



## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

### **The Anthropology of Person as Portal:**

#### *Spirit companions and the Human Perceptual Bridge to the Other World*

*You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not to take part.*

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?**

The purpose of this project is to examine how individuals relate to extrasensory phenomena through the phenomenological lens of relationships formed with spirits in both nature and function, and to examine how through interactions with spirits, the individual becomes a receptor or intermediary of the spirit realm.

Through participant interviews and collected observational data (audio transcription of interviews, potential contextually relevant video and photographic material if permission is granted) the project explores how individuals who engage in intentional spirit relationships describe their experiences, how they interpret them, and how these practices function within an experiential context.

The central concern of this research is the nature and function of human spirit relationships: how such pacts are entered, what form they take, with whom/what are they formed, and what they mean to those who maintain them.

#### **WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You have been invited to participate in this study because you identify as someone who:

- *Engages in intentional spirit communication, mediumship, ritual practice involving communication with spirits, paranormal investigation, or*
- *Has experience with sustained or intentional encounters with a spiritual entity, spirit companionship, or*
- *Is a member of a relevant community or group (e.g., paranormal societies, mediumship circles) or*
- *You conduct research or are otherwise knowledgeable into topics involving spirit companions, supernatural encounters, mediumship, induced communication and anomalous encounters, etc.*

## **DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?**

*It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this Participant Information Sheet to keep and be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw from the study at a later date, without giving a reason. Only the project team will have access to the research data.*

## **WHAT DOES TAKING PART INVOLVE?**

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to take part in:

- A semi-structured one to one interview about your experiences, beliefs, and practices.
- The interview will be expected to last approximately 60-90 minutes. However, the interview can be terminated at any point, and more than one interview/ongoing correspondence in a series of interviews is welcomed per your discretion.
- Conducted either in person, or over video call, depending on your preference.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy, and the researcher may take written notes. You may decline to answer any question and may stop the interview at any time.

You may also choose to allow the researcher to observe a relevant group meeting, ritual, or practice setting.

## **ARE THERE ANY POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISADVANTAGES IN TAKING PART?**

*There are no significant risks anticipated from participation in this research project, but if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to ask. You are free to pause or stop the interview at any time, and have your participation withdrawn. The only anticipated cost is the time of the participant, which is great appreciated.*

## **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?**

There will be no direct personal compensation, however, by sharing your experience, you will be providing the researcher and University to better understand how people interpret supernatural experiences, how intentional spirit relationships are formed, and how this is experienced in everyday life.

## **WHAT IF I WANT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE PROJECT?**

*Agreeing to participate in this project does not oblige you to remain in the study or to have any further obligations to the research project or team. If at any stage you no longer want to be part of the study, you can withdraw from the project by contacting the researcher at*

*[I.Y.Furbee@sms.ed.ac.uk](mailto:I.Y.Furbee@sms.ed.ac.uk) up to one month after your interview. You should note that your data may be used in the production of formal research outputs (e.g. journal articles, conference papers, reports) prior to your withdrawal and so you are advised to contact the research team at the earliest opportunity should you wish to withdraw from the study.*

*If you withdraw from the project all your identifiable data/audio-recorded interviews will be destroyed, but we will continue to use the anonymized data collected up to your withdrawal, and we will maintain our records of your original consent.*

## **HOW WILL MY DATA BE LOOKED AFTER DURING THE PROJECT?**

*All your data will be processed and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) along with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). The project will be also be guided by and adhere to the University of Edinburgh's data protection guidance and regulations, see <http://www.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk/InfoStaff/DPstaff/DataProtectionGuidance.htm>.*

*All personal details, including contact details, addresses, phone numbers etc, will be kept strictly confidential within the research team, stored on password-protected and encrypted devices and/or University secure servers, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, and the latest University of Edinburgh data security protocols.*

*Electronic (videos, photos, transcripts) project data will be uploaded as soon as possible to a secure University of Edinburgh server and stored there for the duration of the project, only accessible to the project team.*

*All paper records will be transferred to locked storage at the University of Edinburgh as soon as practicable. Your Consent Form will be stored separately from your responses.*

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY DATA AFTER THE END OF THE PROJECT?**

At the end of the project:

- All identifiable data (names, contact details, audio recordings) will be deleted.
- Anonymized transcripts will be retained by the researcher and stored on the University's server for up to one year.
- These anonymized materials may be used for future academic work by the researcher (e.g., publications, conference presentations), but only in anonymized form if indicated as such on the consent form.
- No one outside the research team will have access to identifiable data at any stage.
- Anonymized data will not be shared publicly or deposited in an open repository.

You may choose separately on the Consent form whether you consent to your anonymized data being used in future research by the researcher.

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WANT TO TAKE PART?**

If you would like to participate, please contact the researcher by email to express your interest. You will then receive:

- a copy of this Participant information sheet
- an informed consent form

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

The results of this study will be used in a postgraduate dissertation submitted for the Master's of Science degree in Social Anthropology at The University of Edinburgh.

These findings may also be used in:

- Academic articles
- Conference presentations
- future research projects

*Quotes from your interview may be used in these outputs, and these will be anonymous unless you give permission for your real name to be used in the Consent Form.*

### **WHO IS ORGANIZING AND SUPERVISING THE RESEARCH?**

This project is conducted as part of a postgraduate dissertation at The University of Edinburgh by a student researcher. It is supervised by Professor of Anthropology and the Humanities Richard Baxstrom.

### **CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

*If you have any further questions about this project, please contact the lead researcher at:*

**Supervisor:**

[richard.Baxstrom@ed.ac.uk](mailto:richard.Baxstrom@ed.ac.uk)

**Student Researcher:**

[I.Y.Furbee@sms.ed.ac.uk](mailto:I.Y.Furbee@sms.ed.ac.uk)

*If you have any concerns about the way in which the project has been conducted, or you wish to make a complaint, you can contact the Deputy Director of Research (Ethics and Integrity) in the School of Social and Political Sciences:*

*Deputy Director of Research (Ethics and Integrity)  
School of Social and Political Sciences  
University of Edinburgh  
Edinburgh EH8 8LN  
e-mail: [ethics-ssps@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ethics-ssps@ed.ac.uk)*

*For general information about how the University of Edinburgh looks after research data go to:  
<https://data-protection.ed.ac.uk/privacy-notice-research>*

*If you have any queries about how the project data is managed, you can contact the University Data Protection Officer, Dr Rena Gertz, at [dpo@ed.ac.uk](mailto:dpo@ed.ac.uk). See <https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/about/data-protection-officer>*

**THANK YOU**

*Thank you for taking time to read this Participant Information Sheet.*

**DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_