

ANOMALY:
JOURNAL AND CONFERENCE
PROCEEDINGS

VOLUME 48

assap.ac.uk

Contents

The Cage St Osyth: Interim Report on John Frazer Witness Testimony Analysis of a Traditional Haunting, Investigated in 'Modern' Ways.	John Frazer	10
The Wild Ride: A Short History of Witchcraft in the Middle Ages	David Sivier	48
Religious Education and the Paranormal: Discussing Anomalous and Exceptional Experiences in the R.E. Classroom	Jack Hunter	70
The Modern Vampire	Jessica Monteith	98
Ghosts, Spirits and Gods: Perspectives from Anthropology	Jack Hunter	125
The Exorcist and the Exorcists, Parallels Between the Cottage City Exorcism and Early Modern Narratives	Jon Kaneko- James	165
Traditional Witchcraft Now and Then	Mark Norman	200
From Fairy to Spaceman: How UFOs Developed from the Fairy Faith	David Sivier	227

Second ASSAP National Belief and
Experiences Survey

Dave Wood 246
and Nicky
Sewell

Recording Interactions

Ashley Knibb 250

ANOMALY :

VOLUME 48 EDITORIAL

Anomaly 48 has been the product of three different teams over two years: it contains conference papers from five separate ASSAP one day conferences, a small selection of the papers given.

ASSAP is staffed entirely by volunteers with many claims on their time, and 2015 saw a change over in the Exec as happens from time to time: much of the work on this issue was already completed at that date before I took over, and so while the faults are mine, the strengths of this issue belong to the previous team and in particular Sarah Spellman and Simone Taylor who gathered most of the material you see.

ASSAP represents researchers with a wide variety of viewpoints, and different emphases. This issue is rich in articles dealing with the historical and societal side of so called paranormal phenomena, and also includes both a theoretical piece by Ashley Knibbs and a case write up by John Frazer.

As always, the articles included do not represent the view of ASSAP (which holds no corporate opinion) or even the Editor, but only the authors. This journal has been a long time in the making: I hope you enjoy it.

ANOMALY:

JOURNAL OF RESEARCH INTO THE PARANORMAL

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

Anomaly is sent free to all members of the Association or is otherwise available for £10 (\$20).

ASSAP is a registered charity (327422) and a company limited by guarantee.

Correspondence address: ASSAP, 8 Broad Bush, Blundson, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN26 7DH. Email: publications@assap.ac.uk

Registered Office: (no correspondence) ASSAP, office 36, 88-90 Hatton Garden, London, EC1 8PN

If you would like to write for ANOMALY or contact the team please email publications@assap.ac.uk

**OFFICIAL NOTICES RELATING TO THE RUNNING OF
ASSAP AS AN INCORPORATED CHARITY**

As of close of nominations for director positions on 31st October 2015 the only nominated received were the automatic nomination of serving and co-opted members of the ASSAP Board of Directors. As fewer candidates stood for positions than positions available all candidates are declared elected unopposed. These candidates were Dave Wood, Nicky Sewell, Christian Jensen Romer, Becky Smith, Anne Radley, Robert Moore and Norie Miles/Jonathan Fost (job share). ASSAP's accounts are available to all members. These can be found on the members area of the website under Reports and Annual Report 2014. Please email chairman@assap.ac.uk if you have any questions.

The Cage St Osyth: Interim Report on Witness Testimony Analysis of a Traditional Haunting, Investigated in 'Modern' Ways.

John Frazer

ABSTRACT

This property caught the imagination of the popular press in 2012 when it was reported that the owner Vanessa Mitchell, a single mother of one, could no longer live there or rent it out, due to her experiences and those of other residents. Mitchell took the decision to try to hire the house out for paranormal investigations. Like most other reports of active paranormal activity there was a danger that matter hearsay could become reported as fact, and the truth obscured.

This project therefore set out to report on efforts to make a record of first hand witness testimony (beyond that of the owner), and to see if any meaningful theories can be developed when this testimony is brought together. It was also intended to explore the strengths and weaknesses (in an

evidential sense) of short periods of observation and measurement by different people- which is in effect the style of modern paranormal investigation most often seen today.

METHODOLOGY.

Witness testimony with regards to the Paranormal can be a controversial issue, particularly when involving individual paranormal investigation teams. The well-known sceptical blogger Hayley Stevens for example states that due to the lack of a common methodology and other factors such testimony 'Counts for nothing' (Stevens 2015).

Alan Murdie, Chair of the Ghost Club and council member of the SPR who is also a qualified barrister, tends to disagree. Murdie points out that even:-

'The courts accept that collections of what may appear to be isolated facts or reports, merging from the testimony of different witnesses can constitute cogent proof to a standard beyond reasonable doubt'

And that:-

‘Similar fact evidence... enables separated collections of isolated testimony to be taken together to act as cogent proof’¹

Murdie then goes on to argue that it is logical that evidence that can put someone in jail should also be evidential at least in establishing a case for evidence of the paranormal.

I believe Murdie’s argument to be relevant in this project especially as the point of this exercise was not to try to prove anything beyond reasonable doubt – that would be too ambitious in this stage of our understanding of apparent paranormal phenomena, but simply to ask whether any evidence is of a strong and compelling nature or not – and if it is shown to be just that, what is it evidence for?

As far as I am aware relatively few attempts have been made recently to try to as comprehensively as possible trace reports back to the original witnesses. Perhaps the first modern type of collation of witness testimony was the tenancy of

1 In the Abstracts of Presented Papers 58th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association Joint with the 39th International Annual Convention of the Incorporated Society for Psychical Research

Harry Price at Borley Rectory. Here however the observers Price chose were given instructions in advance, sometimes of a leading nature, via what became known as the 'Blue Book'. Such a scenario is of course very different to going back to a case and picking up information later. Perhaps the most witness focused case recently was that of the Enfield Poltergeist (Playfair 1980), where an on hand presence of the two investigators, Grosse and Playfair, ensured any debriefing session happened quickly.

In many ways such a process of gathering evidence of a fairly large number of past experiences is therefore experimental. For that reason I mainly kept to the report of anomalies that could be classed as being objective. Those for example involving any sixth sense or mediumistic ability I have dealt with briefly separately. This in no way comments on their validity or otherwise, it simply avoids any analysis being along well-trodden arguments about whether such experiences are subjective or objective and real.

For practical purposes as much as anything I also avoided data regarding EVP and other recorded phenomena as each would have needed to be analysed to decide its evidential worth. With

regards to all data excluded I will add a short summary later.

Initially I optimistically thought a form could be devised for initial responses, but I quickly found out that quite frankly people's experiences don't fit nicely into tick boxes. Data was therefore gathered in several ways:-

Key witnesses who lived locally to The Cage and who visited it or lived in it when it was used as a residential home were interviewed face to face with the invaluable assistance of Rosie O'Carroll of the Ghost Club. A summary of the interview was then e-mailed to the witness to ensure the facts were interpreted correctly.

Structured telephone interviews were used with other witnesses, especially those who had later investigated The Cage. These were largely taped. Again a summary of the main points raised were e-mailed to the witness for confirmation or correction. Some interviews were conducted purely by e-mail, these consisting of several exchanges to fully clarify points and understand the extent of what was experienced. In a few cases where key witnesses have already stated publicly on film or on line their report of what occurred and when what occurred

was significant and clear, notes have been made of those experiences as well. In all cases not already out in the public domain the option was given for witnesses to remain anonymous. That option was only taken in a few cases.

Care was also taken to identify the location within the premises of an unusual event. The property was ideal for this being in effect a fairly small cottage. It consists of two bedrooms, a bathroom, a staircase, the 'Cage' room (built around the original holding cell – thus getting its name) including an extended kitchen area, and a separate reception room off a small entrance hall.

Only what were interpreted as significant events were included, and in the case of the actual residents especially many significant events of a similar type were summarised. This excluded what were clearly events of an ambiguous nature such as noises that on the balance of probability may have come from outside or creaks in floorboards that may not have been anything unusual.

INTRODUCTION

The Cage as it is dramatically called is an 18th century property in St Osyth, Essex built over a much older smaller shell which was used as the local holding jail up until 1908. Its most famous prisoner was perhaps the local 'witch' Ursula Kemp who was kept there amongst other similarly accused before being hung at Chelmsford in 1582. It was purchased in 2005 by Vanessa Mitchell, despite a local reputation for being haunted which is perhaps not so unusual in an old property of this type.

In 2010 Ms Mitchell initially contacted the SPR's Spontaneous Cases Committee reporting that phenomena had made the house uninhabitable and making the unusual request of asking for advice as to what to do with a property no one could any longer stay in, and whether in our opinion it was ever possibly to let out a house as a haunted site for research purposes?

I visited Ms Mitchell in 2010, taking with me a colleague, Rosie O'Carroll of The Ghost Club.

Whilst nothing unusual happened at The Cage during our time there, Ms Mitchell appeared to be a credible witness giving consistency of testimony and accepting that some facts may appear difficult to believe at first. The time line above gave me the impression that she genuinely believed the place to be haunted, and that any appeal regarding letting the house out to paranormal researchers was a purely last resort option. Her thought process (in my opinion) being along the lines of

'I have a haunted house that I can't live in and don't feel morally able to let out again – what can I do with it and how can I pay the mortgage?'

I attempted to dissuade Ms Mitchell from this option partially on the grounds I thought it unlikely to be a practical solution to her issues.

Shortly after our meeting Ms Mitchell did indeed offer her house open to paranormal research groups. This reached the national press and TV which reported it in their normal sensational way. However on a short term basis at least from a practical point of view my advice was incorrect. My understanding is that she received investigations over a period from many paranormal research

groups of various types (and more likely or not of varying belief models as well). During this period it could possibly be claimed that The Cage became the most talked about active haunting in the country.

INITIAL EXPERIENCES OF THE OWNER

When Ms Mitchell moved into 'The Cage' in the late spring of 2005 she was almost immediately joined by a close friend Nicole Kirtley as her lodger. J.C. (*pseudonym*) a male friend of Nicole Kirtley joined them in early 2006.

Ms Mitchell has stated that prior to buying the property she was aware that it had (like many old houses) a reputation for being haunted. She had previously lived in the area, and knew of a middle aged couple who claimed that books flew off their shelves whilst they were there. (Ms Mitchell states that she didn't know them that well and as they are long gone it has not yet been possible to establish this first hand). She was also fully aware that there had been a suicide there in the not too distant past which took place on the stairs landing next to the bathroom.

Mitchell states that on her first day there she turned and saw a figure of a tall dark male walk from the Cage Room into the Lounge. In the following weeks and months she recalls doors slamming or opening with no wind to push or pull them, and footsteps upstairs. Ornaments would fly off the mantle-piece, the old chain from the original prison building would swing back and forward and the hall stairs door would crash open in a forceful almost violent way. Taps turning on and off, door latches rattling through the day and night, (as if someone was going to come in the room, but never did) a coke can whizzing across the table, objects disappearing then turning up in unusual places or not turning up at all, objects turning up out of the blue that did not belong to her, something walking up and down the stairs in the night.

Amongst other apparitions she viewed a transparent lady carrying what seemed to be a bowl of herbs from the Cage Room to the living room , a sighting which may have had some association with one of the 'witches' that was held there? She also stated in initial correspondence that she ultimately entered a state of dark depression which cleared up quickly after she finally moved out.

What made the final decision for her to move was when she:-

'saw a man standing at the top of the landing with modern day clothes on...he wasn't a burglar he was a ghost of a man and standing very near my son's cot'

When Ms Mitchell moved out she first tried to let the property to a long-time friend. The new female lodger reported to Mitchell that she also experienced phenomena to the extent that she had requested the help of a psychic who had ultimately refused to enter the house on arrival. The friend also reported that she felt a similar dark depression while resident there.

This tenant moved out after four months and the next tenants, a young couple with a baby, lasted two months. During that time it was rented out by an agent so we cannot know the reason these tenants decided to leave so quickly.

At that point Ms Mitchell decided based on her own and others experiences that the house should not be let out for residential purposes again and attempted to rent it out for investigation by paranormal groups, and individuals with a

reasonable amount of success. It was also at this time the press started to take an interest (Metro Online 2012; Mail Online 2012). The house is still sometimes used for this purpose and is currently up for sale.

CORROBORATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE INITIAL TIMELINE.

It was clear when investigating the credibility of these interesting initial reports that as things stood, most of the reports were coming from one witness, the owner. That is of course hardly surprising, but from an evidential view based on witness testimony is of course not ideal. So part of this project included a further visit to the village again with my colleague Rosie O'Carroll. The point of the visit being to interview others who had unusual experiences at the time the house was occupied. In this case interviews were conducted face to face and on tape¹, and involved Nicole Kirtley resident for part of the time with Vanessa Mitchell, Kirstine Blackwell a frequent visitor and cousin of Ms

1 To prevent repetition the witnessed incidents which also involved Vanessa Mitchell were largely not mentioned in the previous section.

Mitchells, 'Nick' (*pseudonym*) a friend of Ms Mitchells, Neil and Kirsty Williams who were also friends.

J.C. the male resident at the time of Ms Mitchell's residence was unavailable for interview. He however has given several interviews previously including on video and his comments are useful for comparison purposes. Whilst none of the witnesses had experienced quite the same intensity of phenomena as the owner, their testimony did in fact prove very interesting.

Nicole Kirtley who moved into the Cage almost immediately after Ms Mitchell experienced the door latch being undone in her bedroom room (later used as Ms Mitchells child's nursery/bedroom) and the door swinging part the way open on numerous occasions . She also had numerous occasions of JOTTs¹, objects (normally clothes) disappearing and reappearing in places where they were most unlikely to have ever been put. An interesting point to note here is that Kirstine Blackwell who sometimes kindly visited the property when no one else was at home reported experiencing exactly the

1 JOTT is an abbreviation for 'Just One of Those Things' brought into use by Mary Rose Barrington of the SPR to give terminology to the phenomena of apparent random disappearance and reappearance of objects.

same phenomena, thus negating the possibility of practical jokes (at least by a physical entity).

As well as the day to day mysterious events Nicole was also witness to some significant one off incidents. This in particular included the strange appearance of an important document relating to a past resident on the kitchen surface. This was not the immediately previous residents and so could not have been put down to something simply having been left behind. Nicole also sighted orb like lights filling the living room along with Vanessa, and was witness to the Coke can sliding across the table in the living room that has previously been mentioned. She also reported that after she had stopped living in the Cage, on one of her return visits she had found it extremely difficult to enter the premises. This was beyond being just nervous -more like a feeling of having to 'wade' through the door. By itself this is an interesting but somewhat subjective incident – the reason why it may be evidential will be more fully explained later.

Perhaps the strangest and for that matter the best witnessed incident of all was when Nicole, Kirstine and 'Nick 'were helping Vanessa move out of the premises . There was a loud bang from upstairs heard by the three ladies who were all on the

ground floor which happened at the very instant that Nick had pulled up outside in his van and seen the shadowy figure of a lady in one of the bedroom windows. It is this sort or coordination of testimony that can very much help to strengthen a case.

As previously mentioned Kirstine Blackwell tended to often visit the premises when the residents were out to help tidy up. As well as the incidents previously mentioned there were at least two other unique incidents that Kirstine reported as being totally inexplicable. The first involved when she was tidying up in the kitchen alone and was hit by two soft objects on the back of the head. On turning round she found that two sugar sachets (previously stored with others on the opposite work surface) were lying on the floor and had apparently been the objects that had struck. This was sufficiently unnerving for her to have the urge to ring up Ms Mitchell to report it. The other incident of special note was after stacking up books in the Cage room again when alone, found them shortly afterwards to be randomly strewn all over the floor – in a way that could not have happened if the if the stack had simply collapsed. Kirstine also reported the feeling as if she was about to be pushed at the top of the stairs.

Nick a friend of the Vanessa's also tried to help

around the house when he could, and during one of these times when repairing an electrical fault at the top landing he also felt a force physically trying to push him down the stairs.

On leaving the living room for a short while, he also found that a large vase had repositioning itself without explanation from the floor of the living room into a hole that he was helping dig beneath the floorboards in a search for interesting artifacts. He witnessed the door latch move in the nursery/bedroom and the door being opened at such an angle that it appeared to be being violently moved. This not only corroborates Nicole's testimony but gives a sense that this was not simply a badly hung door – something we found no evidence for during a basic inspection during our recent visit.

As mentioned previously it was unfortunately not possible to talk to the other resident of the house during the time Ms Mitchell lived there. J.C. however has appeared on camera to be interviewed about his experiences (North London Paranormal Investigations 2012) confirming the high level of activity in the house and specifically talking about seeing a figure 'as clear as day' behind him in the bathroom on one occasion.

Before finishing this section regarding the initial outbreak of phenomena it is worth pointing out the extended timeline of these events. Since The Cage no longer has any permanent residents it has gained a good deal of publicity, a professional web site, and undoubtedly a fair number of bookings both from serious paranormal investigation groups and those who are simply curious. The sales specification, when it was put on the market in 2015 even mentioned that it is a potential paranormal business. It would therefore be possible to think in passing that an 'old mysterious' house was purchased just for that purpose. This is why it is so important to point out that every effort was made to live in the house for several years, after which it was rented out while the owner Ms Mitchell has lived in rented accommodation at different addresses including at one stage a caravan. This hardly seems to in any way be an obviously planned lifestyle choice.

When she contacted the SPR in 2010 it seemed clear in my opinion Vanessa Mitchell fully believed that her house had significant paranormal activity. The question this report needs to address is whether that belief can be justified to an outside investigator, which as previously stated can only be really achieved with a wide variety of other

witnesses.

FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS OF PARANORMAL TEAMS AND SUBSEQUENT VISITORS.

Let us first go back to the debate about whether it is a useful tool of analysis to have a series of differing people spending time at a place of paranormal reputation. Hayley Stevens in a critical review of phenomena at 'The Cage' has this to say:-

'You can't conduct an investigation in one day as there are so many data variables that you have to try and account for before you even begin to investigate allegedly anomalous phenomena. How can you study the mean temperature of a location in just one day? How can you account for regular electro-magnetic fluctuations in a building in just one day? How can you map out the normal movements of the building in just one day?'

(Stevens 2015)

Stevens is correct if the aim of an investigation is to totally overcome accepted scientific theory in just one visit and prove a place as haunted— but incorrect in the sense that most investigations should and do not even aim to achieve this. Most simply aim to observe and add to any relevant data, and to gauge the strength of a case through measurement and observation. As the pioneering scientist Nicola Tesla better puts it –

'The <scientific> man does not aim at an immediate result.His work is like that of the planter — for the future. His duty is to lay the foundation for those who are to come, and point the way'

(Tesla 1934)

Where a weakness may lie is that in apparently haunted places where this type of multiple investigations takes place, be it Chingle Hall in the 1990s or Woodchester Manor more recently, there has been to date no central point in which any agreeing or conflicting data can be collated. This is actually why I thought this exercise was long overdue.

There is one advantage however in not really

knowing what happened in previous investigations. This means there is far less potential with regards to suggestibility of specific phenomena. This was the mistake made by the 'Blue Book' of instructions at Borley that told people such things as to sit in the summerhouse and wait to see if the phantom Nun appeared. Without a complex narrative of what has been or should be seen any correlation of events becomes far more significant in the evidential sense. The limited narrative that exists about The Cage was a former witches holding cell where strange events took place. However very few observers saw or picked up much to do with what might be witches, which is actually much more in line with the known history. Ursula Kemp and her associates in fact only spent a few weeks imprisoned there before going to Chelmsford for trial and ultimately the execution of Kemp and one of her colleagues Elizabeth Bennet.

Before however looking at events that did indeed have a high degree of correlations I list a random series of anomalies which show that what the residents experienced seemed to continue after they had left.

Kevin Bennet of South East Paranormal Investigations (SEPI) reported that he and part of

his team heard bangs coming from the bathroom wall partially on request as if something was trying to make communication. Amongst other things they also experienced a pebble fly across the room whilst in the main bedroom investigator Mo Keohan heard a growling sound in the kitchen and a woman's crying coming from the lounge.

Donna Harris while leading the investigation group 'Ghost Search UK' reported that her group heard a noise as if a heavy object was being dragged across the floor in the main bedroom (when in the nursery/ bedroom next door). Nothing was found to have moved on investigation. Muffled thuds were also heard while in the living room.

Simon Ludgate, an experienced television producer heard distinct voices in the main bedroom and also experienced the swinging chain that was hanging in the cage room which had been reported at times when the place was still inhabited.

David Mayhew who organised investigations in 'The Cage' on various occasions reported amongst other things an iron moving along the floor of the downstairs cloakroom.

Added to this there is a selection of very unusual

phenomena, on public record on the internet. This includes an investigation and film made by Chris Halton of 'Haunted Earth' where during their filming in the living room a loud noise was heard and an Ouija Board (one used in other investigations and not the type of equipment they wished to use) was found to have been thrown across the cage room when previously standing in the corner (Halton 2012).

North London Paranormal Investigations reported and recorded footage immediately afterward of a table moving in front of the inwardly opening nursery bedroom door when the bedroom was empty (North London paranormal Investigations 2012).

It is fair to say that not all groups had active nights, The Ghost Club for example found very little phenomena during the night of their investigation.

Overall a significant selection of events with on the face of it no obvious normal explanation, (and only a small proportion of the unusual things that were reported during the interview and information gathering process). This in my opinion by itself shows that the phenomena in The Cage can certainly not be dismissed. Over and above these

one off events however there were certain trend events the sort of 'Similar Fact' evidence that has been supported by Alan Murdie's paper.

'SIMILAR FACT' OCCURENCES.

The Staircase

The staircase is only unusual in that it actually has a door at the bottom. Otherwise it appears normal for a house that is stated on Estate Agents specification to be largely early 1800s – likely extended over the original older holding cell.

Footsteps on the staircase seem to be the most common type of phenomena. These have been experienced by the Ghost Search team, South East Paranormal investigations, the Haunted Earth filming team, and separately by investigators David Potter and David Mayhew amongst others. Such footsteps were also a common occurrence when the house was inhabited. In the case of David Potter his experience of the footsteps were reported to occur when the door to the staircase slammed, a phenomena also reported by Nicole Kirtley when she lived there.

Whilst such footsteps were part of the original phenomena they were not a 'headline' event that were likely to have given a predisposition for any researchers to let their expectations run away with them. There is of course still a possibility that there may be something in the natural fabric of the building that cause footstep type noises to occur , (although that would not explain any incident of the door to the stairs slamming at the same time). Now that this phenomena has through multiple witnesses been identified as being so common it should give any future investigators with an understanding of old buildings a specific project to concentrate on which in itself shows the usefulness of such gathering together of data.

However collective evidence on the staircase does not end with this auditory phenomena with 'Nick ' and Kristine Blackwell identifying the sensation of something actually trying to push them down those stairs.

Could such feelings of being pushed however simply be subjective? This of course is a possible answer. When we look at the national press report regarding the investigator Chris Palmer - who was actually pushed to the extent that he fell and landed

on a fellow investigator (Mail Online 2012) the subjective theory regarding such experiences starts to fit far less comfortably with the overall data.

Lifting of latches – Opening of Bedroom Doors.

This was a phenomenon that was predominant when The Cage was inhabited by Mitchell, with all three of the initial inhabitants confirming this. The nursery / bedroom door (actually Ms Kirtley's and J.C.'s bedroom at the time) seems to have been the room where this was most frequently witnessed. Again any future investigative teams should look for normal explanations relating to uneven floors and faulty latches etc. However 'Nick', long after the house had stopped being occupied described the movement of this door as opening up at an angle as if being violently pushed which would not sit quite so comfortably with the 'quirks of an old building' theory. The Haunted Earth film team also captured a very decisive movement on video (Halton 2012). This when combined with their experiences of hearing footsteps on the stairs (mentioned earlier) makes a 'quirks of an old building' theory less likely to be the full explanation.

Poltergeist Scratches.

This refers to physical scratches on the skin (as opposed to scratching noises) and is a relatively rare type of phenomena. Perhaps the best known case was that of Eleonore Zugun a Romanian peasant girl who was investigated extensively by many of the top parapsychologists in Europe during the earlier part of the last century. To date four separate incidents of such occurrences have been reported at The Cage. These cases are of course very different to that of Zugun however, whose phenomena seemed centered around her rather than because of a person's presence in a particular building.

The first occurred to Simon Ludgate who noticed a pain in his leg immediately after leaving the building and photographed the back of his right leg as soon as he could which shows significant starching and redness when it is viewed.

The second is stronger evidentially on the basis that the lady a member of South East Paranormal Investigations was more aware of the point of impact (on her arm) as being during part of the investigation that took place in the bathroom. A photo was taken shortly after and shows that blood

has been drawn.

The third however is the most impressive of all involving a colleague of Donna Harris named 'Emma' who was assisting during an investigation. When Emma was sitting on the easy chair in the living room (wearing boots with jeans tucked inside thus protecting her legs from any likely normal source of abrasions) she suddenly felt a pain in her legs and later found that blistering and scratching had formed. The blistering was later examined by a doctor and diagnosed as being burn marks.

Potentially related to these is a forth example- a severe stabbing pain in his leg that David Mayhew felt when in the lounge at The Cage which caused some bruising. This will be discussed in the next section.

Extreme Emotional Reactions

This could potentially be the most controversial 'Similar fact occurrences' that took place, as by their nature emotional reactions are phenomena internal or subjective to the person. In much the same way however as if mediums had independently received a particular message not in the public domain, internal experiences that

correlate between non-associated groups of people at the very least can be deemed to be of 'interest' in the gathering of evidence sense.

There is undoubtedly a psychological factor in being placed in a house that is reputed to be haunted. I have however conducted investigations in such places as the haunted underground prison cells - which can be definitely categorised as more psychologically 'atmospheric' than the Cage. If we call a degree of nervousness the normal 'base line' effect in such places, the Cage seems to extend this normal effect exponentially.

Investigator Mo Keohan who had been to the cage before was suddenly reduced to tears on the stairs could not stay in the building and had to immediately arrange a lift to come from close to London to take her back home.

Investigator David Mayhew also stated he was reduced to tears after being prodded on his leg in the lounge. Simon Ludgate has described to me in detail as to how he hit one of the darkest moods he could imagine shortly after a visit. Though perhaps not as intense as those stated above members of the South East Paranormal investigations suffered from chest pains and headaches shortly after

entering the premises.

The next two examples are so very similar as to be especially significant , Mr Kim Sodergaard founder of Dansk Parasychologist Aspect one of a relatively few active research groups in Denmark, was visiting the cage as a possible prelude to making a television documentary . When he entered the main bedroom- to put it in his own words:-

"I began to feel as if my legs would not carry me anymore I bumped into the wall, into the door and could not stand still ...at one point I suddenly felt a strong hatred towards 'Jette' (a member of my team)"

Sodergaard's strange behaviour caused the others to evacuate the building with him. He then goes on to explain that:-

'I don't recall much, but I remember standing in the courtyard Then I broke down ... I started to cry uncontrollably'.

Sodergaard an experienced investigator ultimately believed he had become possessed in some way.

Let us compare this further experience of Mo Keohan again who whilst also in the main bedroom

she had been filled with a rage for no reason and had wanted to punch a fellow investigator in the face. Both experiences also strangely included the unusual perception of facial 'shape shifting' as well (i.e. the belief that the facial features of another had changed to something unworldly and bad).

If we refer back to the dark mood experiences of Ms Mitchell and potentially other residents, there does seem a strange pattern emerging – should you doubt the strength of what witness actually reported let me also add that one witness I spoke to has stated on record the fact that he/she had felt (temporarily) suicidal after paying 'The Cage' a visit. When all this is pulled together the reactions of those in the Cage seem I believe to go far beyond the normal baseline of feeling 'on edge' in a house that may be paranormally active. I therefore feel that such reactions when taken together are potentially significant of something very strange.

What that 'very strange' thing is, is of course open to debate. It could be something paranormal or even an unusual but natural atmospheric effect in the building, but which ever they are such a collection of extreme emotional reactions cannot be dismissed out of hand as not being related.

EMF Hotspots.

EMF detectors measure not surprisingly electromagnetic frequency nothing more and nothing less. What is picked up also depends on the frequencies an individual piece of equipment is effective at. With that in mind any 'Similar Fact' occurrences can only be an approximation.

Those provisos being set both Tony Wright and Simon Ludgate found significant EMF variations with meters placed on the stairs, while Ludgate and North London paranormal Investigations found similar variations in the Cage area. In some instances such variations appeared to approximately come at the request of the investigator. This is another obvious pointer for further research, by a team who specialises and understands EMF effects fully.

OTHER DATA.

Information Psychically Retrieved.

As I mentioned during the methodology at the start, information picked up from séances, mediums etc.

was excluded from the main comparison points of this project. There was a large amount of such information but it did not tend to fit a particular pattern. Entities reported to have been communicated with included 'Marcus' 'Joshua' and Mathew Hopkins the infamous witch finder general but with no obvious similarity of communication between groups. Perhaps surprising Ursula Kemp was also only reported the once. There was however an underlying feeling that a former more recent resident may have been trying to communicate , though nothing was specifically gained in communications that was not already known .

Perhaps the situation from a psychics point of view was best summed up from the medium Donna Harris, who stated that she felt that any 'spirits' she picked up during a table tilting experiment were not centred on any particular place and could have been picked up similarly in other venues . Ms Harris also reported what seemed to be the most impressive 'hit' in apparently psychically gathered previously unknown information. When on her initial visit she identified as a communicator a local man who had died in a road accident. This was done in sufficient detail for the man to be recognised by Vanessa Mitchell. Again however this person had

no direct connection with the building.

Photographs

Photographs have a relatively poor track record for proving the paranormal. this started in the late 19th early 20th century when very obviously faked photographs were accepted initially as evidence of physical mediumship and has continued to more modern times with the famous Ghost Club photo of the 'Hooded Monk' of Queens House Greenwich has more recently been realized as a likely strange effect created by the slow shutter exposure (Wilson 1995). Any photographic evidence that remains without obvious explanation should be therefore be seen as a bonus.

A series of photographs did however become closely associated with the phenomena when it first came into the public eye. These were photos taken by psychic photographer Ron Bowers and were featured for example as part of a discussion on the phenomena on ITV's This Morning TV shown in 2012.

The photography of Bowers is by no means exclusive to The Cage. He has taken photographs

with clear anomalous images at various ‘haunted’ sites. When we inspected the original photographic data in 2010 we confirmed that they were a true and untampered with image of whatever was in front of the lens. The possibility of acetate transparencies attached to the lens was raised by Steve Parsons who helped with the inspection, but without reference to how Bowers took his images this could only be a theory.

In the meantime however ‘The Night Watchman Chronicles’ came up with the theory of how Bowers photographs were taken. This is an American web site normally sympathetic to Spiritualism – and which initially helped Bowers publish an online book (Schumacher & Bowers 2007).

It subsequently published a theory of Bowers techniques based on anonymous sources (Schumacher–undated). In brief the accusation were that since Bower’s camera allowed a screw on filter lens it made it relatively easy to add an acetate image already attached to the filter. I have questioned both Christine Schumacher of Night Watchman Chronicles and the anonymous source, as well as receiving further comment from Bowers.

The key fact however that was not addressed by

Bowers was that the anonymous source had analyzed images of the same 'spirit' taken by Bowers shortly after each other, and the one thing that does seem clear is that the 'spirit' never seems to change shape and when photos are taken in quick sequence and always seems to 'stick' to the same part of the photograph as an acetate transparency would do. Whilst anonymous sources can be tricky to cross examine, in this case I think the facts seem to speak for themselves, and these photos I believe should not be considered to be evidential of paranormal activity as things currently stand. What is very much worth noting however is that Bowers work is an independent project whose validity or otherwise would have no effect on the strength of other parts of this case.

CONCLUSION

This was a fascinating experiment in witness testimony in many ways, particularly because it took the recorded phenomena in directions not really expected. The lack of a 'Witches' narrative in the evidence and a relative shortage of apparitions was more than made up for by the strength and repetition of differing types of 'phenomena' .

A number of the initial witnesses including Ms Mitchell seem primarily convinced by an 'afterlife' paranormal theory and this is of course a clear possibility – but without an identifiable intelligent source it would be impossible at this stage to favour one 'paranormal' theory over another.

It has many of the facets of a poltergeist but seems to be centered round a building rather than any one person, which would make it closest to what Gauld and Cornell refer to as being an 'Intermediate Case' (Gauld and Cornell 1979) one that contains elements of poltergeists and traditional hauntings .

It is also possible that while differing groups of people may be able to experience the same phenomena, any attempt at communications may only come (assuming an afterlife theory) when both parties become more familiar with each other. Referring back to the Enfield Poltergeist for example it was only after a spate of apparently meaningless random marble and bricks being thrown and chairs being moved that some kind of communication was established. (Gauld and Cornell 1979)

Perhaps one of the closest matches to the phenomena so far at 'The Cage' is one discussed

by Gauld and Cornell also affecting a smallish House at Prestonville Rd Brighton between 1882-& 1889 and which again had a suicide in the not too distant past. Gauld and Cornell state that:-

'A woman had a few years before hanged herself in the upstairs bedroom.... The story was discovered from reports of the inquest to be true.'

(Gauld and Cornell 1979 P187-189)

Phenomena in this case extended primarily to what Gauld and Cornell described as 'imitative noises' -differing sets of witnesses heard such things as footsteps , doors banging sounds of furniture moving as well as seeing door handles turn . What they call 'imitative noises' is surely no different to the 'Similar Facts' evidence we have been discussing. As with 'The Cage' no clear connection was ever established between any one 'entity' and the phenomena in the Brighton case. The fact that such similar trends have been noted in the past again strengthens our current witness testimony.

I noted at the start of this report that witness statements in themselves should not be expected to overturn the views of those with scepticism as to the existence of things beyond current science.

What such testimony should show beyond doubt is that a case such as this – one which has caused some distress -should neither be ridiculed nor dismissed out of hand even by those not currently fully convinced. The fact that ‘similar fact ‘evidence has clearly been shown, has identified the strange phenomena more clearly and can make further investigation more focused. It would also be a useful plan if any future investigations collated reports and sent them back to a central point.

At this point in time however the Cage undoubtedly remains a place where much of the phenomena remains unexplained, some is especially unusual, and witnesses from so many sources add a persuasive consistency to the testimonies of Vanessa Mitchell and the other full time inhabitants.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND POSSIBLE FUTURE RESEARCH

It would sadly be impossible to list all the people individually that have helped compile this report, and I hope they will accept my collective thanks. Particular thanks however would go to Vanessa Mitchell the owner of the Cage for allowing unhindered access to the premises as well as

introducing me to some witnesses .To Rosie Murdie whose assistance was invaluable in the face to face interviews, and to the Survival Research Committee of the 'Society for Psychical Research' whose support was of a great help in bringing this report about. This interim report has flagged up areas of future research which I hope would be carried out either by myself or by others in the future. It is also likely of course that I have not succeeded in contacting all past witnesses to any phenomena at the Cage.

To continue this process I would be most interested if any new groups or individuals who have had any unusual experiences at the 'Cage' would wish to contact me, or for that matter those with general comments on this piece of research.

jfraserghosthunting@hotmail.co.uk

The Wild Ride: A Short History of Witchcraft in the Middle Ages

David Sivier

Witchcraft has, since the 1970s, become one of the most popular subjects for historians. Although the study of witchcraft as a historical phenomenon can be traced back to the 19th century and the works of liberal, rationalist scholars such as Jules Garinet in France, and Henry Charles Lea in America, interest in it has increased immensely over the past four decades so that it is now one of the major topics for historical research.

This revival of interest in witchcraft was partly caused by a general change of emphasis in history itself, as historians became increasingly interested not just in political events but also in reconstructing past worldviews. Witchcraft and magic were investigated because of their importance to the *mentalite* – the worldview – of ancient, medieval and early modern Europe. One of the first major works based on this approach to magic was Keith Thomas' 1971 *Religion and the Decline of Magic*,

which explored the role magic played in 16th and 17th century English popular belief.

Other major factors for the renewed interest in witchcraft have been feminism, and women's and gender history, which have investigated witchcraft and particularly the witch-hunting period for its construction of supernatural female identity and threat, and gender power relations, and contemporary neo-Paganism.

Although contemporary scholars of neo-Paganism such as Dr. Ron Hutton have suggested that modern paganism is largely the product of the late 19th century occult revival, contemporary witchcraft, Wicca, viewed itself as a survival of a medieval non-Christian witch cult, based to a large extent on Margaret Murray's 1930 book, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*. While Murray's view that medieval witchcraft was the survival of an ancient, Palaeolithic cult of the horned god involving the ritual murder after seven years of sacred kings, analogous to the institution of sacred kings in the traditional religions of Nilotic African peoples has been thorough discredited, nevertheless it has led to a revival of interest in witchcraft at the popular and academic level. Historians are also interested in witchcraft because of the insight it can also give

to the development of institutional persecution, and the social and political causes of similar witch hunts in modern times, such as that of McCarthyite America and Stalinist Russia.

There is also the fascination of particular politically motivated witch trials, such as those of the Templars and Giles de Retz. However, rather than discuss these I shall attempt here to give a general description of the rise of the classic image of the witch during the Middle Ages and the change from a relatively sceptical attitude towards witchcraft at the beginning of the Middle Ages to belief in them and the necessity of mass persecution in the end.

Although the Middle Ages are popularly considered to be the great age of the witch hunts, this is largely the product of 19th century liberal, anticlerical writers such as Lea, who viewed the Roman Catholic church (and specifically the Inquisition) as an oppressive force that kept humanity in terror and superstition. This view has now been extensively critiqued by subsequent historians.

The great age of persecution for witchcraft was the 16th and 17th centuries. The systematic persecution of witches only emerged in the 15th century when it was increasingly seen as a serious threat through

the belief that the witch had formed a pact with Satan. Indeed, recent historians stress that the Middle Ages were a period of scepticism and rationalism, rather than superstitious credulity. Jean Claude Bologne has pointed out that the majority of *grimoires* – spell books – date from the 16th to the 19th centuries, rather than the Middle Ages, and that the goal of the medieval intellectual was to find the 'trick' within the apparently miraculous, and represent as natural what appeared to violate nature. For him, no one is more sceptical towards miracles than a theologian. There was considerable debate about the presumed powers of demons, for example. As only God could create new creatures, or change existing creatures into something else, this was considered impossible for demons. When demons did appear to perform such miracles, they were merely illusions.

Nevertheless, there was certainly a belief in witches and the efficacy of certain types of magic in the Middle Ages, and this belief became progressively stronger throughout the medieval period. The classic image of the witch that had emerged by the end of the Middle Ages, according to historians such as Jeffrey Burton Russell, was comprised of a number of elements drawn from contemporary sorcery, such as cannibalism and the invocation of

demons; folklore, such as membership of a magical society that could pass through closed doors or walls; heresy, such as orgies, feasting and the definition of witchcraft as a sect, and contemporary theology, such as the notion of pact and the peculiar mark the Devil was supposed to leave on the witch's body.

Witchcraft was certainly known and legislated against in the ancient world. The Roman *Twelve Tables* of traditional law made the utterance of a *malum carmen* – a harmful spell – an offence. The Roman poet Horace describes in his *Epodes* the sacrifice of a young boy by the witch, Canidia, and her activities with a fellow witch gathering herbs and other material for magic in a cemetery reserved for slaves on the outskirts of Rome. Although fictional, Canidia was based on real women practicing magic in the slums of Rome, in a magical underground threatened by harsh legislation. As Christianity expanded and confronted paganism in the late Roman empire and succeeding medieval states, so elements of ancient paganism became assimilated to nascent Christian witch beliefs. These included the hunting festivals dedicated to Diana held on the 1st January, which saw feasting and masquerades involving transvestism, in which some people believed that they had been turned

into animals. These festivals have been seen as a continuation of the Roman bacchanalia and the precursor of the witches' sabbat.

Another source of the emergent belief in witches was the ancient belief in night-flying, malignant spirits, the striga and lamia, which sucked human blood. Originally conceived as spirits, rather than people, the distinction began to break down in the 6th century when they were increasingly seen as human women. However, there was also some scepticism regarding their existence. An edict of Rothari of 643 prohibited the burning of women for cannibalism because flying to the crime was impossible. There was also legislation to prevent false accusations of witchcraft against an innocent person punishable with a fine, and prohibited mob violence against suspected witches. The Carolingian capitulary for Saxony of 775-90 similarly enacts penalties for violence against suspected witches, prescribing death for the man, deceived by the Devil, who believed in the existence of witches and so burned the alleged witch to death.

Although there was a strong belief in magic, secular law codes largely legislated against it as crimes against people and property similar to non-

supernatural crimes. Frankish legislation against the stormbringers, who raised storms to destroy crops, gave them the same punishment as those, who destroyed them in non-supernatural ways.

It was also in the Sixth century that the idea of a pact between the witch and the Devil first appeared. This was introduced into western Europe from Byzantium in the tale of Theophilus. Theophilus was a priest and archdeacon in Cilicia, who refused elevation to a bishopric. This started off a series of rumours about him, which provoked the new bishop to deprive Theophilus of his offices. He then approached a necromancer to restore his position in the church. This necromancer took him to a crossroads at night, where he summoned up the Devil, with whom Theophilus then made a pact. The next day the bishop did indeed restore Theophilus to his positions as priest and archdeacon. However, according to the legend, Theophilus became increasingly troubled by his conscience, praying and fasting for forty days until the Virgin Mary appeared to him in a dream to tell him that Christ had forgiven him. The next day, Sunday, he went to church, publicly confessed to his pact with the Devil before the bishop and showed him the deed between himself and Lucifer. This was torn up and burned, Theophilus was given absolution and

reconciled to the church, only to be taken ill with a fever and die three days later. The story was originally written by Eutychianus in the Sixth century, and translated into Latin two centuries later in the Eighth. While this was originally just one element in the witch belief, it gained increasing prominence, as society became progressively feudalised. The Synod of Paris of 829, citing Leviticus and Exodus, declared that no sorcerer should be allowed to live and that the king should punish those who did harm by transferring their loyalty to Satan.

The most influential piece of early medieval witchcraft legislation was the *Canon Episcopi*, first included in a 906 book by Regino of Prom, and then in the penitential, the *Corrector*, and the *Decretal*, both by Burchard of Worms of 1008-12. This was highly influential subsequently being incorporated into the *Decretals* of Ivo of Chartres and Gratian, thus entering Canon Law. It was believed to be a canon from the council of Ancyra of 314, but instead appears to have been a Carolingian capitulary. It orders bishops and their clergy to remove from their parishes, those who work magic and people, who believe that they ride out at night with Diana, or in the version used by the *Corrector*, the witch Holda. These people,

mostly women, believed that they joined other people in a company that included humans and demons in the guise of women, to worship Diana instead of Christ.

Particularly significant for the development of the witch belief was the development of various heretical groups in western Christendom from the Tenth century onwards. This began with the prosecution of a group of heretics at Orleans by Robert II in 1022. These were supposed to have held underground orgies in which they worshipped the Devil, burning the bodies of the children conceived and using their ashes in a blasphemous parody of the Christian eucharist.

These accusations of cannibalism, ritual sacrifice and unnatural sex seem to have been derived from ancient Roman accusations against the early Christians, which were attacked and refuted by the early Christian apologists, some of whom believed that Gnostic sects such as the Marcionites really did perform such acts. These accusations were then repeated against Dualist heretical groups, such as the Euchites, Messalians and Bogomils when they emerged in the Tenth century and then the Cathars in Twelfth century France. The prosecution of these groups introduced into the

medieval idea of witchcraft the idea of orgies, and that they were also believed to worship the Devil as the creator of the material world. Other elements from the supposed activities of the Cathars also entered the conceptions of witchcraft, such as the *osculum infanum*, the obscene kiss on the backside with which the witches paid homage to the Devil, and the term 'synagogue' to describe their meetings. These first appear in a description of a Cathar meeting by Walter Map of about 1182. Indeed, by the Fourteenth century 'synagogue' was the most popular term to describe witches' assemblies, and remained so until it was replaced by 'sabbat' in the mid-Fifteenth century. While the Cathars themselves were rigorously ascetic due to their perception of matter as intrinsically evil, the Twelfth century saw the rise of a number of radical antinomian sects, such as the Amalricians, the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and the Apostolici, who believed that as members fo the true church, they were unable to sin and so free to gratify themselves without any concern for conventional morality.

Scholastic philosophy also led to innovations in the intellectual conception of witchcraft. Their influence here was less in what they had to say regarding witchcraft than in the replacement of the earlier, Neo-Platonic intellectual worldview with

Aristotelianism. With the exception of William of Auvergne, the Scholastics were little interested in witchcraft, and when they did discuss it, their views were very much in the tradition of the early Middle Ages. Neo-Platonism was generally less hostile to magic through its belief that everything in the universe was interrelated and united in a cosmic world soul through a system of correspondences that linked microcosm to macrocosm, sympathy and antipathy. This worldview allowed for action at a distance through natural magic without the intervention of supernatural agencies.

The Aristotelianism of the Scholastics, and particular St. Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, saw physical contact as the cause of action, and ruled out action at a distance through sympathy-antipathy and the world soul. Thus, marvelous effects were regarded less as the product of natural laws, but as the result of supernatural, particularly demonic, intervention. It thus reinforced the Augustinian view that all magic was essentially demonic, and allowed magic to be associated increasingly closely with witchcraft.

The Scholastics also developed the idea of the pact between the sorcerer and demons, by which they magician was able to perform his magic. For

Albertus Magnus there were two forms of pact, explicit and implicit. An explicit pact was made with the Devil face to face. In an implicit pact, the magician performed actions through demonic aid, which could only be achieved through the performance of some service to the demons involved. William of Auvergne argued that all magic was based on implicit pact, a fact that, to Aquinas, made all magic, even astrology, evil. Popular folklore also had an effect on scholastic views of the pact by insisting on the inferior position of the human party. Previous conceptions had seen both demons and humans as bargaining more or less equally. However, this view was modified so that the pact was seen less as a bargain between equals than as an act of homage by the witch or sorcerer to the Devil.

Paradoxically, the Twelfth century renaissance may also have assisted the rise of the belief in witchcraft through the discovery and translation of Arabic scientific texts. Despite the rationalist nature of many of these works, they also included astrological texts, such as the Picatrix, that gave instructions on how the celestial spirits could be brought down to earth to work for the magician. Thus scientific development also included elements of magic that reinforced the belief in the activities of

spirits and demons in the world.

Political and societal forces also contributed to the rise of witchcraft and witch hunting from the Twelfth century onwards. Medieval society underwent considerable change in this period, and the social and intellectual challenges created by the rise of the towns, the revival of learning, and the breakdown of traditional notions of Christian unity through the struggles between popes and emperors and between nations and kingdoms created a sense of dislocation and crisis that expressed itself in the search for obvious sources of attack, real or perceived, on Christendom, such as witches. This sense of crisis may have become particularly acute in the Fourteenth century through the impact of the Black Death and the decline of Scholasticism and the rise of the scepticism of William of Ockham.

Another major development in the witch belief was the idea that witches had sex with the Devil at their meetings. The belief in the existence of demons – incubi and succubi – that had sex with humans was ancient, while the idea that heretics or witches held orgies dated back to the Eleventh Century. The idea that they had sex with the Devil himself was new, taken from contemporary folklore. These witches were mostly considered to be women due

to the medieval conception that women were morally weaker than men.

The Scholastics, however, tended to be conservative in their views about the sexual activities of witches, and generally saw sex with demons occurring not at witches' meetings but in the cases of the incubi and succubi, who had sex with sleeping humans. Both of the scholastics, who had the most influence on subsequent conceptions of witchcraft, William of Auvergne and Aquinas, had very traditional views regarding them. William of Auvergne considered that the ride with Herodias or Diana was real, but performed by demons, not women. These demons were worshipped by the magicians, who made pacts with them. Aquinas, however, considered, the night flight an illusion. The Scholastics generally considered that while demons could produce the effects of miracles, this was done either through natural means or was illusory. They could not really change individuals' shapes, nor could they transport humans through the air except in rare cases when they had God's explicit permission. As for the pact, Aquinas believed that while the witch or magician was guilty of making an implicit pact with demons, he doubted whether anyone had ever made an explicit pact. Aquinas' ideas thus differed considerable from

popular notions of witchcraft, and he was not responsible for the increased persecution of witches in the later Middle Ages.

Official attitudes to witchcraft and religious dissent also became more severe from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth centuries. In 1080 Pope Gregory VII wrote to King Harald of Denmark urging him not to blame unfortunate women for sickness, frosts and other disasters. This moderate attitude changed, however, as the authorities became increasingly harsh and persecutory. The reasons for this change were partly theological and partly due to the revival of Roman law.

St. Augustine and Aquinas provided the theological justification for the use of force against heretics and religious dissenters. Augustine considered that the individual had no right to dissent, as error had no rights and ignorance of God's law was no excuse. Aquinas had at one point been inclined to assert the rights of conscience, but in the end argued against it as he believed that heresy was the result of criminal negligence. It was also felt that heresy was treason, which had been punishable by death in the Roman Empire. The legal codes of the Christian Roman emperors, Theodosius and Justinian, declared that heresy was *lese majeste*

against Christ, so deserved death far more than mere treason against an earthly lord.

Burning was also increasingly adopted as the punishment for heresy and sorcery in the Thirteenth century. It was adopted as the punishment for such crimes in the Empire in the *Treuga Henrici* of 1224, and subsequently incorporated into the laws of imperial cities such as Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck. Burning was adopted as the punishment for witchcraft based on the trials for heresy, rather than sorcery. It was theologically justified through analogies with the purificatory fires in the Old and New Testaments. It was also adopted as the replacement for the trial by ordeal that was finally outlawed by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. The burning of heretics was, however, unusual in the Eleventh and 12th centuries. Its incorporation into canon law was due to the endorsement of Frederick II's policies against heretics in 1224, 1231, 1238 and 1239 by Honorius III, the council of Toulouse, and Gregory IX. It finally became canon law through its incorporation in Gregory's collection of decretals in 1234.

Another major innovation affecting the judicial investigation of witchcraft was the revival of the use of torture. Against, this was due to the revival of

Roman law. Roman imperial law provided for the use of torture, and it was incorporated into Justinian's *Digest*. By contrast, Germanic law did not permit torture, and the church explicitly condemned it from the time of the early church to Gratian. The use of torture was, however, revived by both ecclesiastical and secular courts following the rediscovery of Justinian's *Digest* in the Eleventh century. In 1252 Innocent IV ordered civil authorities to use torture against heretics as long as it did not kill or injure them.

The papacy also responded to the threat of heresy with the establishment of the Inquisition by Gregory IX. Originally the persecution of heretics was the responsibility of the episcopal courts. After the end of the Albigensian Crusade in 1229, Gregory passed a series of legislation establishing the Inquisition and entrusting its operation to the mendicant orders, particularly the Dominicans. In 1233 Konrad of Marburg was appointed papal inquisitor in Germany, and two years later in 1235 Robert le Bougre was appointed to the same office for France. The manuals written for the Inquisition from the 1230s included witchcraft as well as other forms of heresy. Anxious to extend their powers, the Inquisition attempted to persuade Pope Alexander IV to allow them to investigate sorcery as

well. He refused, except for cases where sorcery involved heresy. As a result, the Inquisition was anxious to prove that sorcery included heresy when it could.

The procedure adopted by the Inquisition was strongly biased against the accused, involving torture, anonymity for accusers and witnesses against the accused, the use of informers, refusal to hear witnesses for the defence, lack of legal representation fro the accused. The charges against them were also deliberately read to them in the vernacular in a faulty translation from the Latin, so that their replies could be placed against the original Latin, often to the opposite effect of what the prisoner had said. Some scepticism remained, however. Nicholas of Oresme distinguished between natural and demonic magic, and considered strange events to be better explained through natural magic. Demons were active in the world, but their activities were rare and confessions of witchcraft should be treated with scepticism because they were obtained through torture or the threat of torture. Nevertheless, the activities of the Inquisition expanded. Pope John in 1326/7 authorised it to act against sorcerers because they had 'made a pact with hell'.

The trial of Anne-Marie de Georgel and Catherine Delort of Toulouse in June 1335 also saw the addition of new elements to the witch belief. Although the Anglo-Saxon *Bald's Leechbook* contains a recipe for a salve against 'women who copulate with the Devil', the first account of sex between the witch and Satan is that of Anne-Marie de Georgel. Her account is also the first time the activities of witches in collecting material from cemeteries in order to make poisons and spells is mentioned. The trial also saw the introduction of pressure on the accused to implicate others as Catherine Delort was asked under torture to name the other witches.

Other trials in the Fourteenth century saw the emergence of the ideas that witches performed a ritual dance and the appearance of the witch's familiar. This appears to be derived from the fairy of folklore, which was assumed to be a demon, and then attached to the witch through Thirteenth century popular belief.

Episcopal and secular courts were just as active in attacking witchcraft as the Inquisition, however. In the Fourteenth century, the parlement of Paris considered magic a civil crime and most sorcery trials were held in secular courts. Similarly , the

accusations of witchcraft against Alice Perrers were first made in the English parliament in 1376. Nevertheless, the scepticism of the *Canon Episcopi* still remained in the works of some authorities, some of whom extended it still further. Antonio Guaineri, the author of a medical treatise on witchcraft, considered the incubus a psychological illusion caused by a physical disorder. Moreover, witches were considered a distinct sect, and often confused with the Cathars and Waldensians.

During the Fifteenth century, however, the number of prosecutions for witchcraft increased dramatically. The emphasis changed from finding individual suspects to mass witch hunts, and the Inquisition was empowered to act against sorcerers, who were considered as witches, by Popes Eugenius IV, Nicholas V and, notoriously, Innocent VIII, whose bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus* gave full support to the infamous inquisitors Henrich Institoris and Jacob Sprenger. This expansion of belief in witchcraft may have been due to the revival of Neo-Platonism in Renaissance Humanism, which made magic intellectually plausible. It has also been suggested that printing also assisted the spread of the belief in witchcraft through the greater availability of theological materials on it. The first printed book on

witchcraft, the *Fortalicium Fidei*, was published in 1464. It may also have expanded due to the increased desire for ecclesiastical reform that culminated in the Reformation.

Institoris and Sprenger were the authors of the notorious witch-hunting manual, the *Malleus Maleficarum*. This gave full credence to the existence and powers of witches, countering the scepticism of the *Canon Episcopi* with the claim that contemporary witches were different from those of earlier centuries, whose wild rides were indeed illusory. Institoris' ruthless pursuit of his suspects eventually alienated Sprenger and the rest of the church. The Dominican order condemned him for procedural irregularities, while the Bishop of Innsbruck described him as 'completely childish' and released 50 of his prisoners. Nevertheless, an increasing number of other theorists shared Institoris' and Sprenger's belief in witches and the reality of their powers. These theorists created the final image of the witch. For example, the broom first appears as the vehicle used by witches in their flight in an illustration in the margin of a book by Martin le Franc in 1451. Scepticism remained. Nicholas of Cusa, for example, considered that women, who confessed to the crimes of witchcraft were mad. Despite this, the rise in prosecutions in

witchcraft and the increasing credence given to its reality created the necessary conditions for the massive witch hunts of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries.

Religious Education and the Paranormal: Discussing Anomalous and Exceptional Experiences in the R.E. Classroom

Jack Hunter

In recent years, scholarly attention in academic religious studies has shifted towards a focus on paranormal topics as an avenue for deepening our understanding of religion more generally. Jeffrey J. Kripal, for instance, has argued in his books *Authors of the Impossible* (2010) and *Mutants and Mystics* (2011), that the paranormal is 'our secret in plain sight,' and that it is deeply entwined in the histories of many of the world's religions. Historian of religion Darryl Caterine (2011) has similarly recently referred to the paranormal as a modern analogue of religion, and, slightly earlier, Emmons & Sobal (1981) have suggested that paranormal beliefs serve as functional alternatives to traditional religious beliefs. There is ample reason, therefore,

to take the paranormal seriously in the context of the study of religion (Laycock, 2015a, 2015b).

It should also be recalled than many religions are built around the extraordinary experiences, preternatural charisma and miraculous abilities of their founders: think, for example, of Moses' encounter with YHWE on Mount Sinai, the angel Jibrail's revelation of the Qu'ran to the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh), Guru Nanak's visionary revelation of the oneness of Waheguru, or the many miracles (temporary suspensions of the laws of nature), performed by Jesus Christ, and recorded in the Christian Gospels. Many more recent religious developments also have their origins in ostensibly paranormal experiences and phenomena, see especially Spiritualism, Mormonism, and a range of UFO religions, such as Raelianism and the Aetherius Society.

For many, however, paranormal and religious belief are viewed as something that ought to be eradicated, as a form of 'pseudoscientific,' or even 'pre-scientific,' thought.¹

1 A perspective that has been inherited, almost in its entirety, from Nineteenth Century social-evolutionary

such as Richard Dawkins and James 'The Amazing' Randi, are particularly vocal in this regard. In a 1998 article on the paranormal, for instance, Dawkins concludes quite certainly that '[t]he paranormal is bunk,' and Randi is famous for denouncing all paranormal claims as 'Woo-Woo' (whatever that might actually mean). And yet, in spite of such denunciations, claims and accounts of paranormal experiences and phenomena are still extraordinarily common: no amount of labeling such claims as 'bunk' and 'woo' rids us of the fact that people do indeed seem to have genuine anomalous experiences (Castro, Burrows & Wooffitt, 2014), and that these experiences often play an important and transformative role in peoples' lives (Kennedy et al., 1994), regardless of their ultimate ontological reality. The paranormal is also deeply enmeshed within our popular culture, it is everywhere (Kripal, 2011).

Any account of religion, including the teaching of Religious Education in schools (Holt, 2014), therefore, ought to be able to deal with such apparent supernatural manifestations in a critical

theorists like J.G. Frazer, E.B. Tylor and Herbert Spencer.

but open minded manner. Once we have recognised the connection between religion and the paranormal,¹ the question becomes 'how should we face up to, and then teach about, the extraordinary nature of the foundations of the world's religions, as well as the paranormal experiences of pupils in school?'

This paper will explore some of the ways in which paranormal themes might be used as a means to promote deeper thinking about a range of topics in the secondary religious education classroom, as well as some of the reasons why Religious Education teachers might consider engaging with paranormal themes in their lessons.

Experiencing the Paranormal in Childhood

In addition to the links between the paranormal and the origins of the world's religious systems, there is yet another reason that Secondary R.E. teachers

1 I would suggest that they might both be understood as manifestations of the same phenomenon, with religion being the institutionalised or domesticated, form of the paranormal.

might consider taking an interest in the paranormal. It is probable that many young people will encounter a wide range of paranormal themes over the course of their social and personal development, whether through ghost stories and popular movies, or accounts of paranormal experiences and beliefs related to them by friends, family members and parents (Braswell, Rosengren & Berenbaum, 2012).

Research has also found that children are particularly prone to anomalous, transpersonal and religious experiences (Armstrong, 1984; Tamminen, 1994, p. 66; Hoffman, 1998; Hart, 2004). Indeed, my own exploratory classroom based research with Year 7 pupils at a large Secondary School in Shropshire found that, in a sample of 3 R.E. classes (75 pupils), 48% claimed to have had an experience that they thought was paranormal, and 62% claimed to believe in the paranormal. These are particularly high percentages, especially when compared to the number of pupils who claimed to be religious 28% (Hunter, forthcoming). This data, although relying on a relatively small sample size, suggests that paranormal beliefs and experiences

are more prevalent than traditional religious beliefs.

It the author's contention that it might be useful for Religious Education classrooms to provide a safe and supportive environment within which young people can make sense of such experiences and ground them within a wider conceptual framework. An exploration of such experiences in the classroom could be understood as an important aspect of the development of children's spirituality, which is a fundamental requirement of Religious Education teaching in schools (see OFSTED, 2015 and Hay, 1998 for a discussion of the importance of spirituality in education, for example).

All too often paranormal experiences are understood as delusional, or as the product of underlying psychopathology in mainstream Western culture, while other cultural and sub-cultural systems provide alternative explanatory frameworks that might be helpful (and perhaps less distressing), for those who are prone to anomalous experiences (Grof & Grof, 1989). R.E. teachers might, therefore, consider providing a broad range of possible interpretations of paranormal experiences, perhaps taking influence from the

open-minded approach outlined in the undergraduate textbook *Anomalistic Psychology* (2012), which presents a refreshingly pluralistic perspective on anomalous experience without bias towards any particular interpretation or explanation.¹ Such an approach might allow young people to form their own, critical and well informed, conclusions about the nature of their own experiences, as well as those of others (including the kinds of experiences recorded in the world's religious traditions).

Constructivist Pedagogies and Dreams

One method by which the extraordinary aspect of religion might be approached in the classroom setting is through the implementation of a constructivist approach to teaching and learning, building on the educational theories of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, that builds new learning onto the foundations of pupils' own prior knowledge and understanding (Grimmitt, 2000). One approach to

1 Promisingly, *Anomalistic Psychology* does have a place in some A-level psychology curricula.

teaching about unusual experiences in the context of Religious Education scholarship is that advocated by Kate Adams (2001, 2003, 2008), who has suggested that pupils' own dreams, and their experiences within them, might provide a useful framework for developing an understanding of the role of religious experience in the world religions. She writes:

The topic of dreams can [...] contribute to those aspects of the curriculum that relate to learning about religion: learning about factual and conceptual aspects of religion in ways that are relevant to children [...] The specific value of [dreams] in R.E. Lies in its experiential realm, that is, in the realm of some of the children's experience, which can be used to enhance the effectiveness of teaching (Adams, 2008, p. 62).

In line with the constructivist framework, then, using pupils' own dream experiences as a gateway to understanding difficult concepts in Religious Education (one example might be the role of

prophetic dreams, or of visions, in religious scriptures), is effective precisely because it allows pupils to form links between the subject matter and their own personal experiences.

Alternative Pedagogies for Discussing Anomalous Experience in R.E.

Another possible avenue towards achieving this goal might be to employ a completely different model of learning to the classical learning theories and pedagogies discussed in the previous sections. For example, an alternative pedagogy for R.E. can be found in Jeffrey Kripal's proposal for an 'initiatory approach' to the study of religion. Kripal argues that

'[...] a truly effective pedagogy needs to identify the existential costs of the modern study of religion' and that both teachers and students should 'own up to the radicalism of what we are actually doing in the study of religion'

(Kripal, 2014, p. xii).

The radicalism Kripal refers to here is R.E.'s exploration of alternative modes of conceiving of and understanding the world around us. In other words, good teaching of R.E. ought to embrace this element of openly exploring the experience of religious adherents, rather than focussing solely on dry doctrine and 'know-that' facts. Through focussing specifically on the experiential dimension of religion, and the possibility of other ontological systems, pupils will encounter a breadth of religious experience, from the everyday experience of religious worship, to much more extravagant experiences of transcendence and communion with the divine.

Kripal's course is intended for University level students of comparative religion, but nevertheless I feel that his call for a more immersive, radical and existentially aware mode of teaching and learning about religion could be of benefit to secondary school teaching as well. There must be a way of making the learning experience more meaningful and interesting to young people, a way of allowing them access to alternative modes of understanding

the world - and this could be through relating the learning back to their own personal experiences, making it relevant to their lives, and encouraging pupils to think about what it means to them and their own perspective on the world.

Experiential R.E.

David Hay (2000), for example, has suggested some possible methods by which this kind of approach could be introduced into the classroom with activities that challenge pupils visual perceptions and allow them to think in different ways about the things they perceive. Hay writes:

Properly conducted [R.E. teaching] is more like deconstruction or de-indoctrination, helping to question hidden cultural assumptions that constrain our possibilities as human beings (Hay, 2000, p. 74).

Hay further suggests that R.E. teachers have three tasks that they must attend to:

- * Helping students to keep an open mind.
- * Exploring different ways of seeing.
- * Encouraging immediacy of awareness (Hay, 2000, pp. 74-77).

Through an emphasis on the experiential dimension of religion, it should be possible to foster a more tacit understanding of differing religious perspectives, including a wide range of anomalous experiences, and so move away from purely explicit, fact-based, learning - we can approach a dimension of knowledge and understanding that cannot be expressed in any other way. Such an approach fits comfortably into an emerging approach to the study of religion that goes by the label 'cognitive, empathetic engagement' (see below), which seeks to promote an open-minded, exploratory, non-dogmatic and reflexive approach to the study of religion. Perhaps through this kind of approach it might be possible to foster an attitude of respect and understanding relating to anomalous experiences (as well as towards religion and different modes of conceiving of the world), which

can often play an important role in the lives of many people.

Participatory Learning: An Ethnographic Approach

Another example could be drawn from anthropology, and specifically the work of Edith Turner, who has argued in favour of an experiential approach to the study of religion (Turner, 1998). Turner argues that in order to truly understand a religious system, it is essential to experience it in as complete and immersive a way as possible, arguing that 'anthropologists need training to see what the Natives see' (Turner, 1993, p.11). This call has also been echoed in the work of Fiona Bowie (2013), who has coined the term 'cognitive, empathetic engagement' to refer to an active process of cognitive participation in alternative ontological systems in order to achieve an 'insider,' or 'near-insider' perspective.

Just as Turner and Bowie call for anthropologists to 'see what the Natives see,' so R.E. teachers might aim to encourage pupils to see the world through

the eyes of the religion under study. In this way the study of religion can become more meaningful to the pupils, embracing what Kripal referred to as the 'existential' dimension, with learning having a basis in personal experience, as a grounding for understanding the personal experiences of others. Perhaps it might be possible to incorporate more immersive activities into the classroom, activities that don't rely so heavily on preprinted worksheets, with a greater emphasis on the personal lived experience of religious adherents, paranormal experiencers, and pupils alike, rather than focusing solely on doctrine.

The Paranormal as an R.E. Teaching Tool

Building on this constructivist approach, and taking into account the prevalence of paranormal themes and topics in popular culture (with which many pupils will no doubt be familiar), the paranormal could also be used as a tool to aid teaching in R.E. lessons about traditional, but tricky, religious concepts. debates that draw upon pupils' own feelings and ideas about ghosts or UFOs, and what

they are/are not, for example could be used in the context of a wider discussion about the nature of God (My own experiments linking questions about UFOs to the nature of God in the context of an R.E. lesson are described below), and encouraging pupils to think critically about accounts of paranormal phenomena (i.e. Speculations on the possible causes and mechanisms of certainly widely known paranormal phenomena, or the weighing up of alternative explanations), could be used as a springboard for class discussions about religious miracles. Grimmitt (2000) writes of the aim of Vygotsky's constructivist approach to learning:

[...] the process that Vygotsky is advocating is one whereby the teacher is aware of the pupils' constructions and deliberately seeks to build upon, extend and challenge them with alternative ways of responding to the subject matter being studied (Grimmitt, 2000, p. 209).

Through explorations of paranormal topics, pupils can be encouraged to develop their own informed opinions on a range of religious phenomena. A

colleague of the author has, for example, even employed paranormal phenomena as a means to instigate discussions on what makes an event or experience specifically 'religious' in nature.

The Paranormal in Practice: UFOs and the Nature of God

Before concluding this paper we will briefly reflect upon an instance in which, as part of my own experience as a trainee R.E. teacher, I used the paranormal (UFOs) as a springboard for discussing 'who or what is God?' with two Year 7 R.E. classes.

In keeping with the constructivist awareness of the need to understand the extent of each pupil's prior knowledge, beliefs and experiences (upon which any learning in the lesson must necessarily be built), before presenting new information, I started the lesson with an activity about UFOs. I put up a PowerPoint slide featuring several images of UFOs and asked pupils to work together in pairs to discuss their own ideas about what UFOs are, whether they believe in them, and why. I asked each pupil to write out three questions that they would ask about

UFOs on sticky post-it notes. The following questions are examples of what the class came up with:

“Do you even exist?”

“Why are UFOs usually thought of as a round shape?”

“Are they secret military testings?”

“Has anyone ever made any contact with a UFO?”

“If they aren’t real what are they?”

“How long have UFOs been around?”

“How many times has a UFO been sighted?”

“Are UFOs real? Or something in disguise?”

Once pupils had done this, I asked for feedback from each group to tell me one of the questions they would ask. I then asked the pupils why they thought we were talking about UFOs in an R.E. Lesson, so that it was the pupils making the con-

nection themselves. Responses included that both religion and the question of UFOs revolve around belief, and we explored these issues a little further through deepening of questioning. I then explained how it is possible to ask many of the same questions about God as we can about UFOs, such as “Is God real?”, “Is God imaginary?”, “Why do people believe in God?”, “Have you ever had an experience of God?”, and so on. I then introduced the class to the main theme of the lesson, which was to think about who or what God might be.

We then moved on, again as part of the general constructivist progression of the lesson, to think about pupils’ own ideas about God (building up from their own prior knowledge), including thoughts about what God might be like, whether God exists and whether and why/why not they believe in God. This was done collaboratively in table groups, with pupils working together to put together a mind-map of their ideas on an A3 sheets of paper. Pupils were given 15 minutes to complete this exercise. Once they had finished, each table group fed-back some of the ideas they had come up with, and other groups were encouraged to add in extra ideas and

detail to their own diagrams, thus incorporating alternative perspectives and showing clear progress. This activity worked particularly well, and the pupils were well-engaged. Some of their responses to the question 'Who or What is God?' are included below:

"I don't believe in God because I can't think there is someone 'watching over us,' I don't think like that."

"I am not entirely sure about God because I have my doubts from scientific theories."

"I think people have made God up."

"I think God is a spirit."

"Because so many people believe in God so maybe he is real."

"How can there be a big person in the sky?"

"Character from story."

"He could be imaginary."

“If God was real there would be peace in the world and not war.”

“God is not real because nobody has seen him.”

These responses to the question ‘Who or what is God?’ are particularly insightful. The pupils were evidently thinking deeply about the question, their responses show a degree of creativity and critical thinking that is very impressive, and there is a range of perspectives from those who believe in God, to those who are agnostic, and those who are atheistic. It is this author’s opinion that beginning the lesson with a discussion of UFOs, and encouraging pupils to formulate their own questions about the UFO phenomenon, enabled them to make progress and think more critically and creatively about the nature of God.

Conclusions

Martin (1994) has highlighted the benefits of incorporating pseudoscience and the paranormal into science education programs. He writes:

The goal should not be to instil such beliefs in students but to get them to think critically about such beliefs. Science education...should not be narrowly conceived. The goal of science education should not just be to get students to understand science but to be scientific...Learning to think critically about pseudoscientific and paranormal beliefs is part of being scientific' (Martin, 1994:357).

The development of critical thinking skills, in itself, is reason enough to include explorations of the paranormal in the R.E. classroom. This, coupled with OFSTED's requirement to provide an opportunity for young people to develop their spirituality in school-based education, presents ample reasons to take the paranormal seriously in R.E. Arguing along slightly different lines, Radford (1999) considers religious education to be 'the process of exploring spiritual experience through the conceptual frameworks of religious texts, and of seeking to find meaning in those texts that is

relevant to the development of the spiritual interests of pupils' (1999, p. 166). Through engaging with pupils own experiences and beliefs about the paranormal, Radford's definition of religious education could be put into action.

References

Armstrong, T. (1984). 'Transpersonal Experience in Childhood.' *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, Vol. **16**, No. 2, pp. 207.

Bowie, F. (2013). 'Building Bridges, Dissolving Boundaries: Toward a Methodology for the Ethnographic Study of the Afterlife, Mediumship, and Spiritual Beings.' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, **81**(3), 698-733.

Braswell, G.S., Rosengren, K.S, & Berenbaum, H. (2012). 'Gravity, God and Ghosts? Parents' Beliefs in Science, Religion and the Paranormal and the Encouragement of Beliefs in their Children.' *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, Vol. **36**, No. 2, pp. 99-106.

Castro, M., Burrows, R. & Wooffitt, R. (2014). 'The Paranormal is (Still) Normal: The Sociological Implications of Paranormal Experiences in Great Britain.' *Sociological Research Online*, Vol. **19**, No. 3, pp. 1-16.

Caterine, D.V. (2011). *Haunted Ground: Journeys Through a Paranormal America*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC.

Dawkins, R. (1998). 'What's Wrong With the Paranormal.' *Sunday Mirror*.

Emmons, C.F. & Sobal, J. (1981). 'Paranormal Beliefs: Functional Alternatives to Mainstream Religion?' *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. **22**, No. 4, pp. 301-312.

Goode, E. (2002). 'Education, Scientific Knowledge, and Belief in the Paranormal.' *Skeptical Inquirer*, pp. 24-27.

Grimmitt, M. (2000). *Pedagogies of Religious Education: Case Studies in the Research and Development of Good Pedagogic Practice in R.E.* Great Wakering: McCrimmons.

Grimmitt, M. (2000). 'Constructivist Pedagogies of Religious Education Project: Re- Thinking Knowledge, Teaching and Learning in Religious Education.' In M. Grimmitt (Ed.) *Pedagogies of Religious Education: Case Studies in the Research and Development of Good Pedagogic Practice in R.E.* (pp. 207-228). Great Wakering: McCrimmons.

Grof, S. & Grof, C. (1989). *Spiritual Emergency: When Personal Transformation Becomes a Crisis*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher.

Hay, D. (1998). 'Why Should we Care About Children's Spirituality?' *Pastoral Care*, March 1998, pp. 11-16.

Hay, D. (2000). 'The Religious Experience and Education Project: Experiential Learning in Religious Education.' In M. Grimmitt (Ed.) *Pedagogies of Religious Education: Case Studies in the Research and Development of Good Pedagogic Practice in R.E.* (pp. 70-87). Great Wakering: McCrimmons.

Hoffman, E. (1998). 'Peak Experiences in Childhood: An Exploratory Study.' *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. **38**, No. 1, pp. 109-120.

Holt, J.D. (2014). *Religious Education in the Secondary School: An Introduction to Teaching, Learning and the World Religions*. London: Routledge.

Hunter, J. (Forthcoming). 'Does finding out about pupils' prior beliefs and experiences make for better teaching and learning in Religious Education?: An Exploratory Study of 75 Year 7 Pupils.'

Illeris, K. (2009). *Contemporary Theories of Learning: Learning Theorists...In Their Own Words*. London: Routledge.

John-Steiner, V. & Mahn, H. (1996). 'Sociocultural Approaches to Learning and Development.' *Educational Psychologist*, **31**(3/4), 191-206.

Kennedy, J.E., Kanthamani, H. & Palmer, J. (1994). 'Psychic and Spiritual Experiences, Health, Well-Being, and Meaning in Life.' *Journal of Parapsychology*, Vol. **58**, pp. 353-383.

Kripal, J.J. (2010). *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kripal, J.J. (2011). *Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kripal, J.J. (2014). *Comparing Religions*. London: John Wiley & Son Ltd.

Laycock, J.P. (2015a). 'Religious Studies and the Paranormal.' *EdgeScience*, **21**, 12-14.

Laycock, J.P. (2015b). 'Foreword: Playing With the Impossible.' In J. Hunter (Ed.) *Strange Dimensions*:

A Paranthropology Anthology. Falmouth: Psychoid Books.

Martin, M. (1994). 'Pseudoscience, the Paranormal and Science Education.' *Science and Education*, Vol. 3, pp. 357-371.

OFSTED (2015). *School Inspection Handbook*. Manchester: OFSTED.

Tamminen, K. (1994). 'Religious Experience in Childhood and Adolescence: A Viewpoint of Religious Development Between the Ages of 7 and 20.' *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 61-85.

Tobacyk, J., Miller, M.J. & Jones, G. (1984). 'Paranormal Beliefs of High School Students.' *Psychological Reports*, Vol. 55, pp. 255-261.

Turner, E. (1998). *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing*. Philadelphia, United States: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Conference Papers

The Modern Vampire

Jessica Monteith.

Abstract

Vampires have become a long-running staple in media of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These creatures of the night have assumed a position of prominence on the silver-screen and the television, invading our cinemas, our living rooms, and even our bedrooms. Vampires have become so globally recognizable that it is almost a cliché to reference them in film and literature, a fact which must have facilitated the drastic evolution they have undergone in the last two decades. Adolescent undead heart-throbs pout that their eternal existence is unbearable, and multitudes of women flock to their side.

*Even those vampires whom the viewer are meant to abhor are not as horrifying because whatever impact they may have had is negated by the more sympathetic breed of this sub-species. A good example of this is the film *30 Days of Night* (2007) compared to the box-office heavy-weight *Twilight* (2008). The vampires in *30 Days of Night* are*

traditional and horrific monsters, and though they do not appear in the same film as any of the more sympathetic vampire characters, they do have to compete for prominence in the cinema. In fact, Twilight far outstripped 30 Days of Night in box office sales.¹

Such has not always been the way of the vampire. Before the cinematic reinterpretation the vampire was a thing of nightmares. How did it happen that a monster which terrorized the Victorians has become man-perfected in modern pop culture representations? Twenty-first century vampires have been subjected to unusual levels of re-packaging to suit the needs of a new audience – the female – and to reflect fears of this specific community. The mirroring of female fears has been possible due to the inherent malleability that the vampires have always enjoyed as fictional beings. The fascinating new vampire mythology being written for the screen is only part of a larger redefinition of traditional conceptions surrounding death and mortality. By placing a few modern vampires in an historical context, we can ascertain some of the changing attitudes surrounding immortality and death in the twenty-first century, as

1 *30 Days of Night* grossed \$39 568 996.00 including DVD sales, while *Twilight* grossed \$192 769 854.00 (Source: www.boxofficemojo.com)

compared to Romantic and Victorian beliefs. We will do this by referencing popular television series' Buffy the Vampire Slayer and True Blood, and the films Dracula and Twilight.

As is true for most figures and characters of oral narrative, it is unknown from which geographic region the vampire first came into being. But pre-modern vampires are not universal; there are no Native North American vampires, and the traditional fears around death have typically been entirely separate from fear of the vampire (Dundes 2002). Importantly, the undead in folklore have a purpose in returning, to perform a task or haunt their widow, more like a poltergeist than a vampire. This is nowhere more apt than when considering the early precursor to the vampire – revenants; zombified corpses who rose from the grave to spread plague and pestilence in their community. In oral narrative translations, the term vampire is used interchangeably with ghost and revenant, and vampires only gradually lost their association with humans to become a separate species. (Auerbach, 1995).

Views on task fulfilment and the completion of major life-events were bound to the medieval and early modern understanding of mortality, and the

will of the living to cling to the life goals of those who have passed on. The survivor's feelings of guilt, love, and hate, were projected onto the deceased, and that is why revenants and vampires frequently return to haunt their nearest and dearest first.(Dundes 2002, 23) This becomes even more plausible if we consider that when a man afflicted with some disease dies, it is most likely going to be his kith and kin who fall ill next – and those he came into closest contact with. This could very likely have been interpreted as a haunting from beyond the grave. The fear of vampirism is the fear of immortality disrupted, whether for good or ill.

The word *vampire* was originally defined in the English Oxford Dictionary (1734) as an “evil spirit” who inhabited the bodies of “deceased persons”. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997 - 2003) the facial transformation of vampires was indicative of their demonic possession. A recent quote from Joss Whedon, creator of this ground-breaking television series, explains the reason for the facial transformation of the *Buffy* vampires:

“I didn't think I really wanted to put a show on the air about a highschool girl who was stabbing normal-looking people in the heart. I thought somehow that might send the wrong message, but when

they are clearly monsters, it takes it to a level of fantasy that is safer.”¹

In much more recent representations, like Edward Cullen in the *Twilight* series, the viewer does not see the human transformation, nor are we privy to the life's goals or experiences of the man before he was turned into a vampire. The transformation of a vampire from a man or woman into something *other* was a pivotal aspect of what defined the species in folklore. As a revenant, or a human merely possessed by an evil spirit, early definitions of vampires demonstrate a confusion regarding immortality, the nature of death, and fears regarding the state of the body vs. the state of the soul after the moment of expiry. The transformative state of the vampire conveys the horrific nature of these creatures who encroach upon the boundaries of life and death.

The vampire, as imagined by Joss Whedon, served as a catalyst for the main character Buffy's existence. They also served to create a clear delineation between what a bad vampire could or could not do. Their natural instinct, indeed every modern vampire's natural instinct, is to drink blood.

¹ Additional commentary, season 1, disc 1 (00:37:45)

As far as this author can recall, this rule is without exception. Blood-drinking is a theme that has been interpreted by the twenty-first century audience as integral to the vampire, and they are not prepared to be swayed on the point. Yet traditionally vampires did not have to drink blood. Although William of Newburgh mentions blood when discussing revenants in his twelfth century *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, most deaths resulted from ensuing plague and pestilence. Some recorded attacks are made in the night and the corpse attempts to smother or strangle their victim.¹ In Ireland the motif of blood-sucking was continued in the guise of a demon called *Dearg-dul*. (Summers, 1929).

Buffy the Vampire Slayer, *True Blood*, and *Twilight* all include vampires who drink blood and some who do not. Those who refrain are represented as ‘good’ vampires specifically because they do not drink blood. What is so intriguing about this premise, especially in a show like *Buffy*, is that it would seem the only unforgivable crime is to drink blood, and everything else in a vampire’s nature is forgivable, including past crimes. This would indicate that the only freakish thing about any of the killings a

1 See folkloric tale types 307 and 363 as recorded by Stith Thompson for more on the murderous night-time activities of corpses.

vampire may execute is that they do it in order to survive – all the cruelty associated with the act is null. It can therefore be argued that the brutality must be inherent in human nature, and so can be construed as normal or understandable, while surviving off of one's companions is regulated to the realm of animal or *other*.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, coinciding with the decline and end of the European witch-trials, the revenant of medieval England faded into obscurity, and the more familiar figure of the vampire came to the fore. As representations of disease and pestilence, medieval revenants were neither handsome nor charming in the oral narrative tradition. The modern vampire arose from exaggerated behaviour, inordinate appetites, disrespect for established ritual, and the disruption of the smooth transition from the land of the living to that of the dead (Senn 1982).

The growing beauty and allure associated with the vampire emerged with the Romantic. An increasingly scientific European community left the traditional understanding of the transformative state, which had been best understood via the revenant, behind. England in particular had suffered the upheaval of the Reformation, and the Protestants heaped scorn upon belief in the

supernatural, and souls returning from the grave.¹ Is it any wonder that after the oppression of the 17th century, Lord Byron's and Pollidori's vampire have no precedent in medieval narrative? In Bram Stoker's novel of the same name, the key to Dracula's monstrosity is that he looks so human, but possesses super-human qualities. The disbelief of the characters that surrounded Dracula was typical of Victorian England rationalized science. And yet it is the professor, mixing folklore and superstition with modern scientific advances, who discovered Dracula's identity and said that "the strength of the vampire is that people will not believe in him."² Science was also increasing the mobility of the vampiric denizens of Europe, juxtaposed against the greater ease and ability of European's to travel via roadways and railways. It was the Romantic ideal to see new places and experience new worlds – breaking down typical identities and rebuilding something *other*. This idealisation of the sublime leant itself to the development of immortal tragedy, and larger than

1 This argument holds unless one is referring to a divine message transferred via a body which had been reanimated for the purpose by God. See Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* for more on the subject of divine providence.

2 A quote from the 1931 film. *Dracula*. Tod Browning. Universal, 1931.

life characters like Ruthven, whose oath is absolute and binding and is frightening because it is eternal.

After the witch trials, and perhaps because of the witch trials, women became more and more associated with virginal innocence, and the desire to safeguard a woman from harm was the preoccupation of many a Victorian father or husband.¹We see this in almost every aspect of the Romantic and the Victorian ages – there is a considerable shift from women as disruptive to the safety and wellbeing of others, but rather women needing to be kept safe from the rest of the world. In the Gothic novels, it is often an innocent woman who is preyed upon by the vampire, a mark of her redemptive qualities and the vampire's lust for purity, a theme which *Nosferatu* (1922) took full advantage of. McMahon-Coleman and Weaver argue that “exploration and representations of sexuality have ... always been a significant focus when examining” the Gothic (McMahon-Coleman & Weaver 2012).

It took a very long time for the horror-genre to look beyond the over-used refrain of a damsel in distress. Buffy Summers in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was the new generation of strong women,

1 See Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood” for more information on the virtues of women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

the type of independent woman who might have been persecuted during the witch trials, she who did not need a strong male presence. The strongest and most consistent male presence in *Buffy*, Mr. Rupert Giles, is a librarian of sorts, whose role is strictly academic while Buffy performs the physical necessity of slaying the vampires. While Buffy cannot be considered innocent when compared to her peers, who are ignorant of the dangers Buffy faces on their behalf, as she has been jaded by the very act of protecting them.

The notion of innocence and virginal behaviour is a cultural commodity, one that is readily understood by the audience. The audience things they understand what to expect from the woman on-screen. Sookie Stackhouse, the naïve waitress from *Bon Temps* in the HBO series *True Blood* is hopelessly attracted to the bad boy vampires Eric Northman and Bill Compton. Eric and Bill, both of whom prey relentlessly on Sookie, are fulfilling their traditional vampiric role of stalker and seducer of a virginal blonde (in this case, waitress). However, the twist is that they are not antagonists in this series but rather somewhat spectacular love interests. *True Blood* producer Alan Ball reimagined the female protagonist and thus the audience is forced to reinterpret their understanding of the female in vampire-horror. Sookie is more than

capable of handling herself in difficult situations without them, or against them if necessary. McMahon-Coleman and Weaver argue that the theme of the television series and the books is to judge an individual on their actions, rather than by race, gender, sexuality, or species.(McMahon-Coleman & Weaver 2012).

However, it could just as reasonably be argued that *True Blood* is much more about the liberation of Sookie from a state of innocence into a state of hyper-sexualised *otherness* – including a deeper understanding of herself and her own capabilities; an awakening from her previous self-identification as merely a ‘waitress’. In *True Blood*, like in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the modern viewer is encouraged less and less to see the vampire as the lynch pin upon which the story pivots, but rather to focus our attention on the character we might previously have considered the victim. Sookie, tries her best to maintain the lady-like values that still linger in the deep south (McMahon-Coleman and Weaver, 2012), but is increasingly confronted with the queerness and *otherness* of the world around her and she must cope with it.

The most famous, and certainly the vampire best recognized in film and in literature, is Dracula. Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula* in 1897, just a little more than one-hundred years after the last official European

witch-trial. The novel follows the story of Jonathan Harker and his fiancée Mina, as they are plagued by the attentions of Count Dracula. Beginning in Transylvania, and moving to London, Stoker reputedly based Dracula on the historical figure of Vlad Tepes, a man who is alternately viewed by historians as a folk hero or a madmen.¹ *Dracula* was written and filmed shortly after Romantics like Byron were publishing their own works on vampires and the character of Dracula is primarily an *other*, and is presented from the very onset of the book and film as a pretender in gentile society.

Dracula says to Jonathan while they are in the Karpathian Mountains, "Listen to them - children of the night, what music they make." (Stoker 1897). Dracula is aligning himself with the natural elements, including the night itself, by referring to the wolves as children, and their howling as music. This is in direct opposition to Byron's Lord Ruthven, who is so strongly allied with humans. (Auerbach 1995). In the late nineteenth century, as industrialized man moved further away from the deep woods and a natural understanding of predators, nothing could have been further from the readers comprehension of the communicative

1 This subject is worthy of its own in-depth essay. See *Dracula: Prince of Many Faces* by Florescu and McNally for more on the controversy surrounding this topic.

abilities of wolves than 'music' and 'children'. This plot technique served to alienate Dracula further from English readers; there could be no sympathy for the monstrous Count.

The motif of wolves and vampires sharing a mutual bond, or at least a superficial relationship, is one that has been utilized in more modern interpretations of the vampire myth; specifically, and somewhat surprisingly, including the *Twilight* series. But neither Stephanie Meyer nor Bram Stoker have the first or final word on vampires and wolves or werewolves. William of Newburgh's revenant in twelfth century Berwick was constantly hounded by a pack of dogs¹ and according to the legends of the Serbian gypsies, only wolves were strong enough to rip apart and devour a vampire. (Keyworth 2007) Werewolves becoming vampires after death is another enduring myth but this relationship between wolves and vampires can be overcomplicated and exaggerated,² and there seems to be an inclination on the part of some historians and folklorists to associate the vampire with werewolves in whatever context they're mentioned. In *Dracula*, Bram Stoker was cleverly

1 *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, Book 5.22

2 Matthew Beresford's *From Demons to Dracula* is an example of this exaggeration of the vampire/werewolf relationship.

utilizing a common idea to give depth and brevity to the main character.

It is impossible to imagine the motion picture not taking advantage of this fascinating motif of the vampire, especially when *Dracula* was written only a few short years before the birth of cinema in 1897. Less than ten years after the release of *Nosferatu* in 1922, *Dracula*, starring Bela Lugosi, was produced by Universal Studios and the premier vampire of the twentieth century was born; a Hungarian with a debonair sense of style, and a piercing stare. Lugosi was unwittingly associating himself with a long history of vampirism when he became the trademarked ‘eyes’ of the Universal vampire – the malignant stare of the undead was popular in the Icelandic Sagas in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. (Keyworth 2007) The vampiric gaze is not something that is unfamiliar to the audience of the twenty-first century either, as most vampires in film and television are able to use a hypnotic stare to coerce their human victims, absolving them of any responsibility in their own demise.

The association of vampires with foreigners – either Transylvanian or Hungarian –was a relatively new addition to the vampire story, as revenants had tended towards their own family and community, only gradually turning their attention outward if

given the opportunity over time. While a foreign vampire is hardly surprising as a modern invention, even in antiquity monstrosity was associated with distant lands on the edges of the known world.¹ There is a long tradition of xenophobia in Europe. But before easy transport like rail and flight Europeans would not have much chance to encounter men and women from far flung locations. It was with the birth of modern transport that the vampire began his transformation into a seductive and mysterious foreign entity, rather than a familiar dead neighbour. And this has lasted since Stoker's *Dracula*. Just like in *Nosferatu*, Dracula was brought into the western world, a plague on the innocent young people of Whitby "that the vampire introduces to healthy society" (Waller 1986). Typically, modern vampires do come from 'somewhere else'; like Angel from *Buffy* and Stefan from *The Vampire Diaries*, or Bill Compton who returned to Bon Temps after a distance of years, rather than miles.

After Bela Lugosi, Dracula became prolific in cinema – Christopher Lee played Dracula no less than seven times with Hammer Studios. But since the first appearance of coloured blood on the silver-

1 One example (among many) is the description of the Neuri tribe of Scythia who transformed into wolves every seven years. *Histories*, 4.105-109

screen in *Dracula* in 1958, the vampire has generally ceased to terrify and elicit horror from the audience. This is of course not always the case; some cinematic vampires, like the aforementioned *30 Days of Night*, are hideous and truly monstrous in their actions and appearance. But generally the vampire has become more sexualised in film and television. The twenty-first century phenomenon involving vampires has gone beyond mere belief in the undead; the trend has turned into a veritable lust after the vampire. Popular retail outlets have launched clothing with tag-lines including, "I wish my boyfriend was a vampire", and "Forget princess, I want to be a vampire."¹ The desire for the undead might seem unusual at first, if we consider the historical fear and abhorrence of revenants and vampires in medieval, renaissance, and the Victorian worlds. But as Bela Lugosi donned the Count's cape, the vampire began to transform from a monster to be feared, into a mysterious entity to be envied. The modern vampire is the culmination of a historical evolution based on fear. If the fear fades all we are left with is the fascination and a desire for ever-lasting life (Beresford, 2008). The vampiric protagonists in almost all modern examples of the genre share the same character

1 For just a small sampling of t shirt availability, search "Love Vampire T shirts" in Google Images

traits – they seem to be beyond condemnation and beyond death itself.

Considering so many vampire-characters are actually dead, sex is a suspiciously common vein linking all these television shows and films together. What is *Twilight* if not an on-going dilemma faced by Edward and Bella – Edward is so strong and so unable to control himself that if they were to have sex, he would kill her. And yet Bella desires sex with Edward despite a full awareness of this problem. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Buffy does have sex with Angel, resulting in the loss of Angel's soul and a return to his demonic and apocalyptic ways. The pain of any sexual encounter with a vampire has proven itself to be an attractive prospect – Edward is the perfect gentleman and insists that he and Bella wait until they are married, and Bella has been turned into a vampire; Buffy is forced to be a superhero and overcome her irresponsible teenage desires and heart-break to hunt down and destroy Angelus, despite her love for him. Themes of loyalty, desire, courage, and enforced chastity should not be easily disregarded – they speak to consequences of falling in love, having sex, and adolescent expectations of what sex and love should be – earth-shaking, illicit, heart-breaking, and eternal. Bella and Buffy are forced into impossible positions and it was Buffy's

mother Joyce Summers who summed up the situation in season three of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*,

“..when it comes to you Angel, she's just like any other young woman in love. You're all she can see of tomorrow. But I think we both know that there are some hard choices ahead. If she can't make them, you're going to have to. I know you care about her, I just hope you care enough.”

(*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Season 3, episode 20)

And, paradoxically, within this quote is contained all the fear and ownership of women's sexuality reminiscent of the Victorian world; the strong male has to take the lead and save the woman from herself. Except Edward does a pretty poor job in protecting Bella.

It is the belief of this author that the *Twilight* series is the culmination of the romantic vampire genre. Before these popular films, it was unheard of for a vampire (outside of comedy) to remain so steadfast on the side of 'good'. Even Angel from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* lost his soul from time-to-time. But Edward Cullen never acted the role of monster, nor did any member of his family.

It is very strange to see a vampire on-screen not

participating in any of the activities one would normally expect to find a vampire engaged in. The Cullen's do not drink blood,¹ they do not fear the sunlight, and vampires in the *Twilight* world enjoy a tyrannical system of governance under the Volturi. Although the television series *True Blood* and the *Underworld* franchise² do both make use of vampire governments, each system quickly descends into anarchy. Not so in *Twilight*. Until *Twilight* vampires have generally been imagined to be solitary creatures, sharing their time with humans rather than with other vampires; or only loosely organising themselves and quickly breaking up in ever shifting 'coven' societies. Socialisation and pack mentality has, unsurprisingly, been reserved for werewolves. Part of the appeal of the *Twilight* films is that Edward and his family do not act vampiric, and they are not forced into any of the distasteful acts that previous vampires have had to perform in order to survive. They are therefore enjoying immortality to the fullest with no repercussions for their blatant disregard of a natural human life cycle. But what

1 The Cullen's describe themselves as vegetarians though they regularly kill living creatures in order to maintain their immortal life.

2 *Underworld*, *Underworld: Evolution*, *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans*, *Underworld: Awakening*. Len Wiseman, Patrick Tatopoulos, and Mans Marlind. Screen Gems, 2003-2012. Film.

Twilight epitomises most of all is the glorification of the perfect specimen – the beautiful vampire.

The *Twilight* film capitalizes on the social-media generated faith in the power of the individual. Bella Swan, a young woman who is neither particularly beautiful, nor especially intelligent, captures the attention of Edward Cullen, a 106 year-old vampire. Edward described himself as “the world’s best predator... everything about me invites you in – my voice, my face, even my *smell*.” (*Twilight* 2008). Though none of these attributes seem to be the focus of the films – the viewer is meant to believe that what is taking place on-screen is true love in every sense of the term. *Twilight* is about far more than Edward’s capability as a predator to lure his female prey; Dracula had that game mastered a century before *Twilight*. In the late nineties, the television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was so outrageously popular because it cleverly used iconic ‘girl-power’, epitomised in the main character of Buffy, and sexualised her relationship with Angel and then with Spike. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was a whole new world of horror-chic, in which a young woman not only had the power to fight monsters without any masculine protection, but was beautiful and special enough that those same monsters might just mend their ways to be with her. In *Twilight*, Bella was special, but not for any special

reason. Bella and Edward's larger-than-life romance is reminiscent of a Facebook love affair, each Instagrammed moment captured for a world who would otherwise not care.

That Bella is "nothing special" to anyone but Edward is romantic (and typical of all romance), but what is unusual is that while other female protagonists like Buffy and Sookie go on with their daily lives and pursue their own occupations, Bella seems unable to redefine herself away from Edward Cullen. To have no further identity other than the person she sees reflected in Edward's eyes is easy for Bella. And it means Bella does not have to go university, she is rarely in school, and she never takes part-time work. Bella will be beautiful, rich, and young as long as she is with Edward, and she will leave her broken family behind to immerse herself in the cosy Cullen world. There is nothing special about Bella except that she *is* Bella. As an individual, and solely in her role of *being* Bella, she is enough to capture Edward's attention. Of course this has appeal to women of all ages, and this type of individual self-aggrandisement of one's existence is possible now through the wonder of YouTube and social media. Women are living in an increasingly global and therefore increasingly standardizing and public world, and if one cannot be rich or beautiful it is

very difficult to compete – yet Bella manages it just by being her ordinary self.

The romance of Edward and Bella is inclined towards a sadistic and masochistic self-denial, with Bella playing the role of helpless damsel-in-distress that Buffy and Sookie have shrugged off, and Edward as the bad-boy who must save her to save himself. For Bella “to be desired beyond all reason or control, even wantonly or destructively, is a powerful aphrodisiac, flattering both to pride and self-doubt.”^{xx} Adolescent, and even adult, women, are drawn to the allure of absolute desire, of a male who asks nothing in return for their affection – who professes he will love them, even as they age, while he remains forever perfect. The masculine vampires are drawn to the captivating necessity of the feminine presence – it is the individual woman who is so unique and special, that this other creature could be made whole again through the simple magic of their love. “This is the other part of Edward’s appeal: that of the tragic, doomed hero... until Bella’s love offers him redemption.” But even Bella who claims to love Edward unconditionally and irrevocably, is not immune to the lure of immortality. (Greydanus 2012) The second and third films in the *Twilight* series are rife with Bella’s insistence that she be made a vampire, as she believed Edward would not love her when she was

old.¹ Significantly, the historic vampire cannot turn another person into a vampire – a vampire is born or cursed, but not created via a transfusion of blood or a bite from another vampire. Modern youth culture, and the unnatural desire to remain young and beautiful for as long as possible takes on super-natural proportions for Bella and Edward, which makes *Twilight* the culmination of twenty-first century societal self-aggrandisement and youth-pop culture. Let's stay young forever.

Vampires in film and in literature have come a long way from the pestilence-ridden corpses of the twelfth century, and even from the vampire of the early twentieth century. Now they are smooth, polished, wealthy, and young. Always young. This is part of the mass appeal of the vampire, that they will never face their own death; they will never ask themselves the question “what comes next?” For a vampire, the here-and-now is all they will ever experience. He is a stationary creature in a world that continues to evolve, and for all man's fear of the future and of death, the vampire stands apart. Changing popular culture and the fear of eternity and immortality has been written and filmed in the guise of revenants, vampires, Lord Ruthven,

1 The second film, *New Moon* (released in 2009), opens with a dream of Bella as an old woman, while Edward has remained young.

Dracula, and Edward Cullen.

References

30 Days of Night; (2007) David Slade. Columbia Pictures. Film.

Auerbach, N; (1995) *Our Vampires, Ourselves*; University of Chicago Press; Chicago

Beresford, M; (2008); *From Demons to Dracula: The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth*; Reaktion Books; London.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1997-2003) Joss Whedon. 20th Television, Television.

Dracula; (1931); Tod Browning; Universal, Film

Dundes, A; (2002) *Bloody Mary in the Mirror*; University Press of Mississippi; Jackson.

Florescu, R and McNally, R ; (1989); *Dracula: Prince of Many Faces* ; Back Bay Books; New York.

Greydanus, S - "Twilight Appeal" Accessed Dec. 12, 2012

<http://www.decentfilms.com/articles/twilight>

Keyworth, D (2007); *Troublesome Corpses: Vampires and Revenants from Antiquity to the*

Present; Desert Island Books, Southend-on-Sea.

McMahon-Coleman, K and Weaver,R (2012) *Werewolves and Other Shapeshifters in Popular Culture*; McFarlane & Company, Jefferson, NC.

New Moon; (2009) Catherine Hardwicke; Summit Entertainment. Film.

Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror; (1922). F.W. Murnau. Film Arts Guild. Film.

Senn, H; (1982); *Were-wolf and Vampire in Romania*; Columbia University Press; New York.

Silver, A and Ursini, J (1997) *The Vampire Film* ; Proscenium Publishers; New York

Stoker, B.; (1897) *Dracula: or The Undead*; Archibald Constable & Company; Westminster.

Summers, M (1929) *The Vampire in Europe*; K. Paul, Trench, Trubner; London.

Thompson, S; *The Folktale* (1946); Holt, Rinehart and Winston; New York

True Blood; (2008-2014); Alan Ball. Your Face Goes Here Entertainment. Television.

Twilight; (2008) Catherine Hardwicke; Summit Entertainment. Film.

Waller, G; (1986); *The Living and the Undead*; University of Illinois Press; Chicago

Walsham, A; (1999) *Providence in Early Modern England*; Oxford University Press; Oxford.

Welter, B; (1978); "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," in Michael Gordon (ed.), *The American Family in Social-Historic Perspective*; St. Martins Press, New York.

Ghosts, Spirits and Gods: Perspectives from Anthropology

Jack Hunter

It was the global distribution of beliefs in the existence of supernatural beings that prompted the first great anthropological theory for the origin of religion. Sir E.B. Tylor called this theory animism, from the Latin root word anima meaning 'soul' or 'life-force,' and suggested that the belief in spiritual beings was the earliest, most fundamental, form of religion: all religions, so Tylor thought, feature belief in some form of spiritual being. This paper introduces the topic of humanity's widespread belief in supernatural beings, and the spirit-worlds they inhabit, through an exploration of different cultural ideas about ghosts, spirits, gods and demons, and presents some of the theories that have been proposed to explain such beliefs by anthropologists and ethnographers working in the field.

What are Ghosts, Spirits and Souls?

Popular Western ideas about ghosts are likely to feature mysterious shadowy figures glimpsed in haunted houses, or the shrouded spectres of dead nuns roaming long disused corridors in ancient Abbeys. These are images that are familiar to us because they are deeply rooted in our popular culture, in our ghost stories and horror movies (Ackroyd, 2010).

The idea of the ghost, in Euro-American society, is usually associated with deceased people, indeed a standard dictionary definition of ghost would be something like: 'an apparition of a dead person which is believed to appear or become manifest to the living.' The word 'ghost' derives from the Old English term *gāst*, and is related to the German word *geist* meaning spirit or mind. When we use the word ghost, then, we are referring to the spirit or mind of a person that has become separated from the physical body, usually by death.

But what exactly are we referring to when we use the word spirit?

This term has its origins in the Latin word *spiritus*, meaning breath (as in respiration), and so may be thought of as the life-force of a living being. When a living being dies it ceases to breathe, it no longer

possesses breath, its spiritus has left the body. In the modern English usage the term spirit is now defined as: 'the non-physical part of a person which is the seat of emotions and character.' The spirit, then, is also the centre of consciousness and personality of a human, or other, being.

Another term that commonly gets mixed in amongst these already confusing words is soul. Again, this is a word with Germanic roots, related to the Old English term *sāwol*, and the German word *seele*. A standard definition of soul would read something like: 'the spiritual or immaterial part of a human being or animal, regarded as immortal.' The term is often applied to the essential life-force and personality of a living entity. This life-force is generally thought to be the consciousness and will of the individual, the thing that controls the body and makes it alive. The soul is usually thought to be immaterial, existing as a separate entity from the physical body and yet somehow fundamentally attached to it. While the soul is present within a body it can be said to animate, or give life to, that body, and when an entity dies its soul is thought to be released from the physical body. When a soul leaves a body it becomes a spirit.

What we are seeing here, in this confusion of closely related terms, is a manifestation of the difficulty we have in achieving a standard definition of consciousness, and what exactly constitutes human selfhood and personhood. This is a problem that continues to permeate contemporary approaches to the study of 'consciousness,' a term which is similarly difficult to define in terms that are acceptable to everyone.

For the purpose of clarity, I will use the terms 'spirit,' 'ghost' and 'soul' in slightly more specific ways. By doing so it is hoped that we can begin to understand more fully what we mean when we use them:

- * The soul, then, can be thought of as the life-force and personality of a person, or animal, while occupying a physical body.
- * The spirit can be thought of as the soul of a person freed from the limitations of the physical body, for example when the body dies, or as a soul that never occupied a body,
- * and a ghost may be thought of as a particular manifestation of a disembodied spirit.

Dividual Persons & Composite Souls

The category of the person has been of special interest to anthropologists. In particular, anthropologists are interested in the different ways by which persons are recognised and defined in different cultural contexts. Concepts of 'self' and 'person' are not, by any means, concrete in either psychology (O'Connor & Hallam, 2000) or anthropology (Mauss, 1985), indeed categories of personhood are socially and culturally relative (La Fontaine, 1985), varying across cultures.

Anthropologist Marilyn Strathern, in thinking about different cultural notions of the self, has highlighted two distinct categories which she has termed the individual and the dividual self. Strathern characterises the European notion of the self as individual in that Western Europeans generally tend to think of the self as a single and continuous stream of consciousness and personality that is independent of other consciousnesses. In other words the individual self is bounded. A dividual notion of the self, by contrast, is not bounded, it is not individual, but

rather is porous and consists of multiple components. While the individual is self-centred and impermeable, the dividual is group-oriented and permeable.

A similar distinction can also be seen in different cultural notions of the soul. In European and American culture, the soul is generally thought of according to the Judeo-Christian notion of a single and unified centre of personality and consciousness: an individual soul. However, as with so many other ideas in popular Western culture, the notion of a single unified soul is quite specific to Western culture and alternative conceptions, often consisting of multiple, or composite models of the soul, do exist in the belief systems of other cultures, past and present.

A fairly common notion in non-European belief systems posits that the soul is made up of several, interrelated, component parts. The ancient Egyptian religious system features a good example of a composite soul.

According to ancient Egyptian belief every human being consists of five separate parts:

Part	Description	Function
<i>Ib</i>	The person's heart.	The seat of emotion.
<i>Shet</i>	The person's shadow.	A person cannot exist without a shadow.
<i>Ren</i>	The person's name.	The person will live as long as their name is spoken.
<i>Ba</i>	The person's soul.	The individual personality. Can survive the death of the body.
<i>Ka</i>	The person's life-force and double.	The force that gives life to the person. The body dies when the <i>Ka</i> leaves.

All of these parts of the person are contained in the khat, the physical body. It is this belief in the mutual interconnectedness of various aspects of the soul that gives meaning to the ancient Egyptian practice of mummification, and their preoccupation with death and immortality. In ancient Egyptian belief the person's *Ka*, or life-force, existed as a double of their physical body and could continue to exist after death so long as the physical body remained intact. Mummification, therefore, sought to ensure that the

physical body remained complete so that the Ka could continue to exist in the afterlife. The Ba, or the person's individual consciousness and personality, would then be able to occupy the Ka, the spiritual double of their physical body, and so continue to exist in Sekhet Aaru, the paradise of the afterlife (Budge, 1987).

Another example of a composite soul is found in the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski's examination of the spirit beliefs of the Trobriand Islanders of Kiriwina, in Papua New Guinea. Malinowski describes how, for the Islanders, at death the soul is believed to split into two parts: the kosi and the baloma. The kosi fulfills the role of what we might term a 'ghost' in that it haunts the gardens of the villagers, may be met while out walking along the road, or will knock on the doors of friends and relatives after the death of a person. Although, Malinowski writes, the villagers are afraid of encountering the kosi, they are not terrified in the way that Western ghost stories would lead us to expect, indeed the Trobriand Islanders treat the kosi as a sort of clown, or tricky prankster. After a few days the kosi is believed to dissipate, and will no longer cause problems for the villagers.

The second part of the soul, the baloma, however, takes on a more permanent existence in the after-life as a spirit on the island of Tuma. On the island the baloma grieves for those he has left behind before meeting with Topileta, chief of the village of the dead. In order to be granted admission to the village of the dead the baloma must pay a fee to Topileta, and it is for this reason that the deceased person's body is buried alongside valuable grave goods, including ceremonial axes (beku) and jewels, which the baloma takes on its journey in their spiritual form.

Similarly, the traditional Chinese conception of the soul is also a composite one, consisting of two separate parts, the po (associated with the yin), and the hun (associated with the yang). The po is the physical soul, and remains with the body at death, while the hun is the immaterial spiritual soul that leaves the body to dwell in the spirit realm. Sociologist Charles Emmons, in his study of Chinese spirit beliefs in the 1980s even found reference to belief in up to ten souls (Emmons, 1982).

Spirit Worlds

Most of the world's cultures believe that spirits inhabit an invisible spirit-world that exists in parallel with our own. Descriptions of the spirit world vary

hugely from culture to culture, though there are also some surprising similarities between accounts, as these two Native American descriptions demonstrate.

Anthropologist Gerald Weiss has described the Peruvian Campa universe as consisting of a series of layers arranged one above the other, each layer being inhabited by its own class of beings. For the inhabitants of each layer the world is as solid underfoot as the earth is to us. The Campa believe that their world is surrounded by spirits, their immediate neighbouring landscape, both visible and invisible, is populated by unseen entities. The good spirits have encampments on the mountain ridges of Campa territory, as well as in other layers of the universe. In the spirit world, the spirits live in their true forms, whether human or otherwise, and continue on with their lives in much the same way as the Campa themselves, except that the spirits need never want for anything and know nothing of illness, misery or death. While the spirits themselves are generally invisible to the lay person, shamans, owing to their special gifts, are able to perceive them both in the world of the living and during shamanic soul excursions to the spirit world (Weiss, 1972).

The Swedish ethnographer Åke Hultkrantz also describes the North American Wind River Shoshoni universe as consisting of three levels: underground, ground and sky. These levels exist within a vertical hierarchy and are linked by an axis mundi, or world axis. Each world in the hierarchy is inhabited by various spirits: the sky is the domain of important spirits such as the Great Father, some air spirits, like Thunder, Lightning and Wind are closer to the earth which is home to the vast majority of spirits, including human beings. Water spirits and the Earth Mother inhabit the subterranean world (Hultkrantz, 1987).

Belief in the existence of spirit-worlds parallel with the normal everyday world often form part of a particular culture's wider cosmology. It is important to note that these spirit world are not conceived as necessarily distant, or abstract, places, rather they are understood as immanent and present, overlaying, and influencing, the lived landscape.

Hungry Ghosts

Not all spirits move on to the spirit-world. Some remain attached to the physical world, usually because they have some sort of unfinished business amongst the living, and these spirits become 'ghosts.' A good example of such ghosts can be

found in the traditional Japanese Buddhist belief in Gaki, described as the spirits of jealous and greedy people who must suffer the punishment of eternal hunger. Similar ghosts are present throughout the Buddhist world and are known as Preta in India and Egui China.

Monotheism and Polytheism

Christianity, Judaism and Islam are good examples of monotheistic religions. This means that Christians, Jews and Muslims believe in a single God thought to be the creator of the universe. Polytheistic religions by contrast, such as Hinduism, Shinto, many contemporary traditional belief systems, and ancient religious systems like those of ancient Babylon, Greece and Egypt, hold that there are many gods, each with their own specific personality. We will begin with a brief exploration of how monotheistic religions conceive of the nature of God, before looking at polytheistic ideas.

According to Christianity, Judaism and Islam, three religions often referred to as the Abrahamic religions (because of their shared patriarch Abraham), God is conceived as a vast, often impersonal, creative intelligence. Typical descriptions of God include the notion that He is omnipresent (exists everywhere), omnipotent (all powerful), and omni-

scient (all knowing). As the creator of the universe, God is also thought to exist outside of time and space as a transcendent being. God is thought of as a first cause, and so, unlike a spirit, never occupied a physical body, and nor was He created by anything else, rather God is believed to have always existed.

Unlike the notion of a single God held by the monotheistic Abrahamic religions, the gods of polytheistic religions are often described as anthropomorphic entities with desires and emotions similar to those of human beings. Unlike the Abrahamic God, polytheistic gods often have some form of creation story of their own, which explains how they came to be. According to ancient Greek mythology, for example, before the creation of the universe there existed a primordial void called Chaos from which the first gods, the Protogenoi, were born. These first gods, much like humans, mated with one another, thus creating more gods, until a whole pantheon (from the Greek words pan meaning 'all' and -theios meaning 'gods'), featuring several generations of related gods, came into existence.

It is worth noting at this point, however, that even the Christian God is often understood, and experienced, as a personal presence. Anthropologist

Tanya Luhrmann, for example, describes the ways in which contemporary American Evangelical Christians form intensely personal relationships with God in an attempt to incorporate Him into their everyday lives (Luhrmann, 2010). Christian notions of the nature of God are further complicated by the Roman Catholic idea of the Holy Trinity - the father, the son and the Holy Ghost - a tripartite conception of God.

Angels and Demons

Of course, believing in a single deity or a specific pantheon of deities does not exclude the possibility that there are other less powerful spiritual beings. The Christian theological universe, for example, is also populated by countless angelic and demonic beings that, although not partaking of the omnipotent nature of God, are nevertheless supernatural in nature. These beings are believed to have been created by God, just as humans were. In a similar vein, the Islamic universe is also populated by Djinn (or genie), non-physical beings that are described in the Quran as one of three forms of sentient beings (including humans and angels) created by Allah. Djinn, like human beings, may be good, bad or neutral in temperament and possess free-will. Like humans, the djinn live in communities with rulers

with their own traditions and social customs. Descriptions of the world of the djinn echo other descriptions of the spirit-world from different cultures quite remarkably.

Ancestors and Saints

Many of the world's cultures hold ancestors, the spirits of deceased family members, in high regard (Olson, 2011). Even after death the ancestors continue to participate in everyday social life, often demanding attention and interaction (Steadman, Palmer & Tilley, 1996). In certain traditional forms of Chinese ancestor worship, for example, shrines, requiring regular offerings to the ancestors, are erected in the home serving as an everyday reminder of the presence of family spirits.

In some traditions ancestor spirits may be transformed into fully fledged deities, thus blurring the distinction between ancestors and gods. A good example of such a tradition can be found in certain local Indian forms of Hindu folk belief, where small village cults are often established when an individual dies prematurely, violently or undeservedly (Blackburn, 1985).

This is similar in many ways to the Christian transmutation of particularly pious folk into saints, especially if they have been martyred in the name of their religion. Much like ancestor gods, Saints can be petitioned and asked for assistance by the living. Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity have particularly rich traditions of Saint devotion, though they are not unique in this regard.

Other-Than-Human Persons, Relationism and Perspectivism

The category of 'other-than-human persons' has become quite popular in the anthropology of Native American cultures primarily because it helps to express the way in which Native American world-views relate to the environment and the things that inhabit and animate it, such as animals, plants, rocks and the weather. All of these are thought of as persons, like you or me, with consciousness and intentionality, and so life in the world necessarily entails the formation and maintenance of relationships with these other persons (Harvey, 2005).

During his fieldwork amongst the Ojibwa people of North America, the ethnographer Irving Hallowell (1892-1974) noticed that the Ojibwa notion of personhood refers not only to human persons, but also to other entities, physical and non-physical, as well. The example he employed to highlight this idea, and to show just how ingrained this notion is within Ojibwa thought and culture, is in the use of the term 'grandfather,' which when used in the collective plural, as in 'our grandfathers,' is generally a referent for spiritual beings who are persons of a category other than human. Hallowell noted that that these other- than-human persons are not thought of in abstract terms, but rather are seen as active participants in the social-group in much the same way as a 'real' grandfather might. In other words, these other-than-human persons are just as real as everyday human persons (Hallowell, 2002).

A common belief amongst indigenous American cultures is that just as we view ourselves as human beings, animals as animals, and plants as plants, so animals view themselves as human beings, and human beings as animals. This is a way of thinking about the world that anthropologists have labeled 'perspectivism,' because of its emphasis on the different perspectives of other-than-human beings (de Castro, 1998). By emphasising the perspectives of

other-than-human-beings, Native American cultures develop close relationships with the natural world and treat it, and its inhabitants, with the same respect afforded to human persons.

Propitiating Spirits and Gods: Shrines and Offerings

All around the world, and all through time, cultures have propitiated spirits and deities in a variety of different ways. Propitiation basically involves winning the favour of spirits or deities through pleasing them in some way, very often through giving offerings of food and drink, or simply through recognising their presence.

According to ancient Egyptian tradition, in order for the Ka to survive in the afterlife it was necessary for the living to provide it with a ready supply of food and drink for sustenance. To this end special 'false doors,' or 'Ka doors,' were constructed in tombs to allow the Ka to pass between the world of the dead and the world of the living. Offerings of food and drink would be left at these false doors, which were often inscribed with a special offering formula containing the name of the person to whom the offerings were intended. In a particularly striking example, in the tomb of a sixth dynasty official called Idu,

the false door features a carved representation of the deceased with outstretched arms ready to receive the offerings that will sustain his Ka in the afterlife.

In Mexico on the first and second days of November a great festival known as the Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is held to commemorate and appease the spirits of the deceased. The roots of the festival can be traced back to the ancestor worship practiced by the indigenous peoples of central America, before the arrival of the Spanish in the Sixteenth Century, but today the festival owes just as much to the influence of Roman Catholicism, having merged with the Catholic celebrations of All Saints Day (November 1st) and All Souls Day (November 2nd). Over the course of the two-day festival people visit cemeteries to tidy the graves of their loved ones and construct small shrines to the memory of the deceased. Offerings of food, drink and flowers are left at the graves and shrines for the spirits, and the streets are decorated with brightly painted skulls (calavera). All of this is done in a carnival-like atmosphere of fun and frivolity with the aim of remembering the good times when deceased loved ones were still alive (Brandes, 1998).

Just as with the Ancient Egyptian Ka, the Chinese notion of the po (the spiritual component of the soul), also requires sustenance in the form of offerings if it is to thrive in the spirit world. The traditional Chinese Hungry Ghost Festival (Yu Lan) is a monthlong celebration, beginning at the start of the seventh lunar month, during which the spirits of deceased ancestors are believed to be freed from the realm of the dead by King Yama, a god of death, to visit the living. As with the Mexican Day of the Dead, offerings of food and drink are laid out for the spirits in shrines. Offerings are also made in the form of burning small piles of 'Hell Notes,' a kind of money made from joss paper produced especially for offering to the ancestors, who use its spiritual essence.

It would appear, from looking at the different ways of propitiating spirits, that the belief that spirits simply want to be remembered is a fairly common cross-cultural trait, and that if they are not remembered, or honoured in the correct way, they may become angry and bring bad luck to the living.

Representing Supernatural Beings

Because spirits and gods are often conceived as invisible beings, many of the worlds cultures have developed different ways of representing spirits and gods in the physical world. One of these ways is through performance and spirit possession rituals. Another way, which we will now briefly explore, is through physical objects and artistic representation.

Fetishism is a term that refers to the belief that certain objects possess supernatural power, and is a useful concept for thinking about the representation of supernatural beings. For many, the physical representation of spirits in statues is the creation of a physical body for immaterial spirits to inhabit.

The worship of physical representations of spirits and deities plays a central role in popular Chinese religion. Indeed, statues and images are often taken not as simple representations, but rather as the actual physical embodiment of deities, as bodies for the gods. These bodies are interacted with in much the same way as human-to-human interactions, providing worshippers with direct, physical, access to the deities they worship. In popular Chinese religion, therefore, the representation of spirits

and deities in statues and artwork is an act of materialisation (Chan, 2008).

Supernatural Encounters

So far we have dealt mainly with belief systems, but there is another side to this story that cannot be ignored, and that is the experiences people claim to have with what we might term spirits, demons and gods. This section will explore some of the different ways in which the experience of such entities is described and interpreted in different cultural traditions.

Ghosts and Spirits

As we have seen, E.B. Tylor attributed the belief in supernatural beings to misinterpreting encounters with people in dreams as real experiences. Indeed, many cultural traditions do hold that it is possible to make contact with ancestors and other spirits while in the dream state. Amongst the Islanders of Kiriwina, Papua New Guinea, villagers, especially women, are often said to be visited by the baloma in dreams. The following account of what parapsy-

chologists would call a 'crisis-apparition' was documented by Bronislaw Malinowski while conducting fieldwork on the Trobriand Islands during the First World War:

One night Kalohusa dreamt that his mother, an old woman...came to him and told him that she had died. He was very sad, and apparently showed his grief by wailing...All the others knew that "something must have happened in Omarkana." When they learned on their way home that the mother of Gumigawa'ia had died, they were not at all astonished, and found in this the explanation of Kalohusa's dream (Malinowski, 1916, pp. 353-430).

Dreams are not, however, the only means by which spirits and gods are encountered. Spontaneous waking meetings are just as likely to occur. Malinowski also describes encounters with the baloma while awake, for example:

One day he (Bagido'u) was getting water out of a well in the raiboag (stony woodland) on Tuma (the Island of the dead), when a baloma hit him on the back, and, on turning round, Bagido'u just saw a shadow retreating into the

bush.

This particular account accords well with the European poltergeist (from the German for 'noisy ghost'), which is often characterised as a spirit capable of affecting the physical environment. Although these two accounts are take from a single cultural context, they are representative, more generally, of the forms in which ghosts and spirits are usually experienced - as apparitions, or as physical phenomena.

Extraterrestrial Encounters, Marian Apparitions, Fairy-Folk & Psychedelic Entities

A particular kind of supernatural encounter that has become increasingly common in the Western world is the so-called Alien Abduction experience, in which an individual has the experience of being taken aboard an alien space craft, often being subjected to some form of medical examination. The key elements in this narrative structure involve:

1. Capture: Strange beings seize and take the witness aboard a UFO.
2. Examination: These beings subject the witness to a physical and mental examination.
3. Conference: A conversation with the beings follows.

4. Tour: The bings show their captive around the ship.
5. Otherworldly Journey: The ship flies the witness to some strange and unearthly place.
6. Theophany: An encounter with a divine being occurs.
7. Return: The witness comes back to Earth, leaves the ship, and re-enters normal life.
8. Aftermath: Physical, mental and paranormal aftereffects continue in wake of the abduction.

Folklorist Thomas Bullard has noted distinct similarities between the narrative structure of such experiences and that of more traditional supernatural kidnap narratives involving fairies (Bullard, 1989). Similarly, Peter Rojcewicz has suggested that alien abductions exist within a continuum of extraordinary encounters, including encounters with other creatures from folklore and myth; angels, fairies, and other monsters. Rojcewicz suggests that these encounters represent instances of human confrontation with the anomalous (Rojcewicz, 1986). The UFOlogist Jaques Vallee has made similar suggestions (Vallee, 1988). The implication of this research is that there is a fairly standard common core to such experiences, with differences emerging as products of cultural interpretation.

Such encounters are similar, in certain respects, to the visions of the Virgin Mary, often referred to as Marian apparitions, that are alleged to have appeared before a 14 year-old shepherdess called Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes in France. On Thursday 11th February 1858 Bernadette was collecting firewood by a small stream when she heard a gust of wind that directed her attention towards a small grotto in which she saw a young lady dressed in white with a blue belt and golden roses on her feet. Bernadette recited the Rosary with the mysterious woman who promptly disappeared once the recitation was over. This was the first of eighteen encounters between Bernadette and the Blessed Virgin Mary, and was the event that transformed the small town of Lourdes into a thriving centre of international pilgrimage (Evans, 1987).

Encounters with apparently sentient entities while under the influence of psychoactive substances are well documented in the psychedelic literature. Terence McKenna, in his 1975 book *The Invisible Landscape*, described his encounters with weird insectoid entities during an ayahuasca trip in the amazon jungle. Countless people have recorded their experiences of a distinctively feminine presence while smoking *Salvia divinorum* (Adams, 2011). Rick Strassman's 2001 book *DMT: The Spirit*

Molecule contains numerous references to meetings with insect-like and extraterrestrial beings after receiving intravenous doses of the highly psychoactive compound DMT under laboratory conditions (Strassman, 2001). In his autobiographical book *Cosmic Trigger*, Robert Anton Wilson described an encounter with a dancing 'man with warty green skin and pointy ears' following a peyote trip (Wilson, 1977), likening it to Carlos Castaneda's peyote encounter with the spirit Mescalito, as described in *The Teachings of Don Juan* (Castaneda, 1968). More recently parapsychologist David Luke has described numerous meetings with 'thousand eyed' sentient beings after smoking DMT (Luke, 2008). Such encounters give a clear indication of the central role played by altered states of consciousness in the experience of spiritual entities.

How Long Have People Believed in Supernatural Beings?

Attempting to uncover the beliefs of our ancestors is a particularly difficult task. Archaeological evidence, especially prehistoric data, which by definition completely lacks historical documentation, is very difficult to interpret. Because archaeologists must rely solely on material remains, such as bones

and other physical objects, it is very hard to gain an appreciation of the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of the long gone societies they study. Imagine, for example, trying to decipher the meaning and purpose of a church, with all of its elaborate symbolism, without the benefit of historical written sources to give an idea of the system of thought and belief underlying its construction. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to gain a complete picture of the beliefs that inspired the material remains. This is the difficulty faced by archaeologists when trying to work out what people believed by looking only at the objects and structures they left behind. Nevertheless, there are certain clues that can help to elucidate these questions.

Archaeologists have looked to the deliberate burial of the dead as evidence for the early development of religious thought in human beings. The act of intentionally burying the dead has been interpreted as indicating a concern for an aspect of the deceased that survives the death of the physical body, especially when the burial is associated with grave goods. The earliest instances of intentional burial so far discovered date back about 130,000 years to the Upper Palaeolithic period, and were excavated in the Skhūl cave system in Qafzeh, Israel. The graves at Qafzeh contain seven adults and three

children, whose skeletal remains display a mixture of physical characteristics associated with modern humans and Neanderthals, though they are now generally thought to be archaic modern humans. Several of the burials at Qafzeh are also associated with grave goods, possibly indicating a conception of some form of surviving spirit or soul. The burials with grave goods contained collections of shells not found in the local area, perhaps suggesting that they were used as decorative beads, maybe possessing an emotional or symbolic significance to the deceased. Another individual at Qafzeh was buried with the jaw bone of a boar. The body of a boy aged about thirteen years, and clutching Red Deer antlers in his hands, was also uncovered in the cave. Although this evidence does not necessarily imply that the Palaeolithic folk of Qafzeh believed in the existence of spirits or souls, it does suggest some form of thought beyond the confines of the purely physical, even at this early stage in the development of modern humans. One thing that is for sure, however, is that from the upper Palaeolithic period onwards modern human beings, as they spread throughout Africa, Europe, Asia, Australasia and the Americas, began to develop increasingly complex systems of belief that were vividly expressed in material culture, and as the mil-

lennia progressed the evidence for spiritual beliefs began to proliferate.

We will now skip forward several thousand years (but still remaining firmly within the Upper Palaeolithic period), from the burials at Qafzeh to the painted caves of Lascaux in France to consider some of the most exciting expressions of prehistoric thought. The caves at Lascaux are home to over two thousand images painted directly onto the rock surface some 17,300 years ago. Deep inside the caves the walls are adorned with colourful representations of horses, stags and bison, amongst other large animals. Dotted amongst these naturalistic depictions of large herd animals can be found numerous geometric patterns. Once again, it is particularly difficult to know what these paintings meant to those who created them, but numerous interpretations have been put forward. One theory of particular interest to us, with regard to the light it might shed on the history of belief in spirits, is that proposed by the anthropologist David Lewis-Williams, who concludes that the paintings possessed a spiritual, or religious, significance to their makers. Drawing on similarities between the unusual geometric forms dotted around the Lascaux caves and similar motifs in the rock art of the San Bushmen of the Kalahari, Lewis-Williams suggests that the Lascaux

paintings are visual representations of experiences during altered states of consciousness. If this is indeed the case, the paintings at Lascaux may be shamanic in nature, depicting sacred spirit-animals, with the caves themselves serving as a gateway into the spirit-world and suggest a particularly early origin for belief in supernatural beings.

Theories

The main anthropological theories of supernatural beings can broadly be classified as social theories, psychological theories and cognitive theories:

- 1) Social theories hold that supernatural beings are social constructs: produced by society for the benefit of society. Émile Durkheim thought of supernatural beings as nothing more than socially constructed focal points for societies to worship. Worshipping a particular pantheon of supernatural beings, for instance, gives a society a common ideal and sense of identity, which in turn increases the solidarity of the group. While social models such as this make sense when it comes to thinking about large, relatively impersonal entities, but begs the question as to why beliefs in less widespread entities develop, especially, as

in the case of alien abductees, when such beliefs lead to social marginalisation.

- 2) Psychological theories suggest that belief in the existence of supernatural beings is the result of the human need for stability in a transient and unpredictable world. Supernatural beings provide explanations for natural events, illness, fortune and misfortune.
- 3) Cognitive theories suggest that supernatural beings are the product of misinterpreted, or misunderstood, cognitive processes. A good example would be the human propensity to see faces in clouds. Cognitive anthropologist Stewart Guthrie has suggested that belief in supernatural beings arises from a failure to understand that such processes are hardwired into our brains (perhaps as by-products of natural selection), and that such observations do not mean that there are actual entities out there in objective reality.
- 4) The experiential source hypothesis, as expounded by David Hufford in his study of the Old Hag tradition of Newfoundland, suggests that belief in supernatural beings arises from direct personal experiences. As a phenomenological ap-

proach the experiential source hypothesis does not take a definitive position with regard to the reality of the supernatural beings encountered: it does not suggest that the beings encountered are grounded in what might be termed a 'supernatural reality,' but neither does it suggest that all such experiences are the product of hallucination, illness or misinterpretation. What the experiential source hypothesis suggests is that we must take experiential claims seriously in and of themselves.

References

Ackroyd, P. (2010). *The English Ghost: Spectres Through Time*. London: Random House.

Adams, C. (2011). 'Psychedelics, Spirits and the Sacred Feminine: Communion as Cultural Critique.' *Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 49-52.

Blackburn, S.H. (1985). 'Death and Deification: Folk Cults in Hinduism.' *History of Religions*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 255-274.

Brandes, S. (1998). 'The Day of the Dead, Halloween, and the Quest for Mexican National Identity.' *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 111, No. 442, pp. 359-380.

Budge, E.A.W. (1987 [1899]). *Egyptian Religion: Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life*. St Ives: Arkana.

Bullard, T.E. (1989). "UFO Abduction Reports: The Supernatural Kidnap Narrative Returns in Technological Guise." *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 102, No. 404, pp. 147-170.

Castaneda, C. (1968 [1976]). *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

de Castro, E.V. (1998). 'Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism.' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 469-488.

Chan, M. (2008). "Bodies for the Gods: Image Worship in Chinese Popular Religion." In M. Chan (ed.) (2008). *Image Worship in Chinese Popular Religion*.

Emmons, C. (1982). *Chinese Ghosts and ESP: A Study of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences*. Metuchen: Scarecrow Press. (pp. 16-17).

Evans, H. (1987). *Gods, Spirits, Cosmic Guardians: Encounters With Non-Human Beings*. Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press. (p. 51-59).

Hallowell, A.I. (2002 [1960]) "Ojibwa Ontology, Behaviour, and World View." In G. Harvey (ed.) (2002) *Readings in Indigenous Religions*. London: Continuum. pp. 17-50.

Harvey, G. (2005). *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. London: Hurst & Company.

Hultkrantz, A. (1987). 'Diversity in Cosmology: The Case of the Wind River Shoshoni.' *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 279-295.

La Fontaine, J.S. (1985). "Person and Individual: Some Anthropological Reflections." In M. Carrithers, Collins, S. & Lukes, S., (1985). *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.123-140.

Luhrmann, T. (2012). *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God*. New York: Knopf.

Malinowski, B. (1916). 'The Spirits of the Dead in the Trobriand Islands.' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 46, pp. 353-430.

Mauss, M. (1985). "A Category of the Human Mind: The Notion Of Person; The Notion of Self." In M. Carrithers, Collins, S. & Lukes, S., (1985). *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, His-*

tory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-26.

O'Connor, K.P. & Hallam, R.S. (2000). "Sorcery of the Self: The Magic of You." *Theory & Psychology*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 238-264.

Olson, C. (2011). *Religious Studies: Key Concepts*. London: Routledge.

Rojcewicz, P. M. (1986). "The Extraordinary Encounter Continuum Hypothesis and Its Implications for the Study of Belief Materials." *Folklore Forum*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 131-152.

Steadman, L.B., Palmer, C.T. & Tilley, C.F. (1996). 'The Universality of Ancestor Worship.' *Ethnology*, Vol. **35**, No. 1, pp. 63-76.

Strassman, R. (2001). *DMT: The Spirit Molecule: A Doctor's Revolutionary Research Into the Biology of Near-Death and Mystical Experiences*. Rochester: Park Street Press.

Vallee, J. (1988). *Dimensions: A Casebook of Alien Contact*. London: Souvenir Press Ltd.

Weiss, G. (1972). 'Campa Cosmology.' *Ethnology*, Vol. **11**, No. 2, pp. 157-172.

Wilson, R.A. (1977 [2000]). *Cosmic Trigger: Final Secret of the Illuminati*. Tempe: New Falcon Publications.

Biography

Jack Hunter is a PhD candidate in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Bristol, a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Chester, and a Lecturer in Religious Studies at North Shropshire College. His research takes the form of an ethnographic study of contemporary trance and physical mediumship in Bristol, focusing on themes of personhood, performance, altered states of consciousness and anomalous experience. In 2010 he established Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal (www.paranthropology.co.uk). He is the author of *Why People Believe in Spirits, Gods and Magic* (2012), a beginner's introduction to the anthropology of the supernatural, and co-editor with

Dr. David Luke of *Talking With the Spirits: Ethnographies from Between the Worlds* (2014). He is also the editor of *Paranthropology: Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal* (2012) and *Strange Dimensions: A Paranthropology Anthology* (2015). He is currently working on an edited collection entitled *Damned Facts: Fortean Approaches to the Study of Religion*.

The Exorcist and the Exorcists, Parallels Between the Cottage City Exorcism and Early Modern Narratives

Jon Kaneko-James

Note

As an Early Modern Historian I am deeply indebted to the journalist Mark Opsasnik's work seeking and cataloguing contemporary reportage and verifiable accounts of the Cottage City possession and the events surrounding it. I would like take the opportunity to thank him in print for his permission to use of his work.

Abstract

Using source material gathered my journalist Mark Opsasnik, and the supposed Jesuit Diary published in Thomas B Allen's 1993 book, Possessed, to examine the parallels between the purported 1949 exorcism that inspired William P Blatty's book and film, The Exorcist, with particular comparison to the Puritan dispossessions of the late 16th century, and ambiguity of status common to not only the subject

of the 1949 possession, but also Puritan demoniacs and the French 16th century visionary/demoniac Nicole Obry.

Blatty, Allen... and Shakespeare?

While Shakespeare's work has been marked for its populist appeal, with much of his source material taken from popular culture, such as the popular pamphlet press of the 16th and 17th century (Brownlow 1993, Normand and Roberts 2011), comparing Blatty and Allen to the 'Bard of Avon' might seem hyperbolic.

Yet, over the course of his career, Shakespeare often referenced contemporary supernatural hysteria in his works. The Darrel Exorcism controversy of the late 16th century appeared in *Twelfth Night* (Brownlow, 1993) and in *Macbeth* Shakespeare altered material from Holinshed's Chronicles to show closer allegory with the new King's former witch problems (Holinshed, 1587, Normand and Roberts, 2011). If we take Marlowe's nod to Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa in *Faustus* (Ruickbie, 2009) and Jonson's jab at the Earl of Essex's love life in *The Devil is an Ass* (Kaneko-James, 2015), the cyclical relationship between paranormal bandwagons and entertainment would appear to be at least as old as the existence of

English theatre.

Early Coverage of the Cottage City Case

According to the investigative work of Mark Opsasnik, the earliest mentions of a possession case at Cottage City came in the *Washington Post* on August 10th 1949 (Opsasnik, 2000). The article seems typical of the ‘and finally’ news genre: we are presented with the tale of a minister speaking to the local parapsychology society about a period of supernatural hijinks at a Maryland household earlier that year. The article describes a boy’s bed moving around and shaking violently, with objects such as fruit and pictures leaping from their resting places. The minister in the article is described as sceptical to a fault: even when the boy produces poltergeist phenomena at the minister’s own home the man laughs, commanding the boy, ‘enough of this.’ The article ends on a jovial tone, describing how a physician was called and prescribed tranquilisers for the whole family.

The same day, the *Evening Star* seems to have run a slightly more serious article, naming the boy ‘Roland Doe’ and describing the house as a ‘one and a half story’ house in a Washington suburb. We here the first hint of demonic involvement in the

reporting: we are told of the ‘strange events around Roland and his Poltergeist’, and that the boy had twice been sent to a ‘mental hygiene clinic’, but we are also told that while in the Midwest he had been exorcised by Episcopal, Lutheran and Roman Catholic ministers. (Opsasnik, 2000)

Opsasnik’s work collects four further articles: the *Times Herald* chimed in a day later, adding that the boy lived in the ‘Brentwood section of the northeast’ and that the family found messages in rashes on the boy’s skin. It is also the *Times Herald* article where demonic involvement becomes firmly entrenched, describing the boy as being dispossessed after seeing a vision of St. Michael (Opsasnik, 2000). On August 19th the *Evening Star* ran a sequel article, stating that the boy was from Mt Rainer and that a Catholic priest had successfully dispossessed him after Georgetown University and St. Louis Hospitals had studied the boy, following up to describe the young man’s stream of blasphemous curses. (Opsasnik, 2000)

The final two articles are another from the *Washington Post*, adding that the boy’s exorcist had performed the ritual 20-30 times, and that the priest had been from St. Louis. Lastly, the *Parapsychology Bulletin*, published in New York, added that the anonymous clergyman from the first

article had been Reverend Luther Miles Schulze, who further described his experiences, but added nothing significant to the growing narrative. (Opsasnik, 2000)

The Jesuit Diary Emerges

The Exorcist became a publishing phenomenon. Riding the paperback boom that had begun in the late 1960s, Blatty's book became a bestseller, approaching the sale of ten million copies by the time its cinema adaptation was released in 1973 (Sutherland, 2007). In 1974, Blatty had published *William Peter Blatty on 'The Exorcist': from Novel to Screen*.

The book covered two screenplays of the 1973 film adaptation, and told the story of a Jesuit Diary that Blatty had as reference material in his book. A passage in Blatty's book describes a letter from an anonymised cleric who wrote,

"...we (a priest with me) kept a minute account each day of the happenings each preceding day and night, one reason being that our diary would be most helpful to anyone placed in a similar position as an exorcist in any future case..."

(Blatty, 1974)

The diary mentioned in the Blatty book is a sixteen-page document, and various editions of the diary would go on to form the backbone of reporting on the events behind the film and book (Opsasnik, 2000). Blatty remarks that the events as reported in the *Washington Post* are confirmed within the pages of the dairy, although he summaries the events depicted in the 'Post rather than narrating anything from the diary.

By the following year Steve Erdman produced a version of the events for the January 1975 edition of *Fate* magazine (Opsasnik, 2000). Here we observe the move from ghost to demon: Erdman's version of the story tells of an 'Aunt Tilly' who had introduced Roland to the use of an Ouija board, and during a manifestation Roland had asked Aunt Tilly whether she was the cause of the activity, receiving a rap in the affirmative.

Mrs. Doe is described as having anointed the house with holy water to drive away the spirit, with the bottle being wrenched out of her hands as a storm of food began to fly around the kitchen; tables are described as being thrown around the room, and Roland is reported to have moved schools because his desk danced around the class on its own (Erdman 1975, as summarised in Opsasnik, 2000).

The unfiltered diary is finally published in its entirety in Thomas B Allen's 1993 book, *Possessed: The True Story of an Exorcism*. Grown to a 26 page document – although, Opsasnik reported not being able to secure access to the original – the diary began with a previously unmentioned letter from Father Bishop to one Brother Cornelius, an Alexian brother involved with the case:

'Your own cooperation to the extent of establishing public devotion to Our Lady of Fatima will always be associated with the inspirational aspects of the case. The XXX family has been won over complete by the wholehearted Charity of your brothers. There is little doubt that the intention of becoming a Catholic has been deeply influenced by the Christ-like attitude of the Brothers who worked with XXX.'

(Allen, 2000)

In the initial stages of the Allen diary the spirit dictates a great deal of the action: when it is proposed that the boy return to school, the words 'no' are found scratched into his wrists. The writing forces his mother to take him away to St. Louis, away from their family, and dictates the length of their stay. Like the newspaper reports, the boy is described as initially being referred to a psychiatrist, and then a Lutheran Minister. (Allen, 2000)

Other ministers are also tried, as is a medical doctor, but it is only when the Catholic church becomes involved that the spirit reacts: a relic pinned to the boy's pillow is moved, but the boy's family and attending clerics initially continue the idea that the afflicting spirit is Doe's 'Aunt Tilly', going so far as to question the spirit about Tilly's supposed hidden wealth in a way that is strikingly reminiscent of the a trial from the Sussex town of Rye in 1607, where the accused Witches Susanna Swapper and Anna Taylor were questioned for their dealings with a series of ambiguously identified spirits. Like 'Tilly', the spirits moved between states: while the women's statements identify them as 'spirits' or 'fairies', their accusers vary between suggesting the visions could be anything from fairies, familiars to spirits of the dead (SRO, 1607).

Even the evolution of the Jesuit Diary itself has parallels with supernatural literature of the Middle Ages and Early Modern. In the tradition of Grimoire magic, the addition of a covering letter – usually spuriously – linking a text with some authoritative figure was fairly commonplace (Davies 2009), with the Lemegaton of Solomon taking the form of a letter from Solomon to his son.

Such an illusion of frank communication was critical to the possession pamphlets of the 17th century.

The pamphlet, *The Most Strange and Admirable Discovery of the Three Witches of Warboys...* began with a letter from the anonymous pamphleteer to his patron, Edward Fenner, turning finally to address the reader (Anon., 1593 as reproduced in Almond, 2004). Of the two written accounts of the 1574 demoniac Robert Brigges, the best most detailed begins,

‘...to satisfie your ladyshipes requeste, I have sent yow the coppie of Master Brigges tem’ation... the repo’te therof unto dyvers at the firste seemed but a mockrye or counterfett fantasie, but when they came to him... they confessed their rashnes in so judging, they magnified the wonderful workes of God.’

(Sands, 2002)

Further, the exhausting of other sources of help is a vital establishing trope of Early Modern possession narratives. In the 1593 pamphlet on the possession of the Throckmorton children the anonymous author is keen to show us that two doctors are contacted, scientific test – for their time – are carried out, and a number of local ‘Cunning Women’ are turned away when Lady Throckmorton decides their help is too unchristian (Anon. 1593, as reproduced in Almond, 2004). In the 1597 account of Thomas Darling, a Lancashire Demoniac, a doctor first

diagnoses him with Epilepsy until an aunt and a Puritan divine prompt him to realise that he has been possessed by devils that have been sent by a local witch (Anon. 1597, as reproduced in Almond, 2004).

The idea that only the pamphlet author's chosen faith could possibly have power over the forces of Satan is one as resonant in the pages of the Jesuit Diary as it is within Early Modern possession narratives. In George More's *A True Discourse Concerning the Certain Possession and Dispossession of Seven Persons in One Family in Lancashire...* asserts that all the seven Starkie children remained free from Satan once exorcised by More, Darrel and their followers – save for Jane Ashton, who converted to Catholicism and was re-possessed, eventually becoming a living demonstration of Jesuit spiritual power (More, 1600, as reproduced in Almond, 2004). The 'Miracle Book' of the captured Catholic agent Robert Barnes also blamed the possession of Sarah Williams on what Kathleen R Sands describes as her 'insufficient Protestant baptism' (Sands, 2004, and Brownlow, 1993).

From Ghost to Demon

As the clerics' involvement deepened, so the

narrative of the spirit's identity changed. The Allen edition of the diary narrates of how Father Bishop gave permission for an exorcism on March 16th where the spirit, previously thought to be 'Aunt Tilly' wrote the word 'HELL' on the boy's body, drawing a picture of itself as a bat. The spirit then scratched the word 'go' on the boy's crotch, supposedly indicating that it would leave via the boy's waste, stating that it would leave in ten days (Allan, 1993).

Without taking a stance on the existence of spirits and demons, the power struggle between demoniac and exorcist – the initial appearance of a good or neutral spirit who is then 'correctly' diagnosed as demonic by a properly qualified cleric – can also be seen in the 1566 case of Nicole Obry.

Nicole saw a vision of her recently dead Grandfather, Jachim Willot. In her vision the spirit entered and spoke to her, explaining that he was in purgatory after dying with unfinished business. The spirit pleaded with her to arrange a number of pilgrimages, including one to St. James' of Compostella, which proved too expensive for Nicole's family (Newman, 1998, Walker 1981). Despite a faked departure to Compostella, the spirit began to physically torment her until a Dominican friar – Nicole's schoolmaster –spoke to her demon, challenging it with the words, 'it is not in the habit of

good angels to torment other creatures', after which the spirit admitted being demonic (Newman, 1998).

In the Islandmagee possession of 1710, we also see a haunting turn malignant. On a September night, respectable Presbyterian Anne Haltridge is attacked by flying stones, retreating to bed where a presence crawls up from the bottom, slithering all over her body (Sneddon, 2013). As in the Allan manuscript of the Jesuit Diary, two nights later Haltridge's bedclothes are whipped off her, and her pillow removed from under her head, something that becomes a regular occurrence.

After Anne sickens and dies, her son's wife brings an eighteen year old girl for a companion: Mary Dunbar. She too suffers from a mischievous poltergeist:

'some new head clothes... taken out of a trunk and scattered through the house... [their head dresses were] thrown out of doors, and the sleeves of the mantua... they were making were snatched from them... and found besmirched with dirt'

(Sneddon, 2013).

Like Obry and Doe, Mary soon begins to be

wracked with pain, and the poltergeist tormenting her takes the face of several local witches until she fell into a swoon, and narrated the first of a number of dream battles where she swore the power of Christ over their demonic ways, and was punished with terrible pain (Sneddon, 2013).

While the free comparison between Early Modern Presbyterians, Puritans and Catholics might seem strange, the lingering existence of the Devil pervaded Early Modern Europe. The two pronged attack on folk belief and opposing sectarians relied on the Devil: John Bale eagerly portrayed the Medieval Pope Sylvester II as a demonic magician, dragged to hell at the conclusion of his life, and tracked the development of the Church to where the Antichrist had surely infiltrated it (Parish, 2005) while demonologists including James Stuart, King of Scotland and England wrote of fairies and ghosts as demonic (Stuart, *Demonologie*, 1597, reproduced in Normand and Roberts, 2011).

The key theological contortion in breaking the social and financial hold of the Chantries – institutions where priests prayed for the dead in Purgatory – had been the theological contortion that the dead were gone: unable to return from either heaven or hell, and certainly not in purgatory. Eager to prove their form of Christianity as true and ancient, Protestant thinkers, even those charged with

attacking Catholic ritual, took a great deal of influence from the 4th century theologian Augustine of Hippo (Almond, 2014). For those who battled against the idea of the dead appearing = to guide the living – a staple of Medieval visionaries – the Augustinian interpretation of Saul's encounter with the witch of Endor was useful: ghosts and apparitions were merely demons in human form, sent to lead good Christians into sin (Parish, 2015).

The conflation of ghosts and the dead shows signs of a province beyond even Augustine. The Gospel of Matthew depicts the nearness of the dead to demons: 'And as he went out to londe ther met him a certayne man out of ye cite which had a devyll longe tyme and ware noo clothes nether aboode in eny house: but amonge graves' (Matthew 8, KJV, also McCasland, 1944). Certainly, McCasland believed that the exorcisms depicted in the Bible showed links to an older Sumerian tradition of dealing with both the spirits of the dead, and with physical illness (McCasland, 1944).

Even in Judaism by the 16th century the Safed school of Mysticism, influenced by Lurianic Kabbalah, had become vogue (Garb, 2008). This tradition included veneration of the Tzadik, the superlative holy man who existed in all planes simultaneously, and who therefore could be

contacted after death. However, the cemetery was a dangerous place: the blessed dead were surrounded by evil spirits who could enter the unfortunate seeker. Vidal identifies them as, 'the Hevel Degarmi which clings to the bone, or the Nefesh in the world of action...' (Garb, 2008), going on to write, 'It is not well to go into the graveyard except for burial or funeral purposes... for certain harmful spirits will adhere to [you] as the husk at all times seeks to adhere to holiness.' (Garb, 2008)

Dream Battles

Once the critical moment had come and Doe's spirit has been indisputably identified as The Devil, he enters a brief but significant phase where either consciously, or in the midst of his spiritual journey, he attempts to maintain control of the dispossession narrative. In the Allen edition of the diary, Doe begins a series of spiritual battles between himself and his possessor, going do far as to stage a fist fight on the astral plane: 'When the prayer to St. Michael was begun, R began to stir in his apparent sleep. He smiled and then laughed. Then he began sparring.... As he swung his arms with violence he spoke of the conflict which appeared to him. In all the manifestations since the beginning in January there were no words spoken by R when he seemed to be under the influence of

the devil... when he came out of his apparent sleep R was asked what he was doing and what he saw. He said he was fighting a [huge] red devil who felt slimy and very powerful. The devil was trying to prevent him from getting through the iron gates at the top of a pit that was about two hundred feet deep and was very hot...' (Allen, 2000)

The boy's spiritual battle would be short lived: by the next day, his transgressive spitting and swearing had begun, bringing his possession into its most definitive, yet repetitive, phase. We see a similar development in the 1597 pamphlet of the Boy of Burton, Thomas Darling. Darling's fits, later prompted by the Puritan divine Jesse Bee, also develop a visionary quality:

'The next day, the boy had a very grievous fit in which, lying still a while, he began to throw up both his feet suddenly, beating them against the ground with great vehemency... "Do you say you are my God, and that I am your son? Go Satan, there is no God save the Lord of hosts... and would you have me worship a molten calf? I will worship nothing but the Lord God, and him only will I serve..." After this he was tormented three several times over every part of his body.'

(Anon. 1597, reproduced in Almond, 2004).

We see a similar visionary battle in the experiences of Robert Brigges, the Middle Temple lawyer of 1574. Brigges, after misunderstanding a sermon on predestination by Lassiellers Villiers is plunged into fits of despair, believing himself to be damned, his prayers interrupted by intrusive thoughts tempting him to lust and atheism. Like Doe, Brigges' trouble is characterised by an apparition, an 'uglye dogge, shaddey heare, of a darke fuskey color, betweine black and redd...' (Sands, 2002). After a number of attempts at suicide, including knives and throwing himself head-first at stone walls, Brigges is persuaded to visit a doctor, who first treats him with blood-letting, and then prescribes a potion or, 'ordinary poison' (Sands, 2002).

Initially, the effect of the 'poison', which the transcript of Brigges' experiences states he has taken 'divers times afore', plunges him into a coma, from which he recovers. By the next day, however, his condition has changed to one first of medical crisis, and then demonic possession:

'His fitte frequented abowte 8th or 9th in the morning, take him every daye first with gaping and remynge lyke and ague, then darkness overspred his eyes by little and lytlew, not without great angwishe and payne in his eye stringes and temples. Then

wolde his herynge fale him, his felynge remanynge a food space after, but when the tempter came, hee presently loste his feeling also... differing nothing from a deed man but that he spake and drew breath... althowgh the sick man used many pawses lysteninge, as it seemed, to the voyce that spake unto him.... He would begyne to answer the tempter, aperinge unto him sumtyme in one hape and sumtyme in another.'
(Sands, 2002)

Like Doe and Darling, Brigges battled Satan, debating with the Devil on matters of theology and predestination, being tempted to lust by the 'Queen of Hell' – something both teenagers seem to have been too innocent or bashful to indulge in – offered untold riches and threatened with physical harm and imprisonment.

While legitimate spiritual experience has long included dream and visionary experience, the utility of the dream battle to the demoniac is significant: while the very state of possession in the first place can be leveraged to give the weak power over the strong – as we see in Doe's initial dominance over his own affairs in the Cottage City case, and in the Throckmorton children's utter control over their daily routine, food and housing (Almond, 2004) – the dream battle also allows the demoniac to

control the very narrative of the demon and hell itself. Within the dream, where clerical authorities and adults cannot follow, the demoniac becomes a crucial reporter, a conduit between this world and the next.

As Newman writes, 'Speaking *In Persona Diaboli*, they were viewed as sources of supernatural authority, treated with circumspect awe by priests, and sometimes even allowed to preach.' (Newman, 1998). Although John 8:44 refers to the Devil as 'A liar and the father of lies' there remained, certainly through medieval Christianity, a feeling that since the word of God could force a demon to speak truthfully, then the demon or demoniac could be a valuable source of information on heaven and hell.

Etienne of Bourbon, in his collection of Sermon Exempla, tells of a Dominican friar preaching in Tuscany when a demoniac boasts that he could deliver a better sermon:

'[the demon proceeded to] tell many tales – about his own fall, the fall of man, and how many preachers God has sent into the world; his prophets, his Son, the apostles, martyrs, confessors, Preachers and Minors... "Know that I am a devil, compelled to preach the truth to you so that God may have more to reproach you with on the day

of judgement, and I myself may have more to accuse you with; and it will be held against you that you heard the truth preached by the devils themselves. And so that you know I am truly a devil, watch! I will come out now!”

(Etienne of Bournon, translated and excerpted in Newman, 1998).

Thomas Darling, during his torments by the Devil, also briefly narrated a tour of hell given by none other than Jesus himself:

“Do you say this is the bottomless pit where the damned be? Master Hildersham, we have need to pray.” ... by and by, turning his head, he pointed, saying, “Look where Judas is frying in torments... Ah, look in this place of torments where drunkards are hanged by the throats, swearers and filthy talkers by their tongues... Yonder goes Mother Red Cap. Look how they beat her brains out. See what it is to be a witch. See how the toads gnaw the flesh from her bones... take me by the hand Master Hildersham, and let us go to heaven.”
(Anon. 1597, reproduced in Almond, 2004).

Further, while the idea of the truthful demoniac is not deeply explored in the Jesuit Diary, we can

observe its presence in modern cinema: when FATHERA KARRAS and MERRIN confront the devil in the film version of the Exorcist, the demon reveals uncomfortable truths and their deepest personal shortcomings. Even in the Allan text of the diary, Doe accuses his exorcists of masturbation of sexual deviancy (Allen, 2000), although whether that would count of 'truth-telling' or simply transgressive behaviour would depend on facts not revealed in the manuscript. Certainly, deviancy was as part of even Puritan demonic possession: the outed demoniac William Sommers – at various times an accused and self-admitted fake – attempted to mount a dog (Gibson, 2006).

Driving Out the Devil

The repetitive grind of dispossession and repossession is characteristic of possession literature. The Allen edition of the diary sees the demoniac set the false deadline of ten days for the dispossession of Roland Doe, after which time it professes by a sign made on his abdomen that it will leave him through his waste (Allen, 2000). Likewise, the Thorckmorton children's fits came and went by turns for in the region of two and a half years, ending only with the execution of the unfortunate woman they believed to be sending spirits against them. The Puritan demoniac Thomas

Darling's fits were sufficiently regular that the divine Jesse Bee was able to trigger them by reciting specific biblical passages (Anon. 1597, reproduced in Almond, 2004), and William Sommers' possessing spirits were masterful in setting false deadlines. During one of his fits of demonic ventriloquism, "...he lay many times with his mouth extraordinarily void and strangely open. And he spoke these words... "I will use WS's tongue and members for three days..." (Brownlow, 1993, see also Gibson, 2006).

However, the grind of exorcism and possession cannot be maintained forever. In the entry for Easter Sunday, the diarist records, 'Everyone, including R, was becoming weary of the long performance [of the exorcism].' (Allen, 2000). We see here the turning point: the attention the priests give the boy is markedly reduced. He is fed, but when he acts up, he isn't exorcised and prayed over, simply cleaned up and sent back to his room. He asks to telephone his mother and breaks into a fit of possession, and is again simply taken back to his room (Allen, 2000).

During the peak period of the routine of possession and exorcism Doe undergoes two successful dispossessions, each echoing a distinct genre of dispossession.

In the entry for the 18th of March, the Jesuit Diarist writes,

'He asked that the window be opened and then in a happy, victorious mood he said sweetly, "He's going, he's going" and finally, "There he goes." His body fall limp upon the bed and in a perfectly relaxed condition... R was asked what his experiences were during the latter part of the night. He said that he saw a huge, dark cloud of black vapour in front of him passing out from his vision. A Figure in black robes, cowl and white... walked away from the cloud.' (Allen, 2000).

This form of dispossession is strikingly similar to that of Nicole Obry, whose devil, Beelzebuth, left her as 'a visible plume of smoke' after being conjured out with the host (Walker, 1981). This is not quite so visceral as medieval dispossession, where the papers of the Franciscan Order depict,

'A demon in the form of a kind of monster, in the nature of a black, four-legged beast, came out of her body and, falling to the ground, ran away.'
(Caciola, 2003)

However the two extra pages listed as having been especially procured by Allen (Allen, 2000), narrate a dispossession redolent of the Puritan demoniacs:

‘At 10.45 PM the most striking event of the evening occurred. R was in a seizure, but lay calm. In clear, commanding tones, and with dignity, a voice broke into the prayers. The following is an accurate quotation:

“Satan! Satan! I am St. Michael, and I command you, Satan, and the other evil spirits to leave the body in the name of Dominus, immediately – Now! Now! Now!” He said there was a brilliant white light and in that light stood a very beautiful man, with flowing wavy hair that blew in the breeze. He wore a white robe that fitted close to his body. The material gave an impression of scales... In his right hand he held up a wavy and fiery sword in front of him, With his left hand he pointed to a cave... As the devils disappeared into the pit, R felt a pilling or tugging in the region of his stomach. As the devils disappeared, he felt a strange snapping, and then felt relaxed completely.’ (Allen, 2000)

This is strikingly similar to the first dispossession of Thomas Darling, where his demons name themselves, narrating the battle between them and the Puritan exorcist John Darrel:

‘A prayer against the temptations of Satan

was used... After a while, he fell into a trance. And at length a small voice came up from him, saying, "Brother Glassap, we cannot prevail, his faith is too strong. And they fast and pray, and the preacher prays as fast as they." After these words he fell into a fit, and so into a trance a voice being heard from him, big and hollow, saying, "Brother Radulphus, I will go to my Master Belzebub, and he will double their tongues." He pointed at the chimney, saying, "Lo where Belzebub stands, and the witch by him. I charge you in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost to tell me whether this be she that bewitch me or no?" ... Then prayed he again, and at the third word was thrown into a fit, and a trance, wherein a voice was heard from him, his mouth being wide ope, as still it was when these voices uttered, saying. "Brother Radulphus, Belzebub can do no good. His head is struck off with a word. But I will fetch the flying eagle and his flock." ... "I see and angel in the window like a milk white dove, sent from the Lord to be with me to comfort and assist us..."

(Anon. 1597, reproduced in Almond 2004).

Finally, Darling is fully dispossessed with a vision of

a dove who drives away Satan, leaving him free of demonic interference. A similar triumphal vision comes on April 27th 1574, where Robert Briggs reaches the end of his three weeks of possession. He narrated the epic final battle between himself and Satan,

'Why tremble thou? Can you not hear blood named? That is not the blood of lambs and goats. Here are dragons of hell gaping, but behind me are the wounds of Jesus Christ freshly bleeding, which thou seest not. But I will help you to see him as he sitteth at the right hand of God, who has vanquished sin, death and hell...' (Sands, 2002).

Conclusion

As in the case of so many Early Modern possessions, it would be fairly safe to say that whether or not the Jesuit Diary cited by so many authors – yet mysteriously unavailable to Opsasnik – existed, something seems to have happened during the possession of Roland Doe. In Opsasnik's investigation he was able to question Father Halloran, involved in the 1949 case, whose opinions were sceptical as to whether the boy had really been possessed by the Devil (Opsasnik, 2000), and even a friend of the boy himself, who

admitted to having seen strange things happen at the Doe house, although hinted that they were a far more mundane form of strangeness than paranormal enthusiasts might hope (Opsasnik, 2000). One detail from the Opsasnik investigation does give a clue on how the family might have been infected with the idea of possession, if not the actually stories of possession themselves. When Opsasnik contacted Doe's childhood friend, who chose to be known as 'B.C.' he stated that there was, 'superstition from the old German Lutheran grandmother, and the mother got caught up in it too...' (Opsasnik, 2000).

Likewise, in the event of the non-existence of the Devil, a boy immersed in the world of exorcism, with priests around him convinced of his insensibility to the world around him, might by accident or design overhear, as did Thomas Darling, his carers exchange stories of spirits and possession, incorporating them into his narrative.

One thing worth noting is that in the Early Modern periods, Doe's possession might well not have qualified under the watchful eye of divines and physicians. Doe showed no sign of understanding any foreign languages, or possessing supernatural knowledge. Even the supporters of John Darrel, lambasted for their credulity by orthodox Anti-Exorcism writer Samuel Harsnett, listed the

understanding of Latin and other foreign languages in their defence of the possession of William Sommers (Anon. 1598, *A Brief Narration of the Possession, Dispossession and Repossession of William Sommers*, reproduced in Almond, 2004).

While Doe's case does see him brought to medical and psychological professionals, it also remains to be noted that during what Almond refers to as 'The Golden Age of the Demoniac' (Almond, 2004) saw greater than ever scrutiny from both orthodox theologians and medical professionals. In the case of the 1599 French demoniac Marthe Brossier, the physician Marescot argued for her possession being nothing by melancholy: "...sundrie Melancholicke persons... to have runne up and downe crying very strangely, and howling like dogs, without any change, either in pulse or in breathing, or in colour..." (Walker, 1981), while the Bishop of Angers, Charles Miron, tested Marthe by throwing plain water over her after telling her it was holy water – which produced a fit – and then giving her a glass of holy water to drink, to which she did not react. The good Bishop went so far as to read out a passage from Virgil's Aeneid, telling Marthe it was a Latin exorcism, and producing in her a full fit of possession (Walker, 1981).

By the mid-17th century, more and more physicians

were inclined to assign possession to hysteria, also known as 'the Mother' rather than the influence of Spirits (Levack, 2013). Certainly though, some cases were still being treated seriously: in 1656 young Elizabeth Mallory accused labourer William Wayde and his wife Mary of sending spirits to possess her, successfully getting the case taken as far as the York Assizes and seeing her spiritual persecutors imprisoned (TNA, 1656). Despite William's innovative defence that the girl was indeed possessed, and that the Devil could not be trusted to tell the truth, the Assize verdicts for 1656 remain missing from the National Archives, and we shall therefore have to wait to find out whether he was successful.

All three of our most examined demoniacs are under pressure: Darling living as a Puritan in the aftermath of Bancroft's purging of English Puritanism and the execution of the Martinist writers (Brownlow, 1993); a child at a time when the routine of a Puritan family would include strict codes of behaviour and a punishing regime work, study and prayer, where Puritan-sympathetic child rearing manuals would diagnose the most severe character flaws behind the simplest facial expressions (Sands, 2004, Gibson, 2006, Levack, 2013).

Oby, living in France in the years directly before

the St. Bartholemew's Day Massacre. A bereaved girl whose demon referred to French Protestants as 'My Huguenots'. (Walker, 1981).

Finally, Roland Doe: who, by all accounts in Opsasnik's investigation seems to have been a strange, impulsive, cruel boy from an insular, isolated family (Opsasnik, 2000). The boy who trained a stray dog and set it on his only friend. Without speculating or diagnosing, it would seem pertinent to observe that the supernatural adventures of the Puritan faith became more pronounced during times of adversity. We can never know the exact reason for such close parallels between a case from New England in the wake of the Second World War and Europe at the turn of the seventeenth century. Perhaps the Devil simply exists and feels disinclined to adapt his methods, or perhaps the ways which a trapped young man in an environment of supernatural religiosity can take control of his fate are simply limited in scope.

References

Allen, T B. (2000) *Possessed: The True Story of an Exorcism*. 2013 Kindle Edition. Book Country.

Almond, P C. (2004) *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England: Contemporary Texts and their Cultural Contexts*. Cambridge University Press.

Almond, P C. (2014) *The Devil: A New Biography*. Kindle Edition. IB Taurus.

Blatty, W P. (1974) *William Peter Blatty on 'The Exorcist' from Novel to Screen*. Scan of the original 1974 Edition, sold by Google Play Books. Original Publisher, Bantam Books.

Brownlow, F W. (1993) *Shakespeare, Harsnett and the devils of Denham*. Google Play Books Edition. Associated University Presses, Inc.

Caciola, N. (2003) *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*. Google Play Books Edition, 2015. Cornell University Press.

Davies, O. (2009) *Grimoires: A History of Magical Books*. Oxford University Press.

Garb, J. (2008) *The Cult of the Saints in Lurianic*

Kabbalah. The Jewish Quarterly Review, Vol. 98, No. 2. pp. 203-229.

Gibson, M. (2006) *Possession, Puritanism and Print: Darrell, Harsnett, Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Exorcism Controversy*. Kindle Edition. Pickering Chatto.

Holinshed, R et al. (1587) *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*. Wolfe. Viewed in its original state with kind thanks to the personal collection of a trustee at the Rose Playhouse, Bankside.

Kaneko-James, J. (2015), *The Devil, Temptation and Jacobean England*. Lecture Notes. Rose Unfolds Lecture Programme. The Rose Playhouse. From the personal collection of J Kaneko-James.

Levack, B P. (2013) *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West*. Yale University Press.

McCasland, V. (1944) *The Demonic 'Confessions' of Jesus*. The Journal of Religion, Vol. 24, No. 1. pp. 33-36,

Newman, B. (1998) *Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century*. Speculum, Vol. 73, No. 3. pp. 733-770.

Normand, L and Roberts, G. (2011) *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland*. Exeter University Press.

Opsasnik, M. (2000) *The Haunted Boy of Cottage City, The Cold Hard Facts Behind the Story that Inspired 'The Exorcist', Part One: Feeling Devilish? Try the Exorcist*. Strange Magazine, Iss. 20. URL: <http://www.strangemag.com/exorcistpage1.html>, accessed December 2014.

Opsasnik, M. (2000) *The Haunted Boy of Cottage City, The Cold Hard Facts Behind the Story that Inspired 'The Exorcist', Part Two: After the Movie*. Strange Magazine, Iss. 20. URL: <http://www.strangemag.com/exorcistpage2.html>, accessed December 2014

Opsasnik, M. (2000) *The Haunted Boy of Cottage City, The Cold Hard Facts Behind the Story that Inspired 'The Exorcist', Part Three: Debunking the Myth of 3210 Bunker Hill Road, Mount Rainier*. Strange Magazine, Iss. 20. URL: <http://www.strangemag.com/exorcistpage3.html>, accessed December 2014

Opsasnik, M. (2000) *The Haunted Boy of Cottage City, The Cold Hard Facts Behind the Story that Inspired 'The Exorcist', Part Four: Friends and Neighbours Speak out – For the First Time*. Strange Magazine, Iss. 20. URL: <http://www.strangemag.com/exorcistpage4.html>,

accessed December 2014

Opsasnik, M. (2000) *The Haunted Boy of Cottage City, The Cold Hard Facts Behind the Story that Inspired 'The Exorcist', Part Five: Truth and Consequences*. Strange Magazine, Iss. 20. URL: <http://www.strangemag.com/exorcistpage5.html>, accessed December 2014

Parish, H L. (2005) *Monks, Miracles and Magic: Reformation Representations of the Medieval Church*. Routledge.

Parish, H et al. (2015) *Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe: A Reader*. Bloomsbury.

Ruickbie, L. (2009) *Faustus: The Life and Times of a Renaissance Magician*. The History Press.

Sands, K R. (2002) *An Elizabethan Lawyer's Possession by the Devil: The Story of Robert Brigges*. Praeger Publishers.

Sands, K R. (2004) *Demonic Possession in Elizabethan England*. Kindle Edition. Praeger Publishers.

Shakespeare, W. (1606) *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. mit.edu. URL: <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/full.html>. Accessed October 2015.

Sluhovsky, M. (1996) *A Divine Apparition or*

Demonic Possession? Female Agency and Church Authority in Demonic Possession in Sixteenth Century France. The Sixteenth Century Journal, Vol. 27, No. 4. pp. 1039-1055

Sneddon, A. (2013) *Possessed by The Devil: the Real History of the Islandmagee Witches and Ireland's Only Mass Witchcraft Trial.* Kindle Edition. The History Press Ireland.

SRO (1607), Papers of the Corporation of Rye, RYE 1/13/1-6, Examintions of Susanna Swapper and Anna Taylor.

Sutherland, J. (2007) *Bestsellers, A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford University Press.

TNA, (1656). . Assize Records (Northern Circuit). ASSI 45/5/3/132-5. Examination of William and Mary Waide.

Walker, D P. (1981). *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries.* Pennsylvania University Press.

TRADITIONAL WITCHCRAFT NOW AND THEN

Mark Norman

Abstract

This paper examines the Craft path of Traditional Witchcraft and specifically the differences and similarities in the practice between the 18th and 19th centuries and the modern day. It is adapted from a talk first presented at the ASSAP Seriously Bewitched Conference at Goldsmiths College, London in November 2015.

Before we launch into the topic of Traditional Witchcraft itself, it is necessary to briefly mention disciplines. I am not a scientist. Nor am I either a historian or an anthropologist. And although I am a Trustee to the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Boscastle, in Cornwall, I am also not a practising witch in any of its forms. However, as a caveat, I have more than a passing interest in all of those fields.

My particular discipline is that of a folklore

researcher and writer. Or, if you prefer the term, a “folklorist”. This inevitably means that some people in other disciplines will not favour either my methodology, or my sources. However, I make no apologies for that. Because I believe that data collected by folklorists is as valuable as that written by people in other disciplines and provides just as legitimate an insight into the past.

The folklorist is not concerned necessarily with hard data and evidence. Consider ghosts and paranormal research for example. This is the search for evidence to prove, or disprove depending on which side of the fence you sit, the existence of such things. As a folklorist I am not so much concerned as to whether or not ghosts exist. What I am interested in is why people report certain experiences with them, and why similar stories travel, for example, or why accounts change over time.

So, there is one thing that this examination is not. It is not a discussion on whether the practices of Traditional Witchcraft work or do not work. That is a debate for elsewhere, and one that people are more than welcome to have. This, rather, is an examination of the lore of Traditional Witchcraft, the ways that the Craft is thought of and practised, and

whether or not this has materially changed over the last 200 years or so.

That is the first definition of terms.

The second distinction which needs to be drawn is that of the type of witchcraft we are examining, and any changes relating to this. Traditional Witchcraft is very much distinct, for example, from Gardnerian Wicca or other neo-pagan types of 'religious' witchcraft. So what we are not looking for here is evidence of how Traditional Witchcraft has somehow morphed into Wicca or similar practises. Essentially, because it hasn't. They are separate entities. We are also not looking for some method of tracing provable histories back through time in order to show some kind of legitimacy in current practices. My colleague, Helen Cornish, has written an excellent article on this theme, *Cunning Histories: Privileging Narratives in the Present*, (2005) which I would recommend anyone to read if they are interested in that subject. Although I do draw information from Helen's research, I am not looking at the same themes in this case.

My sources, typically for folklore research, are a mix of both written documentation and field research. For the field research in this case I have

interviewed a good friend, who is also a Traditional Witch (or more accurately a pellar but I will come to that shortly), Gemma Gary. Gemma has written a number of fascinating books on the field in which she operates, which may be obtained from her publisher, Troy Books.

For a broad description of what Traditional Witchcraft actually means, I would like to turn first to another friend who practices the Craft, Sarah Anne Lawless. She notes that in our modern times when people first come to the subject of Traditional Witchcraft they tend to associate it with certain names, such as Robert Cochrane or Mike Howard, because these people have written extensively on the subject. But she goes on to note that Traditional Witchcraft does not relate to one tradition as such but should be seen as more of an umbrella term, rather like 'Pagan' which addresses a number of areas both cultural and in terms of actual practise. So we are not looking at what witchcraft 'may' have been like in the past, but what it 'was' like, with the support of surviving documents or oral lore.

Sarah also goes on to note, interestingly, that most Traditional witches don't tend to read pagan books, but rather literature on anthropology, archaeology, history or religion.

We should probably use one final definition of terms, and look at what I am terming Traditional Witchcraft for the purpose of this article. For this examination, we should take Traditional Witchcraft in the sense of those sorts of areas of the Craft which would have been practised by what historically would have been termed either a Wise Woman, Cunning Man or Wayside Witch. Or also, to use the term which applies to Gemma, my interview source, a pellar.

The historical folklorist Bill Paynter described the pellar as “do-gooders” or white witches. The etymology of the term itself is not known for certain, but it is probably a contraction of ‘repellar’. Because the pellar works to heal rather than to harm they would be able to offer a lot of protective magic, and this could explain this particular theory.

In fact, it is within terminology that we may find one difference between witchcraft practices a hundred or more years ago and now. In the 21st century the terms black and white witch are no longer really acceptable to practitioners, but this was not the case in 19th century Britain where they were often very firmly applied.

As an aside, this issue of terminology leads us to

consider a similarity between the use of language and semantics in the old witches and in more modern times. Dr Thomas Quiller-Couch, writing in the 1860s, notes the oracular ambiguity of statements made by conjurers. He cites an example where, in response to an enquiry about the disappearance of some household objects, the conjurer replies “Our horn eat own corn”. What this means is still open to debate some 150 years later. But it puts me in mind of modern fortune tellers, or newspaper astrologers, who are able to produce ‘one-prediction-fits-many’ responses.

Gemma explains that the pellar uses an old craft side of witchcraft which is very much operative. She described it in her book *Traditional Witchcraft: A Cornish Book of Ways* as “practical, get things done” magic. The pellar uses charms and substance-making techniques and their magic is very much imbued with the identification of local god forms as well as charms which include extracts from the psalms and the like. Although Gemma also works with a coven at times, the more traditional role of the pellar is as an individual practitioner: the wise woman or cunning man, or as Cecil Williamson termed them, the “Wayside Witch”.

For example, Gemma told me that she had recently

done healing work for a number of people. Also, the residents of a local farm house had wanted a charm made for protection against thieves because things were being stolen. Gemma had made a traditional charm using a psalm and an inscribed charm parchment, which is now hung up in the farmhouse.

The roots for this type of practice are very old indeed. Steve Patterson notes that the pellar type methodology goes back at least as far as the classical period. In the Greco-Roman period the magic was known as *defixio* and used written or inscribed charms which would bind the receiver to a particular event. This could be either for good or for ill, although more generally Traditional Witchcraft is the former.

So the work of people such as pellars and the like is predominantly a service working for people: a service type of craft. It isn't just the spiritual or devotional side of witchcraft. The practical, operational side is very much tied in with the term pellar or the traditional aspect of witchcraft. Owen Davies, writing in 2003, notes that historically the term "cunning folk" describes those who had expert knowledge of folk magic and practised divination, healing, theft detection and astrology. The same term is used by modern magic practitioners to

include all those who use folk magic beyond everyday domestic needs. Cunning in this case, of course, comes from the medieval usage of meaning knowledgeable rather than devious or the like.

Gemma cited an example of a male witch who ran the group with whom she initially worked when she was exploring the craft. He was asked for help to find a lost dog, and for this he used a hag stone (a small stone with a natural hole in the centre). He would whisper things through the hag stone: requests over and over again, repeated magical acts to bring the dog back. And sure enough, the dog came trotting back home. Whether this is due to the magical act, of course, is a subject rich in possible debate depending on your outlook and beliefs, but as I said earlier it is not a debate that I am looking to explore within this particular examination.

Historically, the role of this service-driven craft would have been considered a mainstream service. When wise women, cunning men and the like were at their height, they would have been the 'go to' person for many things: disputes, thefts, illnesses, births and so on. Now, of course, people will naturally go to a doctor if they are ill; to the hospital if they are having a baby or to the police if

something is stolen. In many cases they would have been held with the same respect that mainstream services are today. Accounts of famous folk magic practitioners such as Tammy Blee in Cornwall, for example, tell of people queuing up and down the block so it wasn't something certainly that happened in the shadows. People were often not ashamed to be seen to be consulting Tammy or her like. Nowadays it is far less likely that people would be announcing that they were going to see the local witch or pellar to sort their problem out.

The same sorts of techniques were practised by proponents of Traditional Witchcraft methods in the 18th and 19th centuries and indeed they still are used today. So, if you refer to the "now and then" angle of the title of this article – now is very much as then in that respect. Of course, the views of these people have shifted significantly over time in some ways. Bill Paynter notes that one famous Cornish wizard attended the law courts at Bodmin and undertook to keep witchcraft off farms for a shilling a year, and in additional guarantee no further trouble. This is certainly not something you would find happening in the same way now. Admittedly some police do choose to use alleged psychics from time to time, in murder investigations

which are going cold for example, but this would be to give suggestions to follow up where they could look for evidence which would be admissible in the court room.

By its very nature and definition, Traditional Witchcraft methods have not varied greatly over time. In fact, they are probably the one constant between the historical pellar or Traditional witch and the modern one.

This fact is interesting in itself, of course, when you consider that the most common and usual way of passing on the skills of Traditional Witchcraft is through oral transmission. Helen Cornish remarks that many newer practises try to legitimise claims for historical validity in their craft, blurring the lines between history and myth to do so and trying to draw on documentation or records to prove their case. But she goes on to note that you do not find these sorts of claims in folk magic because the knowledge is passed on through oral tradition. The practise is old and established, and the cunning folk, often solitary, simply do not need to stake a claim to anything.

The Museum of Witchcraft and Magic provide the following quote:

“Other than court confessions and trial documents little is recorded of the village Wise Women and Cunning Men that were the predecessors of modern witchcraft ... and were an essential part of village life.”

The last remark – ‘an essential part of village life’ – hints at a marked difference between Traditional Witchcraft a couple of hundred years ago and that of today. And that is, simply, the propensity of it. There were far more pellars or other users of folk magic, and they were far easier to find if you needed them. Folklorist Bill Paynter again, writes:

“There were witches in almost every village, shunned and dreaded by some who feared their supposed power to ill-wish those who offended them and sought out by others who wanted their aid to avert the evil eye or by their magic to remove spells already cast on them or their cattle by an ill-wisher who had over-looked them.”

So it is obvious that belief in the power of witchcraft, both Traditional or otherwise, was far more common in the 18th and 19th centuries than it is now. Paynter’s mention of the evil eye is an interesting one that we can draw on to show how belief diminishes. Clergyman, the Rev R.S. Hawker,

commentating in the 19th century, tells us that “two thirds of the total inhabitants of Tamar Side (in other words one side of a major Westcountry river) believe in the power of the Mal Occhio, as the Italians name it, or the Evil Eye”. Now even compared to the number of Americans who claim to have been probed by aliens, this is a significant number. You would be hard pushed now to find any area of the country where the general belief levels were so high.

It was the fact of the widespread belief in witches and in particular in their power to work maleficium being uppermost in the minds of the population in the 18th or 19th centuries that really accounts for the widespread support of cunning folk at these times. In more modern times it is less the belief in maleficium and more the wish for healing work that takes people to those who practise these traditional techniques. Not exclusively even now of course, because people still find concealed objects such as shoes or mummified cats under the floorboards of old properties and choose to rebury them. Others still hang witch bottles in their window or over the front door. Like horseshoes, of course, this is often done as a custom or superstition rather than because of a true belief in the likelihood of invasion

by evil-doers. But not in every case.

The amount of people that would think that if you had a problem you would automatically seek a magical solution are far less than the people in the past who would have thought along those lines. Today people will tend to seek more mundane ways of sorting out their problems. Fortune telling, through astrology and the like, is of course still big business as are alternative forms of healing, but these angles are slightly different to the work undertaken within the sphere of traditional witchcraft.

And what is the reason for this significant shift in belief over time. Should we put it down to that most proveable of effects ... science? Bill Paynter certainly thought so and went so far as to suggest that witch-belief in its traditional form was gone forever, blaming “the scientists’ wand”. I think, however, that this takes it a little too far. There is no evidence to suggest that traditional witch-belief is gone forever, just that it is much diminished.

I put this point to Gemma during the course of our interview, playing Devil’s Advocate and asking her to essentially tell me her counter-arguments against the scientific establishment who would argue that

witchcraft just isn't feasible. She told me that for her personally, she simply wouldn't do it if it didn't seem to work. She admitted that she didn't know whether the cause of the magic working was placebo in many cases or not, but when I asked her whether it mattered, she told me that it didn't to her. To quote from her interview transcript, "I'm perfectly happy to use cars, I don't give a damn how they work! I don't know how they work. I don't want to know how they work. It's like that with this."

Gemma goes on to highlight the fact that we are obviously living in a very different society now from that of the mid-1880s. Although we are far more scientifically aware, she says, people do still seek resolutions or services, or the aid of the spiritual side of things. People do still go to church and sit and pray for things. At the same time, these people are very scientifically aware. Yet somehow this is more acceptable. She points out that there are a lot of people in quantum physics, for example, who are practising magicians as well.

This relationship between magic and science then, is another area which is shifting over time, although maybe in this case it is shifting in more than one direction.

Gemma suggested to me that in the early days of science it was very tightly bound with magic: the alchemists and the astrologers with the astronomers and the chemists and then the two fields seemed to part ways. But, she argues, with the emergence of chaos theories the two seem to be merging more once again. In Gemma's opinion, science is unveiling the ways in which existence and the universe are very strange and odd, and further that we don't understand a lot of it and how it works. She suggests that maybe people are coming to more spiritual ways of looking at things in tandem with the way science examines events.

I asked her whether she felt that perhaps magic and science had been intrinsically linked all along but now that science was advancing further into strange discoveries of "this weird stuff happens" it is being drawn more closely together again.

She believes that there was probably a fear of being open about looking at things in that way. A hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago, people were a lot less coy or reserved about visiting someone who provided help using folk magic, whereas today there is likely to be much more of a veil of secrecy about doing so. Gemma extrapolates the same view to some areas of

scientific discovery, citing an example of a scientist she heard about who works in the field of quantum strangeness. When he was first studying he would not reveal that side of his work. He would do the very normal coursework elements but would not give away anything about the quantum research until he had got his grades.

There certainly seems to be more open-ness in the scientific community in modern times to saying “we don’t know” about things. In the past, scientists were people who didn’t like to say that they didn’t know, says Gemma, but now we hear scientists saying that things are weird or strange, that they don’t understand them, but that that is what makes them amazing.

We have highlighted already that there is a significant difference between past and present in the prevalence of people who practise Traditional Witchcraft techniques as a service, and also that these services were more accessible in the past. So how are they accessed now and what are the differences in the way that pellars and Traditional Witchcraft users provide operative help to those who ask for it?

It was certainly the case in the past that

practitioners were able to earn a living from providing magical help to people, but this is less likely to be the case in modern times in the case of Traditional Witchcraft. There are still practitioners but it is unclear how regular their work is. Gemma herself still practises but no longer advertises her services, working now only for family and friends or people who are referred to her via that route. She did used to advertise at one time but certainly never made a living from that side of her work.

This notion of advertising is an interesting one. In the 18th and 19th century there would often be a cottage at the end of the village and everyone knew that was where you went in order to seek help from the pellar or witch. In the past, the whole operation was very much undertaken with information transmitted through word of mouth. There is still an element of this in more modern times, particularly among the magical community where names get passed in this way, and recommendations made, but this is no longer the most common way of finding help if you need to seek it out.

This method of transmission has naturally been surpassed in the main by the internet, email and social media. People are now easily able to spread information about services offered or found, but are

also able to spread their experiences of people from whom they have received help. It doesn't quite stretch as far as a rating system, but there is maybe a corner of the market open for anyone who would like to establish "Witch Advisor"!

So the essence of the term community for the Traditional witch has now extended to become a global community instead of a local one in many ways. When Gemma was working for clients it was the case that some would come to her locally by word of mouth but by far and away the majority would be people who she would never know, or indeed ever meet. In Traditional Witchcraft this is not too much of a problem of course. Much of the help providing is charm based, which can be made and sent on to do its work, and indeed throughout history much healing magic has been and continues to be done at a distance. There are even instances of practitioners carrying out wart charming and other similar forms of healing via the telephone.

In modern times there is probably an increased level of trust over historical use of Traditional Witchcraft. It was the case that you went to a member of your local community who was, depending on the beliefs of the people in that

community, either shunned or trusted that they were the right person to go to. If they didn't prove to be the right person, then they would not last long within the framework of that community in which they lived. But now, with the global and online communities, you run the risk of contacting people who can hide more behind anonymity, evade shunning (the modern equivalent of which would be the bad reviews) or may not even actually either know what they are doing or profess to be what they are at all.

Some will argue that this refers more to the neo-pagan practitioners than it does to Traditional witches, who don't tend to use the same style of advertising or touting for business. I am not making that suggestion (to reassure anyone who follows any of these paths). There are good and bad practitioners on every path. To quote Gemma:

"I have looked on the internet and you do see websites with people offering spells and they're charging thousands of pounds and they've got some weird name like 'Unicorn Dragonfart' or something and no photographs of them so you don't get to know who the person is."

Gemma went on to suggest that perhaps people

are more trusting of websites where they can actually see who the person is and they keep a blog so that people can read what they are up to. This is in itself a very trusting, and probably slightly naïve, angle though. Anybody can, and people frequently do, set up a website pretending to be someone or something that they are not, and if you never deal with the person face to face then you would really be none the wiser despite there being a blog or photo. It may help the client to be more trusting, but it doesn't make the practitioner any more genuine.

Technology, then, can be seen as both a hindrance and a help to the Traditional witch. It can be a hindrance because it probably waters down any perceived genuineness about the practitioner. But of course, it can also be a help in terms of both ease of contact and also for the provision of goods as well as services, and these can be to other witches as well as to clients. Sarah Anne Lawless, for example, who I cited at the beginning of this article, runs a very successful online shop for ointments, remedies and other traditional objects.

If you go back to, for example, the 1800s there was a traditional way of working and the term Traditional Witchcraft summons up that traditional way of working. Now though, you have a choice of whether

you go to somebody who professes to be Wiccan, or professes to be any one of a number of modern witchcraft strands, for want of a better term.

I made the point at the start of this article that we are not considering an evolution of Traditional Witchcraft into these other types. It is certainly the case that at the start of the 20th century the rise of the Spiritualist movement led to the development of these new paths. Alongside this, it may perhaps appear that the Traditional witch is turning into these newer types. Indeed, Helen Cornish makes the point that the history of witchcraft is very much contested and that some witches are intent on trying to prove some historical lineage from the old witches. Similarly, with the enormous rise of Wicca and other similar religion-based forms of devotional witchcraft, there are aspects which seem to emerge from the work of the wayside witch. But it is not the case that Traditional Witchcraft has evolved into any of these. Rather than it has co-existed in its own quiet way in the background, being less self-effacing and fussy than some other types. Steve Patterson notes that

“the art of cunning and spellcraft seems to have passed into the hands of ceremonial magicians and their country cousins the neo-

pagans (but) ironically it is through the latter that a revival of the old pellar tradition has re-emerged.”

Gemma Gary explains the difference between types of practise like this:

“I suppose people working within a Wiccan framework, probably drawing upon group energy, they are very much geared to raising energy through dancing and directing it. It’s all about power and focus, whereas people working from what’s come to be known as traditional witchcraft tend to work more with spirits and the land – virtues of the land – and are probably more inclined to work with grimoires and things they would take from grimoires.”

As I said earlier, Traditional Witchcraft tends to be more of a solitary practice than a group one, but the two are not mutually exclusive. It is perfectly possible to use elements from either which work for the individual. Gemma does both solitary work and work with a coven, so she describes herself as having a merged background of both Wiccan and traditional techniques.

This act of working with the land and its virtues is

certainly still of relevance within Traditional Witchcraft and also moves across firmly into folklore records and customs as well. It is common in folklore, being cited by Robert Hunt and others, that one could become a witch by interaction with the landscape, for example the Giant's Rock or Logan Stone at Zenner in Cornwall.

Gemma was always aware that there was stuff from the past in the background when she was looking into the craft. She recalls that her grandparents used to take her out to the Menan Tol and other geological features and tell her that they were said to be for healing back pains and the like, and that people would use pins on them for divinatory purposes. There is, of course, much folklore around such geological features which has roots way back in these areas. There are still stones, for example, where people will pass a baby through a central hole for good luck. This would be a practice continuing in folklore from such things as the midwifery angle of the wise woman or pellar. This root would be lost on many people, of course. They would just know that it was said to be good luck to do it. By the same token certain structures in the landscape are still used for healing purposes.

These traditional ways and beliefs are still found

then, in the modern day. So where does that leave us? What are the differences and similarities between Traditional Witchcraft practices and practitioners 'now and then'?

I think the predominant view here is essentially that the differences are nowhere near as far reaching as most people imagine them to be, providing that you stick within the terms of Traditional Witchcraft itself and accept that it is distinct from the more spiritual and devotional forms of the craft that have developed in the modern day. These have gone a long way to remove the Traditional practitioner from the public gaze, but they have not materially changed that practitioner's work, nor have they either replaced it or developed from it.

The skills of the wise woman, cunning man, wayside witch or pellar have not altered hugely over time because the nature of the craft is that it is traditional. It is not 'historical' witchcraft, which many people mistake it for. The very term traditional, from the linguistic root tradere, means transmitted. In other words, the lore and practices have been passed on over time, being reworked very little in real terms.

It is the case that belief in the powers of the

wayside witch have diminished and are not so commonly found in modern times – at least not out in the open as they would have been in the 18th or 19th centuries. Many people will not openly admit to beliefs in these areas for fear of ridicule. Much of the modern folklore movement (and in this case we should take the term modern to mean from the middle of the 20th century) was the domain of the Christian middle classes, many of whom would have been keen to promote the idea that witch beliefs were and are very much extinct. They are not.

Farming families in the South West, where I come from, still pay local practitioners today to protect their land and livestock from harm (both from this world and the otherworld). People still consult the wise folk to have curses removed, or for healing. Gemma Gary, in her book on traditional witchcraft, even cites the example of a Penzance estate agency who called in the services of a local wise woman to help to sell a particularly troublesome house.

Possibly one aspect that has changed over time in the use of the services of the folk magic practitioner, however, does seem to be that people

now rarely request the identity of an ill-wisher to be divined. They are still happy to ask to have a curse that they believe that they are under lifted, but do not wish to know the source of that curse in the first place. One wonders whether this has as much to do with the increasingly Americanised lawsuit culture as anything else. I'm not sure that InjuryLawyers4U yet branch out into the field of curse-inflicted ailments, but there is still time!

There is not even as big a shift as people imagine into the 'pre-made' spells or remedies that are available to buy, or the books on the subject. It was always the case that the Traditional Witch would sell such items, and also that they would consult texts. There is, of course, a difference in both the type of text available to practitioners and the variety. The Grimoires of the 19th century have been replaced in the main by the books on Love Magic written by Unicorn Dragonfart and the like, so there is certainly a wealth of printed material available for people interested in the subject, or people who want to try their hand at what they believe to be magic. But the old texts and lore are still available to the modern practitioner of traditional techniques through more esoteric publishing routes.

Folk magic, to quote Helen Cornish, is viewed as a timeless and unchanging practice that implicitly entails continuity. It is in the ways that these practices are presented, located and accessed where we see the most significant changes, not in the practices themselves.

Traditional Witchcraft is likely to remain traditional for a long time to come.

Biography

Mark Norman is an independent folklore writer and researcher living on the edge of Dartmoor in Devon. He holds what is thought to be the UK's largest archive of Black Dog sightings and apparitions and his book "Black Dog Folklore", the first full length study on the subject by a single author, will shortly be published by Troy Books. He has a popular Facebook page for those interested in his work at www.facebook.com/marknormanfolklore and welcomes interactions through that page.

From Fairy To Spaceman: How UFOs Developed from the Fairy Faith

David Sivier

Undoubtedly the most popular explanation for UFOs and Flying Saucers, apart from the dismissive attitude that they're just misidentified ordinary objects and phenomena, or the fantasies of the deluded, is that they are what they purport to be: real, nuts and bolts spacecraft from alien civilisations. Their occupants are real aliens, who have come here for a variety of reasons. They could be studying us, or experimenting on us, possibly in preparation for a full scale invasion. Or they could be much more benign, emissaries from an interplanetary version of the United Nations, who are contacting us in order to bring about a new, more enlightened, peaceful and harmonious world.

Against this is an alternative view, that, in the words of the psychologists C.G. Jung, UFOs are 'a modern myth of things seen in the sky'. Since the

1970s folklorists have also been studying the phenomenon. Linda Degh, for example, the emerita professor of folklore at Indiana University, in 1977 published a paper, 'UFOs and how Folklorists Should Study Them', which attempted to lay out the proper methods folklorists should adopt in examining this strange new form of modern lore. She has been joined by Eddie Bullard and Peter Roycewicz, also from Indiana University. Bullard is best known for his work on the abduction phenomenon and its relationship to the 'Old Hag' experience. He did his doctorate on 'Mysteries in the Eye of the Beholder: UFOs and their Correlates as a Folkloric Theme, Past and Present'. Roycewicz's 1984 doctoral thesis was similarly titled 'The Boundaries of Orthodoxy: A Folkloric Look at the UFO Phenomenon'. In fact, folklorists have been studying the UFO phenomenon almost since it first appeared with Kenneth Arnold's sightings of flying objects over the Rockies that flew 'like saucers skipped over water'. In 1950 Howard Peckham published his book, *Flying Saucers as Folklore*.

The modern UFO narrative is similar to various forms of folk supernatural experience. It needs to be pointed out that it is not exclusively based on fairy lore. Certain elements are drawn more from

occultism, mysticism and the literature of the survival of the dead – ghosts and spirits, rather than just fairies. Vallee in *Dimensions* quotes from the magic text, *Entretiens sur les Sciences Secretes* to show the similarity of the UFO phenomenon not just to fairy lore, but also to Graeco-Roman beliefs about daemons as the aerial spirits, who formed a link between mortals and the gods. It isn't a simple case that UFOs are simply a modern version of the fairy faith, as there are many different influences at work. Nevertheless, the fairy narratives are an important element within it, given a new, technological guise.

The real inspiration for the view that UFOs are a technological, space-age version of the old fairy lore, however, were the works of the Fortean authors John A. Keel and Jacques Vallee. Keel, a journalist and veteran writer about the strange and mysterious, and Vallee, a French-American astrophysicist and computer scientist, both took the view that the UFO phenomenon was real, and had been present with humanity from the various times. In previous ages before the rise of science, the Ufonauts took the form of gods, angels and demons. Now they appeared as technologically advanced extraterrestrials. Nevertheless, the phenomenon still retained a strong similarity

pointing to its basis in traditional lore, including the belief in fairies.

For example, despite their use of spaceships and spacesuits, the Ufonauts may physically resemble fairies. In *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse*, Keel wrote

Among the great heaps of neglected and ignored UFO data, we find hundreds of “minipeople” accounts. These are very rarely published anywhere because they are so unbelievable. Most of them are identical to the fairy and gnome stories of yesteryear. The minipeople are only a few inches in height. Some dress like spacemen, complete with transparent helmets, while others are described in much the same way as the Irish leprechauns... Many contactees admit that they have seen minipeople cavorting about on their furniture and even riding around in miniature flying saucers.

For example, the creature encountered by Aarno Heinonen and Esko Vilyo at Imjarvi in Finland in 1970 was 35” (90cm) tall, with a hooked nose, small, narrow ears and wearing a conical helmet. Fifteen years earlier, in 1955 a couple of short extraterrestrials, about 3’6” to 4” tall, took the

flowers an Italian woman, Mrs. Lotti-Dainelli, was taking to the cemetery. The short, green creatures with glowing yellow eyes set on the sides of their heads, with large ears and bald heads, that besieged the Sutton family in their home at Kelly-Hopkinsville, Kentucky in 1955, have been described as 'goblins'. Patrick Waters, a tailor from Cloontipruckilish, also believed that the fairies were extraterrestrial in origin. He told the American folklorist and theosophist, Evans-Wentz that 'the gentry are the most noble tribe of all; and they are a big race who came from the planets – according to my idea.'

One fairy encounter that is similar to contemporary accounts of flying saucers is discussed by Vallee in his book, *Dimensions: A Casebook of Alien Contact*. The people of rural Poitou in France believed in a kind of fairy called *farfadets*. These were described as black, hairy dwarfs. They were supposed to live in underground caverns by day, occasionally coming out to play tricks on terrified mortals. In 1850 a group of women were talking outside near the bank of the Egray river until midnight. Just as they had crossed the bridge coming back to the village, they heard a terrible noise and saw a mysterious object, which they described as 'a chariot with whining wheels'. This

was heading up the hill at terrifying speed, pulled by the farfadets. One of the women made the sign of the cross for protection, and the chariot leaped up over the vineyard to disappear into the night. Like modern UFO encounters, this is a sighting of a supernatural vehicle, conveying non-human, intelligent beings, which is capable of flight. The difference in description between UFO encounter and fairy visitation, in this instance, can be put down to the differing levels of technology. In the case of 19th century Poitou, this was a peasant society, where horse-drawn vehicles were the norm and widespread. In the case of UFOs, they have taken on the trappings of 20th century technological society, and specifically the imagery of space flight, to express the idea of a supernatural vehicle and its equally alien, magical inhabitants.

In fact, it's possible to go through some encounters with UFOs and their weird occupants, and show how they conform to some of the motifs in traditional fairy lore, such as those listed in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, or E. Baughman's *the Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America*.

For example, the unnatural lights seen in the sky during CE 1 encounters are related to the visions of

ghostly lights, E. 530.1. Their behaviour also sometimes conforms to accounts of fairy activities. In 1973 DeWayne Donathan, his wife, and another witness, Gary Flatter, saw two silver suited entities dancing in the road before floating away. This corresponds to F261: dancing fairies. Crop circles, when not produced by human pranksters like the infamous Doug and Dave, or Jim Schnabel, can be seen as a modern form of motif F 261 – fairy rings in grass. The skin colour of the 'Greys' is also the colour of the returning dead, E: 422.2.3. The Greys underground bases may be viewed as a modern version of F. 721.1, under ground passages, and F.211 – fairies live in hollow hills. The belief that the American and other governments have done a secret deal with the alien visitors in order to obtain their advanced technology shows a similarity to N. 511, treasure in the ground, and particularly N 512 – treasure in an underground chamber. It's also related to F 342 – fairies give people money, and F244, fairy treasure. In abduction lore, the Greys are also responsible for producing hybrid creatures, which mix human and animal characteristics. These can be seen as a form of E. 423 – the returning dead in the form of animals, and G. 225 and G. 265/7 – animals as witches' servants, and witches controlling animals. The cattle mutilation phenomenon, in which the Greys are supposedly

responsible for killing cattle, leaving the mutilated bodies to be discovered later by shocked farmers and ranchers, are a variety of F 366, fairies harm cattle.

The abduction phenomenon itself has a number of features of traditional fairy lore. For example, the abduction of women roughly corresponds to F 322 – abduction of a man's wife by fairies. Sometimes it's believed that the Ufonauts have left an android in the missing woman's place, like F 322.1(a), in which sticks or a wooden replica are left instead of the abducted woman. The hybrid children produced through the supposed alien programme of breeding with us also conforms to another motif, F 305: offspring of human and a fairy. In the abduction myth, the parents of these hybrid children may be brought back to see and hold their offspring aboard the alien craft in an echo of F 372: Fairies take human nurse.

Like the visits to fairyland, time as well as space may be distorted, so that what seems to be only a few hours can in reality be much longer when the visitor to the underworld is finally returned to our reality. Marco Restier of Brazil was taken on a journey by aliens from the constellation Orion on the 4th December 1949, only to return over four

months later on the 14th April 1950. The aliens, when he met them again, later told him that this was due to 'Space-Time contraction' and the 'Synchronism of Time'. It's a version of F 377: supernatural lapse of time in fairyland.

And like the fairies, the Ufonauts may give the humans, who encounter them gifts. Joe Simonton, a farmer at Eagle River in Wisconsin in 1961, was given pancakes by the 5' (3.65m) occupants of the UFO he experienced. The contactee, Howard Menger, claimed to have been given processed potatoes by the aliens, including Venusians, Martians and Saturnians, who took him to their base on the Moon. Back in the 1990s, the lawyer and broadcaster Clive Anderson was shown a couple of stones by a pair of ufologists he had on his chat show. The pair claimed that they had also been given them by extraterrestrials. These are the modern counterparts of F 340: gifts from fairies, and F 809 fabulous or miraculous rocks.

The transition from fairy encounter to extraterrestrial may well be due to a variety of mechanisms. The psycho-social view of UFO experiences, espoused by such groups as the small press UFO magazine Magonia, considers that these are indeed caused by misidentification and

anomalous or poorly understood psychological processes. The abduction experience is a classic example. In this piece of UFO folklore, people are being abducted by aliens, who intrusively examine them aboard their spacecraft, or have sex them. Eddie Bullard has pointed out the similarities to the 'Old Hag' experience of Newfoundland folklore and the nightmare, succubi and incubi of medieval Europe. This was the experience of sleepers that they were being held paralysed in bed by a supernatural force – a witch or a demon pressing down on them. The modern German term for nightmare is *Alptraum*, though the *Alpen* here probably doesn't mean the mountain range, but is an old term for elf or fairy. At the heart of this experience is the hypnopompic and hypnogogic state – the forms of consciousness between sleeping and waking, in which the body can be paralysed and dream imagery mixed with normal, conscious vision.

Neurologists such as W.G. Walter have also pointed out that the hallucinations suffered by the victims of epilepsy and schizophrenia are drawn from the sufferer's cultural background. This may include myths and legends, as well as literature. For example, one epileptic, whose case was investigated by Walter, used to see a witch,

dressed in rags, cooking in his kitchen during his attacks.

Folklorists also recognise that folklore is not a body of fixed, static tradition, but fluid and changing as the old stories and lore are altered and re-interpreted according to changing circumstances. 19th century folklorists collected material from rural farming communities in the belief that these societies had remained essentially unchanged over the centuries, and so preserved ancient legends and lore that had been lost elsewhere in the new, urban society that was just coming into being. It was widely believed that as modern society became more urbanised, and the population became better educated, particularly scientifically, so these ancient beliefs would die out. This has not happened. As far back as the 1870s folklorists were collecting material from urban workers. In 1886 the French scholar Gabriel Vicaire asked if cities did not also have their own folklore, like that of the countryside.

An example of how traditional stories change according to the developments in technology and society can be seen in the 1830s comic ballad, *The Steam Loom Weaver*. This is a song about the romance between a train driver and a female

steam loom weaver. It's based on an earlier ballad from c. 1804. This was a time when cotton weaving was still a domestic industry, with the weavers working in their own homes. This version of the ballad therefore has the heroine working in her own home, and instead of being a train driver, the hero instead is an itinerant workman, who calls on the heroine to repair it.

Supernatural beliefs and narratives were also changing in line with the differing currents of thought and mystical experiences in 19th and 20th century occultism, and the rise of the scientific folktale. There has recently been a book written about the development of the scientific fairy story as a distinct literary form, as authors attempted to popularise the new scientific discoveries in the form of the traditional fairy story. Something of this process can be seen in one of the stories of Frank L. Baum, the writer of the *Wizard of Oz*. Amongst the magical beings he includes amongst the characters of his book, *The Master Key*, is a 'demon of electricity'. This process continued into the 20th century, and can be seen in another work of children's literature, *The Ship That Sailed to Mars*. Written by the children's illustrator William M. Timlin in 1921, the fantastic ship encounters on its journey to the Red Planet a variety of strange

beings, which are drawn more from the Bible, myth and legend than from informed speculation about life on other worlds. These include the Eden Serpent, air sprites, the Star of Classic Myths, and the Seven Sisters. These all live on their own little world rather like the *Clangers* of the beloved 1970s BBC children's TV series, or the individual little worlds of a recent British Gas commercial. Each of these moons is like a house, with doors, windows and chimneys.

The 19th and early 20th centuries were also a period where the line between science, pseudo-science and mysticism was still very unclear. The trances and strange, ecstatic states produced by the Mesmerists in late 18th century France were credited to a mysterious force, animal magnetism, which flowed between individuals and which was activated by the passes and gestures of the Mesmerist as he treated his subjects. In the next century, the surviving Mesmerists developed a theory that the force behind the phenomenon was a kind of electrical fluid that flowed into the universe from the throne of the Creator. This was a period when an interest in Spiritualism was entirely respectable intellectually, even if the phenomenon itself was extremely controversial. Amongst those with an interest in the possibility of the survival of

the personality after death were respected, senior scientists like the physicist Oliver Lodge and the biologist Alfred Russell Wallace in England, and the astronomer Camille Flammarion in France.

This was also the period in which people were, as now, intensely interested in the possibility of life on other worlds, and the scientific romance was taking shape as a distinct literary form. The year 1835, for example, saw the publication of Edgar Allen Poe's story *Hans Phall – A Tale*, about a journey to the Moon by a man from Rotterdam, and the now notorious 'Moon Hoax' of Richard Adams Locke. Locke was an English journalist, who had emigrated to America. In 1835 he wrote a piece in the New York *Sun* claiming that the British astronomer, John Herschel, had discovered not only life but civilisation on the Moon from the observatory in South Africa. The article caused a sensation, and was immensely popular. This early Science Fiction contained a number of supernatural elements. The Vril-ya, the advanced, underground civilisation of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's immensely popular proto-SF novel, *The Coming Race*, are able to achieve flight and immense feats of engineering through their mastery of a mysterious force, Vril, which acts rather like electricity. The novel was immensely popular in its time, and was the

equivalent of today's SF blockbusters. The celebrated stage magician, John Nevil Maskelyne, put on a full-length stage play based on the book. Contemporary SF still retains a very strong element of mysticism and the supernatural. Many of the aliens, like *Star Trek's* Vulcans, are telepathic. A recurring theme in much SF were hostile extraterrestrial creatures, that drained their victims of 'life energy', like the Fendahl in the 1970s Dr. Who serial, *The Image of the Fendahl*, which shows the continuing influence of vitalism. And the Force in *Star Wars* is basically the Science Fantasy counterpart of the Tao in traditional east Asian religion.

Occultists and mystics also tried, using their disciplines, to make contact with the inhabitants of worlds elsewhere in our universe. This began in the 18th century with the Swedish scientist and visionary, August Swedenborg, who claimed to have visited a number of different planets, including Jupiter, during out-of-body experiences. Allan Kardec, the founder of Spiritism, claimed to have been informed by the spirits, whose teachings he published in *The Spirits' Book*, that the other worlds in our universe were also inhabited. Sherman Denton and 'Helene Smith' (Catherine Eise Muller) also claimed to have journeyed to Mars using astral

projection. And in SF, John Carter, the fictional hero of Edgar Rice Burroughs' novels set on Mars, travelled to the Red Planet simply by wishing he was there after being attacked in a cave by enemy soldiers during the American Civil War. Burrough's explained his translation from one world to another across the vastness of space using concepts based in Theosophy. Teleportation, the instant transfer of matter from one location to another, is another concept taken over from the paranormal. The term was first coined by Charles Fort, and the cult SF writer, Alfred Bester, let the cat out of the bag about its origins by giving the name of the discoverer of this hitherto unknown human ability the name of Charles Fort Jaunt in his class novel, *The Stars My Destination*. Star Trek's transporter may do the same using advanced physics, but the idea is very much based on Fort's mysterious appearances of strange objects. Telepathy and psychical research almost became orthodox science for a period in the 1970s. The veteran British amateur astronomer, writer and broadcaster, Patrick Moore, was extremely sceptical about a number of paranormal disciplines. He did not believe in UFOs, and was very scathing about astrology and pyramidiology. Nevertheless, he believed that there was a considerable amount of evidence to support telepathy, and was open to the idea that telepathic

communication across space would be possible. On the other side of the line between science and mysticism, some occultists were also coming to the same conclusion. Charles Stansfield Jones, a British disciple of the 'Great Beast' Aleister Crowley, believed that Aiwass, the entity who dictated *The Book of the Law* to his occult master, was an extraterrestrial, rather than a discarnate spirit.

Owen Jones, the British historian of witchcraft, points out in his study of witch belief after the passage of the Witchcraft Act of 1736 that the belief in witches persisted in Britain in rural communities long after it had been rejected by the upper and middle classes. He also pointed to the continuing persistence of astrology, the belief in psychic powers and UFO abductions as proof that irrationality certainly was not confined to the past. Rather than dying out, irrational and supernatural beliefs have simply taken different forms in line with the changing nature of modern society and humanity's expanded horizons.

As a result, traditional narratives, including those of fairy lore, have been recast in line with the development of modern, advanced technological science. But the old mystical desires and attitudes towards the heavens as the locus of gods, spirits

and angels still persist. When Stephen Hawking appeared on Richard and Judy, the cosmologist, himself an agnostic, was asked by Madeley questions more suited to a religious leader or philosopher, rather than a man of science. Was there a God?, Madeley inquired. Did heaven exist? It's notable that in the film version of *The Mothman Prophecies*, the character Richard Gere's hero turns to for an explanation of the mysterious visions he and his colleagues are experiencing, Dr John Leek, is a physicist. Astronomers, cosmologists and physicist are now the guardians of cosmic truths previously kept and revealed by priests and mystics. And if the gods aren't riding in technological chariots, the fairies and other spirits are, and UFO experiencers are the modern seers who perceive them and observe their passing.

Notes & Articles

In this Section of the Journal we present independent research that was not presented as a Conference Paper at an ASSAP Conference, nor submitted to full peer review, but is of interest our members.

We welcome submissions of a speculative or theoretical nature that are too long to be published in our magazine, Seriously Strange.

Notes & Articles are not subject to Peer Review.

SECOND ASSAP NATIONAL BELIEF AND EXPERIENCES SURVEY

Dave Wood and Nicky Sewell

At Seriously Strange in September 2013, the conference of the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena, the National Belief and Experiences Survey (NBES) was launched. This was based on professional polling conducted by professional pollsters YouGov. There was interest from the academic community and press following the results of the first NBES.

The purpose of the project is to track the paranormal beliefs and experiences of British population over time. ASSAP aspires to commissioning the polling on an annual basis. This will allow the public belief in different anomalous phenomena to be monitored over time, to see emerging trends and help direct investigations and research. Similarly assessing the types of phenomena people report experiencing will help to direct activities.

In September 2015 the second National Belief and Experiences Survey (NBES) was conducted. The same professional polling company, methodology and questions were used.

Where the results of the first NBES stood in relative isolation, with some comparisons made to previous surveys by other bodies, the second NBES allows direct comparison with the first.

Further research will be presented at Seriously Strange 2016, but some headline findings include:

Belief in Ghosts

In answer to the question: I believe some people have experienced ghosts (i.e. seen, heard, smelt or otherwise sensed the spirit of a deceased person or animal).

- Belief in ghosts has risen from 52% believe, 32% disbelieve, 14% not sure in 2013 to 57% believe, 32% disbelieve and 11% not sure in 2015.
- Much of the movement appears to be amongst men whose believe was 41% in 2013 compared with 48% in 2015.

- There was also movement in age groups as belief amongst 25-34 year olds increased (49% in 2013 and 55% in 2015) and especially 45-54 year olds (49% in 2013 compared to 59% in 2015).
- When split by social grade ABC1 stayed broadly stable (53% in 2013 and 54% in 2015) whilst C2DE increased from 51% in 2013 to 58% in 2015.
- Belief in ghosts rate are highest amongst women (64%), the over 55s (61%), lower social grades (58%), those living in the midlands (59%), working in a part-time job (66%) and those divorced or separated (69%).

Belief in UFOs

In answer to the question: I believe some people have witnessed UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects) that have an extraterrestrial origin.

- In 2013 fewer people believed in UFOs than disbelieved. Belief in UFOs has now overtaken disbelief. In 2013 38% believed, 38% believed with 17% unsure. In 2015 43% believe, 41% disbelieve and 16% not sure.

- In 2013 belief in UFOs was more common amongst women (35% men believed; 41% women believed) this gap has closed and increased in both groups. In 2015 42% of men believed whilst 43% of women believed.
- There were several variations between age groups with a 7% increase amongst 25-34 year olds, a 10% decrease amongst 35-44 year olds, a 10% increase amongst 45-54 year olds and an 8% increase amongst those 55 years and older.
- Belief in UFOs rates are highest marginally amongst women (43%), the over 45-54 year olds (49%), lower social grades (47%), those living in the north (48%), working in a part-time job or unemployed (48%) and those divorced or separated (56%).

Raw data is available at assap.ac.uk/polling

Recording Interactions

Ashley Knibb

Introduction

Whilst researching, investigating and experimenting in the paranormal field, more specifically during communication between sensitives and possible spirits, I wanted to discover an easier way to document the communication. I wanted a method that could help me see what was going on during the communication simply, rather than referring to multiple sources in order to understand the short event.

Over the years I have tried many things, but whilst reading about Quantum Physics I discovered Feynman's Diagrams and began to wonder if there could be a way of incorporating a similar approach. Oddly this also identified something else which I had felt was missing or perhaps not quite right, which was the vocabulary. I wanted to change some of the terms in order to move away from assumption and begin to create something more

probable.

This paper outlines how telepathic interaction during 'paranormal occurrences' can now be documented using my ideograms quickly and simply. The diagrams can also in some cases be reduced to define the most probable source of the interaction, thus determining if it is a good example of survival or not.

1 What is an Interaction

In order to first gain an understanding of what an Interaction might be, we often have to look at the general aspects of the Paranormal and those times that we often perceive as some kind of communication.

In the case of paranormal investigation and research communication can often be quantified as two types;

1) **Residual**, a left over energy imprint which continues to play given the right catalyst or individual tuning into the right frequency.

2) **An Intelligent or Spiritual connection**, these are seen as entities which have intelligence and the ability to communicate with us on an intellectual level. However it is my assumption that in many

cases during today's 'Paranormal Investigations' that the lines between these may have become blurred. That is to say that many probably confuse Residual for Intelligent.

It's this perception of communication that has caused much confusion over the years. Hence when some identify communication, what actually occurs could simply be a sequence of events that appears as communication. Equally actual communication could be missed by those looking for something more substantial.

This in itself means that there is no clear definition of communication within the Paranormal Field or indeed Telepathy in general. Thus that which is measured by perception of the individual is not really measured at all.

As I researched various types of probable communication it became apparent that the very term 'Communication' may also be considered incorrect, especially if the information is residual. Also often I would see various occurrences which would either happen prior, during or after the communication and could be considered to be associated to the communication. However we still really quantify these events as communication.

In understanding this, but also under the distinct realisation that something was happening I decided to use the term 'Interaction' to describe this change of personal self and possibly environment. This single term can be easily used to describe changes to the environment and individuals involved or perhaps not involved to their knowledge.

An Interaction is, transference of information by telepathic means between minds, influencing the personality and/or physiology and/or environment. This can be a random or planned event, independent of time and/or space; and/or possibly of dimension/realm/plane of existence.

The information transferred can take many forms and be of varied detail, but must be quantified according to what's received. Often more can be read into 'communication' than is actually supplied, when looking at Interactions we should use only what is provided to understand the Interaction. This could equally define the Interaction as having a source of the Subliminal Self as it could to an entity of some kind, a conclusion based on the facts provided. Although, this doesn't mean the Interaction isn't truly of an external entity attempting to communicate, just that the Interaction lacks fact

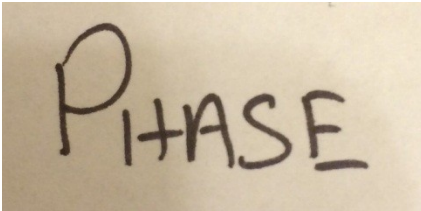
to support beyond the Subliminal Self. For the individuals involved, the experience may outweigh the facts provided, leaving them with a perception of the Interaction beyond the facts provable.

2 Interaction Phases

One aspect of monitoring these Interactions is breaking them down into 'Phases' to understand that each Interaction can be independent from the another although occur during the same session. Treating the Interactions independently doesn't mean they are not linked to other Interactions, but simplifies the data to be analysed. However Phases of Interactions can be used to possibly understand information from a particular source and how much detail is transferred.

Thus we identify each Interaction as a Phase within a session or sessions if the Interactions with a specific source continue over more than one session.

I will identify the Phase as follows :-



PHASE 1 - The first Phase of Interaction.

PHASE 1.1 - In some cases there may be possible Phases within Phases, simply labelled like this.

3 The Automatist

Previously we may have identified the individual in receipt of information as perhaps the Medium or Sensitive. However from my experience, although there are indeed individuals that appear more gifted in 'Communicating' than most of us; it's my understanding that we are all capable of communication by telepathic means. Thus an Interaction can occur to any of us at any time.

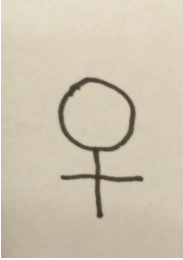
FWH Myers identified the Automatist as; both Sensory Automatism and Motor Automatism. These are identified as follows:-

Sensory Automatism - includes visual and auditory hallucinations.

Motor Automatism - includes messages that are written and words uttered without intention (automatic script, trance-utterance, etc.)

Thus the Automatist is an individual in receipt of either Sensory or Motor Automatism's.

I will identify the Automatist using the follow ideograms:-



4 The Agent

"Agent - The person who seems to initiate a telepathic transmission."

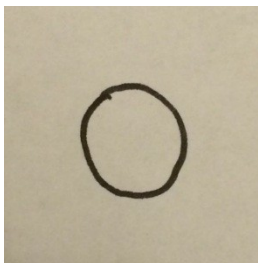
FWH Myers

In his book *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* Myers identified the Agent as above and it is in my opinion that this is an excellent way to simply show where/who the telepathic communication is from. However it is my understanding that we can't simply use 'Agent' alone as there could be considered a number of types. There are two primary types of Agent in relation to the Automatist,

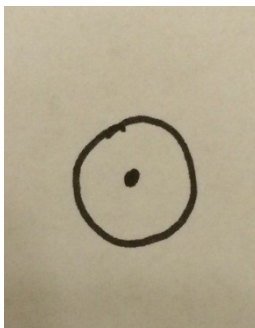
- 1) Known to the Automatist;
- 2) Unknown to the Automatist.

This defines if the Automatist knows of the Agent or not. This knowledge of the Agent is defined by whether they have had previous Interactions with the Agent. From these two we can define the Agent as the following;

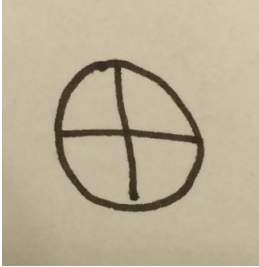
- 1) Unclassified Agent, an Agent that failed to provide enough information to define it.
- 2) Living Agent, an Agent that is alive like the Automatist.
- 3) Deceased Agent, an Agent that identifies it as someone that has past away.
- 4) Supernormal Agent, an Agent that is considered to transcend the ordinary, be of other Dimensions, Worlds or beyond. I've listed these below.



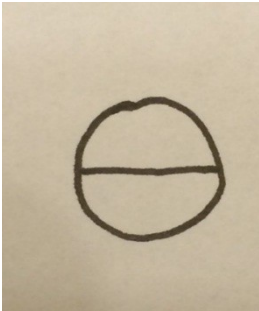
Unclassified Agent Known to the Automatist



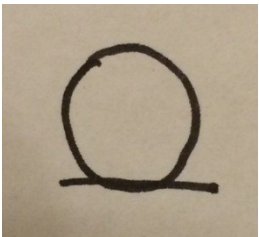
Living Agent Known to the Automatist



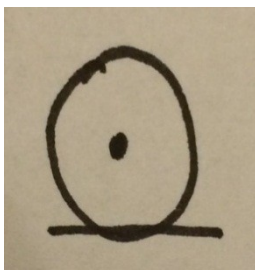
Deceased Agent Known to the Automatism



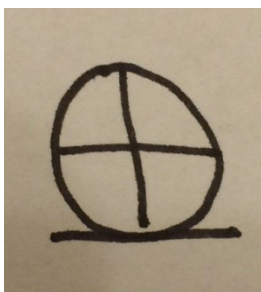
Supernormal Agent Known to the Automatism



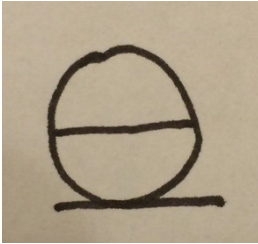
Unclassified Agent Unknown to the Automatism



Living Agent Unknown to the Automatism



Deceased Agent Unknown to the Automatism



Supernormal Agent Unknown to the Automatist

5 The Observer

As you might expect the 'Observer' simply describes the other people physically present in the room with the Automatist. Often they might engage in verbal conversation with the Automatist both during an Interaction, speaking to the probable Agent via the Automatist or when the Automatist is in a normal state of mind.

However an Observer could also be seen to be an individual that either influences the Interaction locally by simply being present or at a distance from conscious or unconscious thought.

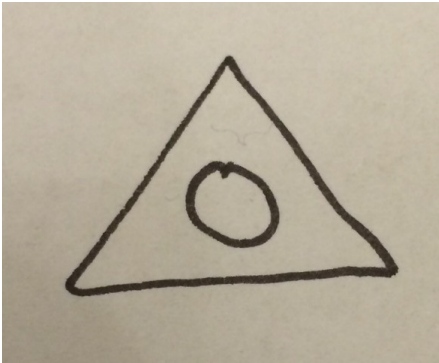
This kind of influence over the Interaction can also help to determine if it is an Interaction with a deceased or supernatural entity too. This is

determined by the very possibility that the Interaction could be reduced to the Automatist and the Observer that is influencing the Interaction.

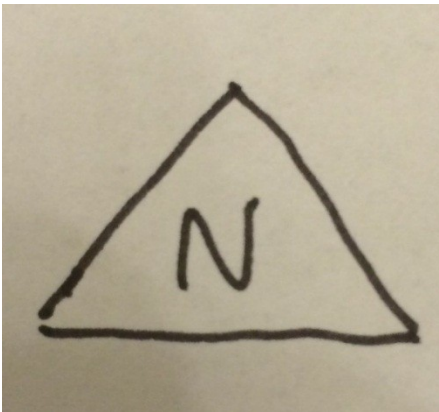
Of course determining a link between the Interaction and the Observer isn't always easy. However this can be ascertained from the facts communicated by the Automatist. If those facts are understood to be linked to an Observer and the Observer is well aware of the facts, then we could conclude that the Interaction is between the Automatist and Observer without the influence or indeed involvement of an Agent.

It's important not to forget the involvement of the Observer as its influence can often be missed as a catalyst to the Interaction. After all in science it has been determined that some experiments may behave differently when observed, thus yielding other results.

I have two ideograms for observers, as below:-



This represents the Observer local to the Interaction. The person's initials can be added below for reference.



This represents the Observer at a distance (or not present) from the Interaction. Again the person's

initials can be added for identification.

6 Categorisations of Interactions

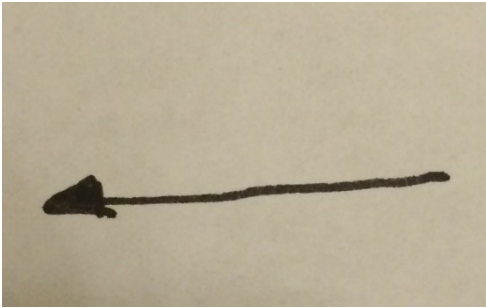
During my work investigating various locations with purported paranormal activity, observation of various Automatists (Mediums/Sensitive's) I have come to categorise the Interactions that occur in a certain manner. These categorisations refined the particular aspects of the interaction down to identify if it was;

1. a singular event,
2. a multiple event,
3. a planned event,
4. a random event,
5. locally obtained,
6. obtained at a distance,
7. A continual intellectual event, or
8. Level of detail was presented at the point of interaction.

It's often hard to gather all of this information during the Interaction itself, but by utilising audio recordings and the ideograms this should become easier.

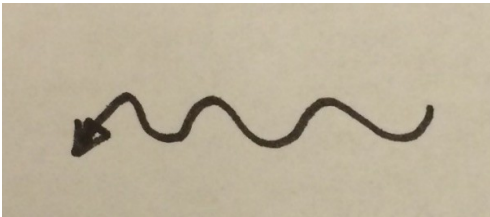
In order to ensure my ideograms were kept as

simplistic as possible focussed on four primary ones to begin with, which are as follows:-



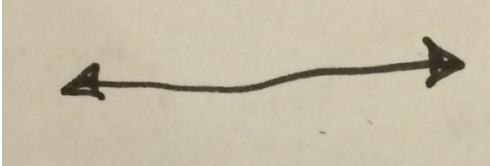
Singular Planned Interactions Obtained Locally

- These are a single or one-off transferences of information, which the Automatist seeks from a particular identified Agent.



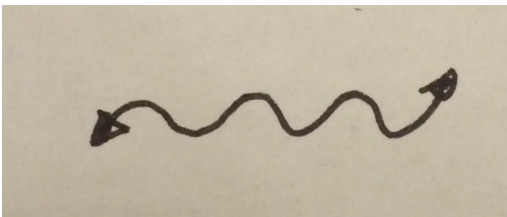
Singular Random Interactions Obtained Locally

- These are single or one-off transferences of information, which the Automatist receives from an Agent without request.



Multiple Planned Interactions Obtained Locally -

These are multiple transferences of information, which the Automatist seeks from a particularly identified Agent. The very essence of multiple transference of information can often suggest the possibility of two way communication, but this isn't necessarily the case. The reason being is that even some responses, which appear in return to communication, could actually simply be multiple chunks of information at random between Automatist and identified Agent.

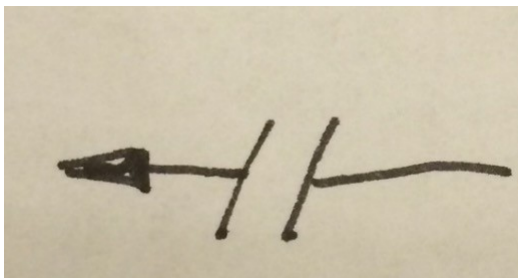


Multiple Random Interactions Obtained Locally -

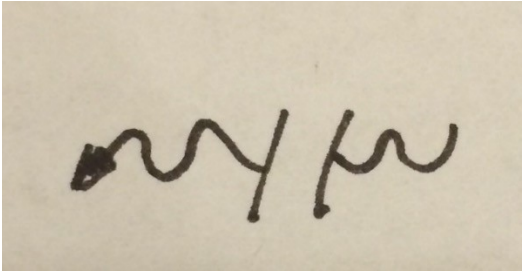
These are multiple transferences of information from Agent to Automatist which are received

without request. Again these can appear similar to conscious communication due to the multiple transferences of information, which may seem to interact with a line of questioning. However they could equally simply be random transferences of information.

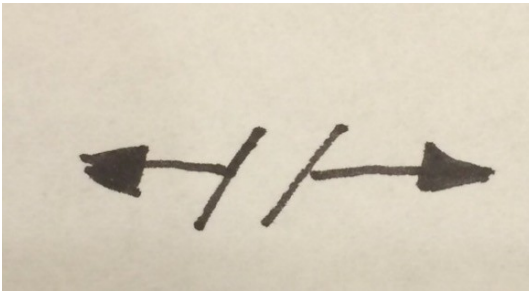
Using the above ideograms to identify information locally obtained, we soon realise the requirement to identify information also obtained at a distance too. These are as follows:-



Singular Planned Interactions Obtained at a Distance - These are a single or one-off transferences of information, which the Automatism seeks from a particular identified Agent at a distance.

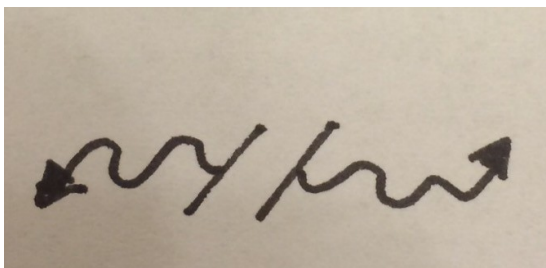


Singular Random Interactions Obtained at a Distance - These are single or one-off transferences of information, which the Automatist receives from an Agent without request at a distance.



Multiple Planned Interactions Obtained At a Distance - These are multiple transferences of information, which the Automatist seeks from a particularly identified Agent. The very essence of multiple transference of information can often

suggest the possibility of two way communication, but this isn't necessarily the case. The reason being is that even some responses which appear in return to communication, could actually simply be multiple chunks of information at random. However in this between Automatist and identified Agent, but received at a distance.



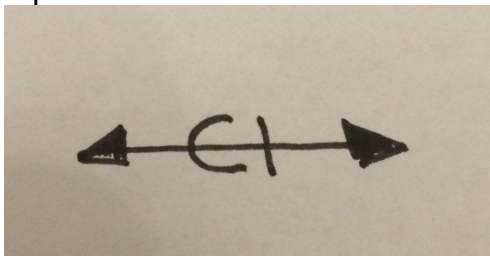
Multiple Random Interactions Obtained at a Distance - These are multiple transferences of information from Agent to Automatist which are received without request. Again these can appear similar to conscious communication due to the multiple transferences of information, which may seem to interact with a line of questioning. However they could equally simply be random transferences of information received at a distance.

These eight ideograms should cover most instances of interaction that occur. We simply add

in the determined level of detail as discussed in the section 'Interaction Detail'.

However in the fewer instances where the interaction meets all the required detail and shows itself to be intellectual by nature, but equally reoccurring then these instances become known as 'Continual Intellectual Interactions'. These would be very rare as the very presence of one of these suggests the possibility of evidence for survival, due to the fact that two-way interaction is established and then tested with Intellectual conversation that would require an Agent with consciousness to respond.

Continual Intellectual Interactions are represented as follows:-



Continual Intellectual Interactions are continued interactions with an Agent that supplies verifiable facts; such as its identity, the information it supplies, contacts it identifies, etc. This should include information 'unknown' or at least 'out of

reach' of the Automatist.

It's important to note at this point that the Continual Intellectual Interactions can only be truly applied if certain criteria are met. The first Interaction must also define relevant information that is not possibly known by the Automatist and there isn't a known Observer that could trigger the Interaction. Hence there appears to be no obvious observer causality to the Interaction. These aspects should help to define the Agent as aware of any information transferred and the Automatist during the Interactions too.

Interactions by their nature and indeed complexity can be hard to document, but without refined categorisation this is near on impossible. Hopefully my ideograms and small categories should help to simplify this moving forward.

Of course when observing (or reviewing audio/video after the fact) an interaction it's not always obvious to which type of Interaction fits best. However this can be broken down into a simple process:-

1. Does the Interaction appear to be occurring locally (ergo the Agent is present in the room)

or at a distance? This gives you the 'Obtained Locally' or 'Obtained at a Distance' element of the Interaction.

2. Did the Automatist identify an Agent prior to the Interaction? If yes and the Agent match the planned Agent, then this is a Planned Interaction. If no, then this is a Random Interaction.
3. Does the Interaction consist of a single transference of information (that is one word, brief sentence or utterance, contained in a relatively small amount of time) without significant continuation? If this is yes, then this is a Singular occurrence. If this is a no, then as long as the information transference continues over a significant amount of time or even if there is reoccurring incidents during different sessions (Phases) then this can be considered as a Multiple occurrence.

These three questions should identify the Interaction type each time. Once this has been identified then we need to add a level of detail, which is explained in the next section 'Interaction Detail'.

7 Interaction Detail

Often during an Interaction the Automatist will transfer a certain level of detail within the information. Often is the case that this detail or facts are not able to be verified at the time of the Interaction or even post Interaction. It's often the case that our own perception of the details presented drives us towards a probable conclusion that we may feel is correct, but in reality we have no way of knowing.

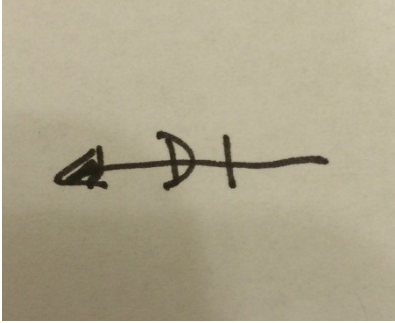
There are cases where the details within the information transferred during an Interaction have been verified at that point in time and indeed times where the details receive verification post Interaction, perhaps during further research. However this section isn't to identify the factual nature of those details presented by the Automatist during the Interaction, only to determine the level of information obtained.

The reason for this is because although the information transferred maybe difficult to establish as fact, we must also take into consideration that our understanding of fact may be equally flawed in these scenarios. That is to say; if the Automatist presents us with an Agent called Fred Watts, who

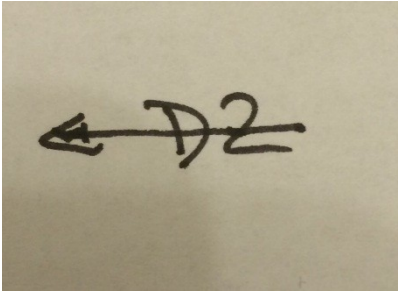
died age 55 in Hertford and is communicating with us knowing that he's dead, then we know that the Interaction Detail is good. However post Interaction and during further research we may find that although we had been supplied with many details on Fred Watts, we are unable to establish him as ever living in Hertford. Thus we begin to question if our Automatist received the information from the Agent Fred Watts or their Subliminal Self. In truth we are unable to establish fact on either side. Often we conclude that the inability to establish fact on the Interaction information results in the information becoming seen as fiction. However as we equally are unable to establish fact on the reality that the Agent may be external to the Automatist, then it is my assumption that we should not determine the Interaction as fiction, just devoid of sufficient conclusive fact to support survival or supernatural Interaction.

Hence why Interaction Detail is to evaluate the volume of information and not the quality of information given by what we can establish as fact.

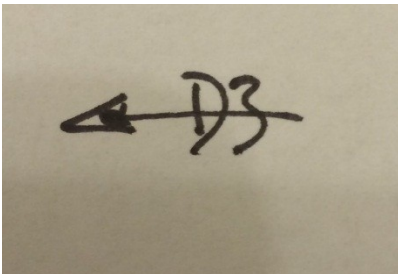
Interaction Detail is displayed by adding the 'D' and the number 1 to 5, depending on the detail level, to the Interaction line. This is shown below on a Singular Planned Interaction line.



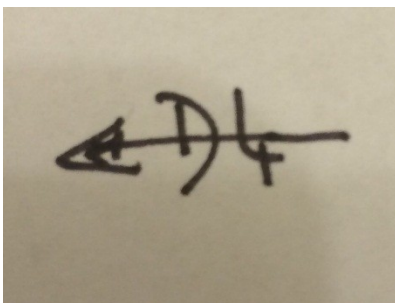
D1 - Agent Name, Age, Occupation, Date of Birth, Date of Death, Place they lived, family members, additional information and/or a message of some kind. This is the highest level of detail transferred to the Automatist by the Agent and shows that the Agent is aware of the Interaction as they respond to questions presented to the Automatists by the Observers. The Agent will also transfer additional information that allows the Automatist to identify Observers (present or not) that are connected to the Agent.



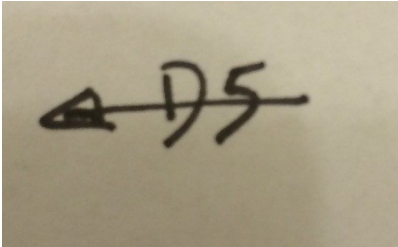
D2 - Agent Name, Age, Place they lived, family members, additional information and/or a message of some kind. This is the level of detail transferred to the Automatism by the Agent shows that the Agent is aware of the Interaction and responds to questions presented by the Observers. However the detail of the information supplied would make it difficult to determine as fact or not, for example specifics about the Agent are left out such their date of birth or death. Also any additional information is void of fact which links the Agent to anyone else in order to support survival.



D3 - Agent Name (in part not full), additional information and/or a message of some kind. This level of detail transferred to the Automatist by the Agent shows that the Agent may be aware of the Interaction as they begin to respond to questions from the Observers such as 'What's your name?' However the Interaction may be short or the Agent may struggle to transfer detailed information.



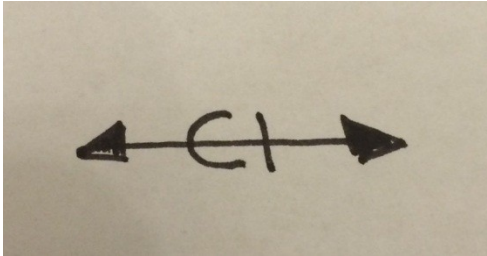
D4 - Information of some kind is received. This level of detail transferred to the Automatist by the Agent is of a very basic level, yet contains comprehensible information which equally determines that an Interaction is occurring. However due to the nature of the information it's difficult to determine if the Agent is aware of the Interaction or not.



D5 - No details received that can be comprehended, possible emotional response or non-verbalised communication. This is the lowest level of detail transferred to the Automatist by the Agent. If the Interaction lacks comprehensible details transferred to the Automatist, then this should cover them. Often an Automatist may receive information from an Agent, but the only response maintained is either emotional or simple random noises. However the behaviour of the Automatist display that an Interaction maybe in progress, but due to the level of detail in the information it's unlikely that the Agent is aware of the Interaction.

If the level of detail goes beyond that of D1, becomes continual, the information transferred is intellectual, the Agent begins to ask questions of the Observers via the Automatist, the Interaction must be two-way; then these become known as 'Continual Intellectual Interactions' as documented in the 'Categorisations of Interactions' section. It is

imperative that an Interaction Detail is beyond all five levels though before it can be determined as a Continual Intellectual Interaction.



8 Interaction Time Classification

The time classification is applied to the Interactions simply because it's my belief that the transference of information may not be restricted by time. This within itself can make the whole aspect of 'when' information is transferred seem a little fanciful, but in fact is probable in my mind.

It's my understanding that information can be transferred between an Agent and Automatist in a kind of format where as it may 'pop into existence' without the constraints of relative time or space.

For example as we may sit today in the 'Present' we could have information transferred from an Agent (alive or not) also in our present time. This is

the simplest form of information transference during an Interaction within the same time that doesn't break our understanding of reality. However, let's suppose the Agent (alive or not), knowingly or not, transferred the information yesterday. Then that would mean it was transferred in the past, to be received in the present, but its transmittance would have been void of time; thus popping into existence within the mind of the Automatist.

Understanding this as possibility to an explanation of although an Interaction may occur in the present, the only part of that really occurs in the present is the realisation that the information has become recognised. The possibility that the information was transferred in the past or indeed the future is hard to prove, but oddly probable in regards to an explanation. The reason for this is because in my investigations, research and experiments I have come to realise some situations where the transference of information is most likely void of time.

One example is something similar to precognition or déjà vu, whereas the Automatist appears to have information/knowledge of events prior to them taking place. Whereas déjà vu often is ruled out because the recollection occurs during the event

and cannot be clearly distinguished between the event and knowledge gained, precognition appears to have greater relevance. One such Automatist had such detailed knowledge of the future event that they described it as a 'video replaying in my head'. During one such event as these events approached, the Automatist explained to me exactly what was about to occur next, which remarkably was correct and detailed.

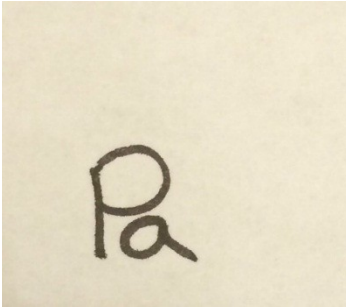
These present the possibility of an Interaction occurring, which transfers information from the future to our present or possibly to our past, which is realised in the present?

It's important to highlight at this point that there isn't conclusive evidence of these Interactions void of time occurring, but as there seems to be a possibility we must take them into consideration when documenting the Interactions. That way if they do appear to occur we have a method of seeing that within our ideograms.

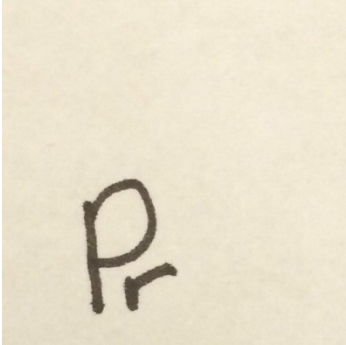
This is represented simply by adding the following to the Agent and/or Automatist to highlight when we believe the information was transferred. However it is imperative that we add this only if we are fully convinced that the Interaction is outside of the

present. Thus there must be something that suggests this to us, perhaps something from Agent via the Automatist, or perhaps the Automatist suggesting they were already aware of the information presented, or a time reference of some kind.

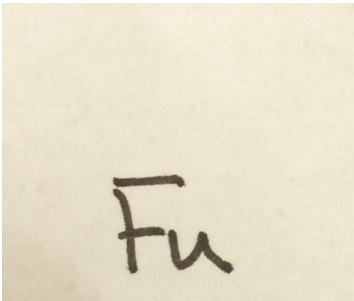
The following should be added to the Interaction to highlight the Time Classification:-



Past - The above is used to represent the Past



Present - The above is used to represent the Present



Future - The above is used to represent the Future

9 Personal Experience

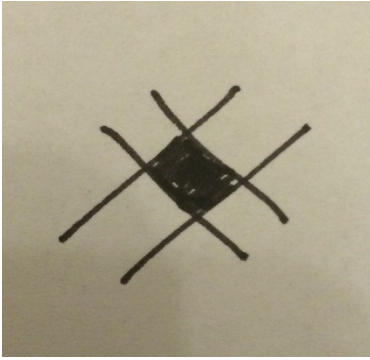
During an Interaction there are often a number experiences that are remarked on by all members of the group present, including the Automatist and

Observers alike.

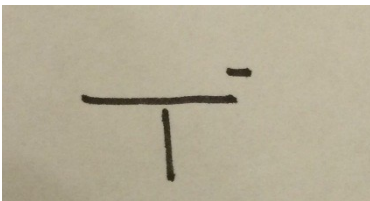
These experiences should be documented in the same way that you would anything else. Although there are no 'exact' measurements, as these are things which the individuals believes to be occurring, we can still document the variance that are believed to have occurred. For example, if an Observer tells the group that they are feeling a drop in temperature, then we would use the ideogram that shows a Temperature reduction.

It's equally important to document what the individual local to the Interaction may experiences, as this could have an importance relevance to the Interaction itself.

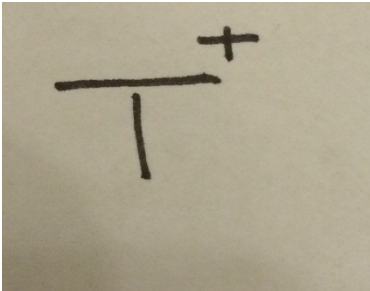
Below are some examples of the Personal Experiences ideograms:-



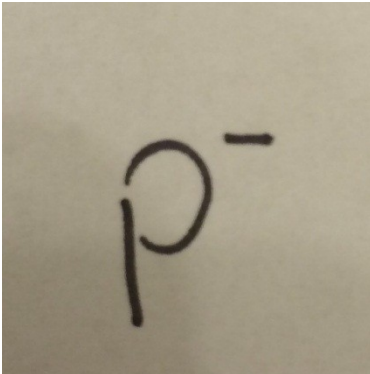
Physical Contact Felt During Interaction - If an individual believes they have been touched by something during the Interaction this should be indicated by adding this ideogram in close proximity to them.



Temperature Reduction Felt During Interaction - This simply indicates that an individual has identified that the temperature in their locality has reduced in their belief.

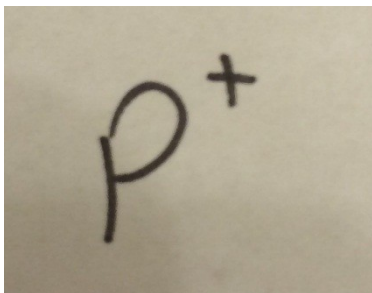


Temperature Increase Felt During Interaction - This simply indicates that an individual has identified an increase in their localised temperature.

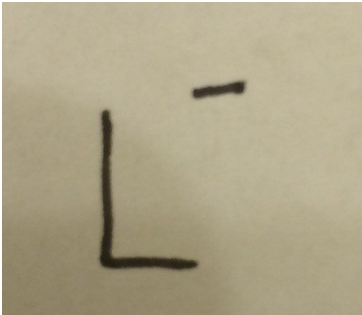


Pressure Decrease Experienced During Interaction - Although an individual may not be able to understand a change in pressure exactly, this can often be felt as what may be referred as a change in the atmosphere. Determined by a feeling that things are a little heavier perhaps. Again not exact measurements, but something experienced during

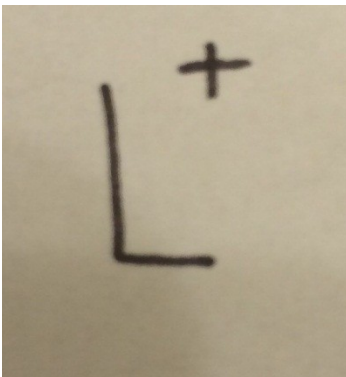
Interactions in my opinion. As with temperature these should be noted in the area of the individual that experiences this. I've added the increase and decrease separately for a particular reason, that being if the individual experiencing this mentions it as an increase or decrease. That way if the individual identifies an increase/decrease in pressure which is substantiated by our equipment, then that in itself is relatively interesting.



Pressure Increase Experienced During Interaction - This follows the same explanation as 'Pressure a Decrease Experienced During Interaction', but refers to an increase rather than a decrease in pressure.

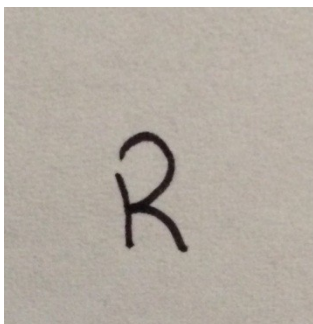


Visible Light Decrease Experienced During Interaction - Often there has been the odd experience of the visible light actually decreasing, either within a room or specific area. This ideogram should be added around the individual that experiences this. It's still hard to determine whether or this experience remains of the mind or is an actual change in the environment.

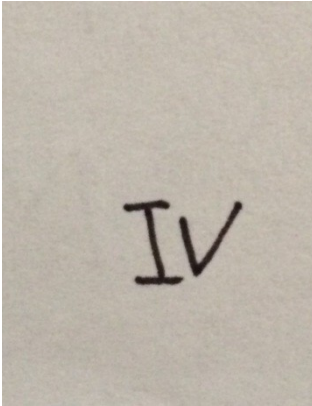


Visible Light Increase Experienced During

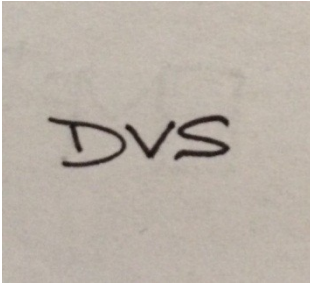
Interaction - This is less in occurrence than the decrease in light, but has been witnessed. Obvious explanations, as are similar for a decrease, are the individual's eyes adjusting to the light in the local environment. However this has also been witnessed in direction to Interactions, thus we must also record it.



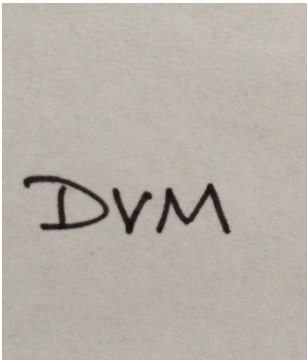
Audible Phenomena : Physical Object - These represent the most basic of audible phenomena, which are often experienced as raps, taps, knocks, etc. on physical objects during Interactions. These can be often heard by individuals alone, but also more than one individual at times too. In order to identify that a Tap, Rap, etc. was heard simply add this ideogram (letter R) close to the individual that identified the phenomena.



Audible Phenomena : Indistinguishable Voice -
These represent another slightly common phenomenon during Interactions, which is that of the indistinguishable voices that are heard. These sometimes present themselves as noises within the local area, which can be identified as a probable human voice, but equally don't carry a vocabulary that's easily understood. Again these can be easily added using the ideogram (letters IV) close to the individual that identified the phenomena.



Audible Phenomena : Direct Voice Single Words -
These represent the less common phenomena of Direct Voice, which presents itself as a single word during an Interaction. Of course this is often phenomena that is heard by an individual alone and less likely to be supported by others present. These would be added using the ideogram (letters DVS) next the individual that identified the phenomena.



Audible Phenomena : Direct Voice Multiple Words -
These represent the least common phenomena of

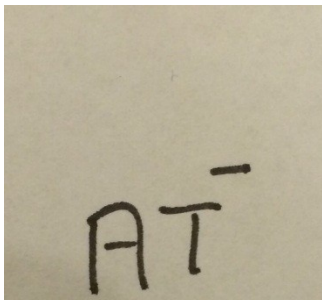
Direct Voice, which presents itself as a multiple words during an Interaction. Of course this is often phenomena that is heard by an individual alone and less likely to be supported by others present. The multiple words could be random words that not connected or make up sentences. These would be added using the ideogram (letters DVM) next the individual that identified the phenomena.

10 Environmental Changes

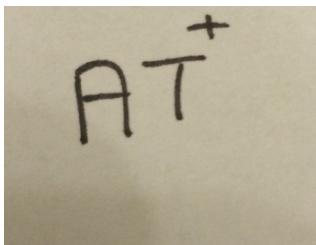
In order to align the data captured during an interaction and also draw comparisons with the other parts of the interaction it's also good practise to gather actual readings on the environmental changes, utilising devices to monitor these changes. Often these changes to the environment that we seek to monitor are in direct relation to some of the things we may personally experience during an interaction. Although we are often left asking if our experiences actually occurred during an interaction, the logically way to conclude if they did is to measure the environment and self.

These changes can include Temperature, Air Pressure, Light, Electromagnetic Field and Magnetic Field, but shouldn't be simply restricted to just these.

However in order capture the most frequently used I have included the following ideograms.

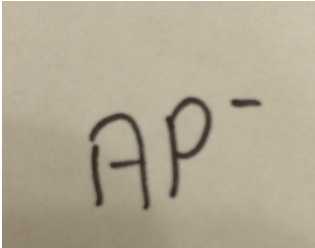


Actual Temperature Decrease - This can be used to represent a decrease in the actual temperature which is logged on a device. The above ideogram could be used as it is to represent the fact that the temperature decreased or the variance of the decrease could be added. For example -3.

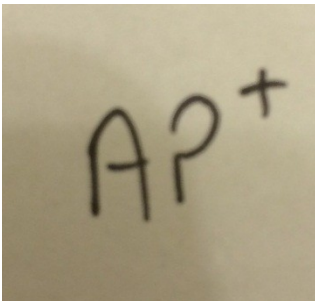


Actual Temperature Increase - This can be used to represent an increase in the actual temperature which is logged on a device. The above ideogram

could be used as it is to represent a temperature increase or the variance of the increase could be added. For example +3.

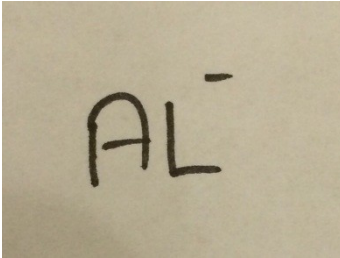


Actual Air Pressure Decrease - This can be used to represent an actual decrease in the localised air pressure logged by a device present. The ideogram can be used as it is or the variance of the decrease could be included. For example -2.

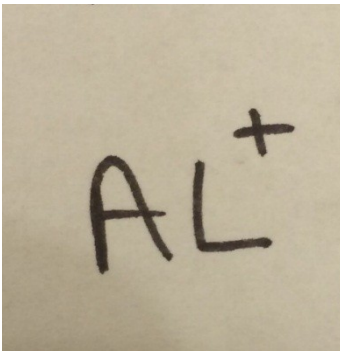


Actual Air Pressure Increase - This can be used to represent an actual increase in the localised air pressure logged by a device present. The ideogram can be used as it is or the variance of the increase

could be included. For example +2.

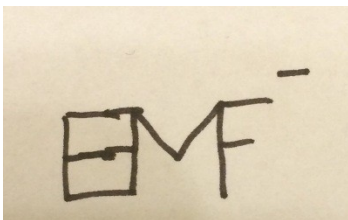


Actual Light Decrease - This can be used to represent an actual decrease in the local light logged by a device present. The ideogram can be used as it is or the variance of the decrease could be included. For example -2.

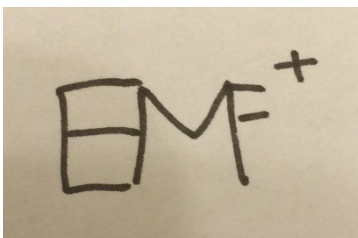


Actual Light Increase - This can be used to represent an actual increase in the local light logged by a device present. The ideogram can be used as it is or the variance of the increase could

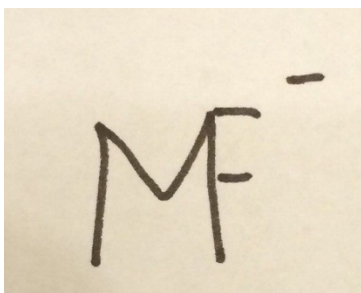
be included. For example +2.



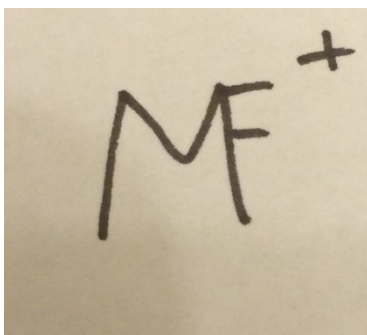
Electromagnetic Field Decrease - This can be used to represent an actual decrease in the localised Electromagnetic Field logged by a device present. The ideogram can be used as it is or the variance of the decrease could be included. For example -0.5.



Electromagnetic Field Increase - This can be used to represent an actual increase in the localised Electromagnetic Field logged by a device present. The ideogram can be used as it is or the variance of the increase could be included. For example +0.5.



Magnetic Field Decrease - This can be used to represent an actual decrease in localised Magnetic Field logged by device present. The ideogram can be used as it is or the variance of the decrease could be included. For example -0.5.



Magnetic Field Increase - This can be used to represent an actual increase in localised Magnetic Field logged by device present. The ideogram can be used as it is or the variance of the increase could be included. For example +0.5.

11 Local Manifestations

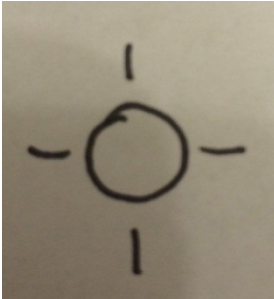
Often during an interaction various types of manifestations can occur, which could be seen by the Observers or the Automatist alike. These manifestations can take many forms, from light anomalies, to objects, to the full manifestation of a person.

During some of my own research, investigations and experimentations I have come to realise that these manifestations could equally be of the mind as actually seen by the observer's eyes. The simple reason for this is that many have been witnessed by an individual (myself included) where the manifestation was in plain sight of others, but they were unable to see the anything. Hence if these manifestations were identified from information from our eyes to our mind then it is logical to conclude that others would see the very same. However often nothing is seen by others or indeed another interpretation is received.

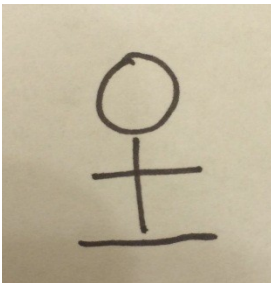
It is equally important to gain an understanding of these manifestations as a part of the interaction in my mind, as they could equally be a form of telepathic communication, if not a very interaction themselves.

On some very rare occasions these manifestations have been utilised by the Agent to visually prove their localised existence. The Scoble Experiment documented this on several occasions with the many light anomalies which took part in most of the sittings that there were guests present. Guests included the SPR (Society for Psychical Research) members; Montague Keen, Arthur Ellison and David Fontana. They investigated the case and documented it in The Scoble Report (book and Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research).

We can simply add an ideogram for a type of manifestation (or multiple) next to an Automatist or Observer to indicate if they witnessed any manifestations during the interactions. These types are listed below:-

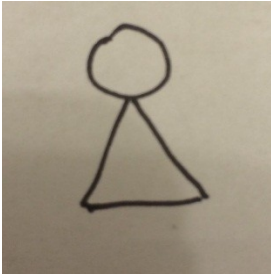


Light Anomaly Observed - This can be used to represent the fact that either the Automatist or Observer(s) may have witnessed some kind of light anomaly in close proximity during the interaction. Ideally this should be placed close to the individual (Automatist or Observer) that had seen the light anomaly.

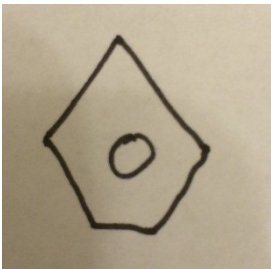


Male Manifestation Observed - This can be used to represent the fact that either the Automatist or Observer(s) may have witnessed the manifestation (or apparition) of a male in the localised area during the interaction. Ideally this should be placed close

to the individual(s) that had seen the manifestation.

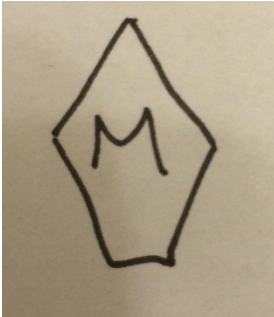


Female Manifestation Observed - This can be used to represent the fact that either the Automatist or Observer(s) may have witnessed the manifestation (or apparition) of a female in the localised area during the interaction. Ideally this should be placed close to the individual(s) that had seen the manifestation.

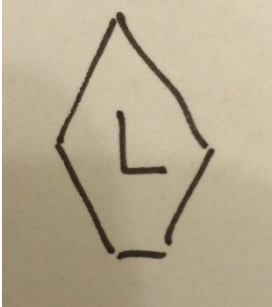


Stationary Physical Object Manifestation Observed - This can be used to represent the fact that either the Automatist or Observer(s) may have witnessed the manifestation of an object in the localised area

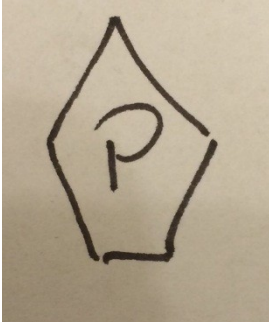
during the interaction that doesn't appear to move. Ideally this should be placed close to the individual(s) that had seen the manifestation.



Moving Physical Object Manifestation Observed -
This can be used to represent the fact that either the Automatist or Observer(s) may have witnessed the manifestation of an object in the localised area during the interaction that appears to move. The movement could be from the very slight to the obviously significant. It could include the object rocking or moving on relatively the same spot to the object moving around the whole room. Ideally this should be placed close to the individual(s) that had seen the manifestation.



Levitating Physical Object Manifestation Observed -
This can be used to represent the fact that either the Automatist or Observer(s) may have witnessed the manifestation of an object in the localised area during the interaction that appears to be levitating. The levitation could be from the very slight to the obviously significant. It could include the object levitating only slightly above a physical surface or at a much greater extent. Ideally this should be placed close to the individual(s) that had seen the manifestation.



Phased Object Manifestation Observed - This can be used to represent the fact that either the Automatist or Observer(s) may have witnessed the manifestation of an object that appears to be 'Phased'. This means that they saw an object, but it didn't seem to consist of standard properties in such that it was visible, perhaps see through and not solid to touch. The reason for this addition comes from some the experiences discussed in The Scole Report by the SPR, which included an item such as this.

12 Examples of Use

***"Telepathy -The
communication of impressions
of any kind from one mind to***

***another, independently of
recognised channels of sense”***

FWH Myers

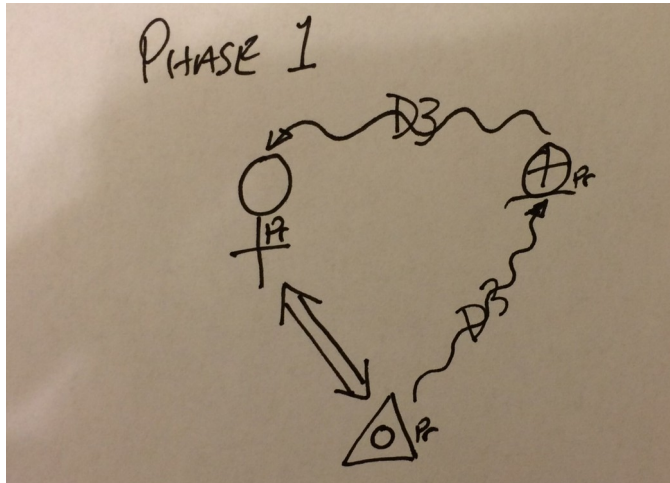
This was Myers original understanding of telepathy, which he distinguished himself in his book 'Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death'. In all honesty I think it's an understanding of this term that allows us to realise the potential for telepathic communication and the vast subject behind which we've yet to fully understand.

Hence in this document I have attempted to outline a methodology of which I feel could help to document these telepathic interactions that allows us to see all the information right away. Also, which can be effectively reduced if so required to understand the probable source that would be determined by others reviewing the interaction. It's important to point out that perception of these interactions can often cause us as individuals to judge them as external sources or of the subliminal self. It's this perception which we must normalise in a way to measure with the same tools.

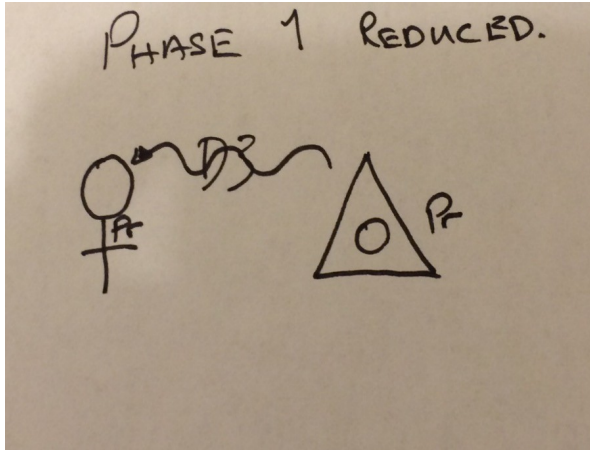
I would also like to point out here that this methodology is to determine those interactions which go beyond the norm and present us with information that could prove the survival of human personality. Although we may reduce an interaction to a conclusion of subliminal self, it's not necessarily the true source. This simply means that the information presented during the interaction didn't yield a Continual Intellectual Interaction.

In order to understand the use of this method, I have included some examples below:-

1. The Automatist receives a message from a deceased Agent claiming to be the bother of an Observer at a Séance. All occur in the present.



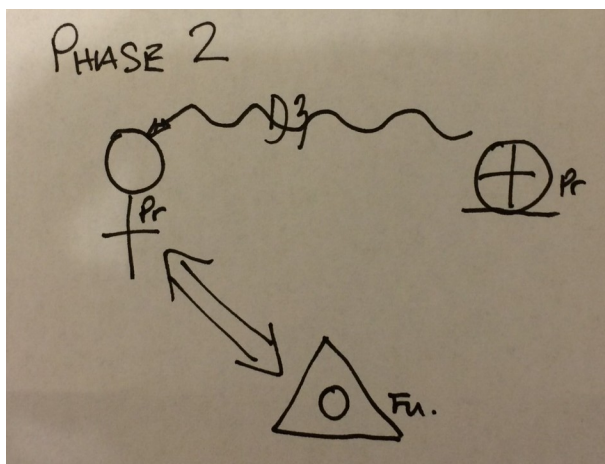
In this example the Automatist receives a Local Singular Random Interaction from an unknown Agent. However not obvious is the likely causality for this particular Interaction which is the Observer related to the possible Agent. It is more than likely that simply by being present the Observer would have thought of, perhaps in a subconscious manner, an Interaction with their deceased brother, generating causality for this Interaction. However unless fact unknown to the Observer is presented by the Agent, we must then reduce this Interaction as follows:-



The Observer themselves is presenting the information to the Automatist regarding their brother via their subliminal self. We must assume this because this is more probable and we are void of fact unknown by the Observer.

Thus, void of fact unknown (but true) to the Observer that the Agent claims relation to, then we reduce the Interaction to be between the Automatist and the Observer; to be a case of telepathy between two living individuals, but perhaps subconsciously perhaps.

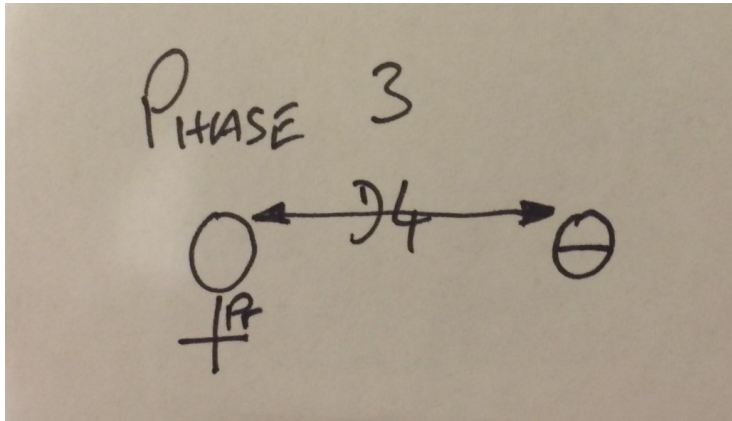
2. The Automatism receives a message from a possible deceased Agent, later confirmed by the Deceased Agents friend. The Agent was never known to the Automatism during their life.



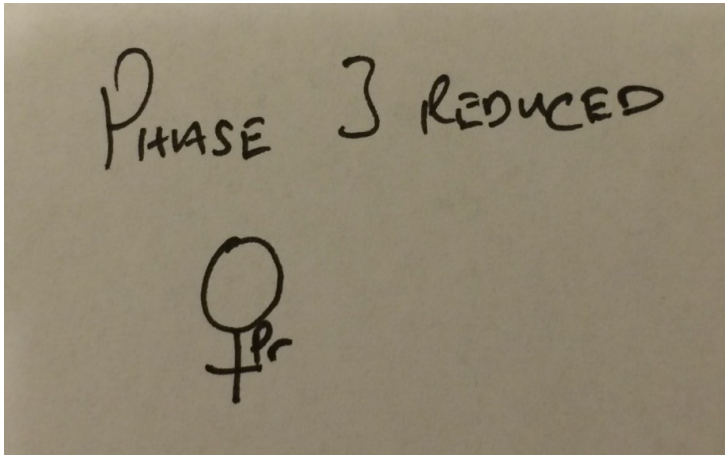
These types of Singular Random Interaction are interesting as they are often singular occurrences, which mean they are unable to quantify survival, but also contain fact which is later confirmed by an individual not present when the Interaction occurred. They are a small glimmer of possibility that the Agent may have been who they identified themselves as; as such not reducible.

However there is still as we have limited fact or understanding of telepathic interaction that these types of interaction could be random connections between two living people, the Automatist and the individual that confirmed the identity of the Agent. The reason being is that the Interaction doesn't show without doubt two way communication and more simply because there must be a connection between the Automatist and the individual in order to identify the Agent. Hence that connection alone could be causality for a telepathic interaction subconsciously.

3. The Automatist engage in Multiple Planned Interactions with a Supernormal Agent, who transmits messages regarding the world he lives in, which is unlike any we know.



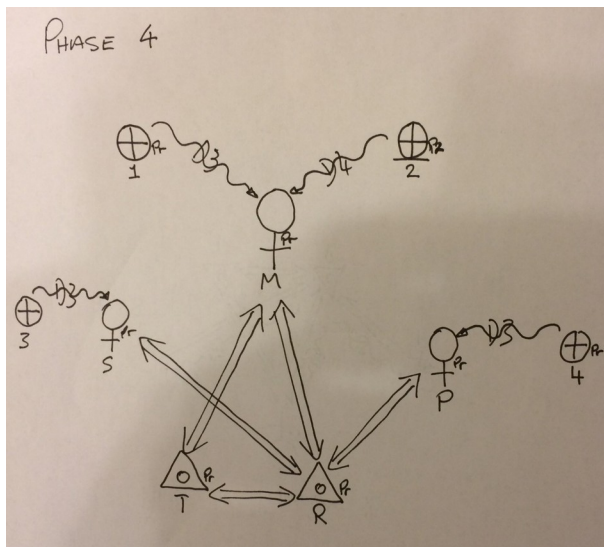
As the facts of this Interaction are beyond our ability to quantify and there is no other evidence of similar facts presented to other Automatists by other Agents we must reduce this down under our current understanding to the Automatists subliminal self.



However should other Automatists receive similar Interactions without knowledge of this one then the source may become possibly of Supernormal origin, but still very difficult to prove. This doesn't show that an Interaction with a probable dimension, reality or planet beyond our own isn't possible. It simply means it is beyond the mind of the Automatist and may be better understood in the future.

4. Three Automatists and two Observers engage in a Séance to attempt to communicate with some probable local Agents at a location. Each Automatist received Singular Random Interactions from Agents identifying

themselves as deceased. Some of the Agents are known to the group and one is not.

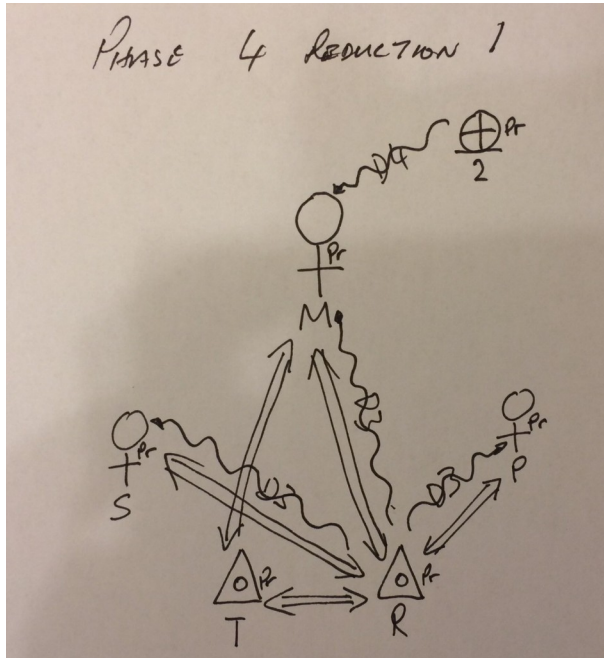


This is how our séance would be mapped out at the time of the Interaction.

Although there is probable reason to believe that the above Interaction pattern is possible; we must also analyse it in accordance to the additional information known. In this particular hypothetical case let us state that Observer R has knowledge prior to the séance of all the facts delivered by Agents 1, 3 & 4 as these

have a known relationship to Observer R and the séance location.

With this in mind we can now further reduce the Interaction Pattern, although this doesn't mean we don't believe the Interactions with Automatist 1, 3 & 4, it just means they are less likely and either of their subliminal self or direct from Observer R.

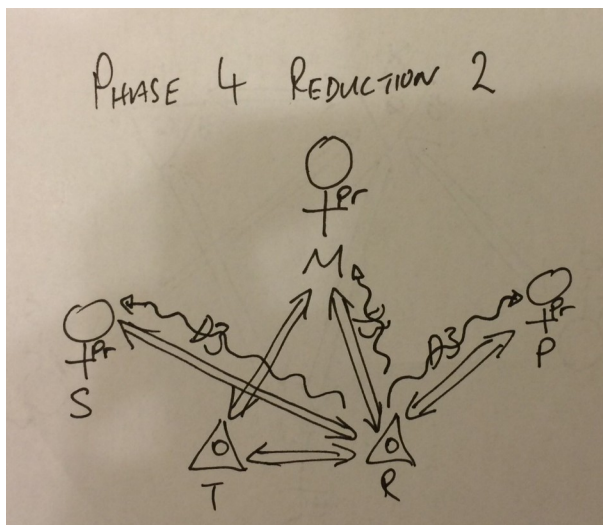


This reduction now identifies Singular Random Interactions with multiple Automatists and Observer R, but only one Singular Random Interaction between Automatist M and the unknown deceased Agent 2. It's this particular Interaction and the facts related to it that we may now focus on.

As by reduction we must now analyse this Singular Random Interaction between Automatist M and Agent 2. Depending on the facts supplied in this Interaction we would then assess the possibility of it being external to Automatist M or indeed of the subliminal self.

Let's suppose in this particular instance that the Interaction is void of facts to suggest identification of Agent 2 or any additional facts to suggest Agent 2 ever truly existed in our reality. With this we would have to conclude the Interaction of the Automatist M with Agent 2 was actually with Automatist M's subliminal self.

The reduction then becomes:-



This now displays our Interactions as telepathic between the Automatists and the Observers, with insufficient fact to support Interactions with other external Agents.

The important thing to remember here is that through this process I am not stating the Automatists Interaction with supposed deceased Agents is not possible, just showing what is more probable with the facts currently available to us. Although given the circumstances and perception denoted from experience of the Interaction; we may believe it to be true of an Agent that was deceased

and have profound faith in the message from the Automatist; we should still search for those Interactions that truly define themselves with quantifiable facts.

With this toolset, not only can we simply document probable telepathic Interactions; but equally we can reduce the Interaction down to assess its ability to provide evidence of survival.

13 Interaction Causality through Field

Through the methodology in this document I have explained a way in which an Interaction can be documented and then reduced to its most logical source given the information provided. Although the logical source may not be the same as the source that we believe transferred the information, the source must be defined by the information and not our belief or perception of the Interaction.

My methodology delivers varied sources that could be connected to an Interaction, but in order for there to be a source at all it's reasonable to theorise that the Interaction of any kind must have causality.

This it would seem is the greatest paradox of the Interaction, as we must understand that Interaction

causality is complex and not resolved to a singular source. There is a probable similarity with all types that may cause an Interaction; the existence of possible fields.

I'm not going into too much detail within this document in regards to fields and the various theories that surround them, but from what I've read the existence of fields could help us to understand how an interaction could occur.

It is my assumption that as individuals we each have our own field of some kind, this field connects with a greater field which possibly links all fields together. With this it's my understanding that there is a collective nature to these fields. Without some kind of collective nature the very possibility of an Interaction becomes less likely. However with all our fields connected in this way, we literally share information all of the time.

As I continued to research I stumbled upon the work of Rupert Sheldrake (<http://www.sheldrake.org>), Sheldrake's thinking and work was the breath of fresh air I was searching for in my own research. His approach seems to challenge the standard materialistic view, which in my own opinion is important as science

and indeed humanity will not progress under its current state. However I won't delve into this debate just yet!

Sheldrake's work on Morphic Fields and Morphic Resonance became of particular interest to me, especially when I heard mention of the link to telepathy. He has conducted a lot of work with animals and humans in order to test various types of telepathy, but perhaps away from the more standard psychical approaches.

Morphic Fields could explain how telepathic interaction may occur due to the extension of the field beyond the individual connecting and interacting with other fields. This is most likely between individuals that are known to each other as the Morphic Fields of the social group may connect group members through familiarity. This could be friendship to family.

Sheldrake mentions the following when discussing Morphic Resonance on his website, "Thus each individual inherits a collective memory from past members of the species, and also contributes to the collective memory, affecting other members of the species in the future." If indeed this is the case, then the answer to the survival hypothesis could be

within each of us.

I also tend to agree with both these approaches as they simply make sense in regards to telepathic interaction. Our minds are our fields I believe, our physical brain as Sheldrake puts it; "more like TV receivers than video recorders, tuning into influences from the past".

However I think there's a little more, Gaia Theory. Dr. James Lovelock developed the Gaia Theory in the late 1960's, his research led to new insights regarding life on Earth. Where does Gaia Theory come into Telepathic Interaction? Well the theory suggests that the Earth is a living system, which includes all the living organisms and their inorganic surroundings have evolved together. With this they are dependent on each in order to keep the living system intact.

It's my own understanding that the living system that Gaia Theory suggests expands beyond our planet to the Cosmos and that Sheldrake's Morphic Fields and Resonance also follow this similar pattern. Thus all things are connected in many ways, through Morphic Fields which allow the transference of information in telepathic Interaction and through the very energy and matter which are

the building blocks of the known and unknown universes.

It's odd that Sheldrake mentioned on his website, that the commonest form of human telepathy is related to telephone calls. Whereas more than 80% of the population have thought of an individual for no reason and then that individual has called. Of course some could be reduced down to routine and those who are more likely to call, but that still leaves a large percentage. The reason its odd, is because I have often described probable consciousness and telepathic interaction by using the similes of smart phones and the cloud network. Fundamentally, our memories and information appear to be uploaded from our own fields to the greater field in much the same way as we might add a picture to Facebook, which in turn is saved to the cloud. Our technology could literally be mimicking our own abilities!

This considered presents through Gaia Theory and Morphic Fields and Resonance the distinct possibility that perhaps in an energy form, our memories, habits, knowledge, and more would survive our bodily death and under the right circumstances become accessible again. The question then moves on; is it simply the information

that survives or an active consciousness which could indeed communicate from beyond our death. Perhaps my methodology in this theory will help to document this possibility.

References

Burkard Polster, M. W. (2011). *Scienca*.

Close, F. (2011). *The Infinity Puzzle*.

Holzer, H. (2004). *Ghosts - True Encounters with the World Beyond*.

Knibb, A. (n.d.). Retrieved July 2015, from www.ashleyknibb.com.

Leadbetter, D. (2013). *Paranormal Purbeck*.

Lovelock, J. (n.d.).

<http://www.gaiatheory.org/overview/>.

Retrieved July 2015, from

<http://www.gaiatheory.org>.

Montague Keen, A. E. (1999). *The Scole Report*.

Myers, F. (1903). *Human Personality and its*

Survival of Bodily Death.

Sheldrake, R. (n.d.).

<http://www.sheldrake.org/research/morphic-resonance>. Retrieved July 2015, from <http://www.sheldrake.org>.

Sheldrake, R. (n.d.).

<http://www.sheldrake.org/research/morphic-resonance/introduction>. Retrieved July 2015, from <http://www.sheldrake.org>.

Solomon, G. &. (1999). *The Scole Experiment*.

Watt, H. J. (2007). *An Inroduction to Parapsychology*.

*ANOMALY: GUIDANCE NOTES & HOUSE STYLE
SUBMISSION CONTENT:*

Papers should be submitted in the English language and should directly relate to some area of psychical research.

Authors take responsibility for any views aired, and published articles do not reflect the views of ASSAP, which holds no corporate opinions.

TYPES OF SUBMISSION:

Please note that word limits are flexible.

** Letters may relate to previous articles published and can be written in a personal style.*

** Letters should not be more than 1500 words.*

** Book reviews should not be greater than 1500 words.*

** Articles and research notes should not be greater than 8,000 words. We encourage authors to write such articles in an impersonal style, but this is not mandatory.*

** Diagrams and photos should be submitted in grayscale*

if possible with a dpi of 300, but do seek guidance if you are unsure.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES:

We encourage all authors to provide references. This means that if you make an assertion of fact, especially about previous research conducted, you cite the source article, book or web address.

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](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

If you are uncertain please always seek guidance.

SUBMISSION:

We prefer that submissions are emailed to publications@assap.ac.uk – it is the author's

responsibility to ensure submissions are received.

Alternatively the standard ASSAP postal address can be used if email is not available.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Should you need to receive Anomaly in a different format please contact us. We will make reasonable adjustments if possible.