

**29th International Conference of
the Society for Psychological Research**



Established in 1882

Abstracts of papers

2nd to 4th September, 2005

University of Bath



29th International Conference of the Society for Psychical Research

Contents

		<i>Page</i>
1. THE EFFECTS OF WITNESS PSYCHOLOGY ON A RECENT SPONTANEOUS CASE INVESTIGATION	Mark Norman & Tracey Owen-Jones	3
2. ANOMALOUS EXPERIENCE IN SITTER GROUPS: THE ROLE OF MOOD, BELIEF AND GROUP COHESION	Fiona Campbell	4
3. PSYCHIC LOTTERY PROJECT: DATA ANALYSIS & RESULT <i>Also take part in a Group Visualisation attempt to win the Lottery jackpot!</i>	Mick O'Neill	5
4. PERIODICITIES IN CARD-GUESSING DATA FROM THE DUKE UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA ARCHIVES	Richard S. Broughton & S. James P. Spottiswoode	7
5. PARAPSYCHOLOGY AND SCEPTICISM: PRODUCTIVE AND UNPRODUCTIVE INTERACTIONS	Caroline Watt	8
6. THE EFFECT OF REMOTE EMOTION ON RECEIVER SKIN CONDUCTANCE	Peter Ramakers, Paul Stevens & Robert L. Morris	10
7. DISTANT PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL INTERACTION EFFECTS BETWEEN RELATED AND UNRELATED PARTICIPANTS	Mario Kittenis	13
8. PRECOGNITIVE HABITUATION <i>An attempt to replicate previous results</i>	Gergő Hadlaczky & Joakim Westerlund	15
9. CENSUS OF PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE: AN UPDATE AND REPLICATION	Matthew Colborn	16
10. GIANT WAVES, AIR CRASHES AND PHANTOMS: EXAMINING THREE UNUSUAL CLAIMS OF PRECOGNITION	Alan Murdie	18
11. DO OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENTS HAVE BETTER VISUAL IMAGERY SKILLS THAN NON-EXPERIENTS?	Craig Murray, Jez Fox & David Wilde	20
12. "SIGNATURES" : PERSON-SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS IN PSI EFFECTS	Paul Stevens	22
13. NON-DETERMINISTIC REG TIMING SCHEME FOR PK STUDIES	Matthias Braeunig, Tilmann Faul & Harald Walach	24
14. THE EFFECTS OF LABILITY AND STABILITY UPON PERFORMANCE AT A NOVEL Psi TASK: Further Consideration of the Sender as a PK Agent in ESP Studies	Nicola J. Holt & Chris A. Roe	25
15. MURDER MOST FOUL	Tricia J. Robertson	27
16. TRAUMA AND CLAIMS OF MEMORIES OF A PAST LIFE. Overview of psychological studies in Lebanon and Sri Lanka	Erlendur Haraldsson	28
17. HUMAN PERSONALITY AND THE NATURE OF ITS SURVIVAL OF BODILY DEATH	Archie E. Roy	29
18. USING A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO ASSESS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CREATIVITY AND SUBJECTIVE PARANORMAL EXPERIENCES	Nicola J. Holt	30
19. RE-EXAMINING THE PSYCHODYNAMIC FUNCTIONS & SOCIAL MARGINALITY HYPOTHESES OF PARANORMAL BELIEF	Paul Rogers & Gemma Phelps	33
20. TABOO AND BELIEF IN TIBETAN PSYCHIC TRADITION	Serena Roney-Dougal	34
21. THERAPEUTIC ASPECTS OF PSYCHIC-SITTER INTERACTION: SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS	Robin Wooffitt	36
22. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LANGUAGE IN RESEARCHING SPONTANEOUS ANOMALOUS PHENOMENA	Madeleine Castro	37
23. SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AND ETHNOGRAPHY: REFLECTIONS ON FIELDWORK WITH SPIRITUALIST MEDIUMS	Hannah Gilbert	38

The Effects of Witness Psychology on a Recent Spontaneous Case Investigation

Mark Norman and Tracey Owen-Jones

In the autumn of 2004 the authors were called in to investigate alleged paranormal phenomena at a private house in North Devon. The case seemed, on the surface, to be both fascinating and relatively clear-cut: the 'normal' array of phenomena was being witnessed – aural and visual anomalies, feelings of a presence and alleged communication through traditional rapping methods.

Initially, the main witness was interviewed by telephone and it became apparent that other factors were going to have a large part to play in the case. The witness was young and impressionable and held a great deal of respect for paranormal television programmes which serious investigators would class more as entertainment. It was evident that the psychological make-up of the two key witnesses was going to play a large part in the ensuing investigation.

What followed turned out to be one of the most interesting spontaneous case investigations undertaken by the authors. The psychology of both the witnesses and the investigators was brought into question alongside both audio and video recordings of anomalies. This paper explores possible interpretations of the physical phenomena recorded during the investigation, and offers some insight into how psychology plays an important part in spontaneous cases.

**Anomalous Experience in Sitter Groups:
The Role of Mood, Belief and Group Cohesion**

Fiona Campbell

Sitter groups may be defined as any group of people, producing anomalous-type effects through learned psychological techniques, such as those used in Victorian séances (Batcheldor, 1966). In the context of sitter groups, Batcheldor (1984) proposed that certain psychological and physical conditions were conducive, such as darkness, instant belief, relaxation, acclimatisation and conversing, and others were inhibitive such as fear, doubt, suspicion, witness inhibition and ownership resistance (Batcheldor, 1966, 1984 and 1994). In a related line of research, members of the Toronto SPR obtained similar effects in a sitter group by attributing phenomena to a character devised by the group themselves (Owen & Sparrow, 1974; Owen, 1976), in light conditions. Blame of phenomena on the character avoids admittance to ownership by any member of the group, thereby avoiding fear of such. Brookes-Smith and Hunt (1970) suggest this method of 'ownership resistance' aids phenomena. Batcheldor (1984) also suggested that the adaptation of heightened belief would be a strong influence on whether phenomena occurred or not.

The 'Philip' group were able to elicit phenomena such as knocks and raps in answer to questions put to the character, table movement and temperature drops. In my own preliminary experiment, the 'Humphrey' group were able to measure a significant temperature drop, as well as electromagnetic field fluctuation and subjectively reported phenomena.

One interpretation of these findings is that psychological variables associated with members of the sitter group are important in the experience of anomalous activity in this context. This study is investigating the role of group cohesion and mood in the experience of such anomalous activity. Ten separate sitter groups (each consisting of 4-5 individuals) will be asked to meet regularly in an attempt to replicate the kinds of phenomena reported by previous researchers (e.g., Batcheldor, 1966; Owen & Sparrow, 1974). Participants will complete a mood scale prior to, during and after each group meeting, and between group meetings. A group cohesion scale will be completed directly following each meeting and between meetings. The relationship between these variables and the extent to which anomalous experiences are reported will be examined.

These experiments will further be compared to group performance in other parapsychological experiments, such as the Ganzfeld, remote viewing and Zener card tests. Group test will compare to solitary tests, investigating how important the group is to performance of the individual within this context.

One question will be whether spontaneous 'poltergeist' type incidents bare relation to the activity reported within the context of the sitter group, and whether the sitter group is just another version of the family environment, in which such activity often has been reported.

This research forms part of the author's PhD research. The SPR is gratefully acknowledged for funding towards this project.

Psychic Lottery Project: Data Analysis & Results
Also, take part in a Group Visualisation attempt to win the Lottery jackpot!

Mick O'Neill

This talk will include a group lottery experiment. Lottery tickets will be bought and any winnings will be shared amongst participants & the SPR. It is free to take part.

The Psychic lottery project has so far attracted about 400,000 psi attempts in 35,000 sessions by 1,100 participants in five continents over seven years. As such it may possibly be the most wide-ranging psychical research study ever carried out. A total of about 14,000 experimenter hours and £21,000 has been expended (80% on lottery tickets), £3,000 of it from SPR grants.

For the past three SPR conferences I have described the project in some detail. This year's talk will concentrate on the analysis methods and results and include only a very brief description. Therefore, if you are not already aware of the project it would be helpful to read the below 'Background & Description' section prior to the talk if possible. Conversely, if you have attended previous lectures you may skip from here to the 'Analysis & Results' section.

Background & Description:

This project has been formally operating for the past six years and is ongoing. The project's overall aim is to find out whether and how it may be possible to use psi to predict lottery numbers. If it is, we plan to win the UK National Lottery twice!

The principal bases of this research are the PEAR precognitive Ganzfeld results (1989) and the work of Zilberman (1995). This latter research suggested that the number of people who win lottery prizes varies dependent on certain factors, most importantly, geomagnetic disturbance.

Inspired by these researches, and some early personal successes I decided that it might be possible to win the lottery by combining many people's predictions.

The project involves people being invited to try to predict winning lottery numbers using a short period of visualisation. The experiment currently consists of about 70-110 participants independently attempting this for each bi-weekly draw. The participants pay nothing, but simply email or phone their chosen numbers to me. All the numbers are then input into a computer program that collates and saves each participant's predictions. At this stage, it is necessary to eliminate bias. Certain numbers are three times as popularly chosen as others. The computer sorts the numbers into order of popularity. If bias was not eliminated our top sorted numbers would be similar every week. After this, the computer decides which tickets are to be bought, over 100 per week. Prior to the lottery draw, participants are emailed with the numbers on tickets purchased and the information necessary for an unambiguous division of any prizes among participants. After the draw they are emailed with their results and those of the group including prize division.

So, it's designed to be a fun, free and easy opportunity to test one's psychic abilities against the lottery, help psychical research and possibly get rich. You are welcome to join the ongoing experiment. (Email: m.on @ virgin.net)

The developing database is analysed carefully and hypotheses are only made after exhaustive analysis reveals a sufficiently significant result. Each hypothesis that is made is expressed in a way that leaves no room for any ambiguity in the probability p-value obtained. Each hypothesis made is counted and notified, in advance, to other researchers. Then, any p-values found for an individual result need to be adjusted by multiplying by the number of hypotheses made. Furthermore, before each lottery draw all relevant lottery predictions are sent by email to fellow researchers. This methodology means that any results obtained should be totally indisputable. The only remaining question should be whether the level of significance obtained is sufficient to confirm a psi-explanation. This approach has been

applied to the project and the recent hypothesis phase of the project has seen two hypotheses proposed so far.

Controls: Result Switching: Happily, the lottery presents a simple but near perfect control method. This is to compare the predictions for a particular draw with the results for many non-targeted draws. This can be done *ad infinitum* if necessary and significance levels can be obtained using the Monte Carlo technique

Analysis & Results:

Analysis Techniques: Apart from the controls and hypothesis methodology, the paper will consider furcation, the third important method employed during computer analysis of a large database. Without all three precautions, researchers will usually find apparently significant results, which are in fact meaningless.

Tri-furcation is usually employed. This is simply division of the entire dataset into three subsets. This then allows analysis of the first set, replication of any findings on the second set before a hypothesis is made on the third set. The issues involved in the furcation method will be discussed.

The data has been considered in the form of individuals' predictions, group tickets bought, group numbers sorted into popularity order, all matched with the winning numbers for the targeted draw

The first 3 moments: average, variance and skewness have been considered as well as extreme results and sequences of results.

Interaction has been considered with many external parameters including geomagnetism, Spottiswoode's (1997) local sidereal time window, temperature, previous performance and lunar phase.

The results of two recently made hypotheses, as well as a selection of up-to-date results of some of the above analyses will also be presented.

References:

Dunne B. J., Dobyns Y. H., Intner S. M. (1989). Precognitive Remote Perception III: Complete Binary Data Base with Analytical Refinements. Technical Note PEAR 89002, Princeton University.

Spottiswoode S. J. P. (1997). Apparent Association Between Effect Size in Free Response Anomalous Cognition Experiments and Local Sidereal Time. *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 11,(2),109-122.

Zilberman M. S. (1995). Public Numerical Lotteries - An International Parapsychological Experiment Covering A Decade. *JSPR*, 60, 149-160

Thanks are due to the SPR for support grants amounting to £3,000. Without their help, non-academic research like this will usually be impossible.

Periodicities in Card-Guessing Data from the Duke University and University of Virginia Archives¹

Richard S. Broughton and S. James P. Spottiswoode

Investigations by Spottiswoode have shown a) that anomalous cognition or ESP is greatly enhanced during a narrow window of local sidereal time (LST), an astronomical measure which indicates which slice of heavens is overhead at that time and b) an expected negative correlation between ESP and geomagnetic fluctuation (the ap index) is significantly strengthened during that same window of LST time. Less dramatic effects in the data indicate possible additional periodicities, such as a reduction of scoring during other LST periods. These findings suggest that there may be physical moderators of ESP performance of unknown, but possibly celestial or solar/geomagnetic origin. These findings were based on a database of nearly 3,000 trials of free-response data from remote viewing and ganzfeld experiments.

To follow up on these findings the authors initially drew upon the archives of the Duke University Parapsychology Laboratory to compile a database of good quality, relatively standard ESP experiments that exhibited strong overall evidence of ESP. Sixteen datasets from recognized card-guessing experiments of 1930s contributed a total of 7,167 runs, mostly from two laboratories. The combined z-score for these data is 18.79. These results were reported at the 2000 Parapsychological Association Convention in Freiburg, Germany. Subsequently, we were able to obtain an additional set of card-guessing data from the University of Virginia archives which consisted primarily of results over 3,000 runs from a single high-scoring participant who had been tested extensively and reported on in the late 1930s.

Effect sizes were calculated and plotted in LST space using a sliding two-hour window as in the previous investigations. Similarly, Spearman's ρ was calculated in a two-hour sliding window and plotted in LST space.

In the Duke data set the effect size (ESP scoring) data revealed two periods of significantly enhanced scoring and two periods of depressed scoring that were similar to, but not exactly the same as those found in the free-response data. The correlation with ap was $\rho = .036$ ($p(2t) = .002$). This positive correlation is contrary to the expected weak negative correlation found in other ESP data, however the plot in LST space revealed that the correlation turns negative opposite the main peaks of ESP scoring, similar to what Spottiswoode had observed earlier. These findings do not confirm Spottiswoode's specific finding of a high-scoring window centered on LST $13.5 \pm 1h$ but they do suggest the presence of an LST-related influence on ESP performance that needs further elucidation.

Analysis of the University of Virginia data is still underway (to be completed before the SPR conference). Initial findings indicate both commonalities and differences between the two data sets that are being further investigated.

Several additional analyses made possible by the large database explored more common periodicities as the month, day of the week, and hour of the day in which the tests were conducted. In the Duke archive data, May and September stood out as the best months for ESP testing while January and February were the poorest. Monday held a strong advantage among the weekdays and early afternoon seems the best time of day for testing. These suggestive findings make sense in terms of human performance and we will be seeing if these are replicated in the new data set.

¹ This work was supported in part by a grant from John Björkhem Memorial Foundation.

**Parapsychology and Scepticism:
Productive and Unproductive Interactions**
Dr Caroline Watt, University of Edinburgh

In this presentation, I will firstly consider the nature of productive and unproductive interactions between parapsychologists and sceptics, and then give some concrete examples of productive interactions in Koestler Parapsychology Unit psi research, and in KPU pseudo-psi research. Unproductive Interactions have particular characteristics: 1. Debates at a distance; 2. Unsupported and sweeping statements. In contrast, productive interactions are characterised by direct involvement and collaboration.

Productive Interactions in KPU Psi Research

Security measures for ganzfeld research. In the paper by Dalton, Morris, Delanoy, Radin, Taylor, and Wiseman (1996) we can see the role of a skeptic in making methodological improvements in the development of Edinburgh's autoganzfeld system, which is “a computer-based system that provides automatic data recording, highly effective shielding against sensory cues, and resistance to both subject bias and intentional experimenter bias” (Dalton et al., 1996, p. 131). Measures are described to eliminate or minimise the following possible sources of artefact: subliminal sound leakage to the receiver; cues from repeated playing of the target tape during sending; sounds from the VCR that might allow the experimenter to guess the sender's target clip²; sound leakage from the target room; electronic signalling systems between sender and receiver; and deliberate experimenter bias.

Development of tamper-evident protocol for at-home ESP testing. Delanoy, Morris, Watt, & Wiseman (1993) describe the development of a new free-response ESP methodology that allows the testing of participants outwith the laboratory. A key component of this methodology is that participants are given target materials to take home with them, however there are obvious security considerations in doing this. With Wiseman's help, a company was found that manufactured tamper-evident security bags. The paper describes how “RW, who specialises in the psychology of deception and is also a skilled, practicing magician, tested many such commercially produced bags until he found one which effectively minimized the possibility of gaining entry to it without leaving evidence” (Delanoy, et al., 1993, p. 206). This methodology would seem therefore to have considerable potential for further exploration, in particular because it may be important for positive psi scoring for participants to be able to be tested in a secure but non-laboratory environment.

Productive Interactions in KPU Pseudo-Psi Research

Deliberate deception: Uncovering a fraudulent psychic claimant. In a cautionary tale, Delanoy (1987) describes work conducted with a seventeen year old Edinburgh schoolboy (given the pseudonym Tim) who claimed to be able to bend metal objects at will and to have paranormal fire-raising abilities. Delanoy and colleagues tested Tim over a seven month period in 1983/84. During initial informal sessions, Tim bent several objects, but never under direct observation. The magician James Randi was then consulted and suggested some additional controls. Tim was finally caught using force to try to bend metal objects when he thought he was not being observed, through the use of a hidden camera (this seems to have been Delanoy's idea rather than Randi's). While Randi's assistance did not directly unmask Tim as a fraud, it did raise suspicions that caused the investigators to be more vigilant in their observation of the claimant so that incontrovertible evidence of fraud was eventually found.

² Since the publication of Dalton et al.'s (1996) paper, the Edinburgh ganzfeld system has continued to develop as technological advances have been made. Now the system uses digitised computer files to store and access target material, thus eliminating the cues that could have arisen when targets were presented on video were appropriate safeguards not in place.

Deliberate deception: Guidelines for testing psychic claimants. My final example of a productive interaction between a sceptic and the Koestler Unit is the publication of *Guidelines for Testing Psychic Claimants* (Wiseman & Morris, 1997). By putting this in the pseudo-psi section, I don't mean to imply that all psychic claimants are frauds. However, this kind of research is more vulnerable to fraud, partly because all the attention is focused on a single claimant who may be motivated to have his or her psychic powers validated, and because the claimant may have specific requirements for the way their psychic ability is tested that may make the usual experimental precautions more difficult to achieve. The guidelines were published partly as a result of Delanoy's experience. Wiseman and Morris noted: "Failure to detect such fraud can lead to serious negative consequences" (1997, p.12). If researchers do not have appropriate safeguards in place, both they and the psychic claimant may be wasting their time because critics can point to these methodological weaknesses as accounting for any positive results (Wiseman & Morris, 1997). The guidelines give step-by-step advice for testing psychic claimants, including how to handle initial meetings with the claimant, differentiating between pilot and formal studies, and the methodological implications of proof versus process-oriented research. The guidelines also include useful further references on testing psychic claimants, experimental design in psychology, methods of psychic fraud and conjuring, and suppliers of conjuring and pseudo-psychic literature. The appendix lists some of the commercially available security products that may be helpful to those who test psychic claimants.

References

- Dalton, K. S., Morris, R. L., Delanoy, D. L., Radin, D. I., Taylor, R., & Wiseman, R. (1996). Security measures in an automated ganzfeld system. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 60, 129-147.
- Delanoy, D. L. (1987). Work with a fraudulent PK metal-bending subject. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 54, 247-256.
- Delanoy, D., Watt, C., Morris, R. L., & Wiseman, R. (1993) A new methodology for free-response ESP testing outwith the laboratory: Findings from experienced participants. *Proceedings of Presented Papers, The Parapsychological Association 36th Annual Convention*, pp. 204-221.
- Wiseman, R., & Morris, R. L. (1995). *Guidelines for Testing Psychic Claimants*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

The Effect of Remote Emotion on Receiver Skin Conductance

Peter Ramakers, Paul Stevens & Robert L. Morris

Koestler Parapsychology Unit, Edinburgh

Introduction

The role of emotion in extended communication (this term is used here to avoid the telepathy/PK debate) is not fully understood. Case reports that indicate a large emotional component to apparently paranormal experiences have prompted experimental research investigating this relationship. However, most studies have used a conscious response measure and the use of (mostly subconscious) physiological measures has been suggested in the past (Beloff, 1974). Since then skin conductance (SC) has become a popular measure in parapsychology, but most studies using SC have focused on a remote influence paradigm, rather than on the effects of distant emotions. It makes sense to study remote emotion using physiological measures, since a close association exists between conscious emotional experience and physiological arousal. Undifferentiated physiological responses can lead to an ambiguous cognitive evaluation (Cacioppo et al., 2004), therefore physiology might provide a more clear cut psi measure.

Studies of remote emotion using physiological measures are currently infrequent. One example of a study using SC (which did not include a negative condition) found higher activation in the positive as opposed to the neutral condition (Delaney and Sah, 1994). There have been very few SC studies investigating remote emotion since. A recent experiment done by Radin and Schlitz (2005) also found physiological effects of remote emotion, although they used an electrogastrogram instead of SC.

Another problem concerning SC studies in particular is the use of parameters that are most suitable to detect distant effects. The most widely used parameter is the mean level of the SC, but this might not be the most appropriate one (Schmidt et al., 2001). A recent reevaluation of two SC studies hinted that the variance of the SC might be a more useful parameter (Stevens, 2000).

The present study examines the effect of remote emotion (sender viewing emotional pictures) on the SC of the receiver. It is predicted that emotional target pictures viewed by a sender will alter the receiver's SC ("main analysis"). Furthermore, any differential effect of positive and/or negative targets will be examined ("differential analysis"). The abovementioned comparisons will be made using the mean standardized SC (msSC) and mean variance of the SC, thus allowing them to be evaluated as psi measures.

1. METHODS

Design

The present study had a within subject design, with the independent variable being the emotionality of the sender condition ('emotional-neutral' for the main analysis and 'positive-negative-neutral' for the differential analysis) and the dependent variables being msSC and variance of the receiver's SC. All analyses are preplanned.

Participants

54 pairs of people were tested (the minimum number was set at 54 allowing for a maximum of 4 datasets to be discarded due to possible recording errors; this would keep the power of the study at a minimum of 0.80 with an estimated effect size of $d = 0.50$), 41 being male and 67 being female. The age ranged from 16 to 76 with a mean of 38.9 and a SD of 15.4. Participants were recruited from the University of Edinburgh volunteer panel and from the local student population. All participant pairs were familiar to each other.

Materials

The experiment took place in the laboratory of the Koestler Parapsychology Unit. The sender and receiver's rooms are both sound attenuated and the in/output of computers and electrical equipment of both rooms was kept separate. Ambient ocean sounds were played to the receiver through headphones during the entire session and for the first 5 minutes to the sender.

SC of both sender (results not reported here) and receiver was recorded on two 24 bit serial port model devices using 8mm Ag/AgCl electrodes. The presentation of the stimuli was randomized and counterbalanced. The stimulus material was selected from the IAPS. There were 10 emotional pictures (5 negative and 5 positive) and 10 neutral pictures, giving a total of 20 pictures for each session. The same pictures were used for each session.

Procedure

Participants decided who was going to act as sender and receiver. After participants were seated in their respective rooms, the experimenter entered the sender's room and proceeded with the attachment of the electrodes. After the electrodes had been applied the experimenter checked for a response by asking the participant to take a deep breath. The session was proceeded with only when some response was observed in the SC signal. The procedure regarding SC recording was similar for sender and receiver.

The clocks of both pc's were synchronized and the session was started. Data collection did not start until 5 minutes after the start of the session. After 5 minutes the sound stopped for the sender and 30 s after that picture presentation was started. Each picture was presented for 30 s followed by a reaction/recovery period of 15 s, in which a fixation cross was shown on the screen. Each session lasted about 25 minutes and at the end participants were debriefed and paid £5 each.

2.1. RESULTS

Raw SC data for each subject was converted to standardized z-scores i.e. expressed in units of each subject's standard deviation: $z_n = (x_n - \bar{x}) / \sigma$, where z_n is the nth standardized SC data point, x_n is the nth raw SC data point, \bar{x} is the mean raw SC level for the entire recording period and σ is the standard deviation for the entire recording period.

The mean of the standardized SC for each epoch was then collapsed across conditions (emotional vs. neutral and emotional split up into positive and negative vs. neutral) for each subject, both for the sender and the receiver. As can be expected from the transform, these data were normally distributed. The variance of unstandardized SC data for each epoch was also collapsed across conditions for each subject. These data were not normally distributed. All reported p-values are two-tailed.

<i>main</i>	msSC			Mean SC Variance (μ)		
	Mean	SD	p-value ³	Mean	SD	p-value ⁴
Emotional	-0.1297	0.2627	0.198	0.0099	0.0288	0.959
Neutral	-0.1885	0.2658		0.0137	0.0467	
<i>differential</i>	Mean	SD	p-value ⁵	Mean	SD	p-value ⁶
Positive	-0.1452	0.3744	0.185	0.0058	0.0228	0.017*
Negative	-0.0662	0.4084		0.0135	0.0385	
Neutral	-0.1885	0.2658		0.0137	0.0467	

Table 1 Means, standard deviations and associated p-values for the main and differential analyses of msSC and mean SC variance. * indicates when p-value is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

As can be seen in Table 1, the msSC was higher in the emotional condition as opposed to the neutral condition although this difference did not reach significance. The variance is also lower than in the neutral condition, but the statistical test shows no difference whatsoever. The differential analysis (see also table 1) shows that out of the two emotional conditions it is the msSC in the negative condition that is notably higher than the others. But even when broken down, none of the emotional conditions shows a significant deviation from the neutral condition, which was intended as a control condition. When looking at the variance, it can be seen that the variability of SC is almost equal in the negative and neutral conditions, whereas it is lower in the positive condition. This difference did reach significance ($\chi^2 = 8.197$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.05$).

³ The msSC of the emotional and neutral conditions was analyzed using a paired samples t test ($t = 1.302$, $df = 53$, $p = 0.198$).

⁴ The variance of the emotional and neutral condition was analyzed using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test ($Z = -0.052$, $n = 54$, $p = 0.959$).

⁵ The msSC of the positive, negative and neutral conditions was analyzed using two separate one-way ANOVA's ($F = 1.741$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.185$, Greenhouse-Geisser).

⁶ The variance of the positive, negative and neutral conditions was analyzed using a Friedman test ($\chi^2 = 8.197$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.017$).

3. DISCUSSION

This study revealed a trend in msSC towards higher arousal in the negative condition and a significant difference in mean variance due to lower variability in the positive condition. Upon further inspection of the data it was noted that SC in the negative condition started to rise after 15-20 s, whereas SC declined in the other two conditions with the most pronounced decline in the positive condition. The rise in the negative condition was small, but under conditions of no overt stimulation SC generally shows a decline due to adaptation to test conditions. It is therefore possible that this small rise is indicative of the (subconscious) remote perception of a negative emotional event. There was no evidence of any remote perception of positive emotional events, as SC in this condition showed normal decline. The neutral condition also showed consistent decline, however with a degree of variability that matched that of the negative condition. It can be argued that the neutral condition was not a proper control, since the pictures in this condition, although generally rated as neutral and not very arousing, could still have evoked idiosyncratic reactions from the senders. The reports of some participants who acted as senders indicated that this was the case. This could have affected receiver SC in the neutral condition.

As to the choice of parameters, the slow changing msSC did not differentiate between conditions although msSC was highest in the negative condition. It is possible that there simply was no psi effect, or that this effect was not strong enough to be detected by the use of msSC. Focusing on faster changing components of SC, as represented by the mean variance in this study, did not give a clear answer to this question. The significant difference in variance cannot be straightforwardly attributed to psi because it is unclear whether the high variance in the neutral condition is reflecting an effect of idiosyncratic sender responding, or is merely due to chance. As a methodological improvement the neutral condition should be replaced by a proper control ("no picture" epochs) in further studies.

In summary, this study showed no clear evidence of the remote unconscious perception of emotional events as indicated by receiver SC. It is possible that receiver SC was influenced by the negative pictorial stimulation of the sender, but improper control conditions make this interpretation problematic.

4. REFERENCES

Beloff, J. (1974). ESP: The search for a physiological index. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 47, 761, pp. 403-420.

Cacioppo, J. T., Berntson, G. G., Larsen, J. T., Poehlmann, K. M. & Ito, T. A. (2004). The Psychophysiology of Emotion. In M. Lewis and J. M. Haviland-Jones (eds.). *Handbook of Emotions* (pp. 173-191), New York: Guilford Press.

Delanoy, D. L., & Sah, S. (1994). Cognitive and physiological psi responses to remote positive and neutral emotional states. In D. J. Bierman (Ed.), *Proceedings of Presented Papers of the 37th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association*, Fairhaven, MA: Parapsychological Association, 128-137.

Radin, D. I., & Schlitz, M. J. (2005). Gut feelings, Intuition and Emotions: An exploratory study. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 11, 1, pp. 85-91.

Schmidt, S., Schneider, R., Binder, M., Bürkle, D., & Walach, H. (2001). Investigating methodological issues in EDA-DMILS : Results from a pilot study. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 65, 59-82.

Stevens, P. (2000). Human electrodermal response to remote human monitoring: Classification and analysis of response characteristics. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 64, 391-409.

Distant Psychophysiological Interaction Effects between Related and Unrelated Participants.

Mario Kittenis, Koestler Parapsychology Unit, Edinburgh

Two studies were conducted to investigate possible remote psychophysiological interactions between spatially isolated participants, using EEG measures and a photic stimulation procedure. It is an attempt to conceptually replicate past findings suggesting the presence of such interactions, and to clarify the role, (if any), of an existing emotional relationship and pre-session interaction between participant pairs.

In the first study, (Kittenis, Caryl et al. 2004), forty-one unpaid volunteers were assigned to one of three groups. One of these consisted of thirteen related pairs of participants who reported sharing an empathic relationship, another of five unrelated pairs (i.e. randomly matched strangers), and the last of five single participants. Related pairs spent some time alone together before testing, whereas unrelated pairs did not know each other and did not meet until after the session; single participants were told they would be paired with someone they didn't know, but were not matched with anyone. Pairs of participants simultaneously listened to a recording of a progressive relaxation procedure including suggestions aimed to induce a hypnagogic-like state, which was followed by 15 minutes of continuous drumming; this procedure aimed to induce a similar alteration of consciousness in both participants. During the drumming period the EEG of one person of the pair ("receiver") was recorded while the other ("sender") was occasionally stimulated with randomly timed single photic flashes. For the single participants group the same procedure was followed but there was no "sender" to observe the flashes.

EEG epochs that were time-locked on photic stimulation of the "senders" were taken from the continuous EEG record of the "receivers". Similar randomly sampled epochs were taken from periods of no stimulation to serve as controls. According to the null hypothesis no difference would be expected between these samples, as sensory stimulation of the "receivers" was homogenous throughout the experimental period. Event-related evoked alpha power measures revealed a tendency for samples from "remote" photic stimulation periods to show larger deviations from pre-stimulus baseline than control samples; these deviations were in the same direction as normal responses to direct photic stimulation. This difference between "remote" photic stimulation and control periods was found to be significant for the related pairs group at $p < 0.023$ (Wilcoxon signed-ranks test, two-tailed; $N=13$). Deviations of similar direction and magnitude were found in unrelated pairs ($p < 0.007$ when combined with related group, $N=18$), while recordings from single participants (when no other person was stimulated) showed no such effect.

These results suggest the presence of an anomalous psychophysiological interaction effect. This effect was localised in the posterior temporal/occipital cortex, which is consistent with the effects of visual stimulation. The lack of such an effect in the group of "receivers" who were not paired with a "sender" further suggests that this effect is dependent on sensory stimulation of another participant, and cannot be attributed to a general methodological flaw, or to direct anomalous perception of the remote stimuli. The similar magnitude of the effect seen in related and unrelated pairs further suggests that an empathic relationship and prior interaction between participants is not necessary for the induction of the effect, as some previous studies have suggested (Grinberg-Zylberbaum, Delaflor et al. 1994), and is in agreement with the conclusions of other studies who also found a similar pattern of results (Wackermann, Seiter et al. 2003). As however the unrelated and no-sender groups in the first study were too small to allow statistical comparisons between groups to be made, a second study was conducted with equal numbers of participants in each group (thirteen pairs in each of the related and unrelated groups, and thirteen single participants in the no-sender group; total $N=65$). An additional feature of the second study is the adoption of an 'oddball' stimulation paradigm, where two types of stimuli are presented (green and red flashes) at a ratio of 3-to-1. The less common stimuli typically evoke a different pattern of cortical responses in the stimulated participants than the common stimuli, and we will examine if the same pattern can be observed in non-stimulated participants. The presence

or absence of this similarity will help in clarifying the physiological characteristics of the anomalous effect. A further improvement in the second study involves recording EEG simultaneously from both the stimulated and non-stimulated participants.

Data collection for the second study has now just been completed and we are in the first stages of analysing the results. The analysis and interpretation of the results will be completed in time for the SPR conference, and the combined results of both studies will be presented and discussed.

References

Grinberg-Zylberbaum, J., M. Delaflor, et al. (1994). "The Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen paradox in the brain: The transferred potential." Physics Essays 7(4): 442-448.

Kittenis, M., P. G. Caryl, et al. (2004). Distant psychophysiological interaction effects between related and unrelated participants. The Parapsychological Association 47th Annual Convention: Proceedings of Presented Papers. S. Schmidt. Vienna.

Wackermann, J., C. Seiter, et al. (2003). "Correlations between brain electrical activities of two spatially separated human subjects." Neuroscience Letters 336: 60-64.

Precognitive Habituation

An attempt to replicate previous results

Gergö Hadlaczky, Joakim Westerlund

Department of Psychology, Stockholm University

Precognition is defined as the perception of future events not foreseeable by any means of known derivation. Contemporary research in this area has been focused on unconscious time-reversed effects, where ordinary psychological phenomena are examined for possible existence of precognition. An example of this is the presentiment effect, where it has been observed that exposure to emotional stimuli was preceded by arousal, measured by skin conductance. In order to simplify the experimental procedure a new protocol has been designed by Bem (2003). This process is also based on time-reversed mere exposure effects.

In mere exposure studies subjects are often subliminally exposed (it is only in recent experiments that subliminal exposure is used) to a neutral image (A) of for instance a polygon. Then, they are shown the same image (A) plus another neutral image (B) supraliminally and are asked to choose the one they prefer. Results show that people are significantly more likely to select picture A. One explanation to this could be that we become habituated to the stimulus and therefore develop a preference to it compared to the other, unfamiliar, stimulus (B).

The precognitive habituation (PH) protocol tests for precognition by reversing a mere exposure study and using both highly negatively and highly erotically arousing images. Subjects are asked to view pairs of negatively arousing pictures (A and B) and choose the one they prefer. Only *after* they have chosen an image does the computer randomly select one of the two and flashes it to them subliminally. The idea is that if they can see into the future, they would be affected by the picture the computer is *going to* show. Therefore, if the computer will show image A in the future they should choose image A in the present or the reverse if the images are erotic (because they would have gotten used to it when they saw it in the future). This would constitute a hit. A number of items on a questionnaire that is filled out before the experiment are designed to predict a PH effect.

Bem presented the results of a study with the same design as the one described above in Vienna, at the 47th annual convention of the Parapsychology Association. After gaining significant results the experiment had been replicated several times with both successful and unsuccessful results by different researchers. This study is yet a further replication, using the exact same design as done previously by Bem et al. The hypotheses are as follows:

1. There will be a significantly higher overall (for erotic and negative trials together) hit rate than expected by chance.
2. There will be a significantly higher hit rate than expected by chance for erotic trials for those participants that scored higher than three on the erotic screening questions.
3. There will be a significantly higher hit rate than expected by chance for negative trials for those participants that scored higher than three on the negative screening questions.

Forty seven undergraduate students at the University of Stockholm took part in the study (23 women and 24 men, between the ages of 19-64) and the software used was identical to that used in the previous studies by Bem.

Results will be available for presentation at the conference.

Census of Psychic Experience: an Update and Replication

MLC Colborn,

The author has initiated a questionnaire survey, with the aim of establishing the extent and variety of 'psychic experience' in the early 21st century. This is needed to (1) update earlier findings by Sidgwick *et al* (1894), West (1948, 1990) and others, and (2) to determine whether reports of psychic experience are in transformation or decline (Cornell 2004, Thomas 2004). This survey is a work in progress.

The basic aims of the survey are almost identical to the first *Census of Hallucinations*;

(i) "To ascertain approximately what proportion of persons have experienced sensory hallucinations (Sidgwick *et al* 1894)," premonitions, Near Death Experiences (NDEs) and unidentified aerial or floating lights.

(ii) "To obtain details as to such experiences with a view to examining their cause and meaning (Sidgwick *et al* 1894)."

There have also been a number of recent suggestions that psychic experiences are in decline, at least in the Western world (Stevenson 1990, Cornell 2004, Thomas 2004). For instance, crisis or death-coincidence apparitions were common in Victorian times (i.e. Gurney, Myers & Podmore 1886) but are now apparently rare (Stevenson 1990, West 1990). A survey should give us some idea of the frequency of different kinds of psychic experience.

Method

The survey questionnaire is almost identical to that used by West (1990). The participants are requested to state their age, sex, occupation, the age they left full-time education and level of belief in ESP. They are then asked whether they have experienced an hallucination, a veridical hallucination, a premonition, apparently inexplicable object movement (9) and/or a Near-Death Experience.

There is one additional question, not included in the West census; 'Have you ever seen a light whose origin you cannot account for in the sky, close to the ground or inside a room?' This is included because some have claimed a link between anomalous atmospheric 'light forms' and psychic/apparitional events (i.e. Persinger & Lafrenière 1977, Ring 1992, Budden 1995).

This survey makes use of volunteers from disparate parts of the UK, each of whom receives some questionnaires, stamped addressed envelopes and instructions for effective questionnaire distribution. So far the questionnaires have been distributed mostly to convenient persons (i.e. family, friends or work colleagues.) Once completed, the questionnaires are posted back to the SPR by the volunteer, and forwarded to me. Each is numbered in the order in which they are received. The most notable experiences are chased up by telephone, and corroboration is sought.

Results

281 questionnaires have been received as of the 15th April, and the aim is to collect a thousand, if possible, for statistical analysis. The author will report on the current status of the project, including some of the best qualitative reports received to date.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Donald West for his kind permission to adapt his questionnaire, to my volunteers and to the SPR and Scottish SPR for their kind support of this survey.

References

Budden A (1995) UFOS: Psychic close encounters, London.

Cornell A (2004) Spontaneous cases and electromagnetism, talk at 28th international Conference of the SPR (not given).

Green CE (1960) Analysis of spontaneous cases Proc SPR 53 97-161

Gurney E, Myers FWH & Podmore F (1886) Phantasms of the Living, London.

Persinger MA & Lafrenière GF (1977) Space-time transients and unusual events, Chicago.

Ring K (1992) The omega project: Near-Death Experiences, UFO encounters and the mind at large, New York.

Sidgwick H et al (1894) Report on the census of hallucinations Proc SPR 10:25-422.

Stevenson I (1990) Thoughts on the decline of major paranormal phenomena Proc SPR 57 149-161.

Thomas S (2004) What's happened to weird? The Guardian supplement, 14th June.

West DJ (1990) A pilot census of hallucinations, Proc SPR 57 163-207.

West DJ (1948) A mass-observation questionnaire on hallucinations J SPR 34 187-197.

“Giant Waves, Air Crashes and Phantoms: Examining Three Unusual Claims Of Precognition”
Alan Murdie

At the end of October 2004 a 45 year old male mature student living in the East of England described his dream of a giant wave devastating a landscape in a letter sent to the Society for Psychical Research. Subsequently, his dream was initially considered suggestive of the destructive tsunami that occurred in the Far East on Boxing Day 2004 almost exactly two months to the day from his dream experience. The author followed up this dream report on behalf of the Spontaneous Cases Committee of the Society in February and March 2005.

In February 2005 the author was contacted by a retired engineer living in California who had experienced a number of visions apparently predicting a number of air disasters caused by terrorism which he subsequently believed had been fulfilled, including the Lockerbie attack of 1988. He had submitted a paper describing his visions and his theories about them to the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* but this was rejected although his paper and some of his experiences have subsequently been published elsewhere. (Gurzi, 1998).

Both individuals agreed to provide further information to the author and answer questions. In the case of the percipient in England who had experienced the dream of a giant wave, this was by way of a personal interview followed by written correspondence. In the case of the man in the USA and the visions of air disasters, further information has been obtained via written correspondence.

The percipient in England described having many dreams, visions and hallucinations which he had experienced since his teenage years. Similarly, the percipient in the United States also reported a large number of visions from childhood which he believes to be paranormal in nature.

A third historical claim of precognition arising from an experiment in automatic writing by Margaret Verrall in 1901 was also examined by the author. (Verrall, *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. 20, 1906). This was also one of a large number of experiences claimed by the percipient over a lengthy period.

All three claims of precognition fall to be assessed in terms of G.W. Lambert’s desired criteria for any alleged instance of precognitive dreaming. Lambert sets out the following:

- (1) The dream should be reported to a credible witness
- (2) The time interval between the dream and the event should be short
- (3) The event should be one which, in the circumstances of the dreamer, seemed extremely improbable at the time of the dream
- (4) The description in the dream should be of an event destined to be literally fulfilled and not merely symbolically foreshadowed
- (5) The details of the dream should tally with the details of the event.

(Lambert, 1966)

Although each of the particular examples given falls short of one or more of one or more of Lambert’s desired criteria, certain more general similarities appear to exist, particularly with respect to the three individual percipients.

Each took steps to record the event with credible witnesses prior to apparent fulfilment. With each, knowledge of the apparent fulfilment of the came through a later perception of distant events by way of written and broadcast media sources, rather than any direct personal connection with the event, as though the witness was perceiving later news coverage or media representation. This is a pattern in alleged precognitive experiences which has been noted elsewhere. (Dunne, 1927, MacKenzie, 1974).

For all three, the particular examples were just one of a number of similar precognitive experiences spread over a period of years which were considered meaningful by the percipients.

In each case, the percipients may be described as highly educated people, with the two male percipients having a background in engineering. All three percipients could be described as exhibiting marked language and literary abilities and possessing marked skills in being able to deal with abstract and technical information on a professional level. However, in marked contrast to their ability to express their ordinary ideas clearly in writing, the content of their claimed precognitive experiences takes the form of images and words expressed in a way which is cryptic and imprecise in nature. With all three examples, the claimed precognitive experiences incorporate symbolic and abstruse elements which prevent any immediate interpretation or understanding for the percipient. This aspect of claimed precognitive experiences seems to be in keeping with the essentially non-linguistic nature of many reported psi-experiences (Grattan-Guinness, 1985). With all three percipients, altered states of consciousness (though not necessarily dreaming) seem to be a feature of the experiences, an aspect also noted elsewhere. (MacKenzie, 1974).

The often dramatic or unusual content of many precognitive experiences often leads researchers to focus upon the content of the experience and whether it is fulfilled by a subsequent event. As well as looking at the details of alleged precognitive experiences for any resemblance they may have to later events, it is suggested that researchers should also consider whether the actual percipients who report precognition share any common personal characteristics with each other.

REFERENCES

Dunne, J.W. in *An Experiment with Time* (1927)

Grattan-Guinness, I, "Is Psi Intrinsically Non-Linguistic?" in (1985) *JSPR* No 799 February 1985

Gurzi, F, "Predictive Air Terrorism Experiences of 1987 and 1988" in *The Journal of Religion and Psychical Research* (1998) Vol. 21, No 3 at 145-154.

Lambert, G.W. "A Precognitive Dream About A Waterspout?" in (1965) *JSPR* Vol. 43, No 723 at 5-9.

Mackenzie, Andrew, in *Riddle of the Future* (1974)

Verrall, Margaret in (1906) *PSPR* Vol. 20 Chap XIII

Do Out-of-Body Experiencers Have Better Visual Imagery Skills than Non-Experiencers?

Craig Murray, Jez Fox and David Wilde

School of Psychological Sciences, University of Manchester

One key theory of the out-of-body experience (OBE) is that it is an imaginal experience, in part explained by the possession of better visual imagery skills by experiencers (OBErs) compared to non-experiencers (non-OBErs) (Blackmore, 1984). However, the research on this issue provides a mixed picture: Irwin (1980) found no evidence to suggest that OBErs were any more habitual 'visualizers' or 'imagers' than the normal population. OBErs also scored lower than the norms for that group would predict on a questionnaire assessing vividness of visual imagery. Blackmore (1983a) found no differences between OBErs and non-OBErs on a vividness of imagery scale, and no differences between a second OBE and non-OBE sample on Gordon's (1949) Control of Imagery Questionnaire. Some supporting evidence for Blackmore's (1984) thesis is available. Alvarado and Zingrone (1994) did find that vividness of mental imagery was positively correlated with the OBE. Further evidence in support of better imagery skills in OBErs includes Blackmore's (1983a) finding that OBErs were better able to switch viewpoints in imaginary scenes, although they did not remember scenes any more frequently from above than at eye-level. Cook and Irwin (1983) found that OBErs were better at judging how an object would appear from different perspectives, but found no relationship between having an OBE and performance on the Necker Cube Fluctuation Test of imagery.

A finding by Blackmore (1983b) that OBErs report more hypnagogic imagery than non-OBErs is sometimes cited as evidence for better imagery skills in OBErs. However the question used to assess this ('Have you ever experienced very vivid and realistic images just before going to sleep?') addresses experiences rather than measuring any specific imagery skill. It also presents problems of interpretation as many people who have an OBE might equate that experience with the one posed in the question. Both Irwin (1986) and Blackmore (1987) have found that people who dream as though they were spectators have more OBEs though there were no differences in the waking use of different viewpoints. Hunt et al. (1992) found a relationship between the OBE and performance of block design and embedded figures tests. Blackmore (1994) cites the findings of Irwin (1986) and herself (Blackmore, 1987) as generally confirming the predictions from her psychological theory of the OBE (Blackmore, 1984), although this glosses over the failure of an appreciable number of her own and other studies to find differences in the visual imagery skills of OBErs and non-OBErs.

The strongest evidence for better visual imagery skills in OBErs seems to be that offered in self-reports than actual performance on visual imagery tasks (Blackmore, 1983, 1987). This presentation will focus on a study designed to put this self-report evidence to objective measurement and test: namely one on paranormal belief and visual imagery.

In the study a total of 46 students completed a questionnaire on paranormal belief. They were then administered Blackmore's (1987) Imagination task, in which they were asked to imagine a number of familiar environments and their ability to switch imagined viewpoints within the scene (e.g. from eye-level to an above, over-head viewpoint). Next participants viewed a series of images displayed on a computer screen. The pictures were comprised of two sets: an OBE set in which participants first saw an eye-level picture followed by four overhead views of the same object (but in which the position of the object varied); and a recognition set in which one picture was followed by a choice of four from which the participants had to pick the image previously seen. After viewing the target image, participants were required to choose the corresponding image from the subsequent choice of four. They were asked to do this as quickly as possible as their response time was being measured. The findings of this study indicated that there was a positive correlation between the self-report on the imagination task and actual performance on the computer task for the OBE picture set. However, there was a negative correlation between belief in the paranormal and number of correct choices on the OBE picture set.

The latter finding is interesting for two main reasons: first, because there is a body of literature demonstrating certain 'faulty' probabilistic reasoning and task performance patterns by people high in paranormal belief (e.g. Musch and Ehrenberg, 2002); second, because OBEs tend to report higher levels of paranormal belief than non-OBEs (e.g. Tobacyk et al. 1982, Glickson, 1990). Given that people who report prior OBEs tend to score on average 50% higher on measures of paranormal belief than non-OBEs (see Murray and Fox, 2004), this leads us to hypothesize that OBEs will not demonstrate the same positive correlation between self-report on Blackmore's imagination task and performance on the computer task, and that OBEs will perform below that of a non-OBE sample. The presentation end with a brief comparison of the findings from this study and similar trials run with OBEs.

“Signatures” : Person-Specific Characteristics in Psi Effects

Paul Stevens

The concept of “psychic signatures” - characteristics of extended communication⁷ relating to the physiological or psychological makeup of an individual - is one which is common in science fiction literature but notably lacking in parapsychology. Historically, parapsychological research has focussed more on demonstrating the existence and range of the phenomena, rather than the finer detail. Only relatively recently has there been more emphasis on process-oriented research, and this has tended towards the psychological – the personality of the experiencer or the atmosphere under which phenomena may be slightly more likely to occur - rather than the addressing the physical characteristics of any effects. And yet the concept is one which could help us to address some fundamental problems in parapsychology.

First of all, how does communication occur between 2 people in different locations to the exclusion of all others? How could a mother show an awareness of her daughter being in an accident but not also pick up on all of the myriad other unfortunate people, some of whom may be geographically much closer ? How does the receiver in a Ganzfeld experiment manage to gain information about what the sender is watching but ignore the thoughts and feeling of other people in the building?

Secondly, why is it that extended communication occurs more often (or more successfully in the case of laboratory experiments) between people who have a close association? If it is due to an emotional bond, why does the association itself not need to be emotional?

Thirdly, how can we tell if the experimenter or some other third party has an effect on the target system, either in addition to or instead of the designated agent?

Fourthly, bandwidth problems in theory building: everything we know about emissive capabilities of humans suggests that any physical model of excomm must be minimalist i.e., the amount of information transferred must be as low as possible.

All of these problems could be resolved if the effect associated with an individual bears an imprint of that individual, i.e. a “signature”. Just as we can recognise people from their voice alone, the characteristics of the sound produced being constrained by the shape (both in terms of physiology and behaviour) of their larynx, throat, lungs and mouth, we might expect there to be similar information inherent in any measurable effect they might have on their environment. It seems reasonable to suggest that the individual characteristics of the system which brings about the effect should be reflected in the effect itself, whether this occurs via a physical signal or even if it is a purely mental process⁸

Although the concept of a signature is speculative (though with a lot of explanatory power), there is some support from previous research. Radin (1989, 1993) had some success in getting an artificial neural network to look for patterns in random event generator (REG) data that related to the PK agent that produced them; the PK studies from the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research Labs showed that a few individuals appeared to produce consistent patterns of deviation (Dunne, Nelson & Jahn, 1988) and that there were consistent gender differences (Dunne, 1998); and Berger (1988) also found idiosyncratic patterns in the data of some of his PK subjects.

One problem with previous research is due to the way in which the target REGs used in practically all parapsychology studies are constructed. First of all, they are digital in operation i.e., the fluctuating,

⁷I use the term “extended communication” to refer to instances where there is actual information transfer between 2 systems that extends beyond what we would expect from conventional information channels.

⁸An analogy would be the style by which an artist may be recognised even when the physical medium of expression varies - the overall manner in which the medium is manipulated is the key to recognition rather than the medium itself.

raw current coming from the electronic noise components inside the REG is reduced to a sequence of ones and zeros (a “1” if the signal exceeds a predetermined threshold, a “0” otherwise). This loses a huge amount of information about the characteristics of the current fluctuations - the equivalent of a physiology recorder which told us merely whether a person were awake or asleep! Secondly, even after the reduction to a binary stream, these ones and zeros are combined with a second binary stream (either a second noise source, or even a pseudo-random or fixed-alternating sequence) in such a way that if both streams return a “1”, then this is converted to a “0”. The intention of this was to ensure that the output of the REG was as random as possible, avoiding artefacts from possible environmental factors unrelated to the study (e.g., mains power fluctuations). However, such a process also ensures that any consistent information that was in the original stream (such as person-specific patterns) will have been well and truly mixed up.

One way around this is to construct an 'ideal' (based on the theoretical premises) target system, one in which the fluctuating, raw current could be accessed directly: essentially an analogue REG (AREG). With the aid of an SPR grant, this has now been done and initial results show certain characteristics in the AREG output specific to the person who is interacting with it. Full analyses will be presented at the conference.

References

- Berger, R. E. (1988). In search of "psychic signatures" in random data. *Research in Parapsychology 1987*. Scarecrow Press: Metuchen, NJ.
- Dunne, B.J. (1998). Gender differences in human/machine anomalies. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 12, 3-56.
- Dunne, B.J., Nelson, R.D. & Jahn, R.G. (1988). Operator-Related Anomalies in a Random Mechanical Cascade. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 2,155-179.
- Radin, D. (1989). Identifying ‘signatures’ in anomalous human-machine interaction data with an artificial neural network, *Journal of Scientific Exploration* ,3, 185-200.
- Radin, D. (1993). Neural network analyses of consciousness-related patterns in random sequences, *Journal of Scientific Exploration* ,7, 355-373.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to gratefully acknowledge the Society for Psychical Research for the provision of a small grant to enable construction of the analogue REG.

Non-Deterministic REG Timing Scheme for PK Studies
Matthias Braeunig & Tilmann Faul, Harald Walach, Institute of
Environmental Medicine and Hospital Epidemiology
Department of Evaluation Research in Complementary Medicine
University Hospital Freiburg, Germany

Experiments with Random Event Generators (REGs) have a long history in the study of paranormal or anomalous behaviour. Nowadays with the help of modern electronics the design of such experiments can be much refined. In a current research project we are investigating non-deterministic time environmental triggers for the generation of random events, similar to tossing coins on a movable table, resulting in a binary data stream. Careful design allows the participants in the experiment to enter into resonance with the bit generating process. Coincidences between trigger and random signals will then show in an excess of 0's or 1's in the sequence. We explore the conditions for which such deviation can actually occur, including triggers from EEG and the output sequence itself. The key point is to avoid any sort of fixed frequency processing, but to provide as much a chance for coincidence as possible. In doing so, the device is "psi-enabled", whether it functions as detector for psi or not, in the sense that a participant can form a system with it, as proposed by von Foerster (1973), an organization characterized by operational closure that can change its own mode of operation.

In an extension of the above principle we constructed an array of RNGs on which several experiments with different parameters and timing can be run in parallel. This is for testing different hypotheses on the same source data and to directly compare the results. For example we run the conventional fixed frequency generator against its non-deterministic time cousin. The proposed hardware basis may shed new light on theoretical approaches to psi phenomena like DAT, MPI and OTs, as we would like to discuss them in the context of second order cybernetics.

REFERENCES:

Foerster, Heinz v. (1973) On Constructing a Reality, reprinted in: *Cybernetics of Cybernetics*, pp.376-381 (1995), Future Systems Inc., Minneapolis

Houtkooper, Joop M. (2002) Arguing for an Observational Theory of Paranormal Phenomena (OT), *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 171-185

Lucadou, Walter v. (1995) The Model of Pragmatic Information (MPI). *European Journal of Parapsychology*, Vol. 11, pp. 58-75

May, Edwin C. et al. (1995) Decision Augmentation Theory: Towards a Model of Anomalous Mental Phenomena (DAT). *Journal of Parapsychology*, Vol. 59

We would like to gratefully acknowledge financial support from Fundacao Bial (grant no. 74/04) through which this research has become possible.

The Effects of Lability and Stability Upon Performance at a Novel Psi Task: Further Consideration of the Sender as a PK Agent in ESP Studies⁹

Nicola J. Holt & Chris A. Roe

Centre for the Study of Anomalous Psychological Processes
University College Northampton, Northampton, UK

a. Abstract

It is not straightforward to determine whether a sender makes an active contribution to the success of ESP experiments. Although there does seem to be a subtle advantage for telepathy experiments over equivalent clairvoyant studies (see, e.g., Honorton, 1995, Ullman & Krippner with Vaughan, 1973), this might be explainable in simple psychological terms, such as the sharing of responsibility for failures (and successes) at a psi task and the calming effects of having a friend accompany one to an unusual and potentially anxiety provoking situation (Morris, Dalton, Delanoy & Watt, 1995). In earlier papers we described a novel method that promised to provide a more direct assessment of any sender contribution (Roe & Holt, in press; Roe, Holt & Simmonds, 2003) by introducing a 'virtual receiver' to the ganzfeld protocol. During the sending period descriptive statements were 'selected' by an RNG (random number generator) from among a pool of 768 to give a 20-item 'virtual mentation' that may represent a more direct measure of any sender influence than the mentation of the 'human receiver'. A suggestive effect was obtained, with a 32.5% hit rate, when an independent judge (JW) used the 'virtual mentations' to select the target clip from three decoys ($Z = 1.48, p = .069, 1-t$). Roe and Holt (in press) sought to replicate this effect and further, compared ganzfeld trials with no sender to ganzfeld trials with a sender. Support for the hypothesis that senders exert some influence on the virtual receiver was obtained, psi outcome being more successful in sender trials, across two independent judges. JW obtained 42.1% hits in trials with a sender (SOR = 43, $Z = .821, p = .412, 2-t$) and 17.6% hits in trials with no sender (SOR = 47, $Z = -.868, p = .384, 2-t$), while RD (a newly recruited judge) obtained 26.3% hits in trials with a sender (SOR = 44, $Z = .616, p = .535, 2-t$) and 5.9% hits in trials with no sender (SOR = 46, $Z = -.651, p = .516, 2-t$).

In this talk we will introduce the third experiment of this series. The protocol was adapted in order to obviate the need for a human receiver, the focus for senders becoming the 'virtual receiver'. This displayed the statements to the sender as they were selected, as an analogue to hearing feedback from a human receiver in the ganzfeld. Senders could rate how well each statement corresponded with their sending experience along a 9-point scale. In addition to these alterations in protocol, the present study manipulated the source of randomness by which mentation statements were selected in order to explore the effects of target lability, following Braud (e.g. 1981, 1994). Twenty-four statements were selected from a pool of 416 for each trial, eight by each of the following processes, which increased in lability: a random number table; a pseudo random process; and a live RNG. It was hypothesised that psi effects would increase as lability of the target system increased. These lability effects might best be understood in terms of Stanford's conformance behaviour model (Stanford, 1978), which conceptualises psi as the 'conformance behaviour' of one system (e.g. an RNG or a human brain) to the needs of a 'disposed system' (e.g. a 'sender' in a psi experiment or a target image). In terms of classical PK studies, Braud (1980, 1981) predicted that the likelihood of/ and or magnitude of a conformance behaviour effect would be proportional to the degree of lability, 'free variability' or 'capability for change' of the 'target system' and the degree of constraint, 'inertia' or structure of the PK agent. In this study we therefore expected the greatest conformance behaviour to arise with the most labile 'virtual receiver', but also with senders who presented as most stabile on personality and attitude measures. Trait lability was assessed by considering factors tapping into constraint/rigidity versus spontaneity that Stanford (1990) argued moderate psi outcome. A composite score of sender lability was created from the following constructs: the use of non-linear versus linear cognitive styles (Holt, in house measure), emotional creativity (Averill, 1999), temporal lobe lability (Persinger & Makarec, 1987), lability of mood (Akiskal et al., 1995) and openness-to experience and neuroticism versus conscientiousness (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

We will present data from the forty trials that were conducted, the virtual mentations of which were rated by two independent judges. Contrary to expectation this study did not find that the virtual mentations enabled independent judges to identify the target clip at a level significantly greater than chance expectation in any of the randomness conditions. There was insufficient agreement in terms of target ranking by the independent judges to consider their ratings collectively (Cohen's Kappas being considered poor in each case, $\square\square\square\square\square 036$,

⁹ We would like to gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Bial Foundation which enabled us to conduct this study.

.096 and \square .299). Effect sizes ranged from $r = .011$ to $.235$, with the latter being commensurate with those from previous studies (Roe, Holt & Simmonds, 2003; Roe & Holt, in press), although not all were in the predicted direction. There was a trend towards psi missing (with a 12.5% hit rate) in the live condition for JW ($Z = -1.485$, $p = .069$, 1-t, $r = .235$) and a trend towards psi hitting (with a 32.5% hit rate) in the pseudo condition for LS ($Z = 1.485$, $p = .069$, 1-t, $r = .235$). This suggests that the judges saw different points of similarity between the mentations and the target and decoy clips. However, there was a significant interaction effect between target and sender lability, which emerged for both independent judges ($F_{4,37} = 2.891$, $p = .028$ [JW]; $F_{4,37} = 4.536$, $p = .002$ [LS]). The hypothesis that ‘stable’ senders would demonstrate higher psi hitting with the most labile target system was confirmed. However, the interaction appeared to be complex, confirming a speculated prediction of a ‘mirror’ effect, where senders with high trait lability performed best with the most stable target system. Also contributing to the interaction was an ‘intermediary effect’ where medium labile senders performed best in the pseudo random condition. These results concur with Braud’s lability hypotheses and his extension of Stanford’s conformance behaviour model. However, a bi-directional process is emphasised, which will be interpreted in the talk as indicative of a reciprocal influence between labile and stabile aspects of systems, analogous to the yogic philosophical state of Sattwa. The senders’ own ratings of correspondences between the statements and their experience of sending were not significantly different across the three randomness conditions ($\chi^2 = .517$, 2df, $p = .772$). Following on from the work of Fox (2000) which evaluated the thought processes of senders in a ganzfeld study, qualitative reports of senders’ experiences will be discussed, such as the extent to which associations deviated from the content of the target clip. Finally, we will consider explanations for the overall lower psi outcome of this study compared to its two antecedents, in terms of the immediate feedback of statements potentially hindering motivation and the implications of direct rather than indirect intention, which was introduced in this study.

b. References

- Akiskal, H., Maser, J., Zeller, P., Endicott, J., Coryell, W., Keller, Warshaw, M., Clayton, P., & Goodwin, F. (1995). Switching from “unipolar” to bipolar II: An 11-year prospective study of clinical and temperamental predictors in 559 patients. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, **52**, 114–123.
- Averill, J. (1999). Individual differences in emotional creativity: Structure and correlates. *Journal of Personality*, **67**, 331-371.
- Braud, W. (1980). Lability and inertia in conformance behavior. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, **74**, 297-318.
- Braud, W. (1981). Lability and inertia in psychic functioning. In B. Shapin & L. Coly (Eds) *Concepts and theories in parapsychology*. New York: Parapsychology Foundation, inc. pp. 1-36.
- Braud, W. (1994). The role of mind in the physical world: A psychologist’s view. *European Journal of Parapsychology*, **10**, 66-77.
- Costa, P., & McCrae, R. (1992). *Professional manual: Revised NEO personality inventory (NEO PI-R) and NEO five-factor inventory (FFI)*. Florida: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.
- Fox, J. (2000). A systems approach to the investigation of telepathy. *The 24th International Conference of the Society for Psychical Research*, University College Northampton.
- Honorton, C. (1995). Impact of the sender in ganzfeld communication: Meta-analysis and power estimates. *Proceedings of Presented Papers: The Parapsychological Association 38th Annual Convention*, 132-140.
- Morris, R., Dalton, K., Delanoy, D., & Watt, C. (1995). Comparison of the sender / no sender condition in the ganzfeld. *Proceedings of Presented Papers: The Parapsychological Association 38th Annual Convention*, 244-259.
- Persinger, M., & Makarec, K. (1987). Temporal lobe epileptic signs and correlative behaviors in normal populations. *The Journal of General Psychology*, **114**, 179–195
- Roe, C., & Holt, N. (in press). A further consideration of the sender a PK agent in ganzfeld ESP studies. *Journal of Parapsychology*.
- Roe, C., Holt, N., & Simmonds, C. (2003). Considering the sender as a PK agent in ganzfeld ESP studies. *Journal of Parapsychology*, **67**, 129-145.
- Stanford, R. (1978). Toward reinterpreting psi events. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, **72**, 197-214.
- Stanford, R. (1990). An experimentally testable model for spontaneous psi events: A review of related evidence and concepts from parapsychology and other sciences. In S. Krippner (Ed.), *Advances in parapsychological research*, Vol. 6 (pp. 54-167). Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Ullman, M., & Krippner, S., with Vaughan, A. (1973), *Dream telepathy: Experiments in nocturnal ESP*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Murder Most Foul

Tricia J Robertson

In recent years we have heard about murder cases in which the police used mediums to assist in their investigations. e.g. The Jackie Poole case reported by Keen and Playfair and Keith Charles, who was in fact a policeman is now billed as the psychic detective who assists the police with their enquiries using his clairvoyant and psychic talent. This paper will present an assessment of statements made by two mediums who participated in two individual psychometry experiments with items that were the property of or relevant to a murder victim. The experiments were carried out three months after the murder had taken place. The items relating to the victim were sealed in an envelope by the victim's mother and were not seen or handled by the experimenter at any time. The mediums were individually asked, at different times, to handle the envelope and psychometrise it for any information they could attain from it, using their psychic ability. The mediums did not know the contents of the envelope, the identity of the owner, the reason that I was asking them to do it or whether or not the person who related to the envelope was alive or dead. Although five mediums were involved in the original experiment, only two gave significantly meaningful statements regarding the victim's life and circumstances of death. In one outstanding experiment, the medium's information was subsequently found to be more accurate than anything that had been reported in the media.

It is worth emphasising that the experimenter did not know what the envelope contained and certainly had no knowledge of any of the information supplied by either medium.

After the experiments had taken place, the experimenter took the list of statements, provided by the mediums, to the victim's mother and simply asked her to reply to the accuracy of each statement with a yes or no. The quality, depth and accuracy of the statements made by one medium was quite outstanding and quite frankly show beyond a reasonable doubt that information can be transferred from one person to another by means unknown to us at this time.

Trauma and Claims of Memories of a Past Life. Overview of Psychological Studies in Lebanon and Sri Lanka

Erlendur Haraldson, University of Iceland

This project started as an attempt to test some hypotheses that have been put forward as possible explanations for why some children claim past life memories. An overview will be given of the results of psychological studies conducted on 87 children, 57 of them in Sri Lanka and 30 in Lebanon all claiming to remember a past life. They had repeatedly been making several to many persistent statements concerning such an alleged life. These were 45 boys and 42 girls aged 5 to 14 years with a mean age of 9,17 years. On the average they had started to speak about a past life around the age of two and a half years. Relevant psychological tests were administered to the children with memories and questionnaires to their parents about their children, and for comparison there was a peer group of children claiming no previous life memories. The purpose of the study was to find out if children with alleged memories of a past life differ psychologically from their peers.

The first study in Sri Lanka (N = 30) revealed that they differed significantly in two ways; they were more cognitively gifted than their peers, and they had more psychological problems or psychological characteristics that can lead to problems and difficulties for children.

In Lebanon a child is more readily considered having past life memories than in Sri Lanka. There cognitive differences (i. e. that children with memories are more gifted) were not found but the problem-related behavioural features were confirmed. Children claiming past-life memories displayed more phobias, fears, anxieties, aggression, and reliving of their experiences, and other features that reveal the syndrome of a post-traumatic stress disorder that is often found in mistreated and abused children. There was however no evidence of mistreatment in their present short life.

The presence of post-traumatic stress symptoms without any apparent causal factor calls for an explanation. Could the source of the post-traumatic-like stressful symptoms be that most of children had images/memories of a traumatic violent death? This image/memory of a violent death is an experience that they are repeatedly and persistently reliving and talking about and its presence is the only explanation that we can find for the post-traumatic stress disorder. What started out as a test of some hypotheses that might possibly explain why children speak about past lives ended in opening up new questions. It is generally not accepted that images alone can cause post-traumatic stress disorder. Another explanation is that we have here memories of past events. Whatever the reason, something has been impressed so deeply on the mind of these children that it has the same effects as real life-threatening and painful memories.

Erlendur Haraldsson. (1997). Psychological comparison between ordinary children and those who claim previous-life memories. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 11, 323-335.

Erlendur Haraldsson, Patrick Fowler & Vimala Periyannanpillai (2000). Psychological Characteristics of Children Who Speak of a Previous Life: A Further Field Study in Sri Lanka *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 37, 525-544.

Erlendur Haraldsson (2003). Children who speak of past-life experiences: Is there a psychological explanation? *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory Research and Practice*. 76, 1, 55-67.

Human Personality and the Nature of its Survival of Bodily Death

Archie E. Roy, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Glasgow University

It is now just over a century since Frederic Myers' great two volume book, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* was published posthumously, its final form, unfinished at his death, being edited by Dr Richard Hodgson and Alice Johnson. For many it still remains a worthy monument to the personality, classical knowledge, learning, high intelligence and logistical capabilities of perhaps the greatest psychical researcher who ever lived. In truth he dedicated his life to understanding the true nature of a human being. Was a human being limited by the boundaries of his birth, his body and his death, apart from his knowledge via his senses of the physical world and ability by those senses during life to communicate with other human beings? By the end of his life Myers had become convinced that the evidence from the diverse fields of psychology and psychical research made it necessary to believe that human minds could communicate outwith the physical senses and that the bodily death of a human being did not annihilate that person's human personality.

By the time that the thirty years duration of the labyrinthine Cross-Correspondences had been terminated, the majority of Myers' contemporaries likewise had become convinced that the survival of death took place. Sir Oliver Lodge, long before the death of his son Raymond, Richard Hodgson, Mrs Verrall, Gerald Balfour and his brother Arthur, first Earl of Balfour, Mr Piddington and even Mrs Sidgwick herself had admitted their firm conviction.

It is now seventy years since the pioneers of psychical research formed their belief that death was not the end of human personality. Certain questions arise in one's mind. Why does it seem to many psychical researchers and parapsychologists that there has been little or no progress in survival research during the past seventy years? Were the early psychical researchers mistaken in their conviction that survival takes place? Do we know better? Has the remarkable progress made in our understanding of brain functions made it inherently improbable that mental functions can exist independently from brain functions? If survival does take place should we not after all this time have arrived by now at some theory concerning the *nature* of that survival?

The speaker will address these questions beginning with the commonly held belief by many laymen and certain physiologists that the personality, memory and all mental functions are consequences of living brain functions and that the destruction of the brain at death terminates and destroys that person. Against that bleak, stoic belief he will marshal evidence from Stevenson and other psychical researchers that suggests that if Frederic Myers were alive today he might, in writing a sequel to his great book, retitle it *Human Personality and the Nature of its Survival of Bodily Death..*

Using a Multi-Dimensional Approach to Assess the Relationship Between Creativity and Subjective Paranormal Experiences

Nicola J. Holt

Centre for the Study of Anomalous Psychological Processes, University College Northampton

Abstract

Between 1962 and 2003, 27 experimental studies have explored the relationship between creativity and psi. These suggest there is something about artistic populations that is psi-conducive. Of ten free-response studies working with artistic populations, four found that compared to non-artistic controls, artists obtained a significantly higher hit rate (e.g., Moss, 1969). The remaining six studies used the ganzfeld paradigm, each obtaining above chance psi-scoring, with hit rates between 30% and 50% (MCE=25%), and an overall hit rate of 40% (e.g., Morris, Summers & Yin, 2003). These artistic populations obtained higher hit rates than the general populations of ganzfeld studies – for which a recent meta-analysis estimates a hit rate of 30% (Bem, Palmer & Broughton, 2001). While this suggests that some characteristics of artists may be associated with psi success on these tasks, it is not known what this might be, possibilities include self-confidence, extraversion, open belief systems, the ability to shift easily between states of consciousness, and/or creativity.

Artistic involvement alone is not a measure of creativity. Creativity is commonly defined as a process whereby a novel product emerges, something that is original and also valuable or adaptive (e.g., Boden, 1996).

The relationship between psi outcome and psychometric measures of creativity (e.g. divergent thinking) in experimental psi research is contradictory, suggesting at best that any relationship between psi and creativity is complex (e.g. Roe, Anowarun & McKenzie, 2001). Creativity is a poly-faceted, heterogenous construct, with low convergent validity between its various measures (Hocevar, 1981). Interpretation of its relationship to psi has been further hindered by this complexity, particularly when different measures of ‘creativity’ have been used in isolation, as Palmer (1978) noted.

In this talk I will introduce a study that sought to clarify the relationship between creativity and psi by asking if different dimensions of creativity relate differentially to the likelihood of having subjective paranormal experiences (SPEs). This expanded upon the work of Kennedy, Kanthamani and Palmer (1994) who found incidence of SPEs to be significantly correlated with rating artistic creativity as an important purpose in life ($r=.20$, $p=.04$).

211 participants (108 females and 101 males), aged between 18 and 70+ were recruited through opportunity sampling (the UCN psychology participant pool, UCN staff, SPR members and posters/flyers at conferences, art galleries and libraries) and word of mouth (through contacts with creative groups and academics at other universities). Participants included 36 professional artists (e.g. fine artists, poets, composers, film makers) and 28 professional scientists (physicists, chemists and engineers).

A correlational design was adopted. Participants completed a varied battery of measures selected to tap into different aspects of the creativity construct and The Assessment Schedule for Altered States of Consciousness, ASASC (van Quekelberghe, Altstotter-Gleich, & Hertwick, 1991), which consists of eleven sub-scales, one of which focuses on SPEs (extrasensory perception and direct mental influence on living systems). When an enquiry was made, potential participants were given by hand, emailed or posted a questionnaire with an introductory letter and instructions about the study. Hence participants could select their preferred environment to complete the questionnaire. This could be returned either via a freepost address¹⁰ or by email. The order of measures presented to participants was counterbalanced, with two versions, in reversed orders, with a ‘drawing task’ in the middle to act as a break from questionnaires.

¹⁰ The author would like to thank the SPR for use of their address in this study.

Seven components of creativity emerged from a Principal Components Analysis, which accounted for 68% of the total variance. These were labelled as: emotional creativity; artistic creative personality; scientific creative personality; involvement in writing and remoteness of verbal associations; involvement in music and performance arts; figural divergent thinking (flexibility and originality of response when adapting abstract shapes in a drawing task); and involvement in domestic crafts and visual arts. These constructs will be elucidated upon in the talk. Of these creativity components only three correlated significantly with SPEs: artistic creative personality ($r=.20$, $p=.005$) which consisted of self-perceived creativity, the importance of creative involvement in one's life, involvement in visual art (e.g. sculpture, painting, drawing and photography), creative personality, and figural expressiveness; involvement with music and performance arts ($r=.19$, $p=.008$), which consisted of involvement in writing and performing music, drama, comedy, video productions and dance; and emotional creativity ($r=.30$, $p=.00001$) which load primarily upon the sub-scales of Averill's (1999) emotional creativity measure which assesses a person's willingness to explore emotional experiences, awareness of experiencing personally novel combinations of emotions, and the ability to use emotional insights creatively and adaptively on both a personal and an interpersonal level. Only the latter remains significant when corrected for multiple analyses.

The incidence of SPEs also correlated significantly, when correcting for multiple analyses, with three subscales of the CCI (Cognitive Cognition Inventory, Holt, in house measure), which assesses the use of cognitive styles in the creative process. These were: heightened internal awareness (e.g. paying attention to internal imagery and meditation, $r=.43$, $p=.000001$); intuitive cognition (moments of waking inspiration and intuition, $r=.42$, $p=.000001$); and oneiric cognition (ideas arising in dreams, daydreams and hypnagogic states, $r=.41$, $p=.000001$).

These analyses suggests that of dimensions of creativity, it is not cognitive flexibility (divergent thinking), creative personality or involvement in particular domains that relate to the reporting of SPEs in this sample, but the use of non-linear cognitive styles, heightened internal awareness and emotional creativity. The relationship between creativity and SPEs seen in the correlations above appears to be explained through shared variance with constructs involving an openness to and exploration of 'psychological space'. This concurs with the idea that people who have 'internal sensitivity' are more likely to have psi experiences (Honorton, 1972). Although artistic populations may be more likely to possess such a 'cognitive style', mere involvement in the arts alone (e.g. music and performance arts or domestic crafts and visual arts) does not appear to predict SPEs to a significant degree.

While components of creativity such as cognitive flexibility and originality, creative personality and involvement in artistic domains did not appear to predict parapsychological experience directly, they did form more robust associations with a general proclivity to experience altered states of consciousness and with the use of non-linear cognition in the creative process. Hence, it may be that these forms of creativity mediate psi-success in experimental paradigms that seek to manipulate states of consciousness and encourage 'internal sensitivity' and spontaneous cognitive processes. The next stage of this research will be to explore how well these components of creativity predict psi-success in an experimental paradigm.

References

- Averill, J. (1999). Individual differences in emotional creativity: Structure and correlates. *Journal of Personality*, 67, 331-371.
- Bem, D., Palmer, J. & Broughton, R. (2001). Updating the ganzfeld database: A victim of its own success? *Journal of Parapsychology*, 65, 207-18.
- Boden, M. (Ed.). (1996). *Dimensions of creativity*. London: The MIT Press.
- Hocevar, D. (1981). Measurement of creativity: Review and critique. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 45, 450-464.
- Honorton, C. (1972). Reported frequency of dream recall and ESP. *Journal of the American Society of Psychical Research*, 66, 369-374.
- Kennedy, J., Kanthamani, H. & Palmer, J. (1994). Psychic and spiritual experiences, health and well-being, and meaning in life. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 58, 353-383.

- Morris, R., Summers, J. & Yim, S. (2003). Evidence of anomalous information transfer with a creative population. *Proceedings of the Parapsychological Association 46th Annual Convention*, 116-131.
- Moss, T. (1969). ESP effects in “artists” contrasted with “non-artists”. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 33, 57-69.
- Palmer, J. (1978). Extrasensory perception: Research findings. In S. Krippner (Ed.), *Advances in Parapsychological Research*. London: Plenum Press.
- Roe, C., Anowarun, A. & McKenzie, E. (2001). Sender and receiver creativity scores as predictors of performance at a ganzfeld ESP task. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 65, 107-121.
- Van Quekelberghe, R., Altstotter-Gleich, C. & Hertwick, E. (1991). Assessment schedule for altered states of consciousness: A brief report. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 55, 377-390.

Re-Examining the Psychodynamic Functions and Social Marginality Hypotheses of Paranormal Belief: The Mediating Effects of Subjective Loneliness and Attachment Style

Paul Rogers PhD, Gemma Phelps & Pamela Qualter PhD, Department of Psychology,
University of Central Lancashire

Abstract

Previous research suggests that believers are more likely to have suffered childhood trauma that through fantasy proneness, use paranormal beliefs as a psychodynamic mechanism for coping with unpredictability (e.g. Irwin, 1992; 1993). Others argue that believers tend to come from socially marginal groups and that paranormal beliefs are a response to social deprivation and alienation (e.g. Bainbridge, 1978).

The present study attempts to bridge these competing accounts by examining the extent to which subjective loneliness and attachment style are predictors of a global belief in the paranormal. A community sample of 253 respondents completed psychometrically sound measures of the childhood trauma, fantasy proneness, subjective loneliness and adult attachment style together with Tobacyk's (1988) *Revised Paranormal Belief Scale*. Hierarchical multiple regression were performed on global RPBS scores with predictors entered in three steps (Step 1; gender, age, trauma and fantasy proneness; Step 2, loneliness and Step 3, attachment style). Significant predictors of paranormal belief were higher levels childhood sexual abuse, greater social loneliness and an avoidant attachment style in adulthood, with female gender a near-significant predictor. Overall, this model was significant ($p < .05$) and accounted for a quarter of the variance in paranormal belief scores.

Results are discussed in relation to both the psychodynamic functions and social marginality hypotheses of paranormal belief.

Taboo and Belief in Tibetan Psychic Tradition

S.M. Roney-Dougal

¹*Psi Research Centre, Glastonbury, Britain*

a. INTRODUCTION

When commencing a new undertaking it is essential to review the literature to ascertain what research has already been conducted. I am starting a project with Tibetan people in North-West India. This paper is essentially a preliminary review of Tibetan belief in psychic phenomena.

b. BELIEF

Tibetan traditions incorporate psi extensively:

1) They have the tradition of oracles, people who go into trance and are possessed by a deity, who then speaks through the medium giving advice and information, which is used to make major decisions, e.g., the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government consult the Nechung Oracle (Dalai Lama, 2002). There are no Tibetan texts concerning this tradition, but some western authors have written about it (e.g. de Nebesky Wojkowitz, 1996).

2) Also every monastery will have at least one lama who does “mo divination,” a method of dispensing advice dependant on the fall of the dice, counting the beads of their mala, mirror or thumbnail reading. The first two utilise a random method and the latter two are direct clairvoyance/precognition. (Kirti Tsenshab, 2005, Topgyal, 2005). There is one Tibetan text on this topic (Gyalho, 1998), but it has not been translated.

3) Interestingly Tibetan Buddhist teachings mirror the Yogic teachings very closely, saying that as you develop samadhi (or shamatha), so psychic faculties manifest. The meditation technique that the Buddhist texts recommend is one-pointed concentration. There are references to this in many traditional and modern Tibetan Buddhist texts (Lamrimpa, 1992; Tsongkhapa, 2002; Conze, 1990). It is this aspect of Tibetan tradition that is the subject of the present research project.

4) A belief in reincarnation is central to Tibetan life. The phenomenon of the tulku - a lama who consciously chooses to be reborn to continue the work of helping others gain enlightenment - is a uniquely Tibetan phenomenon. This belief is surrounded by psychic phenomena: oracles are consulted to find the reborn lama; clairvoyance is performed by lamas at such places as oracle lake; various omens and signs around the pregnancy birth and the young child are considered significant indicators that they have discovered the correct reincarnate. An example of this is the discovery of the new Karmapa, and his predecessors (Martin, 2004).

5) They have a belief in what are termed, the mahasiddhis. The prototype of this is Milarepa (Jivaka, 1996), whose story is told widely through out Tibet and who is one of the founders of the Kagyu sect. These feats are firmly in the realm of the miraculous, such as walking on water, flying through the air, etc.

c. TABOO

It seems that most cultures have some sort of reservation around psychic phenomena. In an apparent paradox, this is very prominent in Tibetan Buddhist culture.

1) Tibetan culture is still very close to its shamanic roots. Known as Bon, this is considered to be one of the five main sects in Tibetan religion (Schlagintweit, 1999). Shamanic cultures accept psychic reality as part and parcel of life.

What is very apparent, though, is the awe and the fear that surround the psychic manifestations. The legends about, e.g. Milarepa (Jivaka, 1996), who was said to have learnt how to kill people at a distance,

which he did with terrible consequences, exemplify the fear of “bad” magic and the belief that people can do such terrible acts.

2) In the West this fear of the abuse of psychic abilities has evolved over the past two thousand years into a belief in the non-existence of psi. The situation is very different however in the Indian subcontinent and amongst the Tibetan people. Whilst there is still a belief in psychic abilities, which are called *siddhis*, normally it is considered wrong to pay any attention to them. Manifesting psychic abilities is thought to have detrimental effects on one’s spiritual development, to be an obstacle on the path. I was informed that even to admit to being a skilled meditator was something that no one would do, because ego is fuelled by such pride. Humility is essential for one’s spiritual development.

Further, Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns, who are working with meditation techniques which are thought to be related to development of psychic awareness, make vows that they will not speak about their practice or reveal their capabilities.

d. CONCLUSION

What I find really fascinating is that His Holiness, the Dalai Lama is positively encouraging scientific research into this taboo topic. Ignorance is considered to be a major obstacle on the path. The scientific method has “truth” as its aim, as does Tibetan Buddhism. Does a real and deep understanding of the process of psi enable one not to fall into the traps surrounding the development and use of psychic abilities? I think it does and I think that is one of the best reasons for undertaking parapsychological research within the Tibetan culture.

e. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Deep gratitude to the Perrott-Warwick Fund and the Bial Foundation for supporting this research; to Geshe Jampel Dhakpa, director of Sarah College, for his support; and to all those who helped me during my stay in Dharamsala.

f. REFERENCES

- Conze, E. (trans. & ed.) (1995). *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, Motilal Banarsidai, New Delhi.
- Dalai Lama, H.H. (2002). *Freedom in Exile*, Abacus.
- de Nebesky Wojkowitz, R. (1996). *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: an Iconography of Tibetan Protective Deities*, Book Faith India.
- Gyalho, Palden Magsor. (1998). *Way of Practising Extraordinary Seeing together with the Explanation*, Tibetan Cultural Press (Sherig Parkhang), Dharamsala.
- Kirti Tsenshab, Rinpoche (2005). Personal audience, 19th April.
- Jivaka, L. (1996). *The Life of Milarepa: Tibet’s Great Yogi*, Rupa & Co., India.
- Lamrimpa, Gen (1992/5). *Calming The Mind: Tibetan Buddhist Teachings on Cultivating Meditative Quiescence*. Snow Lion, USA.
- Martin, M. (2004). *Music in the Sky: The Life, Art and Teachings of the 17th Karmapa*, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, New Age Books, New Delhi.
- Schlagintweit, E. (1999). *Buddhism in Tibet*, Book Faith India.
- Topgyal, Geshe (2005). Personal Audience, 14th April.
- Tsong Khapa (2002). *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to enlightenment: Lam Rim Chen Mo*, Snow Lion, USA.

Therapeutic Aspects of Psychic-Sitter Interaction: Some Preliminary Observations

Dr Robin Wooffitt, Department of Sociology, University of York

In this paper I offer some preliminary observations on the therapeutic orientation of the discourse of psychic practitioners (a term used to refer generically to mediums, psychics, clairvoyants, Tarot card readers, and so on) in consultation with their sitters. The paper does not, however, attempt to offer an evaluation of the therapeutic benefits derived from consultation with psychic practitioners; that task is beyond the scope of this paper and the expertise of its author. Instead, I will use a qualitative method for the analysis of everyday verbal interaction to examine the structural characteristics of psychic-sitter discourse, and to show how these are similar to, or differ from, the properties of verbal interaction between therapists and their patients.

There are good reasons to examine the therapeutic orientation of the discourse of psychic practitioners. The therapeutic benefit of psychic consultations is a recurring theme in *The Psychic News*, and is a core topic in mediums' autobiographies. Advertising flyers claim that psychic practitioners can help clients understand the nature of the self, can assist with emotional and psychosomatic disorders, and can offer guidance on relationships, financial matters and spiritual developments. The public are presented with psychics offering counselling in various media: for example, during the late 1990s one leading UK Sunday tabloid newspaper had its own psychic agony aunt. Moreover, it is quite common to come upon anecdotal claims that more people attend mediums and psychics with emotional or psychological problems than seek professional help. Obviously, such anecdotal claims can not be treated as firm evidence about the reasons people consult psychics, or the benefits they may enjoy; but they at least point to the common feeling that consultations with psychic practitioners have some therapeutic benefit.

There is no doubt that many people benefit psychologically and emotionally from consultations with psychics; it would be hard to explain their continuing popularity if this were not the case. But even if we accept the broad characterisation of psychic consultations as therapeutic encounters, it is still necessary to investigate the linguistic processes through which they are conducted. Like all therapeutic encounters, they rely on verbal interaction: therapists and counsellors work through their clients' problems through language; and it is primarily through verbal communication that psychic practitioners can help their sitters.

This paper examines empirical data: (anonymised) transcripts taken from a corpus of recordings of 'real life' or naturally occurring sittings between members of the public and various kinds of psychic practitioner. I will discuss a range of discourse phenomena, and compare these to findings from studies of interaction between therapists and counsellors and their clients or patients. The paper will focus on the following topics: the ways in which topics are introduced into the encounter; the different ways in which patients/sitters receipt the claims of the therapist/psychic; and the strategies available to patients/sitters to exhibit scepticism about or rejection of the claims of the therapist/psychic.

Some Observations on the Significance of Language in Researching Spontaneous Anomalous Phenomena.

Madeleine Castro, Department of Sociology, University of York

In this paper, I will explore some issues in the relationship between language and anomalous experience. This paper was inspired by Cardeña (2004), whose recent work re-evaluates the importance of introspection for a study of consciousness, and makes various recommendations for future approaches. This work is a welcome addition to ongoing methodological considerations in the study of subjective experience. However, there are some conceptual issues, which may benefit from further attention – a discussion of which can advance our contemporary understanding of anomalous experience.

Scientific methods have often considered the tools of the first person approach to be riddled with problems – for instance, the perception of intractable lack of reliability or validity afforded to introspective methods has persisted. There has been, in some sense a split between, on the one hand advocates of the third person approach, and on the other, supporters of the first person method (Blackmore, 2002, 2003). This has led some to surmise that studies into anomalous experiences and therefore consciousness “may remain fruitless unless sophisticated methodologies can adequately map states of consciousness in a reliable and valid manner” (Pekala & Cardeña, 2000: 50). However, more recently, reflections on introspection as a method for studying consciousness highlight that it may be misleading to think about first and third person methodologies as so starkly distinct (Varela, 1996; Cardeña, 2004).

Cardeña’s (2004) re-assessment of methods considers various versions of introspection methodology, including phenomenology, concurrent reporting methods and retrospective report methods. In this evaluation he sets out the strengths and weaknesses associated with these methods. For instance, ‘thinking out loud’ is considered a good method for provision of a comprehensive account, but may affect the experience and does not address long-term effects. The overall assessment is that although individual methods associated with introspection have their limitations, mainly revolving around memory problems, distortion, censorship, and lack of verification, a more pluralistic approach (combining methods) can be employed to lessen these problems. Cardeña’s (2004) assessment is a useful reflection on this method. There are however, a range of perspectives on the nature of language and communication in the social sciences, on the basis of which, we may wish to be cautious about wholeheartedly adopting Cardeña’s (2004) account.

Within the social sciences, specific methods and approaches have been evolving towards the study of discourse (namely discourse analysis and conversation analysis) aiming to reveal how people make sense of the world and their experiences through their use of language. This work has consistently demonstrated that the language we use to describe our experiences is socially produced (e.g. Schegloff, 1997). That is, the way in which an introspective account of an anomalous experience is articulated will be informed primarily by the circumstances or setting in which the account is communicated (written, spoken etc.). These, mostly ‘non-conscious’, processes of selection and construction, perform social actions – we do ‘things’ with our talk (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1992) – and can begin to inform us about some of the foundations of such accounts. Furthermore, it is worth considering that we do not have the actual anomalous experiences themselves to study, but the accounts, the reflections, and the reports of experiencers (Blackmore, 1988; Wooffitt, 1992; Yamané, 2001).

By beginning with a look at the way in which people articulate their anomalous experiences, we can start to see what is being communicated through their accounts. I want to suggest therefore, that a study of spontaneous anomalous phenomena is in the first place a study of language and communication. Furthermore, I want to argue that an approach informed by both aspects of Cardeña’s (2004) approach and the methodology of discourse studies, can help to furnish a pragmatic and sophisticated alternative, and can offer one potential in-road to a reliable, accountable and fruitful study.

Spiritual Experience and Ethnography: Reflections on Fieldwork with Spiritualist Mediums.

Hannah Gilbert, Sociology Department, University of York

Psychical researchers and parapsychologists have long studied Spiritualist mediums in attempts to ascertain whether there is life after death, and there have been many thorough historical accounts charting the development and initial rise of Spiritualism (e.g. Carroll, 1997; Hazelgrove, 2000; Moore, 1977; Oppenheim, 1985; Owen, 1992). However, Spiritualist mediums - and Spiritualism more generally - have received relatively little attention from the social sciences. Despite some sporadic publishing of research seeking to explore the social dimensions of Spiritualism (e.g. Emmons & Emmons, 2003; Nelson, 1969; Skultans, 1972; Walliss, 2001), insight into Spiritualism as a religious community, as well as mediumship and the embodiment of spirit communication as a *social phenomenon* presents us with a multitude of still unanswered questions. With an increase in popular literature and media attention concerning anomalous and 'psychic' phenomena – a large proportion of this area relating to mediumship specifically – it seems important to seek to explore the social dynamics of mediumship and Spiritualism.

Over the last few decades, the representation and exploration of anomalous phenomena has entered the sphere of methodological debate. From an ethnographic point of reference, this ties in with ongoing discussions about how we interact with people who hold distinctly different beliefs to our own, and how we, as researchers, are likely to influence our research; both in the process of being 'in the field', and in the subsequent vehicle of writing and publishing. These topics have been addressed by many scholars in the social science arena (e.g. Bellah, 1970), some with a specific focus on anomalous experience (Hufford, 1982; McClenon, 1994; Young & Goulet (eds), 1994). While anomalous phenomena have a distinct and often controversial setting within Western culture, many non-Western cultures have a far richer taxonomy of belief that incorporates and legitimises anomalous experience. Anthropology, in particular, has been involved in the study of such phenomena since its early days, and has therefore contributed an enormous amount of data concerning anomalous experience and belief (for example, in the form of experience narratives, field notes). It has also, perhaps finding a stronger focus due to its emphasis on cross-cultural research, been at the forefront of assessing how we should 'deal' with anomalous phenomena; both in regards to the *process* and the *product* of investigations.

How do we, as researchers, prepare ourselves for ethnographic research into areas of social life that represent dramatic differences to our own understanding of the world? How honest should we be about our own worldviews? Is it possible to balance the role of participant and observer when researching spiritual experiences? How can we be reflexive in our efforts to understand the lives of others?

This paper will address these methodological questions by reflecting on current ongoing research into Spiritualist mediumship and relating them to debates about ethnography. This research, which was started earlier this year, has involved semi-structured interviews with Spiritualist mediums in England about their experiences of the spirit world and their reflections on Spiritualism and their role as mediums more generally. The dialogue between researcher and medium has given rise to some unprecedented questions regarding power relations, researcher biases, and the dynamics of interaction, which I will discuss. Reference will also be made to the sensuousness of spirit communication; this is an area of spiritual experience that is often absent from its academic examination, and yet has been a prominent feature of reflective narratives. It provides an important example of how translation of experience can be difficult, both for the researcher, and for the medium who must articulate their subjective and personal experiences. The influence of Western culture - in particular the dominance of scientific rationalism as an acceptable world view - and how this affects mediums' reflection on their experiences will also be noted