying saucers”**. When John asked for identity, the caller replied that it was from another planet, then added **“You have been warned” and then the call abruptly ended. Stuart reported that** the voice had incredible volume and that he heard none of the usual background noises that he was accustomed to on the line. Sometime afterwards, Stuart and the co-founder of his research group, Doreen (aka Barbara) Wilkinson, reported haunting phenomena in and around his property, with Barker citing various examples. Subsequently, Stuart reported that alleged paranormal events also took place at the residence of Wilkinson.

Although it is clear that Barker was uncertain whether these incidents should be reported in a UFO book, he wrote the case up and **even speculated that “all spiritualistic phenomena” may be linked to UFOs**. Furthermore, he discussed the possibility that the haunting phenomena may well have been a poltergeist, adding that to the best of his knowledge, this was the first instance in which poltergeists were connected with a UFO investigation.

Although Barker considered that the sequence of events may well have been coincidental, he gave serious consideration that the haunting was linked to the UFO research and investigation interests of Stuart. Subsequently, Stuart and Wilkinson abandoned their saucer research, fearing retaliation from the intelligence responsible for the anomalous events and initial telephone call.

UFOLOGICAL THEORIES

Ufologists have presented numerous theories for ET contacts and related experiences, with one obvious assumption being that the experiences were genuine contact from other planets. However, Jerome Clark believed that the majority of alien abduction experiences and related ET contacts were caused by something he referred to as (for want of a better word) *The Phenomenon* (Rogo & Clark, 1979). The theory of *The Phenomenon* proposed by Clark basically suggested that somewhere in the universe there is an intelligence or force which can beam thoughts, impressions and visions to Earth. This intelligence could be ET in origin or inter-dimensional or natural mechanisms of our own world that possess no conscious awareness of their own actions and which simply act. Whatever the nature of this force and intelligence, *The Phenomenon* is closely linked with human beings and our thoughts, and provides us with visions that reflect concerns of the human mind. However, these visions can be much more than that of hallucinations and dreams, as hallucinations and dreams cannot be held completely responsible for much of the physical phenomena experienced, i.e. scorch marks left on the ground from UFOs, mutilated cattle, and in some instances, the physical effect of the telephone ringing and sounds/voices heard over the receiver. This is especially the case when experienced by multiple witnesses.

Clark further suggested that UFOs (and we could include related telephone experiences in this theory) are physical devices sent to us by *The Phenomenon* for a number of possible psychological reasons depending on each percipient's life circumstances. The experiences may be produced as visions or messages of future events and warnings (see Cooper, 2012, pp.86-88) or even visions of social and emotional concerns (e.g. bereavement).

In an alternative discussion of theories for UFO and ET related experiences, Imbrogno (2008) suggested that a majority of people that have had such experiences are psychics or are prone to psychic experiences in general (e.g. spontaneously witnessing apparitions, having precognitive visions etc.). In discussion of the psychic connection to UFO and ET experiences, Imbrogno (2008, pp.151-152) states; **“People with psychic ability seem to be able to sense when UFOs are around, and they seem able to predict when they will appear in an area” adding that “some claim that they can channel aliens, angels, or people who have passed over.” Are these particular people experiencing a finely tuned state of consciousness which may produce these visions and allow them to obtain information that should not be accessible by known sensory means, which we know as psi? Or, are these particular individuals more prone to experiencing *The Phenomenon* than most people? The likelihood would be that both psi and *The Phenomenon* are not just united but are the same thing interpreted in different ways.**

Aside from his work in parapsychology, Scott Rogo spent a lot of his career researching UFOs and related experiences, producing three books on the subject while working closely with Ann Druffel (Druffel & Rogo, 1979) and Jerome Clark (Rogo & Clark, 1979) on co-authored pieces. Rogo's own theory for anomalous ET contacts and UFO sightings was discussed in *The Haunted Universe* (Rogo, 1977). Rogo suggested that the majority of paranormal experiences and fortean phenomena, such as UFOs, abduction experiences, and various strange sightings are created by the human mind, psychically. Once the manifestation takes place the anomaly presents a semi-physical existence, with often multiple witnesses present to experience the events. We can also relate this to the experience of apparitions, which are often referred to as hallucinations. Yet, in some cases, apparitions are reported to display a semi-physical existence by touching a percipient, moving an object in a room, or taking care to walk around objects, with the apparition subsequently vanishing without a trace (Tyrrell, 1953).

Rogo's theory was criticised as it set aside ideas of the experiences being the subject of pure hallucination, fraud or even that the phenomena may have been genuine and independent of the human mind (Stokes, 1977). Rogo (1977, 1978) tried to emphasize in *The Haunted Universe* and in correspondence to Dr. Stokes, that there are forms of phenomena which are ignored or misunderstood by parapsychology, which should be taken into account, such as telephone phenomena, ET abductions and UFOs, as it is possible that psychical explanations might be the cause of their occurrence, while keeping in mind that we cannot stray from the rational explanations which must be explored first.

LINKS TO EVP RESEARCH

Curiously, EVP researchers have reported obtaining taped messages where the agency also claimed to have ET origins. The American Association of Electronic Voice Phenomena (AA-EVP) has recorded numerous examples of “Space Communications” (Estep, 1993, 1994; AA-EVP, n.d.) and even reported that some members were experimenting using the telephone for direct communication. One taped *male computerized voice* said, “Yes try the phone.”

The late Sarah Estep reported that many EVP voices were not spiritual in nature, but in her opinion were messages left by ETs or ultra-dimensional beings. Sometimes the agency would use words that had no apparent Earthly meaning. When John Stuart questioned his mysterious phone caller, as noted in the New Zealand telephone case (Barker, 1956), the agency claimed to be of ET origin and provided a name which the witness could not recall due to it being “unpronounceable”. Similarly, many mediums are said to have used other worldly guides, some of whom possessed odd names and sometimes claimed residency in distant worlds or other dimensions.

CASE EXAMPLE 3: EVP CONTACT LINKED TO ANOMALOUS AERIAL PHENOMENA

We must keep in mind that EVP is the purposeful or accidental recording of anomalous sounds or voices, which can be experimented with in laboratory conditions, and has been subject to extensive study (e.g. Ellis, 1978). On the other hand, the telephone phenomenon is different in that it involves live two-way anomalous communication, received spontaneously, and therefore, an account of the experience is often the only thing left and not an actual recording of the conversation (this rarely happens). Nevertheless, EVP is used here as a further example to demonstrate a common link between ufology and psychical research.

Sarah Estep routinely claimed EVP contact with these ET or ultra-dimensional beings and reported observing a large yellow glowing orb the size of a basketball floating outside her window. EVP communications were received both prior to and after the incident, which convinced her that the orb was the ET or ultra-dimensional agency that she had been communicating with. The agency claimed **to be using “a box” for communication as well as having “listening craft” which they maneuvered for communicating, stating; “I come and have the craft down.”** Other references to craft as a means of travel through various dimensions are noted among the communications. Similar claims are found in spiritualist literature, especially those associated with the séance room and mediums. Of further interest is that some ghost hunters and UFO researchers report seeing similar orbs, visually (aside from the common explainable photographic anomaly (Parsons, 2010)), though they have a tendency to interpret these sightings based on their research perspectives, namely as either souls of the departed or ET visitation.

LINKS OF UFOLOGY AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

In referring again to the review by Foley (1996), the importance of the connection between psychical research and ufology should be pursued, and with good reason. Both fields of study can often be faced with extreme bias and prejudice, and yet when we look beyond personal opinions and consider the science of the fields logically and in a serious manner, we are aware that both fields are concerned with investigating claims of exceptional human experiences. But are these experiences linked in some way, even when we are faced with the matter of multiple witnesses? Do they go beyond just being a weird experience?

In a unique publication, Cassirer (1988) proposed the argument that psychical research and ufology are perhaps linked by the involvement of psi. Even in the introduction, the first quotation is that of Hynek (1972), proposing that UFOs

are linked to ‘certain psychic phenomena’. Cassirer (1988), however, proposed many theories and argued that both fields use identical methodologies and face conceptual problems with the reported experiences. Nevertheless, it is discussed that when it comes to considering extra-sensory perception (ESP) in the involvement of extra-terrestrial experiences, it does seem from eyewitness accounts that certainly many unusual experiences with alien or discarnate contact could have been manifested by the percipient involved. This would certainly make it a psychological issue but not necessarily delusional or hallucinatory, as many percipients to strange phenomena first presume of themselves. On the contrary, these experiences, particularly telephone conversations with ETs and the dead, could be psychically generated, albeit unconsciously.

Rogo (1980) strongly believed that, to a large extent, alien abductions, UFO sightings and similar phenomena were psychically generated due to an underlying need for each particular individual to have these experiences, and not necessarily brought on by family trauma, grief and so on. However, when we consider Jerome Clark’s theory of *The Phenomena* once more (Rogo & Clark, 1979), with Rogo’s ‘psychically generated’ theory (Rogo, 1977, 1980) and Rogo’s and Bayless’s theories for the discarnate calls (Rogo & Bayless, 1979), all of these events could be caused by the same thing - psi. Therefore, ufology, parapsychology, psychical research and some aspects of cryptozoology may all be dealing with an area of the human mind using an unknown cognitive process or something within the environment unconsciously manipulating the mind (or the mind manipulating the environment). This could therefore produce, at times, very real spontaneous anomalous experiences, even in front of numerous witnesses as a group telepathic experience.

In 1972, members of the Toronto Society for Psychical Research conducted a series of experiments to determine whether they could create an “artificial ghost” that would generate phenomena in full view of eight witnesses. Prior to experimenting, the group drafted a fictional male character which they subsequently made attempts to communicate with. This approach was to test their hypothesis that they could collectively create an entity that would manifest in agreement with the fictional parameters set out. By pursuing this model, the group believed that the cause of any paranormal manifestations could be isolated without having to resort to “spirits” as a possible explanation. Subsequently the group reported that they obtained communications from a table rapping entity that demonstrated the personality of their fictional character, “Philip.” Other psi related phenomena were also reported as well as communication from a female ‘alien’. Owen and Sparrow (1974, 1976, 1977) reported that the group believed that these communicators were unconsciously created by the sitters. Finally, the group inadvertently picked up examples of EVP which appeared to be related to Philip and the experiment in general. The

‘Philip group’ was apparently successful in creating a secondary psi related personality that was able to manipulate the physical world (the scientific equivalent of a Tulpa). Had the group’s fictional character been an ET, it is reasonable to surmise that it would have also worked with the script provided and masqueraded itself as an alien. The author’s research suggests that the mechanism responsible for the creation of Philip may also be responsible for some anomalous telephone experiences.

It could be possible that UFOs, abduction experiences and, most importantly, any form of anomalous telephone experience (if genuine) could be the result of psi as a parapsychological process. This is at least an argument which several of these past researchers may have agreed on and it is what links ufology and psychical research. Therefore, it is a reasonable hypothesis to assume psi is responsible. However, many parapsychologists and relevant researchers are aware that testing for the presence of psi is not completely straightforward, due **to the nature of many of these experiences being ‘spontaneous’ and occurring in the real world setting.** Some would argue that this is the downfall of parapsychology as a science (often off the record). Many parapsychological theories produce more questions than answers and some would argue this to be a good thing (Stansfield, 1998), as the human brain is a complex system, and, as of yet, not fully understood, and therefore we cannot cast psychology and parapsychology off as soft sciences and expect it to be modelled against classical concepts of other sciences. There is, however, the option of adopting a paranthropological approach, where researchers become involved in the reported phenomena and try to experience them again for themselves in place of the original percipients. This is something which in recent times has been **labeled as ‘first person’ parapsychology (see Luke, 2012).**

Clearly there is more to gain from anomalous human experiences if we analyze them objectively and subjectively. Dr. John Palmer (Rogo & Bayless, 1979, p.152) argued that due to the spontaneity of the experiences you could never have a parapsychologist on hand to witness paranormal telephone calls, but at least we can apply thorough investigative methods, eyewitness testimony and survey all the related experiences using social science methods to understand the experiences as far as possible (see Cooper, 2012). However, on a theoretical basis, psi appears to link the ET and discarnate voices experienced on the telephone (as previously suggested by Foley (1996)).

PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

Though we have discussed the theoretical possibility of psi being responsible, or present, in the anomalous telephone experiences associated with ETs and the dead, let us briefly consider what rational psychological explanations that we are aware of and understand, that could likely be responsible for the interpretation of a paranormal phone call.

When exploring the typical explanations for ET related phenomena, particularly abduction experiences, the subject of sleep paralysis is often brought up (e.g. Blackmore, 1994; Randall, Estes & Cone, 1999). This assumes that people **personally experiencing the body's paralysis during sleep** also experienced vivid dreams of unusual life-forms surrounding them and possibly operating on them. However, most often, the percipient reports that try as they might, they could not move. This is why sleep paralysis has been assumed as an explanation owing to many of the alleged abductions occurring at night. It is equally possible that ET contacts via the telephone could have occurred in a dream or during the hypnopompic and hypnagogic stages of sleeping and waking when dreams may become confused with reality. Several anomalous phone call **witnesses have reported being 'woken' by the ringing of the telephone and upon** answering the call a strange conversation ensued or strange sounds were heard. The entering or return from a state of sleep could be responsible for this pure hallucination, or even dreams themselves.

French (2001) discussed many possibilities for why people might claim to have had encounters with ETs. For example, a number of psychological issues including dreams could cause very real experiences of alien contact to take place; also, fantasy-proneness, dissociation and childhood trauma, hypnotic regression, possible abnormalities with cognitive functioning or fraud and hoaxes. Some of the rational psychological possibilities **might** apply to certain cases where people have claimed contact with ETs via the telephone. However, Rogo (1977, 1980) felt that underlying psychological issues or needs might be the cause of psychic hallucinations. Some of the explanations discussed by French (2001) appear as though the experience was delusional; however delusion is an issue of psychiatry, whereas psychology and parapsychology see anomalous experiences as hallucinations or sensory experiences. Therefore, just because an experience is subjective at times, does not mean that the experience was not real.

When exploring explanations for the phone calls from the dead, many of the previous explanations can be applied, but primarily misinterpretation or self-deception of voices heard on the phone brought on by grief and loss could be a cause for the experience in some cases. The voices heard over the phone could be interpreted as ETs or the dead due to present life situations of the percipient,

as mentioned previously (especially if the percipient were a ghost-hunter or UFO researcher). Typically, a discarnate call recipient would have recently lost someone and wished for final contact, or someone may have seen a UFO and may become paranoid that they are in contact with aliens or stalked by Men In Black, which Rogo (1977) referred to as the MIB syndrome, where people believed that MIBs telephoned them and told them not to tell anyone about their experiences of witnessing UFOs.

CONCLUSION

A final consideration which can be presented with resistance from the scientific community, is that the experiences could be genuine. It is not possible to safely conclude from eyewitness testimony alone that a person did not see a genuine - physical - UFO, **or that UFOs controlled by ETs don't exist**, or that people have not encountered and/or communicated with the dead. There is a mass of corroborative survey data, alongside eyewitness testimony and more, to suggest such experiences are genuine.

As discussed, the reports of certain physical effects as well as the detection of apparent trace evidence imply that a physical component may be involved. With the experiences of telephone calls we have several points we can follow up and investigate. What did the voices sound like? Why did the percipient interpret them as the dead or ETs? Did the phone company have a record of the call? Were there multiple witnesses and what did they experience? What information was replayed over the phone?

There are many lines of enquiry we can follow. One important characteristic is that voices of the dead over the telephone have been reported to sound exactly like the dead person they are presumed to be, whereas ETs often sound otherworldly, robotic or electronic. Clearly the circumstances surrounding the event, as well as the sound of the voice, show a distinction for why the voices are interpreted in different ways. Conversely, in some instances, voices of the dead as well as their ET counterparts have **both displayed a “sing song” or musical quality** (as have many EVPs). This curious similarity provides further evidence that both ET and dead call cases may have a common origin and that the odd artifacts reported may be a reflection of the mechanism involved in the production of the phenomena. While both sets of experiences could be caused by perfectly rational psychological explanations, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that they are linked by psi.

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EXPRESSIONS OF SPIRITHOOD: PERFORMANCE AND THE MANIFESTATION OF SPIRITS

Jack Hunter

Spirit possession is an extremely complex phenomenon, with social, cultural, psychological and, potentially, parapsychological components, all of which interact and coalesce to produce something that is very difficult to compact into a single reductive scheme (Gauld 1982; Levy et al. 1996:18; van de Port 2011:28). In this article, however, I am going to do just that by focusing only on the behavioural aspects of this unusual phenomenon, and in particular the central role that performance plays in the mediumship process. This is not to suggest that spirit possession can be easily reduced, but rather to provide an introduction to one facet of an exceedingly complex phenomenon. This **approach could be called an ‘ethology’ of spirit possession because it will only be** concerned with observable behaviours, bracketing out, for the time being, internal processes and experiences. Such an approach is inspired by the work of anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell, **who developed the notion of ‘kinemes,’ which** he defined as culturally specific non-verbal bodily behaviours used by human beings to express themselves (Argyle 1987).

Let us start from first principles. Human beings are embodied entities. We exist in three dimensional physical space, and have bodies which act as our interface with the world around us. We are also social creatures in that we gather together in groups and communicate with one another, and this communication usually takes place via physical means, generally mediated through the body (Goffman 1990). We have, therefore, developed specific ways of using the body to communicate our internal psychological states (emotions/moods), and distinct personalities, both verbally and non-verbally. We have an extremely large lexicon of facial features, bodily postures and gestures, as well as different tonalities of voice, that enable us to express ourselves as individual personalities with subjective psychological states (Argyle 1987). From the very outset, then, our bodies are the mediums through which our individual consciousness and personality are expressed.

A standard definition of the notion of ‘personality,’ taken from the *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, suggests that personality is ‘the *sum total* of the *behavioural and mental characteristics that are distinctive of an individual*’ (Coleman 2009). We recognise the personality of an individual by drawing general conclusions from observations of their behaviour and characteristics.

By comparing the behaviour of an individual against the behaviour we have come to expect from that individual we are able to determine that they are the same person. In a sense, then, personality and bodily behaviours are intimately connected, **as we cannot know an individual's personality without the mediation of the physical body.**

The body can also be used in different ways to express not only the individual's personality but also the personalities of other people. Actors, for example, manipulate their bodies in such a way as to give the impression that they are a different person. Character actors are good examples of people capable of using their bodies in many ways to express different personalities. In order to successfully express a different personality, and to distinguish it from the actor's own personality, it is necessary for them to display physical characteristics that differentiate the personality they are attempting to convey from their own. Such physical alterations are usually supplemented by manipulation of vocal tonality. The body and the voice, as we have already seen, are the main means by which personality is expressed, and so are also the means by which alterations of personality are expressed. Bodily transformations can also be augmented with **make-up and 'props,' such as masks and other ritual objects that serve to** differentiate the portrayed from the portrayer. These are the basic methods employed in the expression of alternate personalities.

We are now ready to move on to considering the main subject of this article, the **manifestation of spirits through practices commonly referred to as 'spirit possession' and/or 'trance mediumship.'** Broadly speaking spirit possession can be split into two distinct categories, the first being spontaneous, or involuntary possession, **whereby an intruding spirit takes control of an individual's body without that person's consent,** and the second being voluntary possession, often referred to as trance mediumship, whereby the possessed deliberately invokes a state of possession and willfully surrenders control of his/her body to an external intelligence. Trance mediumship can be simply defined as a practice employing altered states of consciousness (trance) and performance for the expression of ostensible spiritual entities. The trance medium will generally enter into an altered state of consciousness, often referred to as a dissociative state, during which their personality is allegedly replaced by another, often claiming to be the spirit of a deceased individual. While the medium is entranced their physical behaviours and vocalisations are thought to be those of the spirit occupying their body, **so that when the medium's original personality** returns they have no, or limited, recollection of what took place in the period of entrancement. For the time-being we will bracket out questions relating to the ontological status of the spirits (though I do consider these issues to be of great importance for anthropologists), and focus specifically on the way in which spirits, **whether 'real' or otherwise,** are discerned and recognised through the body in different cultural contexts in which spirit mediumship is practised.

One of the first issues that needs to be addressed is how, from just observing physical behaviours, it is possible to infer that an individual is experiencing an altered state of consciousness. Altered states of consciousness are almost universally associated with spirit possession, and more specifically dissociative **altered states designated by the term 'trance.'** **Recognising the trance state**, as distinct from the normal everyday waking state of the individual, is the first step in determining whether or not they are possessed by a spiritual being. The behaviours associated with altered states of consciousness would appear to be fairly standard across cultures and through time. Take, for example, the behaviours of individuals possessed by spirits in Voodoo and Candomble (Figs. 1 & 2), the glossolalia of the Pentecostal Christian faith healer (Fig. 3), the trance performances of the Manchu shaman from China (Fig. 4), the serene face of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (the populariser of transcendental meditation) (Fig. 5), a Yanomami *shapori* from Venezuela experiencing the spirit-world through the hallucinogenic snuff *Yopo* (Fig. 6), the Sufi dervish dancer (Fig. 7), **Saint Theresa D'Avila's ecstatic rapture** (Fig. 8) and Daryl Anka channeling his spirit guide Bashar (Fig. 9). Although all of these examples come from different cultural traditions, the physical behaviours associated with their altered states are very similar, even if the underlying neurophysiological and experiential states are ultimately different. The closed eyes seem to be an almost universal bodily symbol for altered states of consciousness, perhaps because of the association with sleep and the dream state, maybe indicating that the individual is no longer concerned with the physical world, but is now looking beyond it.



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9

Another possible explanation for this cross-cultural commonality is the use of sensory deprivation in the induction of altered states of consciousness, for example as employed in the Hmong shamanic tradition (Fig. 10) and the parapsychological Ganzfeld experiment (Fig. 11). The closing of the eyes can be thought of as *both* a behaviour associated with altered states of consciousness, and a technique for inducing them. Recognising altered states of consciousness, however, is not the same as recognising the presence of ostensible spirit entities; it is only the first step.

**Fig 10****Fig 11**

Once the trance state has been recognised the next step is to watch for signs that a spirit, deity, or other supernatural being, is using, or attempting to use, the body of the medium to communicate, and this is where possession differs from other altered states of consciousness. In my own research with trance mediums in Bristol, **the earliest signs of a spirit's attempts** to communicate through an entranced medium may include twitching of the hands and legs, or gurgling sounds and coughing. Indeed, on one occasion as I sat for mediumship development myself, I experienced an unusual altered state of consciousness in which I felt myself becoming distanced from my body (dissociation). At the point of greatest distance I felt my left hand moving of its own accord, and though I was aware of the movement I was completely unable to stop it. The movement of my hand was interpreted by the circle leader as indicative of the fact that a spirit was attempting to communicate through my body (Hunter 2009; 2010), and it certainly felt like this was the case. My subsequent research has revealed that this is not an uncommon occurrence amongst those in the early stages of trance mediumship development:

Although in the early moments of the trance there may be some uncontrolled movements, the medium must quickly gain control if his or her activity is to be interpreted as representing possession by a supernatural being. It is certainly not enough to fall on the floor and thrash around, or stagger about, or make incoherent sounds, or give other evidence of having some kind of unusual psychological experience. The meaning of this kind of behaviour is ambiguous in Batuque beliefs. . . In order to prove that an encantado is really present, the medium must dance, sing the proper songs, and interact with the other participants in the ceremony in an acceptable manner. The behaviour that is most admired in the accomplished medium is very often the behaviour that

appears the least frenzied and the most normal to the outside observer (Leacock & Leacock 1975:171-172).

Similarly, in Balinese sanghyang performances the trance performer is expected to **perform specific dances while being ‘ridden’ by the spirits**. The dancers are **first ritually ‘smoked’**. The smoke is not psychoactive. This induces the trance state in which the spirits must perform their dance, **while the ‘performer’ is dissociated from his/her actions** (Schechner 1988:175-176). The masquerades of the Nigerian Kalabari people also provide a good example. Young men must practise the *Okolokurukuru* performance, with its elaborate costumes, so that when the time comes for them to be possessed they are able to dance the correct dances.

In my own fieldwork with trance mediums in Bristol (Hunter 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012), I have also noticed the use of specific bodily symbols to indicate the presence of spiritual entities, which the circle-leader and sitters must learn to recognise. In Fig. 12 the medium is incorporating a group entity, consisting of several members of her spirit team. As we have seen, her closed eyes indicate an altered state of consciousness. Her unusual hand gestures suggest the presence of an external entity, as such gestures are not common for the medium in her normal waking consciousness.

Similarly, bodily postures can be used to signify the presence of other personalities. In Fig. 13 **the medium’s broad shoulders are indicative of the presence of a character by the name of Graham, a nineteenth undertaker**.



Fig 12



Fig 13

All of this brings up the issue of ‘unconscious performance,’ or, potentially, ‘extra-conscious performance,’ which might be defined as performance directed by a conscious agent other than that of the ‘performer.’ In the following example from my own fieldwork, a medium by the name of Sandy describes her own experience of unconsciously assuming the mannerisms of her spirit controls:

Sometimes, in the earliest days, they used to come through, **and they’d come** through presenting differently, and some of my **movements’d [sic] change**. And depending on which spirit comes through depends on what I do with my hands, or, the one where I was dragging my leg, **I just couldn’t not drag my leg as I** walked in. (Interview with Sandy 23/03/2011)

The voice, as well as the body, is used to differentiate between the personality of the medium and the spirit or deity communicating through them. Amongst Pentecostal Christian groups, for example, sporadic utterances often referred to as ‘**speaking in tongues**’ or ‘**glossolalia**,’ are taken as indicative of the presence of the Holy Ghost. Although such groups would not consider glossolalia to be a form of spirit possession, the practice does bear striking resemblances to spirit possession performances in that the act of speaking in tongues implies the immanent presence of the Holy Ghost.

Another good example of the use of the voice in expressing the distinction between the personality of the medium and that of the spirit communicator comes from the now infamous 1977 Enfield Poltergeist case (Playfair 2011). Here Janet Hodgson, an 11 year old girl, was occasionally possessed by a spirit **who referred to himself as 'Bill' and who was assumed to be the agent behind the poltergeist activity that was plaguing the Hodgson family.** The effect could be quite uncanny and often startling, **Bill's voice** bearing no resemblance to **Janet's and thus clearly indicating a separate,** and distinct, personality. This particular case, however, does not fit quite so neatly into the category of dissociative performance, as Janet did not appear to be in an altered state of consciousness while Bill spoke through her.

Anthropologist Nurit Bird-David describes a similar process of gestural expression of spirits in her analysis of the *devaru* performances of the South Indian Nayaka. She writes:

The *devaru* evoked often improvise on the same repetitive phrases. The saying, the voicing, the gesturing are important. These principle aspects of their behaviour are, **in Bateson's term (1979),** meta-communication, namely, communicating that *devaru* are communicating, because the *devaru* are present as they move, talk, make gestures, etc. They are present as they communicate and socially interact with Nayaka. (Bird-David 1999:76) Exaggerated behaviours and vocalisations, then, can be thought of as a form of **'meta-communication,' signifying the presence of distinct** personalities and serving as a means to allow them to be communicated with as individuals. So, to conclude this short essay, what does it mean to say that spirit mediumship is a performance? Firstly, I think it is important to make the point that just because something is a performance does not necessarily mean that it is fraudulent (Firth 1967; Beattie 1977:2; Schechner 1988:175). I use the **term 'performance' in** a fairly loose sense to refer to the use of the body for the public expression of internal states. To say that spirit mediumship is a performance does not, therefore, deny the importance of the cognitive (Cohen 2008) and neurophysiological processes that underlie the trance state (Oohashi 2002; Krippner & Friedman 2010), **nor does it deny the importance of the medium's** subjective experiences while in the trance state. Indeed, the phenomenon is so complex that reduction to any single aspect will significantly detract from our understanding of it (Boddy 1988:4; Halloy 2010). Furthermore, I do not think that describing mediumship as a performance detracts from the possibility that there might be some genuine parapsychological processes and/or entities involved in the mediumship process. Performance is an essential part

of the process of mediumship, and indeed a central part of living as an embodied being. Without performance there would be no way for human beings to communicate with one another, let alone for ostensible discarnate spirit entities to communicate. Performance is the means by which the medium is transformed into the spirit so that the spirit may communicate (Espirito Santo, forthcoming). The medium becomes the manifestation of the spirit.

How, then, can we fruitfully apply this insight in mediumship research?

This emphasis on somatic performance allows us to approach the issue of the mind-body relationship, and to explore the fundamental interconnectedness of consciousness and the body. We also come to appreciate the significant role of culture in shaping the form of interactions between consciousness and the body, and begin to understand in more detail the ways in which ostensibly independent spiritual entities could potentially interface, and so manifest, in the physical world. It would appear, based upon the ethnographic literature, that dissociative states of consciousness and bodily performance are essential components in this process.

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FEEDING THE MOON: CONSUMABLE HUMANITY IN PERCEIVED ALIEN ABDUCTIONS AND FRINGE COSMOLOGIES

Sarah Spellman

INTRODUCTION

“We are property.” - Charles Fort, *Book of the Damned*

H.G. Wells once observed that Fort wrote “like a drunkard,” and yet Fort is soberly sparing in his explanation of the curious statement above – in fact, he does not leave us with a clear idea of what he means by it.

Ideas about mankind as property are also present in experiences categorised as alien abductions, and while the theme is developed in detail in the conclusions of some abduction researchers, especially ETH (extraterrestrial hypothesis) proponents, upon further examination its place in the alien abduction phenomenon seems as ambiguous as Fort's meaning. However, it is still valid territory for analysis; in the tradition of researchers like Jacques Vallee, Hilary Evans and Thomas Bullard, we must consider a wider context than the experience itself when we study accounts of the unusual. Neither perception nor interpretation happens in a vacuum. An awareness of commonalities among elements of human experience and cultural expression may shed light on the psychology of our species if nothing else, and this is a variable that cannot be discounted in the study of the anomalous.

The concept of humans playing a property, prey or livestock role in relation to beings not of this world is, I feel, distinct enough to make it worth noting when we see it in different content traditions. As it happens, there is some correspondence between the theme of people as a consumable resource in abduction literature and ideas in certain alternative belief systems, models of reality, or as I will describe them here, fringe cosmologies. This thematic thread **can be traced from the Gnostic worldview to the mystic G.I. Gurdjieff's cosmic ecology in which we are “food for the moon” to the writings of astral chronicler Robert Monroe** (with stops along the way that we lack the space to consider here). When taking a comprehensive view of perceived abduction experiences, comparing similar motifs across various sources may serve as a tool for gaining new insights into the phenomenon and its effects on those who report it.

An exhaustive treatment of these topics is outside the scope of this article, but I hope it will serve as an introduction for anyone interested in undertaking further research of their own. Drawing conclusions about the ultimate causes or triggers of perceived alien abductions is also outside the article's scope. However, moving toward a greater understanding of this phenomenon and its psychological impact may be aided by an alertness to thematic similarities gleaned from across human experience and belief.

ABDUCTION EXPERIENCERS AS BREEDING STOCK

Abduction experiences most commonly begin when the experiencer is at home or driving a vehicle, although these are not the only settings reported (Mack, 1994). The abductee's conscious recall of the time leading up to the abduction may or may not include seeing a UFO. Reports of missing time are common and many abduction narratives have been drawn out through hypnosis, which has become controversial due to doubts about its reliability as an a tool for accurate memory retrieval. After an evaluation of over 300 cases, Thomas Bullard (2002: 7) identified eight key elements of abduction experiences (though not every experience contained all elements):

- **Capture.** Alien beings capture a human to take aboard a spaceship.
- **Examination.** The beings subject their captive to a medical examination.
- **Conference.** A meeting, lecture, or schooling session follows.
- **Tour.** The witness is treated to a sightseeing tour of the ship.
- **Otherworldly Journey.** The beings fly the witness to an otherworldly environment.
- **Theophany.** The witness meets a divine being or has a religious experience.
- **Return.** The witness returns to Earth and resumes normal activities.
- **Aftermath.** Aftereffects of the abduction influence the witness for weeks or years to come.

The medical exam has been present as a feature of most (but not all) abduction cases since what are usually thought of as the earliest reports of alien abduction, the Hill and Villas Boas cases (Randles, 1988). These two accounts also include an interest on the part of the aliens in human reproduction. In the 1980s and 1990s, abduction researchers Budd Hopkins and David Jacobs brought ideas of alien-human hybrids and the collection of human reproductive material to the ufological consciousness, and to a large segment of the American public with the 1992 television adaptation of Hopkins' book *Intruders*. In this book, Hopkins wrote that "the human species itself, is the subject of a breeding experiment" (Hopkins, 1987: 27).

Hopkins and Jacobs based this characterisation of the phenomenon on content from multiple experiencer accounts. These accounts, often recovered through hypnosis or post-hypnotic conscious recall, included seeing evidence for – and being a part of – a breeding programme to produce hybrid beings. These abduction scenarios might include seeing hybrid children in various stages of development, being asked to hold or play with a hybrid child and being subject to insemination or sperm/egg collection procedures. There are also many reports (from Hopkins and Jacobs as well as other researchers) of phantom fetuses, intergenerational abductions and the cloning of humans. Here is the recollection of a woman working with abduction researcher and engineer Joe Nyman:

She remembers the Beings telling her when she was nine years old of her reproductive cycle and universal motherhood. During one abduction, she says, she was 'introduced in the sky house to my sister, who looked exactly like me. She was a clone.' Through hypnotic regression Virginia recalled being seated inside a 'birthing room' aboard a spaceship, where she was shown hybrid children around her. She 'dreamed a baby was brought to her in a white blanket. The baby,' Virginia reports, 'was three months old and conversed telepathically'. (Bryan, 1996: 51)

David Jacobs, who favours the extraterrestrial hypothesis, is quite clear on his view that flesh-and-blood (or equivalent) aliens are visiting us and that they are not here to help. In *The Threat*, Jacobs (1998) concludes, based on his work with abduction experiencers, that the alien goal is to complete a hybridisation programme prior to the takeover of planet Earth. He has written that he has **“come to fear this clandestine programme of physiological exploitation by one species of another for an alien agenda” (Jacobs, 2002: 331).**

Even Harvard psychiatry professor John Mack, whose overall view of abduction was considerably more positive, did not dismiss the importance of the breeding theme, although he did not view it in the same way as does Jacobs:

My own impression is that we may be witnessing something far more complex, namely an awkward joining of two species, engineered by an intelligence we are unable to fathom, for a purpose that serves both our goals with difficulties for each. I base this view on the evidence presented by the abductees themselves. (Mack, 1994: 415)

CATAclysmic Visions and Energy Harvesting

Messages about impending catastrophe and the preparation of abductees to play roles in some future disaster have become a prominent theme in abduction literature. People have commonly reported being shown scenes of environmental disaster, nuclear destruction or other apocalyptic scenarios such as a comet or other object striking Earth. Some are told they have been chosen for a special role in the future, and they also report being asked to perform certain tasks while with their abductors – a kind of training simulation. Thomas Bullard notes that **“the beings often warn of a time of tribulation ahead and prophesy disasters to come, and may school the witness for an obscure mission to be performed 'when the time is right' ”** (Bullard, 2002: 7).

Though it is common as a feature, the specific content of this part of the abduction experience is not highly consistent. There have been a variety of catastrophe-types presented, including shifts or mergings of dimensional realities. At the 1992 Abduction Study Conference held at M.I.T., David Jacobs noted that sometimes abduction experiencers are made to view images with **positive emotional connotations, going on to say that the “focus of the aliens during the imaging is not the images but the emotions those images evoke. The scenes themselves do not have any prophetic value”** (in Bryan, 1996: 20-21). At the same conference, Thomas Bullard is quoted as having said that when **specific prophecies about Earth's future have been given, “none of these prophecies have ever come true!”** (in Bryan, 1996: 27).

Karla Turner was a university lecturer turned abduction experiencer, investigator and author. Her first book, *Into the Fringe*, featured her own and her family's experiences. In it, she recounts her first exposure to UFO investigator Barbara Bartholic's views on the true motivation behind abduction procedures:

Barbara, through her research work with over two hundred cases, had learned enough to formulate her own interpretation of such experiences. She believed that at least a certain group **of these beings in some way “feed” off** our emotions, especially the strong ones that come from fear, pain, depression and compulsive actions. (Turner, 1992: 172)

Turner also writes of attending a lecture by Budd Hopkins in which Hopkins discussed the aliens' interest in human experiences of sexuality, emotions and **physical pain. She quotes him as saying he has become “convinced that they have evolved in some way or another past a certain point, so that they seem to need to revivify their own species, and not only in the physical sense of taking our genetic material. They seem to want to feel telepathically what humans go through emotionally” (in Turner, 1992: 177). Hopkins goes on to say that we are a “resource” for the aliens, “physically, emotionally and spiritually” (Turner, 1992: 177). It is worth noting here that although they are sometimes said to act with kindness and to project feelings of affection, alien abductors (especially the small “greys”) are often described as cold, mechanical and emotionless.**

A few years later, Turner's views on these points seem to have solidified. In a late 1994 *MUFON Journal* article, she wrote:

The evidence shows that the aliens do harvest from us in a number of ways, emotionally and energetically as well as physically. There are even reported scenarios of facilities in which human bodies are "processed," and many such reports come from people unfamiliar with ufological literature. If we are indeed a multipurpose resource for the aliens, one which they want to continue to use, could they be performing the various reproductive/genetic procedures in order to make alterations in their "livestock" that better serve the uses for which we are harvested? (Turner, 1994a)

Raymond E. Fowler has written about the Allagash abductions and the well-known Betty Andreasson Luca case. He spoke in a 2007 interview about the conclusion he had reached after decades of involvement with UFO and abduction research: abductions, UFOs, NDEs and some paranormal events are **all part of the same “metaphenomenon” (in Guiley, 2007). His comments, while more positive in tone than those of Karla Turner, are another variation on the theme of humans as a managed herd:**

... my grand conclusion is that our reality or dimension, including human beings, is the property of an adjacent reality/civilization. Our plane of existence is analogous to their farm. We may be the larval form of the Nordic UFO/NDE entities being bred for a future life in the adjacent reality. Some humans are recycled back and forth between the realities until deemed ready for a life beyond this reality. (in Guiley, 2007)

Referencing the work of psychologist and near-death experience researcher Kenneth Ring, Fowler notes similarities between abductions and out-of-body experiences, asserting that abductions are “**simply the other side of the coin to the near death experience**. These are merely operations that are preparing humans for the after life. They are analogous to humans raising and **maintaining lower life forms such as cattle**” (in Guiley, 2007). **He concludes with the caveat that “this is just one of many speculative theories concerning the origin of the UFO phenomenon” (in Guiley, 2007).**

Veteran UFO researcher Fowler, like Turner, believes he has been abducted; unlike her, he reached this conclusion after he began working with abduction experiencers, turning his attention from UFO sightings to closer encounters. He has written that his own experiences have helped to shape his view of the “**metaphenomenon**” that includes UFOs and abductions (Fowler, 2002: 250). He has also cited the seemingly impossible **combination of “physical and non-physical” characteristics of UFOs** – e.g. the right-angle turns and instantaneous accelerations of objects that can also appear on radar or leave landing traces (Fowler, 2002: 250). The seemingly physical presenting as not-quite-real is also, he notes, a feature of abduction cases. Aliens appear to float, materialise, dematerialise, use telepathy, pass through solid objects and exert a mysterious form of control over people during encounters (Fowler, 2002). For him, this “**paraphysical**” paradox “**opens up the possibility that multiple dimensions and other states of reality may exist throughout the universe and manifest their existence to us by what we term psychic or paranormal phenomena including UFOs**” (Fowler, 2002: 250).

THE ENERGY FOOD CHAIN IN FRINGE COSMOLOGIES

In abduction narratives, whether abductors are perceived as hybridisers gathering reproductive material, energy vampires or dimension-bending joiners of the living world and the afterlife, they seem to have an interest in human vitality and often give the impression of wishing to manage it for their own ends (whatever those may be). As we will see, extra-planetary manipulators of our **species’ animating force have also visited us through the belief sets of a Eurasian mystic and his followers, an out-of-body experimenter and a revived ancient philosophy.**

GURDJIEFF

Non-human-entity abduction experiences, when framed in a ufological context, began as a twentieth-century phenomenon. Where else in this century might we find motifs of humans as part of a cosmic food chain? We might look to G.I. Gurdjieff, an Armenian spiritual teacher who arrived in Paris in the 1920s. His teachings were promoted and interpreted in Europe and the United States by pupil-followers including P.D. Ouspensky, A.R. Orage and J.G. Bennett (despite this pattern, initialising one's given name is not known to have been a requirement of studentship). Gurdjieff's concern lay with waking humanity from what he viewed as a sleep-like form of consciousness. He schooled his students in his own Fourth Way system of individual development, also called The Work.

The part of the Gurdjieffian universe of greatest interest to us here is his concept of **“feeding the moon.”** In his cosmology, portrayed in a diagrammed system called the Ray of Creation, the earth is one of eight levels of material density or **“octaves”** (Needleman, 1999). The moon is another. In *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, a dense, allegorical vehicle for Gurdjieff's teachings, he talks about the moon as **“just a part of this Earth,”** saying that **“the latter must now constantly maintain the Moon's existence”** (Gurdjieff, 1999: 63). Anyone who has read *Beelzebub's Tales* will understand why, with an eye on word count, I will not include any further illustrative quotes from this work. In it, Gurdjieff discusses the relationship between the moon, violence, birth counts and the various qualities of energy resulting from human experience (Gurdjieff, 1999). The moon absorbs these energies and is one of the cosmic influences helping to determine the course of events on Earth. It is able to create environmental disasters and incline nations toward war for the purpose of increasing the death rate, and, consequently, the energy immediately available to it.

These ideas received further development from Ouspensky and Bennett. In Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous*, he reports Gurdjieff as having said:

... the evolution of humanity beyond a certain point, or, to speak more correctly, above a certain percentage, would be fatal for the moon. The moon at present feeds on organic life, on humanity. Humanity is a part of organic life; this means that humanity is food for the moon. If all men were to become too intelligent they would not want to be eaten by the moon. But, at the same time, possibilities of evolution exist, and they may be developed in separate individuals with the help of appropriate knowledge and methods. Such development can take place only in the interests of the man himself against, so to speak, the interests and forces of the planetary world. (Ouspensky, 2011: location 1703)

Later in the text, Ouspensky goes into further detail, explaining that the moon's sustenance is the energy released at death by all living things, contained in the soul (Ouspensky, 2011). Souls go to the moon, which is equated with “the 'outer darkness' of the Christian doctrine” (Ouspensky, 2011: locations 2344-51).

Gurdjieff's students have indicated that his teachings are meant to be taken as true on multiple levels. In the unified Gurdjieffian view of reality, “food for the moon” carries a literal meaning and at least one other level of truth applicable to The Work. Bennett commented on *Beelzebub's Tales* that “everything ... is to be taken literally as well as on a psychological level” (Bennett, 2012: 85). So when thinking about food for the moon, we can interpret the moon as a physical manifestation of one of Gurdjieff's octaves (planes of existences) and the earth as another. One aspect of the relationship between octaves is that of a cosmic food chain; the moon-plane feeds on the energy of the earth-plane and also influences this plane. When we look at these ideas as they apply to Gurdjieff's spiritual teachings, the plight of the unaware individual buffeted by forces of universal scale serves as a symbol of the great task required to awaken one's consciousness – Gurdjieff's Work or Fourth Way. Though we as a species may be part of a vast energy ecology, there is hope for the individual who realises his predicament and seeks to address it.

ROBERT MONROE

We can find some Gurdjieffian themes – man as contained prey, the world as an energy production site – in the writings of Robert Monroe, especially in the “Loosh Garden” passages of his book *Far Journeys*. Monroe's work helped to popularise the idea of astral travel (intentional out-of-body experiences). In *Far Journeys*, he writes that during one of his astral travel experiences, he was given a “rote” or information packet concerning the origin of life on Earth (Monroe, 1985). According to the rote, our planet was created as a production site for Loosh, which is a kind of energy given off at death, in the course of conflict or through the experience of strong emotions (both positive and negative). The Loosh gardener and creator of Earth, referred to as “Someone”, is not God, but is itself a created being. “Someone” employs “Collectors” to gather the Loosh and take it from Earth to “Somewhere.” Monroe seems to have accepted this as true, writing that it answered many of his existential questions, but in a way that caused him to go through a “cycle of shock, rejection, anger, depression, resignation, [and] acceptance” (Monroe, 1985: 173).

GNOSTICISM

The term Gnosticism describes “a loosely organized religious and philosophical movement that flourished in the first and second centuries CE” (Moore, 2005). Although the origins of this movement are not completely clear, it is now most closely associated with early Christianity. Texts from the Gnostic tradition, which have seen a revival of interest aided by the discovery of the ancient Nag Hammadi texts in 1945, describe a cosmology featuring various emanation-levels of the Pleroma, or Godhead (Moore, 2005). In this universe, man inhabits a material world that only exists as a result of the arrogance of the Demiurge – a false god and created creator who has either forgotten or is opposed to its ultimate source in the Pleroma. Gnostic writings contrast the corrupted or illusory nature of the material world with the superiority of higher, non-material realms of existence. The journey to salvation requires travel via *gnosis* (“knowledge”) of this circumstance, opening the way for an eventual escape from inferior material existence to purer levels of the Pleroma.

The translation and dissemination of the Nag Hammadi texts in the latter half of the twentieth century helped to make Gnostic philosophy more accessible as one of various traditions sometimes grouped as “Western esotericism” (Ferrer, 2002: 6). However, the transmission of Gnostic ideas into modern Western culture began before the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library – for example, Carl Jung had a long-standing interest in the Gnostic tradition (Daniels, 2005). Closer to the end of his life, Jung also developed an interest in UFO sightings, publishing *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies* in 1959. Although the word “myth” in the title brings with it connotations of immateriality and an all-in-the-mind existence, psychologist and author Gregory Little has argued that reading the book with knowledge of Jung's larger body of work yields a different interpretation: that the UFO as a Jungian archetype (meaningful symbol) can manifest through forms observed in the physical world (Little, 2002).

James DeKorne, former editor of *The Entheogen Review* and author of *Psychedelic Shamanism*, has noted similarities between what Monroe reports of his travels and Gnostic cosmology. DeKorne (2002) equates the Loosh collectors with the Gnostic Archons, portrayed in some texts as agents of the Demiurge, and includes this quote from the Panarion of Epiphanius: “They say that the soul is the food of the Archons and Powers without which they cannot live, because [the soul] is of the dew from above and gives them strength” (DeKorne, 2002).

HERD MENTALITY OR EVOLVING CONSCIOUSNESS?

Spiritual and paranormal aspects of the abduction phenomenon – an increase in spirituality, awakenings of artistic talent and the advent of paranormal events including poltergeist activity – have been noted in some cases since the early days of the phenomenon. For example, Randles (1988) found these features in some early British reports such as the 1974 Aveley encounter (spirituality, psychic experiences, increased artistic talent) and the 1976 case of Joyce Bowles (poltergeist activity, religious messages). Examples of a spiritual dimension associated with abduction experiences can also be found in interviews with the woman Karla Turner (1994b) profiled in *Taken*. A woman known as Pat interpreted her experiences within the context of Christianity, reporting that during a childhood abduction she had asked the beings if they were angels and they had replied that they were, but not in the way she had been taught (Turner, 1994b). Another interviewee, **Jane, spoke of learning that she was “a spiritual being only animating a shell. The body is nothing, the soul is all”** (Turner, 1994b: 87).

This leads us on to the peculiar notion of the recyclable soul. In the case study of a woman named Angie, Turner (1994b) writes that Angie asked the aliens about a miscarriage with which she felt they had been involved. She was told that the **“physical body [of the fetus] had been stored and its soul recycled”** (Turner, 1994b: 95). Another woman in contact with Turner told of a recurring dream of a huge metal sphere that she struggled not to enter for fear of death. Researcher Barbara Bartholic had had visions of similar imagery, and had been told by her abductors that these spheres served as a sort of recycling plant for human souls (Turner, 1992).

It is interesting to note that Whitley Strieber, one of the best-known abduction experiencers, has had involvement with the Gurdjieff Foundation and The Work, though he and his wife Anne no longer attend Fourth Way meetings (A. Strieber, 2011). In a 2009 blog post in which he also referred to using Robert Monroe's astral travel techniques, Whitley Strieber wrote:

I had spent fifteen years intensively involved in the Gurdjieff Foundation, so I knew that what we consider a normal state is not really normal. It's a state of sleep. We react, we do not act. The attention pours out into the world, and the inner being is left to starve. (Strieber, 2009)

Strieber has written multiple books about his experiences over the past two and a half decades and has also maintained his blog for some years. He has never identified his abductors as extraterrestrials, instead referring to them as **“Visitors” and more recently drawing comparisons with the lopsidedness of interactions between chimpanzees and human anthropologists** (Strieber, 2012). His output has displayed an increasing preoccupation with spirituality, a future Earth cataclysm, evolution of consciousness and the nature of the soul.

Returning to the concept of “food for the moon,” J.G. Bennett explains that the relationship between the moon and life on Earth is not just about quantity but **also about quality, writing that “the needs of cosmic equilibrium can far better be provided through the conscious labor and intentional suffering of three-brained beings [humans] striving for their own perfection than by premature violent death” (Bennett, 2012: 46). In his view, when Gurdjieff talks about food for the moon, “what is sure is that man must produce something for the cosmic purpose. If he does this unconsciously – just by dying, for example – that is one thing. ... It is another thing if man fulfills his obligation by ... undertaking something for the benefit of the future” (Bennett, 2012: 108). And we are assured by Ouspensky that “the liberation which comes with the growth of mental powers and faculties is liberation from the moon” (Ouspensky, 2011: location 2359).** We can live and die with minimal awareness and directed action, or we can cultivate a better quality of life-energy through working to attain a higher level of consciousness. The latter results in superior nourishment for the moon, which means fewer wars and catastrophes here on earth as the moon-plane has less of a requirement for the high-volume, low-quality sustenance provided by death on a large scale.

In *Far Journeys*, **one of Robert Monroe's astral informants tells him that “the big game is to control and develop this emotional energy to its most effective condition, which is vaguely set by us humans as love, until we graduate” (Monroe, 1985: 203).**

For John Mack, the alien abduction phenomenon was a mystery that might have contained the key to an evolutionary leap in human consciousness. At the 1992 Abduction Study Conference, C.D.B. Bryan quotes him as having said in a speech that:

“You can't get there from here without a shift in our world-view – a world-view that contains a 'we're here and you're there' sense of separateness in which the physical world is all that exists. Music, art, etc., are in the spirit world, but are they real? In other words," he says, speaking very quickly, "we can't deal with something such as the abduction phenomenon that is so shattering to our literalist, materialist world-view and then try to understand it from a literalist, materialist world-view! The abduction phenomenon attacks our perception of reality," Mack says excitedly, and speaks of alien beings "who, like Merry Tricksters, float through walls, turn on and off television sets as a way of showing off their technological superiority. Is it an intrusion into our space or some sort of psychic phenomenon?" he asks. "Our materialist concept requires that we choose: are they in the spirit world, or are they in the real world?" (Bryan, 1996: 132)

At the same conference one of Mack's patients, despite believing himself to have **undergone sperm extraction, spoke of his feeling that “the Beings are trying to** understand our emotions. Our ability to feel, our deep spirituality - these are our gifts to the universe. No matter how invasive their behavior, we are not psychologically damaged. We are now participating willingly, I believe, and are **part of a plan for some future interaction” (in Bryan, 1996: 52-53).**

DISCUSSION

So what do we have here, and what does it all matter? We have a set of thematic correspondences and recurring motifs about humans as commodities or commodity producers; our role in the universe; non-human entities as either predators or agents of spiritual transformation; and the nature of the soul. These correlations matter because they can help us to gain insight into the effects of abduction experiences on the psyche of the experiencer and to examine theories about underlying causative factors. Have some abduction experiencers absorbed these ideas before incorporating them into intense fantasy experiences that they, often with the help of hypnosis-wielding researchers, label abductions? Are the experiencers and the fringe cosmologists both picking up on content shaped by a Jungian collective unconscious? Is there something inherent in the human psyche that throws up these themes in response to unusual experiences or spiritual enquiry? Are the correlations down to meaningless coincidence? Do both abduction experiences and these alternative models of reality reflect something external to ourselves, perhaps in **the style of Kenneth Ring's “Imaginal Realm” separate reality (Bryan, 1996)?** Are these questions even the correct ones, or was John Mack onto something in his suggestion of a post-dualistic exploration of the human condition?

How enquiries into this subject should be framed and which, if any, of the above questions should be asked depends on one's view of the origins of reported alien abduction experiences and whether or not those origins relate to known processes. Some feel that this question has already been resolved, some feel that it may become better understood in the future and some might echo Raymond **Fowler, who concluded his metaphenomenon comments with: "In the end, all one can do is collect and study reports and speculate"** (in Guiley, 2007).

For me, two narratives become apparent, both in abduction literature and in the alternative worldviews discussed here. These narratives are about transformation of a kind, and they may be two sides of the same coin. Examination of either side has the potential to yield insights into how experiencers have been affected by these experiences and how they interpret their meaning, whatever the source(s) of those experiences. In one of these stories, we are at the mercy of a cold universe as a resource to be mined; in the other, the transformative process is not about exploitation but about becoming something new, whether that is an alien-human hybrid, a more spiritually advanced being or one of the few survivors of a near-apocalypse.

From a psychologically speculative standpoint, we could observe that the end of an individual's world is his or her own death, and abduction experiencers have said again and again that they feel something big is coming within their own lifetimes. Maybe this really is about a universe-level clash of dimensions, planetary cataclysm or alien invasion; or perhaps it is more closely related to the unavoidable human experience of death and its attendant mysteries.

There are obvious parallels here to themes from belief systems around the world and through the ages – death and rebirth, ego destruction, the spiritual reward at the end of the difficult quest or shamanic initiation process. Looked at in this light, abduction experiences recall what Jacques Vallee has said about UFOs: **"They may be real, yet a product of our dreams. Like our dreams, we can look into their hidden meaning, or we can ignore them. But like our dreams, they may also shape what we think of as our lives in ways that we do not yet understand"** (Vallee, 2002: 754).

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WEM REKINDLED

Andrew Homer

Andrew Homer was involved in the Wem Town Hall “Girl in the flames” photographic anomaly right from when the story broke in 1995. He was one of the few ASSAP investigators to actually meet with the photographer, Tony O’Rahilly. In June 2011 he presented a lecture for ASSAP at St Briavels Castle finally revealing the full story of this enduring case.

On the 19th November 1995, the old Wem town hall was burned to the ground. Amongst the crowds gathered that night to watch was amateur photographer, **Tony O’Rahilly**. One of the photographs, taken on black and white film with his 200mm lens, appeared to show a young girl standing in the doorway to the fire escape of the fiercely burning building. Since then, the Wem “Girl in the flames” picture (Figure 1) has become one of the best known and widely published ghost photographs ever taken.



Figure 1. Wem Town Hall “Girl in the flames”. Copyright Tony O’Rahilly and published by kind permission of the Fortean Picture Library.

The picture very quickly became linked with the story of Jane Churm who, in March 1677, allegedly started a great fire in Wem with a candle. Whilst collecting some stored wood for the fire, the fourteen year old girl placed her candle too close to the thatched roof. The roof caught fire and many buildings in Wem, including the Market House, were completely destroyed. The fire was said to have been visible for many miles around. Since then, local legend associated her guilt ridden ghost with the old Wem Town Hall and she was reputedly seen on a number of occasions. One such incident involved two workmen in the old hall doing some refurbishment work who reported being terrified by a ghostly figure shrouded in a swirling mist which passed directly in front of them.

Tony's picture received extensive media coverage and ASSAP regional group, Parasearch, were first on the scene to investigate. Various experts were called on to give an opinion including Dr Vernon Harrison of ASSAP. He concluded that whilst the negative appeared not to have been tampered with, the figure was most likely burning debris which by chance appeared to look like a little girl. A classic case of Pareidolia in fact. Dr Harrison did suggest that, "it could be a burning plank of wood though" (Topham).

A BBC programme made at the time had a copy of the photograph analysed by experts at the National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television in Bradford (now the National Media Museum). Paul Thompson and Will Stapp concluded that the image had been manipulated. Indeed, Thompson detected **what he thought were scan lines, "as though the image consisted of a photo of a face on a video screen pasted into the picture of the fire" (Smith 2010).**

It has to be said that there were no witnesses to the girl being in the flames including Tony himself who claimed he only discovered her presence when he developed the film. The fire service recorded a video of the blaze and this too showed no sign of the little girl or indeed the burning debris which could have created the illusion according to Dr Harrison.

The author met with Tony O'Rahilly at the time who maintained that he was as curious as anyone as to how the girl had come to appear on his picture. For this reason he was more than willing for the original negative to be examined by experts which is how Dr Harrison got involved. Tony had a little darkroom set up in a shed behind his house and did all of his own developing and printing there. One slightly odd aspect was that Tony claimed he could not find any of the negatives preceding or following the image of the girl which had been cut out from the rest of the strip. Preceding and following exposures from the same negative strip of the town hall burning down would have helped to authenticate the image. Tony did have other pictures of the burning building however, including the one reproduced here (Figure 2) which is previously unpublished. As with the fire service video there is no indication of burning debris creating

any kind of illusion. Various other theories were put forward but for the most part the picture has remained something of a mystery.



Figure 2. Previously unpublished picture taken from the same location by Tony O'Rahilly.

In 2007 Steve Potter, a digital photography specialist, examined my own high quality JPEG image which had been taken directly from the original negative by the Shropshire Star in 1995. Steve noted a denser area behind the figure that **could have been due to, “a thicker area of the original negative” (Figure 3)**. He concluded that, **“this image could be a selective enlargement which then was re-touched either on the print or by using an interneg of the figure being sandwiched between the original negative or even a copy negative”**. **A negative created from a manipulated photograph in other words. However, Steve was able to discount the scan line theory finding that, “the lines on the print do not suggest scan lines of an image photographed from a television screen but scratch lines made by dust and dirt in the camera’s back, a common problem in 35mm cameras”**. **It has to be noted that Steve had access to digital image analysis techniques simply not available to the experts, including Dr Harrison, who were consulted in 1995.**



Figure 3. Portion of original photograph illustrating denser area identified by Steve Potter.

The story now moves to the 17th May 2010, when a report by Toby Neal (2010) appeared in a local newspaper, the Shropshire Star. A retired engineer, Brian Lear, had spotted a little girl bearing a striking resemblance to the girl in the flames on a postcard of Wem High Street dating from 1922 (Figure 4). She can be seen standing in a doorway on the bottom left hand side of the postcard.



Figure 4. Postcard from 1922 discovered by Brian Lear.

'Could this be the source of the ghostly image which has intrigued so many people for so long? Closer analysis of both images side by side (Figure 5) reveals that the folds in her bonnet and dress are identical as is the narrow sash she is wearing around her waist. The little girl's right hand and thumb is also clearly visible in both images. Tony O'Rahilly sadly passed away in 2005 but having met and talked with him I am convinced he believed he was, "acting in the best interests of Wem by bringing the town hall fire and the story of Jane Churm to the attention of the world's media" (Homer, 2012).'



Figure 5. Side by side comparison of the two images.

Having always maintained he was a very amateur photographer, the other picture he gave me at the time holds an interesting additional clue. A small advertising sticker on the back (Figure 6) suggests he was a bit more than the amateur photographer he claimed to be and more than capable of producing copies of photographs. The very technique required to create an interneg and thereby produce his enigmatic picture. I like to think Tony was trying to tell me something!

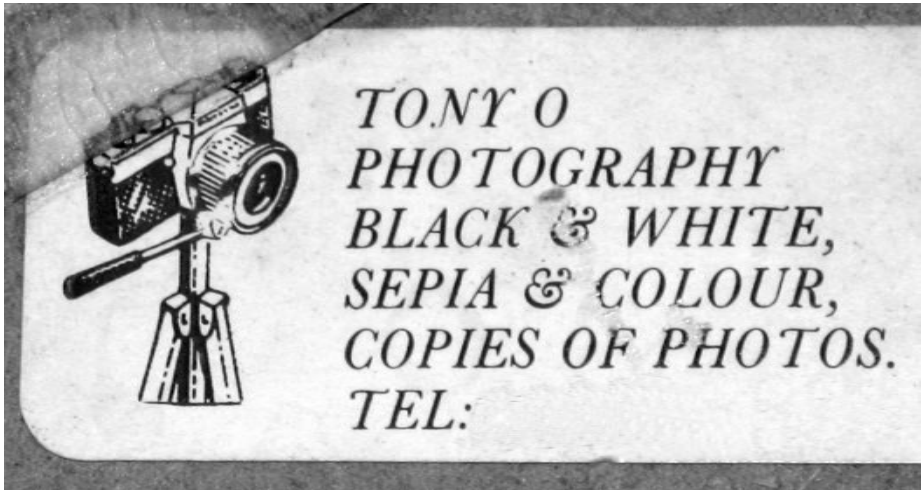


Figure 6. Tony O’Rahilly’s advertising sticker.

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BOOK REVIEWS

CREATING THE PARANORMAL by Bob Trubshaw. Heart of Albion Press. 84pp. April 2012. 100pp. Free PDF download.

Reviewed by David Taylor

Creating the Paranormal brings together new developments in cognitive science with an analysis of the sociology of the paranormal, especially the way in which paranormal narratives are retold. To all intents and purposes such narratives are how most of us are aware of the paranormal - and most of us create the meaning and significance from such stories.

This book is in two main parts. Part One attempts to summarise research which **has revealed how ostensibly 'normal' cognitive processes may not be as reliable** as common-sense supposes. Secondly, it examines how what we think we see is in large part culturally-constructed. Lastly, this is then applied to the **perception of phenomena deemed to be abnormal or paranormal'**. Part Two picks up on one aspect of Part One – the way the construction of narrative is intrinsic to our cognitive processes – and looks more broadly at how all aspects of our life – normal or otherwise – are recalled and retold as narratives. Both in **the 'everyday' way we share 'ghost stories' with other people and also in the way literature, film and television employ the paranormal to create a 'safe threat'**. Such narratives reveal the varying extent to which the narrator believes in what he or she is recounting. They may also reveal underlying attitudes about the **paranormal as portents or harbingers of 'fate'**.

In effect, this book can be thought of as attempts to understand the cognitive dissonance which paranormal experiences induce. Out-and-out scepticism is as much a response as, say, the beliefs of someone who regularly attends Spiritualist séances.

Bob makes new information about cognitive science and folklore narrative accessible to the non-expert. **Bob has done all the hard work so you don't have to.**

In *Creating the Paranormal*, Bob Trubshaw challenges the overly sceptical approach to anomalies (while still being sceptical) and makes the reader question more deeply what it is we think has been experienced.

This informative and highly enjoyable publication is available as a free download from the Heart of Albion Press website - www.hoap.co.uk

LIGHTQUEST by Andrew Collins. Published by Eagle Wing Books, 2012. 415pp. £14. 99. ISBN: 978 0 940 829 49 7
Reviewed by David Taylor

From the impressive artwork on the cover the book goes from strength to strength, and promotes a very convincing argument that UFOs are not extra-terrestrial 'space-craft', but something far more exotic, and far more interesting! Taking as its starting point 'Earthlights' by Paul Devereux (Devereux, 1982), Andrew makes some convincing arguments and observations about reports of UFOs and unusual lights in both America and the UK. His theory is that UFOs are in fact a form of plasma based inter-dimensional intelligence that interacts with our consciousness on some sort of archetypal level is very well stated.

But will this book have its fans? Without a doubt it will become a classic in the field, but I have a feeling it won't be popular. Why? Modern UFOlogists are obsessed that UFOs are 'ET' and nothing will shake them from this. The Sceptics believe UFOs are all explainable by natural means. This leaves Andrews book stuck somewhere in the middle. This is a shame, and I hope I'm wrong, as the idea that plasma based conscious intelligence is interacting with us is a very exciting one.

Minor quibbles. Every book has them! For me, there was too much time spent on Roswell, **as an exercise in demolishing the 'ETH' argument**. The section on Rendlesham had some imaginative leaps regarding place-names and Beowulf (too imaginative for me!). Also, considering the scope of this book, it would have been good to see some reference to another book on light anomalies - 'Spiritual Encounters with Unusual Light Phenomena' by Dr. Mark Fox (University of Wales Press) which would have added weight to **Andrew's** argument.

If you had read Andrews other excellent books, 'The Circle Makers'(Collins, 1992) and 'Alien Energy'(Collins, 1994) you get a feel for where this book is going, although I would have liked to have seen more of the 'Alien Energy' material in this current book.

Overall though, a great book with some great ideas, and certainly the most innovative UFO book for some time!

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 Collins, A, 1992, The Circle Makers, ABC Books
 Collins, A, 1994, Alien Energy, ABC Books

ZONES OF STRANGENESS by Peter McCue. £14. 99. Published by Author House (www.authorhouse.co.uk). 560pp. February 2012. ISBN: 9781456778422

Reviewed by David Taylor

When I first became interested in UFOs back in the **late 70's**, there was only one place to go and see them - Warminster. **Over the years I have visited Britain's most famous UFO 'window area' many times**, and on rare occasions I have not been disappointed - seeing things that I could not explain. Then a few years later my attention turned to the Pennines following a wave of UFO sightings. Wandering over the Pennines at night in a gale is still something I shall never forget!

This book has a truly international feel, which will no doubt help it appeal to a broad readership. The author, Peter McCue worked for many years as a clinical psychologist in the National Health Service in the UK. He lives in Scotland. His qualifications include a Ph.D., from the University of Glasgow, awarded for a thesis on the nature of hypnosis. His interest in psychical research goes back decades, and is a well known and respected researcher.

Peter takes a geographic approach to anomalous/paranormal reports, with the focus on looking at the evidence for "hot spots" with overlapping reports of different paranormal phenomena.

The first few chapters place the reports of anomalies in some sort of context. An excellent overview of the evidence and the arguments and counter arguments are given for anomalous experiences. Theories for paranormal experiences, from believer and sceptic led approaches are presented in an even handed way.

Peter kicks off his examination of "hot spots" in the UK. Here we come across **most of the "usual suspects"** - Warminster, Rendelsham Forest, Bonneybridge, the Pennines, Blue Bell Hill, Clapham Wood, the so-called **'Welsh Triangle'**, Cannock Chase and the Shropshire/Welsh border (to name a few). The scope of **breadth of Peter's research on each of these locations is eye-opening.** Each location is examined for its historical reports. In many instances these will include apparitions, UFOs, cryptids, poltergeists and Fortean phenomena. Maps are included for each location (although I found these less successful). Having visited such locations as Warminster, Clapham Wood, Cannock Chase, **the Welsh Marches and the 'Welsh Triangle' I was aware of most of the cases** that Peter uses in the book, and found that he gave a fair and balanced overview of them all.

The next three chapters take on an international feel, covering the USA, Puerto Rico and the Bermuda Triangle. I found these to be the less successful. This

probably is more to do with me, as Peter continues the same analytical style as when examining UK window areas.

Peter finishes off with an examination of all the theories and sceptical criticisms. This is a huge tome of a book, with extensive references. Peter weighs up the available evidence and source material in an objective manner and is not afraid to point out the weak points in any case. He has some interesting and innovative thoughts on the subject, **but I won't spoil that for the reader.**

I found this book to be extremely interesting and though provoking. I had the pleasure of hearing Peter lecture on the subject of his book back in 2010, and so I was eagerly awaiting this book. I was not disappointed. Add this modern classic to your bookshelf.

IRISH GHOSTS by Peter Underwood. Published by Amberley Publishing, 2012. ISBN 9781445606521.

Reviewed by David Taylor

Like many readers of *Anomaly*, I grew up reading Peter Underwood. Holidays in Devon or Cornwall were always accompanied by me spending my pocket **money on Peter's latest book from the local bookshop**. There is something **comforting and reassuring about Peter's books**. Peter has a great writing style, and no wonder, with over 50 books to his credit he justly holds the title of ghost hunter, par excellence! I am also extremely fortunate, as Editor of the Unitarian Society for Psychical Studies (of which Peter is President), to receive Peter's reminiscences of past cases for publication in our journal.

I must admit that I have never ventured to the Emerald Isle, but after reading this book, **it's certainly on my list! Each location is listed in alphabetical order**, and each location has its history; people associated with it; paranormal experiences; the possible identity of the ghost(s); how often the ghost(s) are seen plus any evidence for the sighting.

There are also some nice photographs to accompany the text, nearly all of castles and stately homes. As usual Peter writes with a combination of wit and authority that makes his books such a pleasure to read. This is a thoroughly enjoyable read and a must for anyone living in or planning a trip to Ireland.

PARARANTHROPOLOGY: ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE PARANORMAL - Edited by Jack Hunter. 257pp.

ISBN: 9781471653797. £17.00 plus p&p. Available from: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/edited-by-jack-hunter/paranthropology-anthropological-approaches-to-the-paranormal/hardcover/product-20272474.html>

Reviewed by David Taylor

I have had the great pleasure of hearing Jack Hunter lecture on his anthropological research at the 2011 ASSAP conference at the University of Bath. As Jack is also a consultant to my own group, Parasearch, I have been **fortunate in having Jack's expert opinion on cases whenever I need it**. Indeed Jack is at the forefront of something of a campaign (if that is the right word) of introducing an anthropological approach to anomalous experience. He has recently been awarded an Eileen J Garrett scholarship and the Gertrude Schmeidler Award from the Parapsychology Association. From what I have read of Jack's research, he has an inclusive approach and one that is truly open minded (Hunter, 2011). This same fair handed approach is visible here in this anthropological anthology.

This compilation is an impressive collection of academic approaches to the anthropological study of anomalous experience. Of all the contributions the **ones that stood out for me were: 'Anthropology, Evolution and Anomalous Experience' by James Mcclenon; 'Devising Methods for the Ethnographic Study of the Afterlife' by Fiona Bowie; and 'Paradigms and Methodologies for Anomalous Research' by Michael Winkelman**. To have a collection of essays of this calibre in one volume makes this book a real gem. Previously those of us interested in the anthropological approach to the paranormal had to make do with occasional contributions in other publications (Devereux, 2007 and Luke 2010).

One word of warning however. It is a fine line to walk between a popularist approach and maintaining an academic style. Too much of either approach will alienate either of your potential markets. At times the overt academic language in some of these entries could dissuade the casual reader from exploring some truly interesting ideas. But this is a minor point.

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THE 100 BEST BRITISH GHOST STORIES by Gillian Bennett. Published by Amberley Publishing. £14. 99. 192pp. ISBN: 978 1 4456 06941
Reviewed by David Taylor

With the nights drawing in, what better excuse would you need to read a new collection of historical ghost stories? The title of this book may be a little misleading, suggesting that these are fictional narratives. They are not. This is a collection of historical ghost reports from the Seventeenth century to the present day. The collection has been compiled by Gillian Bennett, an internationally renowned folklorist. I first came across Gillian back in 1987 **when she wrote the excellent ‘Traditions of Belief’ (Bennett, 1987)**. By placing these stories in chronological order Gillian is able to show how these reports have culturally changed over the years. Unlike other collections of English ghost stories (Ackroyd, 2010) Bennett adds an element of historical context to the stories, an element sadly missing from other compendiums. We no longer believe in boggarts and other elementals as the cause of poltergeist activity, and **as for the ‘Woman in White’**, the Victorians removed her voice and relegated her to a silent video tape. When you compare historical accounts of ghosts to the type of report ghost hunters get today (light bulbs exploding, car keys go missing!), you realise just how much cultural factors play in how ghosts are perceived and reported.

Bennett must be commended for the level of her research, as she visited most locations mentioned in the book. An interesting observation she made while conducting this research was that there was something distinctive about the location where the story was set, **the place seemed to have a certain ‘feel’ about it**. She vividly makes this clear at the Woodseaves canal bridge in Staffordshire where, in 1879, a traveller claimed to have been attacked by a **‘man-monkey’**. Having visited this location myself following more recent reports, I can confirm that the place has a strange feel. As a folklorist Bennett is also aware how ghost stories have been woven into the rich fabric of oral folklore and the tourist industry. With the former she points out how many of the ghost stories in the **book conform to what folklorists call ‘migratory legends’** - the same story (woman in white, **phantom black dog** etc) **retold as being ‘true’ by different people in different locations in different times**. And with the later, she points out how the congregation at St. Etheldreda in Hyssington have incorporated the **‘Roaring Bull of Bagbury’ legend into their church with a certain amount of local pride**.

It is nice to see Amberley producing a book like this rather than their usual guide to haunted hostleries and towns. These in themselves were okay a couple of years ago, but now are just the same old material endlessly recycled for the short term tourist market. This new volume by Gillian will appeal to a wider

audience than some of Amberley's recent books, in that academic or not, we all love a good ghost story!

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Bennett, G, 1987, *Traditions of Belief: Women and the supernatural*, Pelican

GHOSTS AND GALLOWES: TRUE STORIES OF CRIME & THE PARANORMAL by Paul Adams

The History Press, 2012 190pp £14. 99) ISBN 978-0-7524-6339-1

Reviewed by Damien O'Dell

To quote directly from *Ghosts & Gallows* – ‘Both the **psychical** researcher and the policeman are continually involved in a diligent and patient search for the truth.’ **Indeed the veracity of this statement is borne out by the fact that many** members of my own investigation group, APIS, are both policemen/policewomen by day and paranormal investigators by night. Murder and hauntings are sometimes linked. I just wish that more police forces in the U. K. were as open-minded about consulting psychic mediums as they are in the U. S. A. The Yorkshire Ripper, for one, might have been apprehended earlier in his murderous career if that was so. We will find several examples of these missed opportunities within the pages of this revealing book.

I first came across Paul Adams when I rented an office at Basepoint, in the Stopsley area of Luton, **Paul's home town**. We eventually met up, over a beer, and discovered that we shared twin passions - for writing and the paranormal. He was working on *Ghosts & Gallows* at the time; as soon as it was published I obtained a copy, which I read voraciously.

I was particularly struck by the Swiss-watch-like quality of Paul's research. I know, personally, one the key witnesses in *The Voice From the Grave*, one of fifteen incredible, but true, cases featured in this gripping book. I know, therefore, how accurately the details of the story were portrayed. I was also conversant with the Anne Noblett murder case, which is detailed in *The Ghost of the Frozen Girl*. It struck a chord with me because I have a young daughter of my own. The author, however, still managed to extract much information about this sad episode which was completely new to me. **This is one of Paul's** strengths, even with such well-known cases as that of the evil duo, Brady and Hindley, covered in *Fall of the House of Death*, he reveals fresh, fascinating facts.

The layout of *Ghosts & Gallows* is both attractive and well considered. It is illustrated with over 30 black and white photographs, which assist the reader in visualising the people, places and newspaper headlines from times past. There

is a most useful Index of Names as well as a Phenomena Index and a comprehensive Select Bibliography and Further Reading guide that will please the serious student of the paranormal.

I like Paul's no-nonsense approach and his conversational style of writing which both engages the reader and makes for an easy reading experience. Add this to your bookcase, you won't be disappointed.

THE 100 BEST BRITISH GHOST STORIES by Gillian Bennett

ISBN 978-1-4456-0694-1 Published by Amberley

Publishing, Stroud, GL5 4EP

Reviewed by Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe

“The 100 Best British Ghost Stories” does much more than retell 100

outstandingly interesting tales of the paranormal – it goes into the history of folklore and mythology, ghost stories and tales of the unexplained. It also offers interesting explanations about why certain popular ghost stories have caught the public interest, and accordingly endured over the centuries. The stories that Gillian has selected are helpfully themed and categorised. The Anne Walker case, for example, is one of a number in which a psychic entity seems to have returned to ensure that justice was done. **Mary Barwick's ghost** seems to have returned for the same reason. What may be termed other purposeful spectres include the strange account of the ghost that drew attention to a man who had fallen into a deep shaft and been trapped there for over a week before he was rescued. This account comes from a letter written at the time by William Moore of Redruth in Cornwall. Another especially interesting **category is referred to as locations that are “the borderland between the material world and the spiritual world”**. Littledean Tower in Scotland provides an excellent example. Animal ghosts are not neglected and the story of the Roaring Bull of Bagbury is a fascinating one. The illustrations are every bit as good as the 100 excellent stories, and the Black Pool of Longnor in particular is so well revealed that the imaginative reader can almost see the ghost emerging from it! All in all this book is a valuable addition to the archives of the paranormal.

YORKSHIRE WITCHES by Eileen Rennison

Reviewed by Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe

ISBN 978-1-4456-0292-9 Published by Amberley Publishing, Stroud, GL5 4EP

“Yorkshire Witches” is superbly written by a very experienced author, with numerous other volumes to her credit. It is exceptionally well organised and arranged, and this careful chronology of witches and witchcraft makes the book very informative. Eileen takes the reader into past centuries when fear of **witches and witchcraft was a major factor in many people's lives**. Injuries,

accidents, disease and disability were not understood. In looking for **cause**, the superstitious blamed witchcraft. The important sociological and psychological background of belief in witches and witchcraft is also made very **clear and understandable in Eileen's excellent volume**. People without power were happy to encourage others to believe that they had magical power – this belief gave them status. A casual quarrel over some trivial item that eventually grew into the kind of mortal feud that separated the families of Romeo and Juliet could lead all too easily to accusations of witchcraft, torture, hanging, or death at the stake. In addition to this well-argued explanation of the basis of witchcraft – and its social consequences – Eileen has focused on one case after another in commendable detail – including the mysterious prophetess, Mother Shipton, who has also been the subject of some of our own investigations.

“Yorkshire Witches” is excellent in its historical and sociological approaches. It is a logical and rational study of the weird irrationality of witches and witchcraft. It provides excellent information in a very well-written form.

GHOSTS OF YORK by Rob Kirkup

ISBN 978-1-84868-236-8 Published by Amberley Publishing, Stroud, GL5 4EP

Reviewed by Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe

“Ghosts of York” is a wide-ranging collection of extremely interesting reports of the anomalous and paranormal phenomena to be encountered in this historic city. We ourselves have made numerous on-site investigations there – including one research visit with Uri Geller – and we find ourselves in close agreement with Rob Kirkup and his team.

What makes his book so very fluent and readable is the way in which Rob refers to the details of each exciting investigation and the reactions of the friends and colleagues who are investigating with him. This is so well done that the reader feels closely involved with each event as it happens. The wide range of excellent photographs reinforces that feeling of being on site with Rob and his team of investigators. The account of the haunted gallows area where Dick Turpin was launched into eternity is a particularly interesting one, **as is Rob's account of the team's adventures in Gray's Court**.

As professional investigators ourselves, we found this book very well put together, clearly and fluently written and a valuable addition to our research library. We strongly recommend it.

HAUNTED HOSTELRIES OF SHROPSHIRE

by Andrew Homer. Amberley Publishing ISBN 978-1-4456-0201-1

Reviewed by Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe

Andrew Homer brings his years of skill and experience as a highly accredited investigator of the paranormal and anomalous to his excellent new book on the haunted hostelries of Shropshire. He writes with great clarity and fluency, and really brings all the mysterious phenomena to life for the reader. His account of the Mytton and Mermaid Hotel is particularly interesting, as is his account of the remarkable happenings at the Coalbrookdale Inn. The picturesque Green Inn at Oswestry is yet another fascinating site that Andrew describes extremely well. The photographs and drawings match the high quality of the text, and make this book a very valuable acquisition for all readers who are interested in the paranormal. We recommend it very strongly.

GHOSTS OF YORK by Rob Kirkup

ISBN 978-1-84868-236-8 Published by Amberley Publishing, Stroud, GL5 4EP

Reviewed by Michael Gage

Ghosts of York, written by Rob Kirkup, and published in 2012, **details Rob's** adventure with his investigation team. Their Mission: to investigate ten of the most haunted locations in York (which supposedly is one of the most haunted cities in the world). Rob Kirkup is an experienced paranormal investigator and researcher who has written many books regarding regional hauntings, particularly in the north-east of the UK. **His and his team's exploits** carry them around the north of the UK exploring these tales in an attempt to experience them themselves and to gather evidence of hauntings. This time, as the book's title suggests, **Rob's paranormal gaze focuses on York city.**

York, **according to the book's synopsis**, "has over five-hundred individual spirits, and is therefore a perfect location for five paranormal investigators from Newcastle gathering evidence to answer a question as old as time: Do ghosts **actually exist?**".

Unfortunately, **it's really difficult to review a paranormal book who's** investigative methods you strongly disagree with but at the beginning has a cast that you raise the occasional smile at, and dare it be said, the occasional chuckle. **Rob and his team are the sort of guys you'd probably** have a great time investigating with; they get into some scrapes that only men tend to get themselves into, and the book is well written and with a sort of lads humor that, for a man, is difficult not to relate to. The pre and post investigation antics are what really give this book its interesting quality with Rob and the investigation team often getting themselves into some honestly funny circumstances.

That said, **the book's chapters each act as a sort of investigation report for each location**, and after while these reports blur into one as each location describes the same sort of investigation techniques, and subsequent personal experiences that leave the reader plowing through what seems like the same investigation report over and over again. This is a shame because it eventually eclipses the laughs and the interest that the book promised at the start, and while the laughs and the laddish endearing qualities are still there, they are overshadowed by, astonishingly what the book is about, the investigations, which became rather stale after a few chapters. Instead each chapter is packed to the rafters with personal experiences and paranormal TV clichés which did no favors to the books quality.

All in all Ghosts of York doesn't particularly offer any new insights into the paranormal, it revolves around the team capturing EVP; claims of being prodded and blown by unnatural forces, and taking pictures of reflections of dust; insects; exhaled breath - sorry I meant to say orbs; all very stereotypical. Instead, **it's more of a whistle stop-tour** of some of the more recognized haunted places in York coupled together, rather unsurprisingly, with the investigation **team's personal experiences**, and personal beliefs. **It's easy to enjoy reading this** book purely because of Rob and his teams endearing personalities, and with the way the book is written, Rob brilliantly describes very familiar circumstances for those who have been on investigations for themselves. However, after a while these qualities are drowned out by a continual repetitiveness, chapter by chapter, which could have been rectified by the investigation team using some imagination and diversity to make the investigations interesting and fresh.

If you enjoy reading books about the personal experiences of an investigation team as they sweep through each location, **then this is your book; it's got a great cast** that will give you a few laughs, and each of their experiences are interesting, though repetitive, and probably explainable from a more rational point of view. For those looking for a more factual, informational and historical look into these alluringly haunted places this is probably not the read for you. 5 out of 10.

TELEPHONE CALLS FROM THE DEAD by Callum E. Cooper

ISBN 978-0-9571074-1-0

Reviewed by Nicky8 Sewell

Anyone fortunate enough to have heard Cooper speak on this subject will concur that this area of phenomena is something about which he instantly engages his audience in a fully accessible, albeit educated, way. Clearly passionate about his work, Cooper presents his research and that of his forefathers (most notably Rogo and Bayless) in such a way that his enthusiasm for this area of study is infectious. Unfortunately, Telephone Calls from the Dead is not an antidote to this infection, rather an exacerbator. It is, quite simply, essential reading for

anybody with even a passing interest in this phenomena. The long term **prognosis is that you will want to find out more and to follow Cooper's future in this field.**

The book is presented in ten well-structured chapters and preceded by a foreword from the President of the International Foundation for Survival Research – Elizabeth McAdams Ph.D – in which she alludes to the pride Bayless would have undoubtedly felt in response to Cooper continuing his research with **the scientific and ethical keystone which was fundamental in Bayless' own work.**

The first three chapters introduce this area of study and explore the history of telephone calls from the dead and the previous research conducted. Chapters four and five go on to outline the types of calls that people experience and analyses of these experiences. **What's refreshing about this book is its use of real-life examples which instantly makes it engaging and even when it is presenting research data it does so in such an accessible way that absolutely no academic background is required of the reader.**

Chapter six delves into more miscellaneous experiences including dreams and **voicemails and the proposition of a telephone itself being 'haunted'**. It is in chapter seven that Cooper really comes into his own and draws on his knowledge as a parapsychologist to examine the psychology behind the reported experiences. The final three chapters move on to look at the mechanics behind alleged telephone calls from the dead and the future of this field of research. As our own technology continues to develop, as will the variety of media through which the departed may opt to attempt communication. It is very clear that this is an area of research which, really, has only just been born.

With this being Cooper's first published book, it is alarmingly invigorating to read something from a developing researcher who clearly has such an accessible manner and voice through which he writes. Whilst Cooper is an academic, the tone and narrative which he employs makes this the type of book which is truly approachable irrespective of your own prior understanding. Even without professed powers of prediction, it does not take much of a leap of faith to see Cooper as a future Professor of Public Understanding of Psychology. Richard Wiseman watch out.

SCIENCE AND SPIRIT by Charles F. Emmons and Penelope Emmons
ISBN 978-1-47594-264-4
Reviewed by Emma Lewis

Charles and Penelope team up in this book in perhaps an initially unlikely, yet **ultimately complimentary, partnership.** Drawing on Charles' academic and scientific experience and utilising Penelope's background in mediumship and

more spiritual approaches to the paranormal, the pair excel in delivering a book which both explores and exceeds the boundaries between science and spirit. Split into four parts and some seventeen chapters, *Science and Spirit* initially seeks to lay the foundations for the exploration of where these seemingly contradictory approaches may make some attempt towards redefining boundaries and creating a level playing field for approaching the subject in an open-minded and objective manner.

The Emmons' move on to discuss – perhaps controversially – the impact of scepticism within the field and explore the motivations and precursors behind **researcher's entry to this field of study. The book goes on to tackle a wide variety** of subjects including consciousness, out-of-body and near-death experiences, lucid dreaming, ESP, ghost and haunting experiences, physical effects, mediumship and reincarnation. The book concludes by considering practical applications and the value and usage that people draw from their experiences and phenomena reported.

The style in which this book is written is both engaging and accessible and it proves to be a valuable addition to the library of tomes which seek to explore the plethora of phenomena which we experience.

ANOMALY: GUIDANCE NOTES & HOUSE STYLE

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We prefer the Harvard system of referencing. Sentences containing references should include the author and year in parentheses, e.g. “theories suggest that orbs are not paranormal in nature” (Townsend, 2006).

Where such references are included in the text an alphabetical list should be included at the end of the document, in the following style:

Henry, J. (Ed.) (2005). *Parapsychology: Research on Exceptional Experiences*. East Sussex: Routledge

Parapsychological Association (2006a) *What is the PA?*

URL http://www.parapsych.org/mission_statement.html Date accessed: 04 September 2006.

Thalbourne, M.A. (2005) ‘The Pros and Cons of Being a Parapsychologist’. *Society for Psychical Research: Paranormal Review*, 36, 21-22

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