

THEME: Post Mortem Consciousness

NAME: Ann Jacqueline Bridge DAVIES

EMAIL: annbridgedavies@aol.com

ABSTRACT:

By applying a first person approach to the theme of this paper I hope to offer some insight into a lesser known form of mediumship known as spirit art. First documented four years after the inauguration of Spiritualism, the art was believed to be created by post-mortem artists through the physical body of willing mediums. In modernity spirit art is now thought of by Spiritualists' to be a good source of evidence for post-mortem consciousness. Supported by Spiritualisms' fourth principle – Continuous Existence of the Human Soul – it is believed that portraits are produced by a deceased artist of a deceased personality through a living artist. Post-mortem consciousness, in this context, would refer to the methods by which the deceased 'guide' relays information about the personality to be drawn or painted, and of how that information is interpreted by the incarnate artist/medium. The argument for conscious post-mortem input to the art is centred on the premise that the deceased artist can 'see' or 'experience' the deceased; relay information about them - visually, verbally and/or sentiently – which the artist-medium/non-artist medium can re-create as art. This paper will examine the process by which several artist-mediums, including myself, have demonstrated the link between art and after-life. By discussing my own experiences, as a working spirit artist, together with verbal statements and/or written testimonies from other spirit artists – living and dead – both spiritual and practical creative techniques will be illustrated demonstrating post-mortem creative methodologies. There will be an emphasis on how the portraits were made and recognised by a recipient of the artwork. Hard-copy portraits with personal testimonies will support the paper.

DATE: 17.06.2022

A QUESTION OF SURVIVAL: ADC CASES THAT CONTAIN EVIDENTIAL INFORMATION

EVELYN ELSAESSER,^a CHRIS A. ROE,^b CALLUM E. COOPER,^b SOPHIE MORRISON,^b & DAVID LORIMER^c

^a *Chavannes de Bogis, Switzerland;*

^b *Exceptional Experiences & Consciousness Studies Research Group
University of Northampton, UK*

^c *Scientific and Medical Network, UK*

SUMMARY

A spontaneous After-Death Communication (ADC) occurs when a person unexpectedly perceives the deceased person. This may be through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, or touch, but experiencers might simply “feel the presence” of the deceased person or have an impression of having received a contact or a communication, for example during sleep. The deceased person is perceived in a manner that is typically interpreted by experiencers as indicative of the continued survival of some aspect of that person.

This phenomenon is quite common among those who have suffered a bereavement, with as many as 60% of survey respondents reporting one or more ADCs (Cooper, Roe & Mitchell, 2015), and have been reported in different cultures and times (Haraldsson, 2012; Sidgwick, Sidgwick & Johnson, 1894). Despite their widespread occurrence, ADCs have been little researched and are absent from the media and public discourse. As a consequence, persons who experience an ADC usually have no frame of reference in terms of which to understand, integrate and benefit fully from this experience, and fear that disclosure will cause them to be labelled as credulous, or even as suffering from some pathology (Evenden, Cooper & Mitchell, 2013; Roxburgh & Roe, 2014). For many participants, involvement in a research study can be the first time they have spoken openly about such experiences; Rees (1975) reported that only 27.7% of his participants had previously discussed their exceptional experiences (EEs) with anyone, and just 14.6% had told more than one person. Although some did not share their experiences because they believed that others would be uninterested or potentially upset by them, approximately half the sample believed that they would be ridiculed, reinforcing the impression that such experiences are stigmatized. This reticence acts as a hindrance to research into the effects of anomalous experiences upon the bereavement process.

Although the vast majority of experiencers are convinced of the authenticity of their experience, ADCs are by nature intrinsically subjective, and therefore susceptible to explanation as a psychological response to a deep emotional need. People profoundly affected by the death of a family member or friend might imagine having experienced these perceptions, even unconsciously, as their suffering would be so intense that they would be unable to cope with life without the loved one by their side, if only for brief, hallucinatory moments. There are, however, some types of ADCs that are more resistant to explanation in such terms and are therefore more evidential with respect to the survival hypothesis. These include a) contacts during which previously unknown information is perceived (such as the unexpected passing of the perceived deceased person); b) contacts witnessed simultaneously by more than one person; and c) contacts that occur when the experiencer is not in bereavement (e.g., perception of unknown deceased persons) so that a psychodynamic explanation is implausible. This presentation will focus on new cases that involve previously unknown information so as to evaluate the degree to which it supports the survival hypothesis.

F.R. MELTON'S MYSTERIOUS TELEPHONE*

CALLUM E. COOPER

*Exceptional Experiences & Consciousness Studies Research Group
University of Northampton, UK*

SUMMARY

The idea of using objects and devices in attempt to make contact with the departed, can be seen in many forms, especially since the rise of spiritualism in the 1840s. From table-tipping and automatic writing with plachettes, to unusual devices created, boasted in rare spiritualist articles, and then never to seen or heard of again. Exceptional experiences regarding telephones became a phenomenon of renewed interest when the popular, and now rare title, *Phone Calls from the Dead*, by D. Scott Rogo and Raymond Bayless, was published in 1979. Although the focal point of the book was a content analysis of 50 spontaneous cases, in effort to map the characteristics of such claims, the authors dedicated time within their research to present early accounts of sought experiences. That is, not reports of spontaneous calls taking place on modern telephones, but people who purposefully designed and built devices in an attempt to contact discarnate personalities. One figure given particular focus was Frederick Reginald Melton (1855-1950).

Melton had frequent association with the College of Psychic Studies, offering them talks and articles on such topics as 'psychic photography' (Melton, 1921a). He gave talks on 'the use and abuse of spiritualism', 'trance mediumship' and 'materialism', and other topics to the college and various debating and theosophical societies. His article regarding the development and construction of what he later termed – in his highly rare booklet – *A Psychic Telephone* (Melton, 1921b,c) appeared in the college journal *Light* at this time, and outlines the beginnings of his mysterious machine and its development. The booklet offered instruction of the development and mechanics of this device – a form of 'how to' guide. The device was later replicated by such figures as Harry Price and Hereward Carrington, reporting their efforts to be unsuccessful.

Very little is known about the machine, in terms of what became of it and personal accounts from its users. Did it really work? Was it anything more than a wooden box, with a balloon of 'psychic ether' and few electrical items contained within? What were the facts and what was fantasy? Melton had vocal critics, in both the newspapers and societies of which he regularly attended and gave talks – most notably the 'The Cosmo' Debating Society in Nottingham (Mosley, n.d.). These appear to shed some light on such questions. Following recent newspaper archive research and work with a genealogist to explore Melton's historical movements, this presentation will provide a brief biographical overview of Frederick Melton ('BSc'), his critics, and the claims and operation of his now infamous 'psychic telephone'.

* With thanks to the SPR's Survival Research Committee for support of this talk and related research into telephone anomalies attributed to survival, which the author is still conducting.

REFERENCES

Melton, F.R. (1921a). Psychic photography: A philosophy borne out of facts. *Light*, 6th August, 510-511.

Melton, F.R. (1921b). Telephonic communication with the next world: Some momentous discoveries. *Light*, 20th August, 534-537.

Melton, F.R. (1921c). A psychic telephone. E, Brown & Co.

Mosley, T.M. (n.d.). "*Cosmo*" memories and personalities. Cosmo Society Publication.

Rogo, D.S. & Bayless, R. (1979). *Phone calls from the dead*. Prentice-Hall.

Is mediumship really a dissociative phenomenon?

Everton de Oliveira Maraldi

- Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Department of Religious Studies
- D'Or Institute for Research and Education (IDOR), Rio de Janeiro

Abstract

Mediumship is often portrayed in the psychiatric literature as an instance of dissociative phenomenon involving alterations in the sense of self and identity. However, some studies did not confirm this assumption or found ambiguous results. In this presentation, I present the findings of two quantitative studies carried out in Brazil with practitioners of different mediumistic religions. Participants in both studies answered the Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES), an original measure of somatoform dissociation, and a series of items inquiring about different aspects of mediumship practice. Overall, the findings indicate that the mediums' DES score is similar to those obtained by clinical samples in other countries but is within the range of the general population based on a validation study of the Brazilian DES. The percentage of high and low scorers is also comparable to the general population. In addition, the high standard deviation indicates substantial variation in the DES scores among respondents. No difference was found on the DES total score and subscales between mediums and non-mediums from the same religious groups. However, individuals scoring high on the depersonalization subscale reported more often that mediumistic experiences started during childhood. The mediums also scored higher on somatoform dissociation in comparison to members of non-mediumistic religions. The studies presented suggest that dissociation may not comprise an essential feature of mediumship and that their correlation coefficients may differ according to the type of dissociative process and aspect of mediumship under consideration. The phenomenological characteristics and correlates of mediumship deserve further empirical investigation across cultures in order to clarify its association with dissociative and other psychological processes.

22 August 2022

Harald Walach

Title: From Survival of Consciousness to Survival of Culture.

Here. Is the abstract he send. I have no problems within it but do you?

Psychical Research was actually founded in order to prove, using scientific means, that consciousness is different from matter. This has not been very successful, except in pockets, such as the SPR, the anomalistic research community, and even among parapsychologists a naturalistic stance is not uncommon. Christian religions have lost their attraction in European societies and a naturalistic, materialistic religion - I name it for convenience's sake "scientific naturalism" - is surreptitiously proselytizing minds and hearts of the academic and media elite, thereby changing our society. It is predicated on the implicit understanding that consciousness is produced by the brain, i.e. by a material system. The corollary of this is that a different material system which emulates the brain's architecture and function will be able to produce consciousness. This mainstream thrust is so powerful that any empirical evidence to the contrary or conceptual critique is simply ignored. The Covid-19 crisis is a good example for this quasi-religious status of scientific naturalism: Everyone who questioned the mainstream narrative was brandished a heretic. The new vaccine technology was heralded as a salvation and new sacrament. The developers and sponsors of this new technology were hailed as saviours (in Germany the meme circulated for a while to print Ugur Sahin, the owner of BioNTec, the company that manufactured the Pfizer vaccine, on the 100 Euro banknotes - I actually suggested to print him on the 300 Euro banknotes, which do not exist). So what is at stake is not survival of consciousness any longer. It is survival of our culture. For in this Covid-19 crisis what is obvious to me is that a new religion, scientific naturalism, is trying to fight its way to the front, and is very successful in doing so. This, incidentally, is the declared goal of the Brights movement, the little-known organization that wants to mainstream naturalism and dethrone classical religions from their privileged places in society. That does not imply that the Brights movement is pulling the strings in the back. But it shows that this cultural move is - incidentally or not - very far advanced. This will eventually also have very clear consequences for academic freedom and in the end for anomalistic and psychical research.

An Empirically Based Exploration : Preternatural Cold Spots

*Ciaran Farrell BSc GRSC
Independent Psychical Researcher
Ciaran.Farrell@consultant.com*

There is no clear and unambiguous definition of Cold Spots and therefore the phenomena associated with them or producing them. No entry in the Psi Encyclopaedia (1), but they are discussed on the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena, ASSAP, website (2). A minimal Wikipedia entry subsumes them under ghost hunting (3).

In purely empirical terms, a Cold Spot is a very specific location in which a person experiences an unnatural sensation of cold, headache, sickness and a feeling of fear and dread associated with a perceived drop in temperature.

They may not be explained or accounted for in terms of changes to the natural physical environment such as drafts or convection currents, air flows, or the action of sunlight or heaters in indoor environments or in outdoor environments (4).

Temperature changes in a séance room during a sitting have been established (5). Therefore preternatural temperature changes may be associated with mediumship and presumably contact with the dead.

The author will develop a phenomenological description/definition of Cold Spots and their possible causation (6, 7, and 8).

References

- 1] Psi Encyclopaedia URL: <https://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/> Accessed 13/16/22
- 2] ASSAP Website URL: <http://www.assap.ac.uk/newsite/htmlfiles/Cold%20spots.html> Accessed 13/6/22
- 3] Wikipedia URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_hunting accessed on 13/6/22
- 4] Price, H. (1946). The End of Borley Rectory (Ch. IX). Harrah & Co, London.
- 5] Turner, J. Ed & Price, H. (1973). Stella C. An Account of some Original Experiments in Psychical Research (PP 61-76). Souvenir Press.
- 6] Parsons, Steven T. (2015). Ghostology: The art of the Ghost Hunter. White crow Books.
- 7] Fraser, John. (2010). Ghost Hunting A Survivor's Guide. The History Press.
- 8] Ruickbie, Leo Dr. (2013). A brief guide to ghost hunting. Robinson.

“Some sort of astral vision of myself”: An IPA study of exceptional experiences in epilepsy.

Louise Spiers, University of Northampton (louise.spiers@northampton.ac.uk)

A connection has been established between individuals with epilepsy and spiritual experiences since the Babylonians. In Western medical contexts, individuals with epilepsy reporting mystical or spiritual experiences are understood through case studies and diagnosed with problematic seizure-related activity or psychosis to be controlled through medication. This study sought to explore the lived experience of individuals with epilepsy who also had spiritual experiences. The aim was to provide a richer understanding of the phenomenology from a non-medical perspective, by using the lens of experience to enable critical evaluation of the current biomedical understanding. The study was focused on the meaning of the experiences for participants and considered well-being and de-stigmatisation. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to design and undertake the research. Data recruitment was via word of mouth and Epilepsy Action. Eight participants aged 21-45 were recruited from the UK and data was collected using face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The participants describe a wide range of experiences of precognition, psychic events, near death (NDE) and out of body experiences (OBE), synesthesia, past lives, as well as psychic abilities and access to a non-shared reality connected directly to their epilepsy. Findings include the difficulty of explaining such ineffable experience to other people, resulting in dismissal. Participants understood their experiences to have a profound meaning and to be the catalyst for an introspective process of transformation in a spiritual journey, the value and status of which is at variance with the neuropsychiatric literature. The paper likens these experiences to other exceptional human experiences in non-clinical populations and suggests that, in fact, not all experiences in individuals with epilepsy are undesirable symptoms of the condition and that these are, in fact, genuine spiritual experiences. Future research suggests exploring the cross-cultural nature of such experiences and their extent in wider populations of individuals with epilepsy.

opportunities for all kinds of speculators, profits and even scammers. Of course, the academic discussion and debate in modern society are all normal. In 1985, Hyman estimated about 3,000 experiments in parapsychology, but most were unsuccessful, even scammers [4].

We believe that Randi [5,6], Hines [7], et al., raised the pertinent opinions, which will help the rigorous experiments in parapsychology. But, surprisingly enough, Hines and Randi insisted that so far more than 100 years of parapsychological research there is not a true phenomenon in parapsychology. It is namely play arbitrarily and irresponsibly to the gallery.

The Hines' book is a hodgepodge of mixing parapsychology and various pseudosciences from N-ray, Freud psychoanalysis to Acupuncture, faith medicine, alternative medicine, homeopathy, cold fusion, UFO, etc. Of course, the comments on faith therapy and so on are very objective and scientific. It may be because of the secretion of endorphins. In 2019, we invited Randi to Kunming face to face communication for three times. But, he made no reply.

3. Research of Parapsychology in China

In China parapsychology mainly studies some special people and their special functions. In the international investigation Zha has summarized the vigorous human science in 20 century China and its experimental results [8,9]. In addition, there are also many magical phenomena of parapsychology in traditional Chinese Qigong.

Investigation of parapsychology is two different aspects and levels: (1) The accumulation and summary of phenomena and experiments, which must be as strict as possible. They classify two kinds: pure phenomena and the interacting results with various scientific instruments. (2) The explorations of mechanism and theory. This mainly includes a variety of physical theories, in which the projection theory is independent, but, interacts with the physical world. There is not authority and, of course, no guidance. In fact, this is true for all new disciplines!

So far, according to the results of 43 years of experiments, observation and research of our Human Science Research Institute of Yunnan University and other research in China, it can be certain that the phenomena of parapsychology are true, but, they possess the special and certain probability for different individuals. This includes non-eye recognition word and map, perspective, PK, thought transference, recognizing legover information, etc.

We first analyze and decompose various complex experimental results in parapsychology [10]. For the classification of these phenomena, it can be divided into two big categories: (1) Phenomenological results, such as ear recognition words, thought transference, energy accumulation, clairvoyance, precognition, ESP and PK, etc. The recognition experiment in a plumbum jar shows that this is not an electromagnetic field. (2) The interacting results with various scientific instruments, such as the recognitions of magnetic south or north pole, and the mechanical effects, etc [11].

In the summers of 2012 to 2017, we trained the potential of fifty-two blind children in Kunming. We mainly combine traditional Chinese culture and adopt the method of guiding blind children into a quiet and focused state, then these trained blind children have some effect [12,13]. A blind child X-N Jin of these children is particularly prominent. He can not only accurately recognize the dozens of poker points and colors in a kraft paper envelope, and identify all cards, but also accurately identify single-sided graphics, even double-sided multi-color graphics. Sometimes he can conduct successful PK. Further, in 6 August 2019 our experiments confirmed that X-N Jin can see the infrared light using his "eye" [11]. This was using scientific instruments to explicitly confirm that his vision had expanded and could see the infrared. Probably, it is cause that he is able to accurately identify playing cards and words in an envelope, etc. Similar blind men can see in the dark room. They can play ball, ride a bike, etc. Some men (women) should be able to see "ghosts" as infrared bodies. It will be able to measure and investigate quantitatively a

kind of parapsychology.

Further, we should research a new easy-testing direction in parapsychology: those may perceive and detect new information, and test by scientific instruments. Many functional people can be perspective the human body, which indicates that they have X-ray functions. We should study to affirm it by scientific instruments. It has been reported in 1979 and 1981 that few people may see emit light in different colors from magnetic poles.

From start ESP of general children trained, most in which can demonstrate PK to fold scrips and break matchsticks or scripts in sealed containers using various imaginary hand or other tools, and bend steel spoon. In one case, a child appeared to be able to produce writing in ink – ‘Mother I love you’ in Chinese – on a matchstick in a sealed package [12]:



Similarly, we can study some people with specific functions are probably listened to ultrasound. Further, for the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and other senses, parapsychology should be expanded, such as listening words, smelling words and so on. This is some special ESP, and is already the “heavenly eye”, “heavenly ear”, etc. They are also related to the seventh and eighth senses in Buddhism, etc.

Usually, we can only see visible light and hear specific sounds, but some instruments can detect all-band light and sound. In real world the all-band information field and energy exist. If we expand our organs and/or feelings and develop our potential, we will show some special functions, and be able to see other worlds and collect their information, and even get something, various objects, fragrance and so on. Even we may determine and measure their frequencies, wavelengths, information, energy spectrum, etc.

4. Some People and Their Special Functions

Guo Decai recorded factually that Yang De-Gui carries different objects from usual water for many times [14]. This magic phenomenon is observed by author and much people. The result of Yang De-Gui broken steel bar is the super strong interaction of brittle fracture. This is a mechanical effect, and must be of great force, whose mechanism should be to change the structure of matter.

New well-known functional person Chen Qui-Shi shows some magic functions: catch pills from air, and these pills correspond magically to patient's diseases, PK, carry some objects from usual water, treat diseases by Psi, clairvoyance, etc.

Sun Chu-lin may drill at coin by PK, and may bring to shoot up for cooked peanut or bean, etc. Dai Shu-Zeng possesses “handle emits fragrant” for any objects. Jin Xia’s both hands and some parts of body can absorb different material objects [15]. Moreover, from catch pills from air and PK to treat diseases by Psi, all are not functions of only individual.

Although the functions of these individuals will vary with age, most functions reported here are stable and testable. For this purpose we originally planned hold the Conferences on “Chinese Traditional Culture, Parapsychology and Its Function Exhibition” in Kunming at August 4-7, 2019.

President of Society for Psychical Research, professor at University of Northampton Chris A. Roe planned a report “New developments in parapsychology: The role of unconscious processes” for Chinese Traditional Culture, Parapsychology and Its Function Exhibition, Kunming China, August 4-7, 2019. Conclusions of the report are spontaneous cases of ESP suggest that at least some appear to operate at an unconscious level, responding to environmental info and shaping behavioural responses. This claim can be tested in the lab under more controlled conditions by (i) measuring nonconscious responses, (ii) using implicit psi tasks where behaviour can be ‘rewarded’ or ‘punished’. Cumulative data from such studies suggest effects are small but robust and have been replicated across independent research teams. The criticism Bem has received shows that reactions to research are not founded on scientific criteria but on how abhorrent the commentator finds the outcomes to be.

President of the US Psychotronics Association Ph.D. Beverly Rubik and Harry Jabs, M.S. were two reports “Biophoton Emission from Human Subjects In Energy Healing and Altered States of Consciousness”, “Exploring Energy Healing and Altered States of Consciousness with the Sensor Suite”. Finally, the Conferences not held for some reason, Rubik and Jabs attending the meeting have verified certain magical parapsychological phenomena.

We researched some applications, experimental tests and predictions of parapsychology [16,17], for example, transformation among vision and other sensations, change some microscopic structures and so on [17,11]. New researches show that it is related to new fifth interactions, or the entangled state. These are the development of consciousness and mind. Much experiments show existence of two fields: human thought field and outside information fields [11].

We proposed a physical definition of parapsychology that is an invisible unclear field becomes a visible macroscopic effect, which is a measurable, predictable and testable definition [11]. Of course, the definition of parapsychology may use other methods. We must know that parapsychology is not physics, and is more similar to biology, specially, neurobiology, which has specific and individual difference [11]. Modern neurobiology shows that the known nervous system is generally not a completely stable system. Gerald M. Edelman, winner of the 1972 Nobel Prize in Biomedical Science, pointed out, we have repeatedly stressed that one of the most prominent characteristics of each brain is its individuality and variability. This variability exists at all levels of the brain. This is a great challenge to any theory that tries to explain the overall function of the brain [18]. It is so different that every brain is unique, and the brain is not a computer. Some people pursue accurate neural coding, but can not actually find [18,19].

We proposed three dimensional body-mind-spirit worlds on parapsychology and human society. So far, some observed results imply “ghosts” are probably the existences of some living or non-living things that can not be detected by usual methods, but can be detected by infrared light, etc. It will be a great contribution for world, and is the discovery of a new class of substances, which is similar finding of invisible light [20]. Based on the EPR prediction, the nonlocality and entangled state become the frontline in modern physics. From this we researched some predictions [21], in which one is existence of similar huge magnetic field or the mysterious natural field on the induction between men and nature, or God or the Buddha-fields in body-mind-spirit space [20]. Parapsychology is generally two or three worlds. Only a few functions can be simplified to one dimensional matter world.

Many ESP, thought transference, telepathy, PK, clairvoyance, the thought field and change material structure, etc., are all results of interactions between mind and matter. In three dimensional worlds there may show the human-nature induction, the unifying human-nature, precognition, the universal connectedness, reincarnation and external magic, divine power, cosmic power and cosmic information, etc. The thought field can be derived from mind or spirit. Mind

can produce some new functions.

5. Summary

Parapsychology as a new science must be universal as physics, chemistry, etc. But, it is not physics, and is like biology and medicine, and is different for each individual, which is its complexity. We should verify some phenomena in parapsychology by experiments, such as telepathy and telekinesis, etc. Further, we should research various effects in mind and spirit worlds. Any observations and detections on mind and spirit worlds and on relations between both and matter will be very valuable.

In a word, parapsychology is not only to produce possibly growth points of new science, such as other feelings instead of eyes [22,23], but also may have great inspiration and significance to the national economy and people's livelihood, such as remote sensing, predictions for earthquake [24-26] and other natural disasters.

Parapsychology is universal for the world, although there are differences for different nations. Therefore, they must be the same results by various ways, and merge into the common sea of mankind. Chinese research of parapsychology can combine rich traditional Chinese culture to display various unique parapsychological phenomena. This has already affected certain countries.

Parapsychology cannot build behind closed doors, independent from the world. Of course, many nations have their own characters, and they should not follow the same pace. Instead, they should give full play to their respective advantages, overcome their own shortcomings, learn from each other, and jointly make special contributions to the development of the world's parapsychology.

References

- [1]E. Schrödinger, *Mind and Matter*. Cambridge University Press. 1958.
- [2]C. Hansel, *ESP and Parapsychology: A Critical Re-evolution*. New York: Prometheus Books. 1980.
- [3]L. Zusne and W. Jones, *Anomalistic Psychology*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum. 1982.
- [4]R. Hyman, A critical historical overview of parapsychology. In: *A Skeptic's Handbook of Parapsychology*. Edited by P. Kurtz. New York: Prometheus Books. 1985. 3-96.
- [5]J. Randi, *The Faith Healers*. New York: Prometheus Books. 1987.
- [6]J. Randi, *The Truth about Uri Geller*. New York: Prometheus Books. 1982.
- [7]T. Hines, *Pseudoscience and the Paranormal* (2nd ed.). New York: Prometheus Books. 2003.
- [8]Leping Zha and T. McConnell, Parapsychology in the People's Public of China: 1979-1989. *J. American Society for Psychical Research*. 1991, 85,119-143.
- [9]Leping Zha, Review of history, finding, and implications of research on "exceptional functions of human body" in China. *Bridging Worlds and Filling in Gaps in the Science of Healing*. 2001. 177-202.
- [10]Lin Shu-huang and Liu hui-yu (Ed.), *Experiments and Research of Human Specific Phenomena*. China International Broadcast Press. 1997.
- [11]Yi-Fang Chang, Fourth new result of parapsychology and its extensive quantum theory and possible ten tests. *World Institute for Scientific Exploration (WISE) Journal*. 2020,9(1):52-62.
- [12]Yi-Fang Chang, Zhi-Qiang Zhang, Wen-Hua Zhang, Hong Qin, Tao Shen, Jian-Hua Deng, Potential of blind children and general children. *World Institute for Scientific Exploration (WISE) Journal*. 2016, 5(4):72-76.
- [13]Yi-Fang Chang, Zhi-Qiang Zhang, Wen-Hua Zhang, Hong Qin, Tao Shen and Jian-Hua Deng, Psi potential of children. *Paranormal Review*. 2020,96:22-23.
- [14]Guo Decai, Investigation for Yang De-Gui on placing and carrying objects via focused

- intention and magic arts of Taoism. In: *Chinese Traditional Culture and Research of Parapsychology Kunming 2016* (Yi-Fang Chang, Leu Ying Jhong and Si-Chen Lee, Eds.). China E-Book Publishing Media Group. 2018. p245-252.
- [15]Yi-Fang Chang, Leu Ying Jhong and Si-Chen Lee, Eds. *Chinese Traditional Culture and Research of Parapsychology Kunming 2016*. China E-Book Publishing Media Group. 2018. p255-259.
- [16]Yi-Fang Chang, Experimental tests of the thought field, the extensive quantum theory and quantum teleportation. *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*. 2004,27(4):190-199.
- [17]Yi-Fang Chang, Extensive quantum theory of parapsychology and its tests. *World Institute for Scientific Exploration (WISE) Journal*. 2018,7(3):72-80.
- [18]G.M. Edelman. *A Universe of Consciousness*. New York: Basic Books. 2000.
- [19]G.M. Edelman. *Neural Darwinism*. New York: Basic Books. 1987.
- [20]Yi-Fang Chang, Three dimensional body-mind-spirit worlds on parapsychology and human society, and preliminary classification. *World Institute for Scientific Exploration (WISE) Journal*. 2021,9(2):32-40.
- [21]Yi-Fang Chang, Nonlocality, entangled field and its predictions, superluminal communication. 2020 International Teleconference on the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen Argument that “Quantum Mechanics Is Not A Complete Theory”. Hadronic Press. 2021. p481-494.
- [22]Yi-Fang Chang, A testable application of nonlinear whole neurobiology: Possible transformation among vision and other sensations. *NeuroQuantology*. 2013,11(3):399-404.
- [23]Yi-Fang Chang, Human potential and possible tests of transformations among vision and other sensations. *World Institute for Scientific Exploration (WISE) Journal*. 2017,6(1):35-40.
- [24]Yi-Fang Chang, Three ways of earthquake prediction. *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*. 2003, 27(3):126-130.
- [25]Yi-Fang Chang, Chaos, magnitude-period formula of earthquakes and their multilevel prediction. *World Institute for Scientific Exploration (WISE) Journal*. 2017,6(2):51-59.
- [26]Yi-Fang Chang, Nonlinear whole seismology, topological seismology, magnitude-period formula of earthquakes and their predictions. *World Journal of Geomatics and Geosciences*. 2021,1(1):1-10.

Data and Methodology

The research project received ethical approval from the University of Northampton and was pre-registered with the Koestler Parapsychology Unit registry. An extensive online questionnaire was constructed in three language versions (English, French, Spanish) using the JISC onlinesurveys platform that asked about the circumstances of occurrence, type of ADC, message conveyed, emotions and sense of reality associated with the experience, impact and implications for the grieving process; profile of the experient, and of the deceased person perceived (including cause of death). Some of the outcomes from this survey have been reported in Elsaesser et al. (2022), Evrard et al. (2021), Penberthy et al. (2021) and Woollacott et al. (2021).

In this presentation we will present an original analysis that focuses on those cases in which respondents reported that the ADC communication included information that was previously unknown to them and give an evaluation of the degree to which it constitutes evidence in support of the survival hypothesis.

REFERENCES

- Cooper, C.E., Roe, C.A., & Mitchell, G. (2015). Anomalous experiences and the bereavement process. In T. Cattoi, & C. Moreman (Eds.) *Death, dying and mysticism: The ecstasy of the end* (pp.117-131). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Evenden, R.E., Cooper, C.E., & Mitchell, G. (2013). A counselling approach to mediumship: Adaptive outcomes of grief following an exceptional experience. *Journal of Exceptional Experiences and Psychology*, 2(1), 14-23.
- Elsaesser, E., Roe, C.A., Cooper, C.E., & Lorimer, D. (2021). The phenomenology and impact of hallucinations concerning the deceased. *BJPsychOpen*. 7(5), e148. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjo.2021.960> ISSN: 2056-4724
- Elsaesser, E., Roe, C.A., Cooper, C.E., & Lorimer, D. (2022). Phänomenologie und Auswirkungen von spontanen Nachtod-Kontakten (NTK): Forschungsergebnisse und Fallstudien. *Zeitschrift für Anomalistik*, Band 22 (2022), S. 36–71, <http://dx.doi.org/10.23793/zfa.2022.36>
- Evrard, R., Dollander, M., Elsaesser, E., Cooper, C., Lorimer, D., & Roe, C. (2021). Expériences exceptionnelles nécrophaniques et deuil paradoxal : études de la phénoménologie et des répercussions des vécus effrayants de contact avec les défunts. *Evolution psychiatrique*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evopsy.2021.05.002>
- Haraldsson, E. (2012). *Departed among the living*. White Crow Books.
- Penberthy, J.K., Pehlivanova, M., Kalelioglu, T., Roe, C.A., Cooper, C.E., Lorimer, D., & Elsaesser, E. (2021). Factors moderating the impact of after death communications on beliefs and Spirituality. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*. DOI: 10.1177/00302228211029160
- Rees, D. (1975). The Bereaved and their hallucinations. In I. Schoenberg, A. Gerber, A.H. Wiener, D. Kutscher, & A. C. Carr (Eds.) *Bereavement: Its psychosocial aspects*. Columbia University. 66-71.
- Sidgwick, H., Sidgwick, E., & Johnson, A. (1894). Report on the Census of Hallucinations. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 10, 25-422.
- Woollacott, M., Roe, C.A., Cooper, C.E., Lorimer, D., & Elsaesser, E. (2021). Perceptual phenomena associated with spontaneous experiences of after-death communication: Analysis of visual, tactile, auditory and olfactory sensations. *Explore*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2021.02.006>

GLIMPSES OF DEATH: ANALYSIS OF LETTERS SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO A BBC DOCUMENTARY ON NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES

CHRIS A. ROE & ASHLEE LEWIS-EARL

*Exceptional Experiences & Consciousness Studies Research Group
University of Northampton, UK*

SUMMARY

In January 1988 the BBC aired a QED documentary called *Glimpses of Death* that included personal accounts of near-death experiences and a commentary on them by the psychiatrist Prof. Peter Fenwick. This prompted a stream of letters from viewers who wanted to share their own, similar experiences. The producer, Tony Edwards, kept these letters, producing a collection of 358 letters that varied in length but amounted to about 180,000 words in total. Following a conversation with Prof. Fenwick about previous work at the University of Northampton analysing the Alister Hardy and J.B. Priestly case collections (e.g., Roe 2018; Roe & Linnett, 2017), we were given access to the *Glimpses of Death* collection in order to conduct research along similar lines. With the kind support of the SPR's Survival Committee, we proposed a 2-stage process:

- Stage 1 would entail reading all the letters to identify those that included descriptions of parapsychological experiences, and then transcribing and anonymising these so that they could be made available to NDE researchers in a searchable excel file via the SPR's Open data repository (<https://open-data.spr.ac.uk/>).
- Stage 2 would involve our own content analysis of the material to categorise cases and explore the co-incidence and reported sequential progression of NDE elements. As a by-product, this work would draw attention to the availability of the database and encourage others to work with it to address other research questions.

Data management and analysis

We secured written permission to work with this database from Peter Fenwick and Tony Edwards, and secured ethical approval for the project from our Faculty Ethics Panel.

An initial reading of the letters found that 219 did not meet the inclusion criteria and were not suitable for transcription. These letters mainly comprised: expressions of thanks for the programme, including from people who had recently suffered a bereavement; requests for copies of the programme or details of when it would next be aired; requests for contact details for Dr Fenwick; requests for further information, particularly from students who wished to make NDEs or OBEs the subject of a project; commentaries on the programme that referred to other philosophical or religious writings, or offered the writer's own interpretation or explanation of phenomena; and offers to send details of experiences the writer had had without giving any description of them in the current letter.¹ This left 140 letters (39% of the collection) that provide accounts of NDEs, OBEs or other anomalous experiences that were transcribed and anonymised.

Content analysis involves categorising letters (cases) according to type of experience or circumstances of occurrence (e.g., during childbirth, after complications with anaesthetic during dental work, following cardiac arrest, after psychological trauma, while relaxed but not in medical danger). Such coding allows us to test whether features tend to coincide more frequently than expected by chance (e.g.,

¹ For example, one contributor (G331) wrote, "This experience has happened to me also, but I could not explain in a letter as it is a long and beautiful story".

whether encounter experiences only occur in cases of actual medical emergency). We have also tested Kenneth Ring's (1980) suggestion that NDE elements tend to have a regular sequential progression that is reflected in the relative incidence with which they are reported. Ring devised a structured interview and measurement scale that he administered to 102 people who had been near death, of whom forty-eight percent reported an NDE of some description. He used their accounts to identify a 'core experience' which consisted of five stages that, he claimed, tended to unfold in a particular order, with the earlier stages more common than later stages, as one might expect if some people are revived earlier than others:

1. Deep peace and wellbeing	60%
2. Separation from the body	37%
3. Entering darkness/passing through tunnel	25%
4. Seeing a light/encountering a presence	16%
5. Entering the light/beautiful garden	10%

However, this is still only a trend rather than an invariable sequence —Greyson (1998), for example, reports on some experiences which were out of sequence. We would apply this scheme to the descriptions in the current collection.

In this presentation we will present details of our analysis, illustrating category types with reference to particular cases.

REFERENCES

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2020). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, DOI: 10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238
- Greyson, B. (1998). The incidence of near-death experiences. *Medicine and Psychiatry*, 1, 92-99.
- Ring, K. (1980). *Life after death: A scientific investigation of the near-death experience*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.
- Roe, C.A. (2018). *J. B. Priestley's Man and Time Letters: A Reanalysis*. Society for Psychical Research, 42nd International Conference, Jurys Inn, Newcastle Upon Tyne, 21-23 September 2018.
- Roe, C.A., & Linnett, R. (2017). *Confirmatory content analysis of spontaneous cases of psi drawn from the Alister Hardy Database*. Society for Psychical Research, 41st International Conference, De Vere Horsley Estate, 1-3 Sept.

Mediumship events and well-being – Dr Valerie Harkness

This paper presents the preliminary findings of a research project conducted on aspects of mediumship events (in particular, contacts with departed loved ones and sense of community/connectedness) and well-being.

It is not often the case that after life contacts and/or beliefs in life after death are taken into account in psychotherapy settings. Yet, a number of recent studies focusing on the health benefits of mediumship on the bereaved, have yielded interesting findings. On the whole, consulting a medium has been shown to have a therapeutic impact, namely : (i) the experience helps the bereaved develop their sense of agency and control, as well as their resilience, (ii) it gives them hope of a continued bond with their loved one(s), (iii) it helps build a positive outlook or philosophy of life.

On the strength of both my survey of past studies and my personal experience, I decided to explore the benefits of mediumship events on their participants' sense of well-being. People attend those events possibly in the hope that they will receive a personal message from Spirit, and share with others a very precious moment. Not everyone receives a message, and yet there is clearly a positive sense of connectedness and belonging during those events.

I devised a simple questionnaire (mixed design) which was administered by the Arthur Conan Doyle Centre and sent out to those attending the Saturday mediumship demos. A total of 59 people responded. The main research question was to know the extent to which those events were associated with their participants' well-being and to identify precise contributing factor(s). More subsidiary questions included an overview of obstacles to the positive impact of mediumship events.

The Synchronicity of Schopenhauer. Why global synchronicity suggests a deterministic universe. And what is so bad about determinism anyway?

Carl Jung stated that Schopenhauer was the 'godfather' of his concept of synchronicity (meaningful coincidence) (Jung, 1952/1972). In his essay: 'Transcendent Speculation on the Apparent Deliberateness in the Fate of the Individual', Schopenhauer compared the relationship between events to geographical lines of longitude (meridians) and latitude (parallel circles), stating that:

"...every event is the particular link in a chain of causes and effects which proceeds in the direction of time...Now if we represent those individual causal chains by meridians that would lie in the direction of time, then that which is simultaneous, and for this reason does not stand in direct causal connection, can be everywhere indicated by parallel circles. Now although all things situated under the same parallel circle do not directly depend on one another, they nevertheless stand indirectly in some connection, though remote, by virtue of the interlacing of the whole net or of the totality of all causes and effects that roll along in the direction of time." (Schopenhauer, 1851/1913)

Schopenhauer's description is perhaps a helpful metaphor for macro or 'global'-scale synchronicities, where the microcosm of an individual's life is mirrored in the macrocosm of national or international events. These global synchronicities can be represented by causal chains (meridians) acting on both microcosmic and macrocosmic levels that can become 'meaningfully' linked (by parallel circles) and act to connect the individual to the surrounding world on the largest of scales.

Schopenhauer may have been called a "Prophet of Pessimism" (Carus, 1897), but need a belief in determinism really lead to pessimism? I conclude this talk by reiterating the strengths of determinism when married with a progressive global outlook.

References

Carus, P. (1897). The Prophet of Pessimism. With Reproductions of Four Portraits of Schopenhauer. *The Open Court*, XI(5), 257-264.

Jung, C. G. (1952/1972). *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Schopenhauer, A. (1851/1913). *Transcendent Speculations on Apparent Design in the Fate of the Individual*. London: Watts.

The simulation hypothesis and Psi

Dr Simon Duan

The hypothesis that we are living in a computer simulation is gaining traction in philosophical circle and is also discussed frequently in mainstream science forums. However, it is often considered that the simulation hypothesis is not science because it is not falsifiable.

In this talk, Dr Duan argues that in fact simulation hypothesis gives many testable predictions and therefore is a falsifiable hypothesis. These predictions include the fundamental properties of space and time being discrete instead of continuous, neuron activities do not cause conscious experiences, information can be accessed from a nonlocal database, programs can be locally/temporarily suspended/replaced.

This talk will discuss how these predictions can be tested by experiments involving ESP, PK and OBE/NDE. It is hoped that Psi research will be taken seriously by the mainstream scientific community in the context of raising interests in simulation hypothesis.

With support of Psi research and experimentation, simulation hypothesis could become a new science theory. In return, parapsychology would be gaining its position as an advanced and respected scientific discipline.

Consciousness – where may it exist?

Dr Göran Brusewitz

Abstract:

Consciousness is a central topic for parapsychology. Phenomena like telepathy, clairvoyance, healing and also phenomena indicating “survival” like near-death experiences are all connected to human beings. During the last years, new research indicates that some kind of consciousness seems to exist outside human beings. Research on trees (Mouliia) and plants (Mancuso, Coccia, Baluska) indicates these organisms are intelligent, indicating a degree of consciousness. Trees seem to have a memory, a capacity to solve problems, to learn and communicate in a complex way with their environment, to be cognitively agents. Beside these examples, there is a general analysis by a biologist (Monk), showing there may be some kind of consciousness on many levels in biology, from the atom-level, in molecules, cells and tissues, all the way to macro-cosmos, planets and even solar systems. This is close to the definition of consciousness in *Oxford Living Dictionary*, “*the state of being aware of, and responsive to, one’s surroundings*“, compared to *Cambridge Dictionary*, “*The state of understanding and realizing something*“, used for human-centred studies and being the main focus since Descartes.

Close connected to consciousness is „having experiences“, and for leading neuroscientists (e.g. Koch) it is not clear whether a nervous system is needed to have experiences (and consciousness to exist?). There is also discussion going on (Sheldrake) whether the sun may be conscious, also opening up for electromagnetic fields to be of interest and important, maybe even themselves being conscious (McFadden, Joye).

These results and findings open up for certain philosophies of mind, including panpsychism (Kastrup), and even idealism (Alexander, Kelly, Marshall) and new models of consciousness, partly based on entanglement (Walach) or consciousness being a field (Forman) and related to a biofield (Jain, Moga, Kruth), all possibly involving psi phenomena and probably consciousness being able to survive the bodily death.

POST-MORTEM CONSCIOUSNESS AND ALAN GAULD'S LATEST BOOK:
UNEXPLORED ASPECTS OF MENTAL MEDIUMSHIP

Zofia Weaver

The Heyday of Mental Mediumship: 1880s-1930s by Alan Gauld, published this year, brings to our attention aspects of mental mediumship largely disregarded by modern mediumship research. That time was probably the most productive period in mediumship research, carried out by outstanding minds of the day. The book takes a qualitative approach, examining the flow of exchanges during series of sittings involving the same persons. Such sittings tend to be ignored nowadays, partly because of their length, and partly perhaps because of the suspicion of inadequate safeguards against leakage of information. This suspicion does an injustice to the early researchers' judgment and methods; it also means that we miss out on those aspects of mediumship that allow personalities, particularly those of the communicators and controls, and their relationships with the investigators and the sitters, to emerge in ways that take their evidence to a level beyond the counting of numbers of "hits". That level is "hard to illustrate adequately, not because of scarcity of materials, but because it is pervasive throughout much of the series of sittings" (Gauld, 2022, p.151).

This paper will draw attention to some of the puzzling questions regarding the variety of points of view and intelligences that seem to be involved in these sittings, and their implications for post-mortem consciousness.

References

Gauld, A. (2022). *The heyday of mental mediumship: 1880s-1930s. Investigators, mediums and communicators*. White Crow Books

The Phenomenological Nature of Apparitional and Related Anomalous Experiences Reported during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Aaron Lomas, Chris A. Roe, Callum E. Cooper & David Saunders

Exceptional Experiences and Consciousness Studies Research Group

University of Northampton, UK

SUMMARY

The recent global crisis of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has changed the way societies have had to function and adapt, especially during the first couple of years (from 2020 to present day) when lockdowns and isolation periods were introduced to slow down the spread of the virus and to protect individuals who were classed as most vulnerable. From the unexpected outbreak of a deadly virus came the uncertainty of how this would change the lives of people as well as how it would affect them personally through loss of loved ones and friends. Although in the past decade there has been some outbreaks of viruses that have come and gone without causing high mortality rates (such examples include Swine Flu or also known as A/H1N1pdm09), the Covid-19 pandemic caused a severe high rate of mortalities globally (estimated approximately 6,340,000, [World Health Organisation, 2022]), making this possibly the worst case of a viral pandemic since the Spanish Flu (or H1N1) just over one hundred years ago (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). Apart from the high mortality rates, societies and individuals around the world also faced other issues such as increases in stress, anxiety and depression from other contributing factors like economic/financial decline, job losses, social deprivation, change in living conditions/lifestyle (e.g. wearing of Personal Protective Equipment and sanitisation rules) and the uncertainty of what was to happen next (Torales *et al*, 2020; World Health Organisation, 2022; NHS Online, 2022; Office for National Statistics UK, 2022).

It has been demonstrated in certain situations, such as loss or bereavement, that people often see or sense a presence of that person who has recently passed away (Elsaesser *et al*, 2021; Taylor, 2022; Pemberton, 2021; Pearson, 2015; Rees, 1971) and can normally be classed as a form of an After Death Communication, or ADC (Elsaesser *et al*, 2019; Cohen, 2022). Looking at a more psychological viewpoint it has also been reported that certain stressful situations (like that faced in the first years of the pandemic) also cause individuals to have anomalous experiences in ‘times of fear and anxiety’ (Piaget, 1972, cited in French & Stone, 2014, p.79), ‘unimaginable threats’ (Markle, 2010), social stress and deprivation (McClenon, 1994), ‘concurrent stress to cause hallucinations’ (Bentall, 2014, cited in Cardena *et al*, 2014, p.114), ‘sensory deprivation or overload’ (Evans, 2002), hallucinations experienced during major depression (Lattuada, *et al.*, 1999) and “a sense of vulnerability and perceived loss of personal control and an emotional state of some degree of anxiety or helplessness” (Irwin, 2009, p.111).

From the high mortality rates and the stressful situations people were put in during this pandemic, this research project intends to look at any possible anomalous experiences individuals may have encountered during these times of high stress and isolation/lockdown periods, which will also include experiences like crisis apparitions and other forms of ADCs.

To conclude, the various sources of research already conducted based on how people experience anomalistic occurrences during stressful times and other psychological factors are available from many previous cases. This study would be an opportunity to gather the information based on the

recent global crisis and to also compare it to previous historical events that also saw an increase in anomalistic experiences and spiritualistic beliefs (World War One and the first H1N1 pandemic for example). This would then lead to observe and collect data to find out if such devastating events really do cause increase in beliefs, reported experiences, and explore the veridical quality of such claims.

References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) 1918 Pandemic (H1N1 virus). <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html>
- Cohen, J.S. (2022) When you want to see a sign from your deceased loved one. <https://www.jillgriefcounselor.com/blog/after-death-communications>
- Elsaesser, E., Roe, C.A., Cooper, C.E., & Lorimer, D. (2021). The phenomenology and impact of hallucinations concerning the deceased. *BJPsych Open*, 7, 1-5.
- Elsaesser, E., Cooper, C.E., Roe, C.A., Parra, A., & Lorimer, D. (2019). *The phenomenology and impact of perceived spontaneous after-death communications: A review and new approach*. Paper presented at the 62nd Parapsychological Association convention, 4th – 6th July, FIAP Jean Monnet, Paris, France.
- Evans, H. (2002) Seeing Ghosts; Experiences of the Paranormal. London.
- NHS Inform (2022) Long Covid: Low mood and Depression. <https://www.nhsinform.scot/long-term-effects-of-covid-19-long-covid/signs-and-symptoms/long-covid-low-mood-and-depression>
- Office for National Statistics (2022) Coronavirus and depression in adults in Great Britain: January to March 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/coronavirusanddepressioninadultsgreatbritain/januarytomarch2021>
- Pearson, P. (2015). 'Phenomena Relating to Danger, Death, Bereavement'. *Psi Encyclopedia*. London: The Society for Psychical Research. <<https://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/articles/phenomena-relating-danger-death-bereavement>>. Retrieved 15 July 2022.
- Pemberton, M. (2021) Seeing is Believing: Grief following the death of a loved one can bring some unexpected reactions. *BeHealthy: The Magazine for Benenden Health*, 54, 40-41.
- Rees, D. (1971) The Hallucinations of Widows. *British Medical Journal*, 4, 37-41.
- Taylor, S. (2022) *Can there be communication after death? Some bereaved people report sensing the presence of a deceased loved one*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/out-the-darkness/202202/can-there-be-communication-after-death>
- Torales, J., O'Higgins, M., Castaldelli-Maia, J.M., & Ventriglio, A. (2020) The Outbreak of COVID-19 Coronavirus and its Impact on Global Mental Health. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 66, 4, 317-320.
- World Health Organisation (2022) *COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide*. <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide>

SPR CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Proof of survival after death: some evidential problems arising with a judicial approach

Alan Murdie

Psychical research has accumulated much interesting and cogent evidence which is treated as suggestive of post-mortem survival of consciousness and there is no doubting the importance of the question.

With living subjects consciousness and states of mind are established at law by inferences and the application of various legal fictions but it has long been recognised that direct proof of the state of mind is very difficult. (1)

Clinical identification of the precise point of permanent physical death (treated as an irrevocable cessation of all physiological and mental processes) itself is an immensely difficult issue, where there is at best a broad consensus which can be reached but with scope remaining for arguments, technicalities and differences of opinion. (2)

In proving the presence of life and consciousness in the persons diagnosed as close to death courts in England and Wales have adopted various scientific tests as potentially probative but great difficulties arise in determining the level of consciousness (if any) in comatose and semi-comatose persons and as to whether irreversible coma should be viewed as a criterion of death.

This paper argues that if applying a judicial standard of evidence in our current state of knowledge that much of the material proposed as evidence for survival does not reach a standard to be considered a prima facie case, especially as regards the Near Death Experience (NDE). Cases such as the experience reported by philosopher A.J. Ayer in 1988 of an NDE support this negative conclusion.(3)

Regrettably evidence adduced from accounts of the Near Death Experience fail to reach the threshold of being probative of any post-mortem realm or survival. With NDEs neither hallucination, intoxication, false memory or potentially a super-psi hypothesis can be excluded beyond reasonable doubt as alternative explanations.

There has been a judicial rejection of subjective and 'spectral' evidence since the end of the witch trials at the close of the 17th century and passing of the Witchcraft Act 1736, reflecting the view that non-corporeal entities and the existence of discarnate consciousness in an afterlife cannot be proven to a sufficient standard, even if they are accepted. Attempts to argue survival with respect to material channelled by mediums has even led to judicial rulings that the question itself is one that cannot be ruled upon because of the implications. (4)

However, this does not necessarily exclude the possibility that cogent evidence can be adduced that would reach the threshold of being probative from a judicial perspective.

In this regard it is argued that a possible approach evidence of a sufficient standard could be derived from cases utilizing principles applied in claims for damages for personal injury arising from memories of persons who were undergoing medical operations and procedures under general anaesthetic. A possible approach to this derived from such 'similar fact evidence' cases is outlined (5).

References

- (1) per Chief Justice Brian, *Yearbook Pas 17 Edw IV f1*, pl 2 (1478)
- (2) MacDonald, Helen 'Crossing the Rubicon: Death in 'The Year of the Transplant'' in *Medical History* 2017 Jan; 61(1): 107–127.
- (3) Cash, William, 'Did A.J. Ayer see God when he 'died' *Sunday Telegraph* 25 February 2001.
- (4) *Cummins v Bond* [1926] 1 Ch 267 judgment of Eve, J.
- (5) *Jacobs v Great Yarmouth and Waveney Health Authority* [1984] Lexis Citation 1733;
R v Nicholson [2012] EWCA Crim 1568

Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Edith Stein on the Soul-Body Relationship: Implications for the Nature of Apparitions

Abstract

Michael Potts, Ph.D.

This paper starts with the assumption that at least some apparitions are from the deceased. It is also written from the framework of the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of the soul, according to which the soul is the form of the body, and a disembodied soul is only part of a person, requiring a body to be complete. It will first discuss theories of apparitions, including Gurney and Tyrell's telepathic theory as well as Meyer's theory that group apparitions can be explained by a nonmaterial entity appearing in a particular spatio-temporal location. It will also discuss G. R. S. Mead's interpretation of apparitions in terms of the "subtle body." Then it will discuss the work of Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Edith Stein, who proposed an interpretation of the soul-body relationship with implications for apparitions of the dead. They combine the Cartesian notion of the soul as consciousness with Aristotle's and Aquinas' view that the soul is the form of the body. As the body's form, the soul naturally draws matter to itself to form a body by organizing the elements and compounds required for bodily structure and function. After death, the soul retains this tendency to organize matter, but it lacks the power to gather the appropriate elements to form a biological organism. If a separated soul is motivated to appear to someone on earth, it might have sufficient power to take what matter it can and shape it into the form of the person who died. This could happen through psychokinesis (though some apparitions may be telepathic). The short-lived nature of apparitions may be due to the inability of the soul to shape matter indefinitely. The separated soul, motivated to appear to a person or group, does the best it can with its remaining powers.

Afterlife Experiences Across Jewish Denominations

While researching the relationships between afterlife beliefs and experiences across various world religions, I noticed what appeared to be unique differences between Judaism and most other religious traditions, especially in terms of reports of apparitions, haintings, and ghost stories. To investigate this observation, I conducted a survey (N=1202) into specific afterlife beliefs and experiences in the Jewish tradition. Here, I want to present results from this survey relating to afterlife experiences such as apparitions and OBEs , illustrating the rates of such experiences across Jewish denominations. These numbers will be placed in the context of broader surveys in order to determine whether religious tradition might play a factor in the occurrence (or reporting) of afterlife experiences. Some examples of first-hand accounts of Jewish experiences will also be provided.

Thank you.

Christopher M. Moreman, Ph.D.
Professor
Chair, Dept. of Philosophy & Religious Studies
California State University, East Bay
25800 Carlos Bee Blvd.
Hayward, CA 94542

An online survey investigating sensory processing sensitivity, transliminality, and boundary-thinness as predictors of anomalous experience and belief

Elizabeth C. Roxburgh¹, David Vernon¹², and Malcolm B. Schofield²

¹Canterbury Christ University and ²University of Derby

With thanks to the Bial Foundation Grant number: 48/20

Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS) is a temperament trait identified by deeper processing of information, being easily overwhelmed by stimulation, greater empathy and emotional reactivity, and being able to sense subtleties in the environment (Greven et al., 2019). Aron and Aron (1997) devised a questionnaire called the Highly Sensitive Person Scale to measure high sensitivity and the Highly Sensitive Person (HSP) is used to describe an individual who experiences SPS. Preliminary research suggests that HSPs may be more likely to experience anomalous experiences (AEs), and that further research is warranted to establish if there is a relationship between AEs and SPS (Irwin et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2021). Sensitivity is also part of the transliminality personality construct (Thalbourne and Delin, 1993). Highly transliminal people are susceptible to the occurrence of large amounts of imagery, thought, and emotion and tend to pay more attention to their inner processes, which resonates with the characteristics of SPS. Another personality concept associated with sensitivity is Hartmann's (1991) 'boundary thinness', which is characterised by openness and ease of entering an altered state of consciousness, and significantly thinner boundaries have been identified in persons reporting paranormal experiences (Rabeyron & Watt, 2010). We might expect HSPs to have thinner boundaries and be highly transliminal given their differential sensitivity to external and internal stimuli. The study therefore included measures of SPS, boundary-thinness and transliminality as independent variables and a measure of AEs as the dependent variable to predict whether sensitivity/personality variables contribute significantly to reporting of AEs. We also explored the relationship between the variables and whether scores are moderated by participant demographics or spiritual practice. The study was preregistered with the Koestler Parapsychology Unit and consisted of an online survey with 200 participants. Data is currently being analysed and findings will be presented at the conference.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE FACTORS AFFECTING ESP PERFORMANCE FOLLOWING GANZFELD STIMULATION: A META-ANALYSIS

Glenn Hitchman,^a Adam Rock,^b & Chris A. Roe^a

*^aExceptional Experiences & Consciousness Studies Research Group
University of Northampton, UK*

^bSchool of Psychology, University of New England, Australia

SUMMARY

The ganzfeld technique has been used since the 1970s as a means of eliciting extrasensory perception effects under controlled laboratory conditions. Effect sizes of experiments using the ganzfeld technique compare favourably against other standard parapsychological research methods (cf. Cardena, 2018). Nevertheless, we note that a number of researchers have argued that ganzfeld research is inefficient where it does not incorporate prior selection of participants (e.g., Baptista, Derakhshani & Tressoldi, 2015; Storm & Tressoldi, 2020; Watt, 2020), and meta-analyses have suggested that studies that utilise selected participants produce larger effect sizes than those with unselected participants (e.g., Bem et al., 2001; Storm, Tressoldi, & Di Risio, 2010). However, there is great inconsistency across studies in terms of the criteria that are applied in selecting participants, and choices seem to be based on lab lore rather than on robust empirical evidence. We believe this is partly due to the lack of a definitive meta-analytic review that maps all studies that have incorporated individual differences measures into a ganzfeld study and provides summary statistics regarding the degree of association between personality and attitude measures (along the lines of the review of forced choice studies published by Zdrenka and & Wilson, 2017).

Consequently, we are conducting a comprehensive meta-analytic review of the free-response ganzfeld literature focused on the period to 2021, with the aim of determining which individual difference variables — if any — reliably predict psi performance.

Data and Methodology

A comprehensive database of ganzfeld studies has been produced by Tressoldi and Storm (2022) and we are grateful to them for allowing us access to this resource. They carried-out an online search with Google Scholar, PubMed and Scopus databases of all papers from 1974 to 2020 including in the title and/or the abstract the word “ganzfeld”. Identified studies were included in the database if they met the following criteria:

- Studies related to anomalous perception in a ganzfeld environment;
- Studies must use human participants only (not animals);
- Number of participants must be in excess of two to avoid the inherent problems that are typical in case studies;
- Target selection must be randomized by using a Random Number Generator (RNG) in a computer or similar electronic device, or a table of random numbers.
- Randomization procedures must not be manipulated by the experimenter or participant;
- Studies must provide sufficient information (e.g., number of trials and outcomes) for the authors to calculate the direct hit-rates and effect size values, so that appropriate statistical tests can be conducted.

- Articles in the Storm-Tressoldi database have been independently reviewed by the current authors to remove those studies that did not include at least one individual difference variable, either as a correlate of ganzfeld performance or as an independent variable that specifies discrete groups or conditions, or did not report on analyses involving these variables.

Analysis of cases is ongoing and will be completed in time for presentation at the conference.

REFERENCES

- Baptista, J., Derakhshani, M., & Tressoldi, P. E. (2015). Explicit anomalous cognition: A review of the best evidence in ganzfeld, forced choice, remote viewing and dream studies. In E. Cardeña, J. Palmer, & D. Marcusson-Clavertz (Eds.), *Parapsychology: A handbook for the 21st century* (pp. 192–214). McFarland.
- Bem, D. J., Palmer, J., & Broughton, R. S. (2001). Updating the ganzfeld database: A victim of its own success? *Journal of Parapsychology*, 65(3), 207-218
- Cardeña, E. (2018). The experimental evidence for parapsychological phenomena: A review. *American Psychologist*, 73(5), 663.
- Storm, L., & Tressoldi, P. (2020). Meta-analysis of free-response studies 2009–2018: Assessing the noise-reduction model ten years on. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 84(4), 193-219.
- Storm, L., Tressoldi, P. E., & Di Risio, L. (2010). Meta-analysis of free-response studies, 1992–2008: Assessing the noise reduction model in parapsychology. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136, 471–485. doi:10.1037/a0019457
- Tressoldi, P., & Storm, L. (2022). Stage 2 Registered Report: Anomalous perception in a Ganzfeld condition - A meta-analysis of more than 40 years investigation. *F1000Research*, available at <https://f1000research.com/articles/10-234>
- Watt, C. (2020). Promoting Excellence in Parapsychological Research and Education, Society for Psychical Research Webinar, August 11th, 2020, <https://www.spr.ac.uk/publicationsrecordingswebevents/recordings-spr-events-audio-video>.
- Zdrenka, M., & Wilson, M. S. (2017). Individual difference correlates of psi performance in forced-choice precognition experiments: A meta-analysis (1945-2016). *Journal of Parapsychology*, 81(1), 9-32.

A SURVEY OF SPIRITUALIST MEDIUMS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Fil Kinnersley

University of Northampton, UK

SUMMARY

Anomalous experiences are common in the Western population (e.g. Castro et al., 2014; Haraldsson, 1985; Roe, 2019; Schmied Knittel & Schetsche, 2012), and there is evidence that they can be challenging on multiple levels (e.g. Kennedy & Kanthamani, 1995; Palmer, 1979), causing reactions including fear and anxiety, and that they can be detrimental to psychological wellbeing (Montanelli & Parra, 2002; Siegel, 1986; Tart, 1986). Data from the few centres that offer help with anomalous experiences show that a significant number of experiencers seek help with regard to their experiences (e.g. Belz & Fach, 2012; Zahradnik & Von Lucadou, 2012), but sources of help are not obvious, and some, such as counselling or medically based help, may be positively detrimental to psychological wellbeing (Roxburgh & Evenden, 2016b; Taylor, 2005).

Spiritualist mediums are a subsection of the population who have ongoing anomalous experiences; however Roxburgh's study of Spiritualist mediums showed them to have relatively good psychological wellbeing (Roxburgh, 2010). Although, as part of mediumship practice, these experiences are both sought and controlled, there is evidence that Spiritualist mediums are likely to have had anomalous experiences prior to their mediumship development, and that these were sometimes challenging to their psychological wellbeing (Wilde et al., 2019). There have been few studies of the development of Spiritualist mediumship (Everist, 2015; Roberts, 2015), and this ongoing study seeks to investigate the process through a combination of survey data and in-depth interviews.

This paper will report on the preliminary results of the survey.

Data and Methodology

As part of ongoing study on the experience of Spiritualist mediumship unfoldment, an online survey was distributed to Spiritualist mediums, via churches in the UK, Europe, North America and Australasia, asking questions related to mediumship development. These included closed and open-ended questions related to anomalous experiences over the lifetime of the respondent, their reactions to these, sharing the experiences with other people, seeking help, and a well-being measure (MHI-5).

To date, 90 survey responses have been received from a mixture of experienced and novice Spiritualist mediums. Preliminary analysis, comparing quantitative data with previous research, and using qualitative data to add depth and nuance, will be completed in time for presentation at the conference.

REFERENCES

- Belz, M., & Fach, W. (2012). Theoretical Reflections on Counseling and Therapy for Individuals Reporting ExE. In W.H. Kramer, E. Bauer, & G. H. Hovelmann (Eds.), *Perspectives of Clinical Parapsychology: An Introductory Reader* (pp. 168–189). Stichting Het Johan Borgman Fonds.
- Breen, R. (2008). *The Nature, Incidence, Impact and Integration of Spontaneous Parapsychological Experiences: An Explanatory Mixed Methods Research Study*. University of Adelaide.
- Castro, M., Burrows, R., & Wooffitt, R. (2014). The paranormal is (Still) normal: The sociological

implications of a survey of paranormal experiences in great Britain. *Sociological Research Online*, 19(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.3355>

Everist, W. (2015). *The Spiritually Transformative Experiences of Claimant Mediums*. Saybrook University.

Haraldsson, E. (1985). Representative national surveys of psychic phenomena: Iceland, Great Britain, Sweden, U.S.A. and Gallup's multinational survey. In *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* (Vol. 53, Issue 801, pp. 145–158).

Kennedy, J. E., & Kanthamani, H. (1995). An Exploratory Study of the Effects of Paranormal and Spiritual Experiences on Peoples' Lives and Well-Being (Reprint). *The Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 89.

Montanelli, D. E. G., & Parra, A. (2002). Are Spontaneous Anomalous/Paranormal Experiences Disturbing? A Survey Among Undergraduate Students. *International Journal of Parapsychology*, 13, 1–10.

Palmer, J. (1979). A Community Mail Survey of Psychic Experiences. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 73(3), 221–251.

Roberts, S. (2015). *The Embodied Emotion Management of Extrasensory Practitioners: A Reflexive Approach*. University of York.

Roe, C. A. (2019). A Representative Survey of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences. *43rd SPR International Annual Conference*.

Roxburgh, E. C. (2010). *The Psychology and Phenomenology of Spiritualist Mental Mediumship*.

Roxburgh, E. C., & Evenden, R. E. (2016b). 'They daren't tell people': therapists' experiences of working with clients who report anomalous experiences. *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling*, 18(2), 123–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642537.2016.1170059>

Schmied Knittel, I., & Schetsche, M. (2012). Everyday miracles: Results of a representative survey in Germany. *Mind and Matter*, 10(2), 169–184.

Siegel, C. (1986). Parapsychological Counseling: Six Patterns of Response to Spontaneous Psychic Experiences [Summary]. In W. G. Roll (Ed.), *Research in Parapsychology 1985* (pp. 172–174). Scarecrow Press.

Tart, C. T. (1986). Psychics' Fears of Psychic Powers [Summary]. In W. G. Roll (Ed.), *Research in Parapsychology 1985* (pp. 151–152). Scarecrow Press.

Taylor, S. F. (2005). Between the idea and the reality: A study of the counselling experiences of bereaved people who sense the presence of the deceased. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 5(1), 53–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733140512331343921>

Wilde, D. J., Murray, J., Doherty, P., & Murray, C. D. (2019). Mental health and mediumship: an interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, 22(3), 261–278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2019.1606186>

Zahradnik, F., & Von Lucadou, W. (2012). A Counseling Approach to Extraordinary Experiences. In *Perspectives of Clinical Parapsychology* (pp. 118–134).

A survey of sleep paralysis and other anomalous sleep experiences in Brazil

Everton de Oliveira Maraldi

- Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Department of Religious Studies
- D'Or Institute for Research and Education (IDOR), Rio de Janeiro

Maria de Fátima Fernandes

- Psychologist, Independent researcher

Abstract

Sleep paralysis experiences (SPEs) have been investigated by different researchers in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, parapsychology, religious and folkloric studies. Although usually characterized by an inability to move or speak while awakening or falling asleep, SPEs are actually complex experiences involving different phenomenological characteristics, which overlap with other anomalous sleep experiences (ASEs) such as out-of-body experiences (OBEs) and hypnagogic/hypnopompic hallucinations. Some investigators found a significant relationship between SPEs and paranormal beliefs, but others found no significant association. Little information is known about how exactly SPEs impact religious and paranormal beliefs, for example, whether SPEs tend to confirm or disconfirm a person's beliefs and whether such effects (if valid) depend on the frequency and intensity of these experiences. In addition, no empirical study has yet investigated SPEs in Brazil, one of the most diverse countries in Latin America in terms of religious beliefs and affiliations and with a high prevalence of reports of anomalous experiences. The present study examined the phenomenological characteristics of SPEs and their association with paranormal beliefs and other ASEs in a sample of the Brazilian population. We relied on a multi-method approach, combining psychological scales and thematic content analysis of SPE reports by paranormal believers and skeptics. This is a work in progress, but the preliminary findings indicate that the frequency of SPE characteristics differ among participants, with inability to move being the most frequent and sensation of spinning or turning being the least frequent. Those reporting SPEs also tended to report other ASEs such as OBEs. Almost two thirds of the sample reported that their ASEs did not change their religious, spiritual or philosophical beliefs. There was a tendency for participants to report that ASEs confirmed rather than changed their established beliefs. These findings may indicate that ASEs such as SPEs are not as transformative as certain mystical or transpersonal experiences. When facing difficulties with their ASEs, participants were more likely to resort to spiritual help. This study is supported by a grant from Parapsychology Foundation.

45th Annual International Spr Congress

First call for papers

Research: phenomenon of extrasensory perception "remote viewing"

Objective: to demonstrate experimentally the existence of Remote Vision, a phenomenon of extrasensory perception, which consists of obtaining remote information, of a place, event and / or person, in a distant way and without using any technology or information, reference and / or data that help in the identification of the place, using only the mental capacity.

Field experimentation methodology

Context: Chile (Santiago) – Argentina (Buenos Aires), 1,350 km away

- Issuer, Seer located in Santiago de Chile
- Observer receiver at a point in the city of Buenos Aires

In 2017 I Mauricio Arenas Ibarra conducted an experiment with an Institute of Parapsychology in Argentina, with the following characteristics:

- A time is set to do the experiment, considering the time difference of the countries. (18 hours Chile)
- The observer must be in a (random) place unknown to the remote seer, where he will take photographs of the place, and at the same time the remote seer goes into a trance, obtains information and makes records of the place; annotations, drawings, images and environmental perceptions.
- The duration of the experiment is 20 minutes.
- The remote seer mails all the information collected
- The observer, after receiving the information from the remote seer, sends the photographs to the remote seer's email.
- A comparative analysis of the information received and the photographs is made
- 100% of the information sent matches the photographs.
- The existence of the phenomenon is demonstrated.
- Video is attached with the photographs and sketches.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauYsCggZrM&t=109s>

Controls:

- The remote seer does not know the city of Buenos Aires
- The seer and the observer did not know each other before the implementation of the experiment
- No clues are given, no information prior to the experiment.

- The exchange of the sketch and photographs is done first by sending and receiving the sketch and then the photographs are sent.

Mauricio Arenas Ibarra

Director

Institute of Parapsychology of Chile

www.institutodeparapsicologiadechile.cl

Contact +56067388892

Candidate

Mauricio Arenas Ibarra, Engineer and Bachelor of Marketing Universidad Diego Portales

International Master in Strategic Communication Universidad Diego Portales

With studies in Philosophy at the University of Chile and Psychology at the Gabriela Mistral University