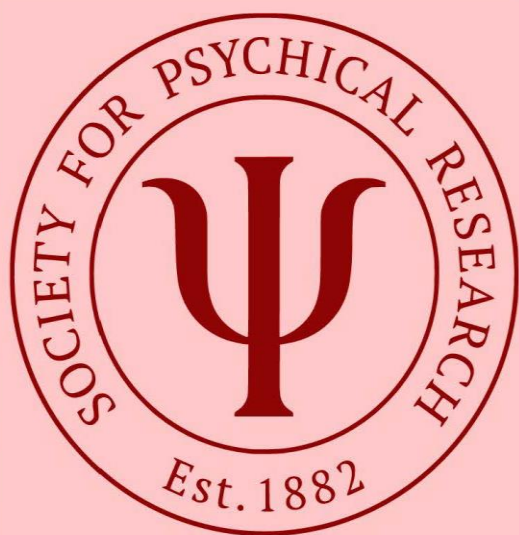


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Holiday
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Introduction

This year's conference takes place in Newcastle Upon Tyne which is the northern regional capital playing host to four universities, if we include nearby Durham. Newcastle University does have a singular historical connection with psychical research: Gerhard Wassermann, a quantum physicist who became Reader in the Theory and Philosophy of Biology, invited J B Rhine to visit him in Newcastle. Wassermann was deeply interested in the subject and formulated a field theory of psychic phenomena, which is similar to the morphic fields theory of Rupert Sheldrake, one of the invited speakers at this conference.

All the invited speakers are currently making outstanding scientific and philosophical contributions and are recognised in their own field for these. These contributions are enabling us to reach a better understanding of consciousness and in doing so they take research into psychic phenomena into the worldview. The panel discussion will offer an opportunity to see if some consensus can be reached. What is already clear is that there is a shift occurring in science by recognising that there can never be a "theory of everything" without a theory of consciousness. The conventional reductionist view of humans is that we are nothing more than intelligent apes occupying an infinitesimal time period in a distant insignificant part of the universe. As the physician Larry Dossey asked, who would then believe such an ape's theory of everything? Besides humility, something big appears to be missing and this has to do with altered states of consciousness and psi - the main focus of this conference.

The conference follows the usual tradition of being an optimal mixture of university-based experimental research and the active investigations of spontaneous phenomena. They are arranged according to the themes of Consciousness, Near Death Experiences, Cross Cultural and Historical Aspects, Experimental Studies of Psi, and Investigations of Mediumship. The conference is also internationally represented with speakers from England, Scotland, Germany, Holland, Iceland and Sweden.

This year, in an effort reduce costs, and thereby to attract a wider participation, we have no formal dinners or receptions, but Newcastle is known for its pubs and parties. And for those who want to escape city life, I recommend the Northumbrian coast - 30 miles of largely deserted beaches. So, enjoy these opportunities.

Prof. Adrian Parker
Chairman of the Conference Programme Committee

The Experiences of Skilled Lucid Dreamers

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Although there now exists some fairly extensive research on the lucid dream experiences of the general population, the data from adept or skilled lucid dreamers seems to be limited to purely anecdotal accounts. Moreover, the existing questionnaires have up to now been designed to record the typical experiences of those having lucid dreamers occurring on the average of one or two lucid dreams in their life (Voss et al., 2013; Schredl Rieger, & Göritz, 2018). Yet, surprisingly, more than 20% of the student population belong to the more skilled category of reporting lucid dreams once month or more (Parker, 2012). Three types of lucid dreams have been categorised: pre-lucid, lucid, and controlled lucid (Kellogg, 2004). The experience of those frequently reporting lucid dreams appears to involve the latter category with more control over the direction of the lucid dream world. As such the experiences of the skilled dreamer may well be radically different from those of the rare lucid dreamer. Those researchers and writers who focus on the accounts of the skilled dreams report a great variety of paranormal and transpersonal experiences (Devereux & Devereux, 1998; Johnson, 2017; Waggoner & McCready, 2015). The content of these seem to have a commonality with psychedelic and shamanic experiences, especially concerning the presence of apparently independent beings (Brown, 2016).

The report here concerns the development of, along with the results of, a more appropriate questionnaire which has been designed by us to record the great variety and depth of these experiences. Additionally, we report on an on-going study with some lucid dreamers concerning the experiences of shared states of consciousness.

Dreams of Aberfan: A Forgotten Collection of Premonitions Received from the Public Concerning the Aberfan Disaster of October 1966

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On 21st October 1966 an avalanche of coal waste from the Methyr Vale Colliery in the Welsh village of Aberfan, Glamorgan, poured down a mountainside, destroying Pantglas Junior School and killing 144 people, 128 of them children.

In the aftermath of the disaster, a psychiatrist Dr J.C. Barker with the assistance Peter Fairley, the Science Correspondent of the *London Evening Standard* launched an appeal in the press seeking members of the public who believed they had experienced premonitions of the tragedy. Some 76 people responded and 60 of these reports later formed the basis of an analysis published in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* (Barker, 1967). The study by Barker is well-known and considered a classic study in the field of premonitions associated with human disasters, often cited in literature on precognitive dreams. (e.g. MacKenzie 1971, Wolmar, 1977; Gratton-Guinness, 1982; Bardens, 1991).

Largely forgotten has been a second public appeal for premonitions of the Aberfan disaster made in the autumn of 1966. Launched three days after the Barker-Fairley appeal, initiated by the Oxford

Institute for Psychophysical Research. This appeal was promoted by articles published in *The Sun* and *Thompson's Weekly*. Although never attracting the same level of subsequent attention as the Barker initiative, this appeal received 74 letters from some 72 different correspondents around England and Wales.

Respondents all reported disturbing dreams, forebodings or visions which they felt had anticipated the Aberfan disaster. Unfortunately, this second collection of premonitions was never published, nor subjected to any detailed examination or comparative study with Barker's material.

Photostats of the letters were deposited with the Society for Psychical Research in 1972, now preserved at Cambridge University Library. This file seems to have gone unexamined until the autumn of 2016.

This paper provides an overview of a preliminary analysis of letters in the second appeal, examines certain features of the material revealed by correspondents and considers the criteria for assessing whether premonitions should be treated as potentially evidential in terms of precognition, following the principles proposed by Guy Lambert. (Lambert, 1965)

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- (3) File 35 Premonitions SPR Collection, University of Cambridge; thank is expressed to the staff at Cambridge University Library and Dr Melvyn Willin with obtaining copies of the letters.
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Integrating a Near-Death Experience: Preliminary Thesis Findings

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This presentation details the findings of the first and second studies for the doctoral thesis, "Therapeutic Approaches Towards Near-Death Experiences." The following abstract details the findings of the statistical analysis of the first study. Findings of the content and thematic analyses on the open responses are near completion and the interpretative phenomenological analysis of the interviews (n = 5) will be completed early September.

In the first study, a 67-item online questionnaire was employed. Fifty-one people who identified as near-death experiencers (NDErs) participated. Questions were a mixture of multiple choice and open response regarding the NDEr's life before their NDE, during, and life after, particularly on changes that were difficult to experience, how those difficulties expressed themselves, and if mental health services were sought. Statistical analysis was performed to measure possible correlations on "negative" and "positive" aftereffects against a handful of variables:

- Perception of reality post NDE
- Personal significance of NDE
- Psychological challenges of aftereffects
- Emotional challenges of aftereffects
- Social challenges of aftereffects

The questionnaire included one established instrument, the NDE Scale (Greyson, 1983; Lange, Greyson, & Houran, 2004), to assess the NDE itself and provide a basis of what qualifies as an NDE for the study. The NDE Scale is best used in the investigation of psychological and clinical effects of NDEs to identify NDEs as its components may be used as independent variables to discriminate among individuals varying in degree and type of NDE (Greyson, 1983). For research purposes, Greyson states that the criterion of a score of 7 or higher (1 SD below the mean; The mean was 15.01 ± 7.84 [range = 2 to 31]) is the best range for selecting a group of participants with NDEs for further study (pp. 375). The scores of the NDE Scale were analyzed for correlations between depth of an NDE and reported struggles with aftereffects, and as a factor when deciding on interviewees for study two. Furthermore, participants who scored lower than a 7 were exempt from the statistical analysis of the questionnaires beyond the demographic questions, as they were discounted as having had NDEs.

A Shapiro Wilk test of normality verified the data for the NDE Scale were normally distributed. Out of the 51 people who took the survey, 44 participants scored seven or above on the NDE Scale, thus seven questionnaires were not considered in further analysis. Correlations between depth of NDE (score of NDE Scale) and the aforementioned variables were analyzed via Spearman's rho coefficient. Three significant positive correlations were found between NDE Scale score and personal significance of the NDE ($p = .003$); the belief that the NDE has led to long-term and ongoing changes in one's perception of their life's purpose ($p = .044$); and the belief that the NDE has led to long-term and ongoing changes in their mood ($p = .048$).

These significant changes were identified by the participant on a seven-point scale:

- Very positive change that I see as desirable
- Moderate positive change that I see as desirable
- Moderate positive change that I see as desirable
- Somewhat positive change that I see as desirable
- No change
- Somewhat negative change that I see as undesirable
- Moderate negative change that I see as undesirable
- Very negative change that I see as undesirable

Correlation between age (younger than 20 and thus considered either a child or teen vs. adult) of when the participant had their NDE and the same dependent variables were also analyzed. There were no significant findings except on the topic of age vs. the belief that one's NDE has led to long-term and ongoing changes in their social relationships in general. There is a high significance with age compared to social negative aftereffects of an NDE ($p < 0.01$; FET).

The findings regarding depth of an NDE are consistent with previous research which indicates there are significant positive correlations between depth of the experience and spiritual/existential changes and mood changes post-NDE. The "deeper" the NDE, the more likely a person is to report changes spiritually/existentially and view them as positive (McLaughlin & Malony, 1984; Greyson & Khanna, 2014); the "deeper" the NDE, the more likely a person is to report long term changes in mood and view them as positive (Greyson, 2006). Findings that there is no significant correlation between depth of an NDE and life satisfaction are also consistent with previous research (Greyson, 1994). Greyson posits that although we see NDErs reporting a positive perspective on their spiritual/existential and mood changes following their NDE, problems readjusting to life after an NDE may offset any enhanced life satisfaction that may result from positive personality transformations (Greyson, 1994). Analysis of the open response questions of my study will provide a clearer picture into this, as will interviews in study two.

The sample size of 44 is limiting in how generalizable the findings are. Furthermore, participants had the option of skipping questions and so not all 44 answered every question. As the group of NDErs that were under 20 years of age at the time of their NDE is such a small number ($n = 14$), the correlation between age and negatively viewed social changes needs to be further studied.

This article provided a brief overview of the preliminary findings of the statistical analysis for study one. The content and thematic analyses of the study are currently underway. Analysis via IPA of the interviews will be conducted in August.

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Psi and the 'spirit molecule' DMT

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N,N-dimethyltryptamine is an extremely potent short acting psychedelic substance found endogenously in the human organism and occurs widely (possibly ubiquitously in many Kingdoms) in nature, and has been theorised to account for numerous spontaneous exceptional experiences such as near-death experiences and psi. This presentation reports on an ongoing experimental DMT field research project exploring intuition, entity encounters, shared visions, telepathy and precognition among seasoned psychonauts (N = 20+) having breakthrough vaporised DMT experiences under supervision.

‘This Other Side of Reality’: An IPA Study of Spiritual Experiences in Epilepsy

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This paper discusses a study of anomalous experiences that some individuals with temporal lobe epilepsy experience. The participant experiences in this IPA study include descriptions of precognition, psychic events, near death (NDE) and out of body experiences (OBE) that are qualitatively very like those in the literature in non-epileptic populations. Participants also discuss psychic abilities developed as a result of their epilepsy. The value and status of these preliminary findings are at variance with the neuropsychiatric literature, which regards such experiences as problematic seizure-related events that require medication and need to be stopped. The medical model assumes and acts as if individuals will not want to encounter these exceptional experiences, and if they do not, then this is also deemed to be a contributory factor of epilepsy-related psychosis. However, the likeness of the spiritual experiences described by individuals such as those in this IPA study to altered states of consciousness and exceptional experiences of individuals without epilepsy suggests that, in fact, not all spiritual experiences in individuals with epilepsy are merely undesirable symptoms of the condition. Having TLE may, as others have claimed, mean that the temporal lobes of individuals with epilepsy are more sensitive than non-epileptic populations and that this is the source of highly valuable abilities which are of interest to those engaged with parapsychological phenomena.

There is a dearth of qualitative accounts of the lived experience of spirituality in epilepsy in the literature and we use a qualitative methodology to provide in-depth accounts of the meaning that these experiences have for individuals. We highlight that there is a tension between the materialist neuro-normative approach the medical establishment has towards this condition, which is through symptoms and diagnosis, and the way that individuals experience it, which is as having profound spiritual meaning.

Since the beginning of modern epileptology in the 19th century, case studies have been published about individuals with epilepsy reporting non-shared, exceptional experiences that include: conversation with spirits, religious conversion, precognition, understanding the meaning of the cosmic

order, conversations with God, out of body and near-death experiences. The nature of the experience is very like those described in parapsychology and transpersonal psychology, with one experient stating that they felt the experience was psychic in nature. The attribution of anomalous experiences in Temporal Lobe Epilepsy (TLE) is discussed extensively in neuropsychiatric contexts; the DSM V lists such anomalous experiences as delusional or hallucinatory events, symptomatic of ictal (epilepsy related) psychosis. Discussion of case studies of anomalous experiences in epilepsy offer limited qualitative information about the phenomenology of the experience, as they are primarily concerned with differential diagnosis and appropriate medical interventions. The aim of this study was to further develop understanding of spirituality in epilepsy from a phenomenological perspective and therefore uses a qualitative approach. In this paper, we focus on the phenomenological elements of spirituality in TLE from the perspective of the meaning that they have for experients.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is explored to highlight the phenomenology and lived experience of these anomalous events. Following Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2012), a small data sample was recruited to enable the gathering of rich data. Nine individuals participated in the study and were interviewed at various locations in the UK. Participants self-selected according to the following question: 'Do you have epilepsy and related experiences that for you are spiritual? Interested potential participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the background and aims of the project, ethical and data management considerations and that participation would involve an interview lasting approximately one hour. Data was collected by means of face-to-face interviews that were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. Analysis was undertaken following IPA guidelines, which involved listening to the audio recording multiple times, reading and re-reading the transcripts and developing codes in an iterative manner. An idiographic approach was employed by considering each participant individually and developing emergent themes and subthemes one by one. For IPA, the reason for doing this is to engage deeply in the participant's experience and ensure that their individual voice is understood and represented in the resulting study. The final stage of analysis examined convergences and divergences across the participants' experiences and shared meanings.

Findings will be discussed that will include the important fact that the participants of the study highly value the abilities that their condition provides, but do not share the anomalous nature of their experiences for fear of stigma and being pathologized by medical professionals. Most participants stated that they would rather keep their epilepsy and the perceived gifts the psychic and mystical experiences they afford, than lose their epilepsy and the spiritual experiences that come from it. This would suggest that the participants do not view their condition as an affliction, but rather a naturally occurring doorway to altered states of consciousness that some non-epileptic individuals go to great lengths to experience. Participant interviews suggest a conflict between how the medical model and professionals diagnose and respond to the exceptional human experiences and the participant's subjective experience and understanding of the meaning of them.

The current findings suggest that future areas of research might include quantitative research, using the terms and phenomena mentioned by the study participants, to understand how prevalent this experience is and whether it is, in fact, less anomalous than the biomedical model proposes. Connections and commonalities have been proposed between such experiences with other parapsychological phenomena. The nature of the experience of participants of this IPA study are of interest, particularly because of the possible connection between the lability of the temporal lobes and psychic abilities.

INVITED TALK

Exploring Awakening Experiences

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Dr Steve Taylor will summarise his research into 'awakening experiences' in which awareness expands and intensifies and we seem to gain insights into the nature of reality. Drawing on his books *Waking from Sleep* and *The Leap: The Psychology of Spiritual Awakening*, Steve will discuss the triggers, characteristics and after-effects of the experiences. He will also suggest that it is possible to shift into a 'wakeful' state on a permanent basis. A shift into 'permanent wakefulness' occurs most frequently in the midst of intense psychological turmoil, but can also occur gradually, as a result of following spiritual practices and paths. Some people may also be naturally 'awakened' to some degree.

Steve will also suggest that there is an evolutionary aspect to awakening experiences. In terms of its internal aspect, evolution can be seen as a process by which consciousness (as it expresses itself in living beings) becomes more intense and expansive - which is exactly what happens in awakening experiences. Steve will also refer to the ideas of his new book *Spiritual Science*, in which he suggests that awakening experiences are a glimpse of a 'fundamental consciousness' which expresses itself in all living beings and objects.

The Work of Catherine Crowe and Edward William Cox and their Influence on the Early SPR

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This paper will explore the method of preternatural research of Catherine Crowe and E.W. Cox. It will explore how their methods of research, format and ontology might have influenced the early work of the SPR, especially *Phantasms of the Living* and Myer's *Human Personality*. It will argue that Crowe's narrative method, among others, was adopted in the *Phantasms* and afterwards. It will also argue Cox's argumentative jurisprudential method (mainly his work on mental sympathy - telepathy) and his Psychological Society of Great Britain laid the foundation for the SPR.

Part 1: Catherine Crowe

This will look at Crowe's *Nightside of Nature* with a special emphasis, emphasized by Crowe herself, on what later became known as "crisis apparitions." It will show Crowe's work, though subtitled as a treatise on ghost-seeing is actually a much more complex ontological work in defense of all immaterial phenomena. It is the only two volume work of numerous case studies before *Phantasms of the Living*.

Part 2: Edward William Cox

This will examine Cox's work and his Psychological Society for Great Britain. Cox's defense for preternatural research began with his studies in animal magnetism but progressed into a well-reasoned argument for immaterial causation in wake of Crookes and the Report on Spiritualism by the

London Dialectical Society. McCorristine has already argued that he helped change the dynamics of preternatural research, but I will, hopefully, try to show how.

Angelos Tanagras - The Theory of Psychobolia in the History of Greek Parapsychology

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In 1948 a controversy made news in the international parapsychology circles between two parapsychologists of different nationalities; it was Dr. Angelos Tanagras, the president of the Hellenic Society of Psychical Research in Athens, Greece and Dr. J. B. Rhine at Duke University in Durham, USA. The disagreement was triggered by the 1947 Rhine's book "*The Reach of the Mind*" [2]. Tanagras had accused Rhine that his book was borrowing ideas from his own theory of psychical phenomena, the theory of Psychobolia, without giving credit to either Tanagras or any of his related publications. Tanagras decided to raise his protesting voice to all psychical research centers in Europe and many American University departments, demanding recognition of his name and work. Those in the States who in 1948 completely ignored the concept of Tanagras' Psychobolia, were thus finding out about it.

This old theory-ownership dispute was recently revisited in detail [1]. But what was that theory of Psychobolia of Tanagras and how could it, as claimed, explain most psychical phenomena? As it had been the essence of Tanagras' parapsychology work and as such an important element of the historic role of Greek Parapsychology [3] of the 20th century, it is worth presenting it anew.

Tanagras, a medical doctor by profession, had attempted with his theory of Psychobolia to account for the origin of psychical phenomena and the way they are externalized from the individual out to the environment. Not only had Tanagras' personal experiences greatly influenced the formation of his theory, but also the scientific developments of his time of which he was well-informed.

So, he introduced the notion of radioactivity from inanimate matter, combining it with his expert knowledge of medicine and biology. The human body consists of atoms and molecules, same as any non-living object able to emit powerful energy in the form of radioactivity under appropriate conditions. On the other hand, psychical phenomena have always been observed and experienced through the centuries, although they have gone unnoticed by science. There is a powerful form of 'energy', a dynamic psychical element stored inside the human body, Tanagras posited, able to interact and affect both animate and inanimate life accordingly. Tanagras called it 'Epipsychidion' a constituent of psyche from 'epi'=over and 'psychidion'=element of psyche.

In particular, being inspired by the ideas of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, Tanagras claimed that every strong feeling forced to remain unsatisfied for various reasons being social, religious, pressure from the family that create hatred, envy, admiration, or indignation in the individual, can be externalized in people of a particular psychic disposition in various ways observed as psychic phenomena. We call those individuals psychics or mediums. Under special conditions, as described above, their sympathetic nervous system, which governs all involuntary bodily functions, can unwillingly emit this psychic fluid, the 'Epipsychidion'. He called the phenomenon 'Psychobolia', from the Greek words 'Psyche=Ψυχή' and 'boli=βολή' meaning 'throw'. The results of this biological radioactivity emission are observed as psychical phenomena. Psychobolia is mainly caused involuntarily and it can only be controllable through special training, while some people are able to shield themselves from its effects.

Thus, Tanagras provided a logical explanation of all those dynamic influences on the human organism and material world such as telekinetic phenomena, telepathic suggestion, precognition, unexpected 'luck. He further used it to explain the familiar 'staring effect'. Psychobolia can cause dizziness and fainting in people; it can affect the brain of vehicle drivers leading to an accident; it can damage mechanical parts of ships, or railways causing accidents; it is responsible for temporary or even permanent impact on the life of people through blessings or curses that people call 'the evil eye'. This is how Tanagras was explaining all those cases of unusual phenomena he was coming across as the president of the Greek SPR. Tanagras saw a humanitarian aspect to the scientific acceptance of Psychobolia, as people will be thinking twice before ill-wishing against others, knowing that it will come back to them.

Tanagras based his theory of superhuman bio-radioactivity as proof that we are possessing a divine element locked inside an imperfect material body, which can be spontaneously externalized, and which will be fully released after death. In possessing this superhuman element we become small gods which, in itself ensures, he claimed, the existence of a higher form of life beyond death.

This talk will engage in the various aspects of the theory of Psychobolia of Angelos Tanagras within the larger frame of the history of Greek Parapsychology.

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Interpreting Electronic Voice Phenomena: The Role of Auditory Perception, Paranormal Belief and Individual Differences

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This report will contain the results from a PhD study investigating Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) in the context of ghost hunting, and the role of auditory perception, paranormal belief and individual differences in interpreting these sound phenomena. The results from the four stages of the study will be discussed, and there will be a brief outline of the consequences of the results for the field of electronic communication with the spirit world, particularly the relevance within the ghost hunting community.

Study one discusses a new questionnaire, the Paranormal Investigation Experiences Questionnaire (PIEQ), and how results from this can be used to distinguish between three groups of participants (non-, low- and high-EVPers) as a measure of "EVPness". Belief in the paranormal was shown to increase as the level of participant's EVPness increased. Afterdeath beliefs in EVP believers were shown to be inconsistent, indicating that participants who believed they had heard spirit voices may not be interpreting the origin of these voices in a consistent fashion. Males were no more likely than

females to believe or disbelieve in the paranormal but were more likely to report that death is final, and there is no afterlife.

Study two concentrated on a number of individual differences that have previously been described as being indicative of a tendency to believe in and experience apparently paranormal phenomena. A number of individual difference measures displayed significant differences between the groups, with the high EVPers displaying significantly higher levels of positive schizotypy, sleep related hallucinations, and auditory hallucinations, and significantly lower levels of reality testing, than non- or low-EVPers. When gender was investigated as a factor, females showed significantly higher levels of positive schizotypy, fantasy proneness, sleep related hallucinations and vivid daydreams, and significantly lower levels of reality testing, than males.

Study three utilised an auditory signal detection task using pink noise, and pink noise overlaid with speech files. Participants were randomised and informed that the task was either a standard auditory task, or that the task was investigating EVP. The outcome measure was whether the participants responded correctly as to whether there was a voice present in the sound clips or not. Due to low recruitment numbers, the groups were split into low- and high-EVPers. The results showed that there was no difference in how the two groups were responding to the clips. However the effect of whether they were told the task was an EVP task or not was significant, with the non-EVP task participants being more likely to respond that they had heard a voice – this indicates that participants used a stricter criterion when assessing the clips if they thought the clips might contain spirit voices. When looking at gender differences, despite females being no more likely to be high-EVPers than males, they were significantly more likely to report hearing a voice in the sound clips than males. The group most likely to report hearing voices in the clips were females in the non-EVP group, and the group least likely to report hearing voices were males in the EVP-condition group.

Study four utilised the same auditory signal detection task, but the voices that were present within some of the clips were directional, so were presented to the left ear, the right ear, or in the centre. High-EVPers were more likely to respond that they had heard a voice within the clips than low-EVPers. From previous studies, it was hypothesised that low hallucinating EVPers would display a higher localisation sensitivity for the right brain hemisphere (left ear), so in addition to the sound clips participants were also asked to complete a hallucination questionnaire and a handedness questionnaire. High hallucinators were significantly more likely to report hearing a voice in the sound clips than low hallucinators. High hallucinators more likely to produce a correct response to non-directional sound clips. Participants who displayed a weaker right-hand preference were more likely to report hearing a voice in their left ear than strong right handers. Strong right handers were significantly more likely to report hearing no voice when the clip was directional (either left or right) than weak right handers.

The combination of individual difference factors and auditory perception differences in the participants shows that, for general paranormal believers and ghost hunters (who use EVP as a tool for communicating with spirits), there are a number of factors that can lead to misperceptions of the sounds being recorded and interpreted. Whilst this cannot be extrapolated to people carrying out ostensibly serious research into the field, it may provide some answers as to why there is an abundance of amateur groups reporting EVP voices in sound clips that in reality appear to show no evidence of paranormality at all.

‘More Voices and Faces from the Greetings Project’: A five-year investigation into Instrumental Trans-Communication

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This paper summarises findings from on-going experiments into electronic voice phenomena (EVP's) and instrumental trans-communication (ITC) by educationalist and part-time psychical researcher Dr. Sean Richards, director of EVP London. Dr Richards will present new findings from his experiments for peer assessment, including showcasing a range of the clearest EVP's and new trans-images and will discuss their significance as evidence of paranormality. Dr Richards will also talk about his 2nd book on the Greetings Project phenomena, which it is hoped will be ready for publication at the end of this year. He will also provide a summary of progress reported from ongoing ITC research projects around the world.

Themes explored in the talk will include:

- Ruling out signal breakthrough, pareidolia, fraud and self-deception in ITC research
- Types of ITC evidence which might support the survival hypothesis.
- Importance of dialogical responses and personal evidence, but problems rating/scoring it.
- James McClenon's 'Entity Letters' - the concept of 'hiding' and barriers on 'the other side'.
- Genealogy Research. Mapping the contacts and building family trees.
- The Voices of the War Generations
- Plans for Digital Mediumship Trials (adapted from Beischel 2018)
- Exploring applications for assisting families in Missing Person's Cases.
- World ITC News. A roundup of progress with ITC research in the US, Brazil and Europe.

Some conclusions to discuss

- Patterns in my data show increasing amounts of personal evidence recorded over the last five years and especially the last two years.
- The total data set contains the same 30 or so regular voices and with repeated messages.
- There is increasing focus and convergence in the messages across the data
- There are still problems obtaining consistently high-quality voice recordings
- Problems interpreting EVP persist
- Other ITC researchers are recording anomalous faces, but the process also needs to be filmed – including my own.
- No positive results obtained yet from Direct Radio Voice trials
- There's still a lack of funding and support for collaborative and systematic ITC research

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The Psychology of Dogmatic Scepticism towards Parapsychology

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Summary

The issues of 'dogmatic' scepticisms towards parapsychology has been a topic of much debate since parapsychology's establishment, and indeed before, with the early work psychical research (cf. Prince, 1925; 1930; Roe, 2017). A sceptical approach is a useful – and arguably required – methodological approach for all sciences when dealing with the various anomalies they face. And science in general, not just parapsychology, is about dealing with anomalies (Broughton, 1991). From the Oxford English Dictionary, a *believer* may be considered a person who believes openly in the truth of something, a *sceptic* is inclined to question, doubt, and does not just accept without evidence, and a *cynic* has no personal desire to consider the evidence and sticks to their set worldview. It could be argued that those labelling themselves as a sceptic in many instances are in fact cynics (owing to dogmatic behaviour when involved in science debate), and might also be referred to as a pseudo-sceptic (false in their own claim of scepticism).

Since the introduction of Wikipedia and particularly the work of the Guerrilla Skeptics movement on Wikipedia (Weiler, 2013), this issue has now moved into creating false public perceptions of parapsychology, its history, methods and findings via what many lay persons believe to be a reliable source of information – but why would the editors do this? Recognition of this problem in general for science is growing (e.g. Martin, 2017), and has also led to the establishment of the *Psi Encyclopedia* through the Society for Psychical Research thanks to the work of Robert McLuhan (2010; 2014) and contributors.

With new generations of students in higher education taking courses on psychology, and also those which support parapsychology, it has become clear in recent years that much 're-education' now has to be done due to many students preparing for such studies by turning to the internet in the first instance. This can lead to gross-assumptions and even strengthening pre-existing biased opinions of parapsychology. However, taught courses of parapsychology within higher education help to present students with the wider scope of parapsychology, weighing up of evidence, and the need for critical evaluation and scepticism in science. This in turn, appears to help students question truth within the popular sources on the internet. Although such dogmatic behaviour in this instance serves to mislead the public on mass, higher education is at least producing more and more individuals with awareness

and evidence of the problems faced, who in turn can re-educate others on such issues of deceptive information in public circulation.

As part of an undergraduate dissertation project, the lead author (Wright) set out to explore these issues further and bring some understanding to the psychology of dogmatic scepticism toward parapsychology, where little formal research has been done before.

Aim & Method

This study was an initial interview-based approach to the psychology of dogmatic scepticism towards parapsychology. Semi-structured interviews were carried with six individuals (2 males, 4 females), collected through opportunity sampling. All identified themselves as sceptics but generally did not believe parapsychology to be scientific or having produced evidence of psi functioning. All interviewees have a background in the sciences, or were currently reading for a science degree at the time of this study.

Findings & Conclusions

A thematic analysis was carried out on the transcriptions of interviews concerning each participant's views on parapsychology. Six superordinate themes emerged from the data regarding why the interviewees did not accept that parapsychology had produced evidence for what it studies, such as:

1. Misunderstandings
2. External influences
3. The gathering of evidence
4. Belief in alternative explanations
5. Fear of the evidence
6. Farfetched focus

This presentation will discuss such findings with examples. It was noted that the interviewees often found the questions difficult to answer. Their behaviour related to previous observations in the literature, such as confidence in dogmatic behaviour towards parapsychology, while their arguments tended to hold little substance or true knowledge of the subject at all. Stubborn behaviour was displayed in terms of admittance to not knowing the parapsychological literature, and not wanting to read any of the evidence either, yet still maintaining parapsychology to have achieved nothing and not wishing to change their minds on that. This could be concluded as cynical behaviour – “a wolf in goat's clothes”. It was also noted that ‘fear of psi’ should be given more focus in future studies and revisiting the topic within the parapsychological literature, as dogmatic behaviour may act as a knee-jerk defence towards such fear.

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A Representative Sample Survey of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences¹

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Summary

Parapsychology is concerned with making sense of beliefs in and experience of phenomena which are often labelled “paranormal”, and can be defined here as phenomena that seem to involve events or abilities that conflict with what C.D. Broad (1949/1953) called the ‘Basic Limiting Principles’ of science. Broad described principles that he believed to be “so overwhelmingly supported by all the empirical facts ... that it hardly enters our heads to question them”. These principles and the experiences that seem to contradict them are listed in the following table:

<i>Broad’s principle</i>	<i>Apparent exceptions</i>
Causes must come before effects	Premonitions, such as dreams that refer to (are caused by?) a future event
A person’s mind cannot produce any direct change in the material world except those caused via the brain/sensorimotor system	Psychokinetic events, where people claim to have moved or distorted some object through an act of will; instances of healing intention
Any mental event is an event in the brain of a living body	Out of body experiences, where the centre of experience seems to be located away from the body. Near-death experiences, where mental events seem to occur when the brain is inactive
	Mediumship communications purportedly from deceased persons
All knowledge of the world comes to us through our conventional senses or by inference from known facts	Telepathy, where people seem to know directly what is in the mind of another person
	Clairvoyance, where people acquire information from the environment not known by anyone

Prominent scientists have proclaimed that such phenomena are impossible and have no scientific basis. For example, Richard Dawkins (1998) concluded “The paranormal is bunk. Those who try to sell it to us are fakes and charlatans, and some of them have grown rich and fat by taking us for a ride”. Such beliefs and experiences are often described by sceptics as ‘anomalous’ or ‘extraordinary’, suggesting that they are rare aberrations, falling outside of the normal range of healthy human experience. However, this view seems to be true only for the academic mainstream.

The general public tends to believe that such phenomena are real and frequently claim to have had personal experience of them. For example, two representative surveys of UK residents conducted by the market research company Ipsos MORI (1998, 2003) found that up to two thirds of their sample reported that they believed in various paranormal phenomena. Gallup polls with US samples (Moore, 2005; Newport & Strausberg, 2001) give a similar profile of belief to that for the UK.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most influential factor with respect to levels of paranormal belief is personal experience. McClenon (1982) found that 54% of those who expressed a favourable attitude towards the reality of psi cited personal experience as influencing their opinion, and Blackmore (1984) reported that of the 36% in her sample who professed belief in ESP, 44% cited their own experience

as the main reason. This tendency is also true for the Ipsos MORI surveys cited earlier: of those who declared a belief in ghosts, a remarkably high 37% of the 1998 sample and an even higher 49% of the 2003 sample reported that they had had personal experience of ghosts; similarly high figures are reported for telepathy (35% and 41%), premonitions (41% and 48%), precognitive dreams (42% and 58%) among others. A positive correlation has also been reported between number of subjective paranormal experiences and strength of paranormal belief (Glicksohn, 1990; Musch & Ehrenberg, 2002).

More recently, Castro, Burrows, and Wooffitt, R. (2014) commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct face-to-face interviews with 4,096 adults, in which they were asked about their experience of five types of phenomenon: 24.1% reported experience of precognition; 12.8% of ESP; 12.4% had had mystical experiences; 11.5% had experienced telepathy; and 10.4% of after-death communications (ADCs). It is unclear how 'ESP' was distinguished from telepathy and precognition. Interestingly, experiencers quite often reported experiences of more than one type of phenomenon: 17.5% reported one type, 10% two, 5.1% three, 3% four and 1.3% all five. Castro et al. (2014) concluded that reporting of paranormal experiences is common within Great Britain, and noted effects upon incidence of sociological variables (gender, age and geographical region). Schmied-Knittel and Schetsche (2005) similarly surveyed a representative sample of 1,510 people and then interviewed 220 respondents reporting exceptional experiences, of whom 73% experienced at least one of the set phenomena (ESP-dreams, strange coincidence, crisis-ESP, Animal psi, apparition, déjà vu, haunting and Other/Miscellaneous extraordinary experiences). Again, multiple experiences were common: the mean number of experiences was 2.8, and 25.7% of respondents reported personal experience of four or more types. Finally, Dagnall, Drinkwater, Parker and Clough (2016) reported on a university-based sample of 1,215 adults in which 42% reported at least one spontaneous paranormal event. They included a much broader measure of paranormal phenomena that included psychokinesis, witchcraft, out-of-body experience, haunting, extra-terrestrials, and astrology. Although the sample was not constructed so as to be generally representative, the incidence of experience is comparable with other surveys described here: 23% of respondents claimed experience of ESP; 4% of PK; 9% NDE/OBE (conflated); 14% haunting; and 13% contact with the dead (unspecified).

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that so-called paranormal experiences are quite common. But while they allude to the experiences that have shaped the respondents' paranormal beliefs, actual details of those experiences are very limited (Schmied-Knittel and Schetsche, 2005, refer to follow-up interviews, but these are described only in general terms). The aim of the current project was therefore to (i) look to confirm the high incidence of paranormal belief and experience among a representative sample; (ii) solicit accounts of those experiences to derive a better sense of their evidentiality and impact.

Method

The survey was conducted by the market research company YouGov, with a total sample size was 2,019 adults. The survey was carried out online between 11th and 12th March 2019. The data have been weighted so as to be representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

A questionnaire was designed by the current author in consultation with YouGov so that it was consistent with their omnibus survey tool. To normalise the phenomena and to encourage people to disclose experiences they might be concerned would identify them as credulous or suffering from some form of pathology, the survey was introduced with the opening statement "we are interested in your beliefs in, and experiences of, a range of phenomena that have been reported among people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures." Participants used a 5-point Likert scale to indicate the degree to which they agreed with statements about a range of paranormal phenomena. All statements were positively worded so that agreement indicated belief in or experience of the phenomenon. Phenomena included were: telepathy; precognition; PK; psychic claimants; post-mortem survival; deathbed phenomena; NDEs; ghosts and apparitions; ADCs; mediumship; OBEs; and paranormal healing. For items that participants indicated belief, participants had a follow-up question that asked if they had personal experience of it. If they responded affirmatively, they were given the

opportunity to provide a description their experience. Additionally, where participants had consulted a medium, a psychic or a healer, they were asked whether the experience had been beneficial.

Results

Data collection is complete, and analysis is ongoing. In this talk I will summarise the incidence of belief and experience, give a breakdown according to demographic factors, and offer a thematic analysis of the volunteered experiences.

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Does Evidence from Psychic Detection Tell Us Anything about Survival?

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It seems obvious that psychic detection of people, objects and events distant in space and time, whether we call it clairvoyance or remote viewing, must involve perception that takes place beyond the percipient's physical body. This needs to happen regardless of how we envisage the mechanisms by which this is achieved, and the methodology employed by the percipient, such as dreams, psychometry, divination etc. There is plenty of well-supported evidence for clairvoyance from different cultures and different periods, and the remote viewing studies from recent decades have done much to test, and to establish experimentally, the extent of such an ability and conditions favourable to its manifestations. However, experimental evidence by its very nature provides answers to questions

limited by the targets and procedures employed, while people with exceptional abilities of this kind, the “star performers”, are few and, however gifted, unable to demonstrate them reliably on demand. Therefore, experimental evidence cannot tell us how far psi can extend in real life.

On the other hand, psi which happens in real life tends to be private, under-reported and under-investigated, both when it is spontaneous and when it involves sittings with mediums. There are sometimes reports of psychic feats by mediums, such as identifying a murderer or finding a body, but they tend to be sensationalised by the media with little verification and corroboration, and to produce vehement denials, by those charged with investigating such matters in a conventional manner, of any “paranormal” involvement. The fragmentary nature of such reports means that attention focuses on establishing their veracity, but there is little in the way of long-term investigations of verified cases that would try to establish where the information might be coming from. Yet there seems to be an interesting overlap between information obtained through what are described as “mediumistic” channels, i.e., claims that the information originates with discarnate beings, and information obtained through clairvoyance exercised by living persons. The question of the possibility of accessing knowledge not possessed by anyone living has been fuelling the philosophical debate between the “living agent psi” hypothesis and the “survival of the human spirit” hypothesis for more than a century without much hope of resolution. Perhaps psychic detection might be an area where this debate might be moved forward, if we can find material of sufficient quality and quantity to be explored in detail.

A source of such material is provided by the story of a Polish clairvoyant, Krzysztof Jackowski, whose career spans more than 20 years and includes hundreds of well-documented cases. Famous in Poland mainly for his contributions to solving crimes and finding missing persons/bodies, he has been the subject of newspaper articles and television programmes, and tested in a variety of ways, often attracting media attacks and controversy. However, from the beginning of his career he insisted on obtaining acknowledgments from the various police forces with whom he collaborated, as well as other official bodies and private individuals. Owing to the efforts of a young policeman who wrote a book about Jackowski, the National Police Headquarters in Poland officially acknowledged his positive contribution to police investigations.

Jackowski’s background and approach are very different from the conventional image of a medium to be found in the Western tradition. What is of particular interest is that, while originally he regarded his abilities as clairvoyance, over the years he has come to the conclusion that the information he obtains comes from those who are no longer alive physically. This paper will look at some of the evidence for such claims.

INVITED TALK

The Day that Changed My Life

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Chris Robinson has an international reputation as a psychic who has foreseen many disasters including: the Lockerbie plane crash, the Twin Towers terrorist attack, many IRA bomb attacks, shootings, the flooding of New Orleans, robberies, and many more. Most of his premonitions have emerged from dreams.

In this presentation, Chris will describe how his first major premonition, which was of the Lockerbie plane disaster, motivated him to learn how to decipher his dreams and expose the underlying message.

He realised that there is an important verbal component in such dreams. Acronyms, for example, might appear - ‘Big Old Motor-Bike’ would specify a bomb. Even postcodes would appear, so providing

the location of an event (BT, AL, etc). The type of event, a weapon, how soon the event will occur, the number of people involved, etc., would be deduced from the dream content.

The security services have, naturally, taken a special interest in his abilities - especially very senior members of the U.S. administration. In Japan, he is well-known for having helped to solve several murder cases.

Chris was the subject in 'The Arizona Experiment' devised by Gary Schwartz in the USA, investigating precognitive dreams. Very good results were obtained, although there were methodological criticisms. In the UK, parapsychologist Dr Keith Hearne has studied Chris over several decades and witnessed several of his cases.

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Several videos about Chris Robinson (Psychic) may be viewed on YouTube.

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Childhood Anomalous Experiences

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Summary

An anomalous experience can be described as those which are perceived to be 'non-ordinary' in their occurrence and the processes behind, especially by those who perceive them (Smith, 2010, p.1). For parapsychology, this could deal with anything from mental cognitions (extrasensory perceptions, ESP), physical effects (psychokinesis, PK), and any phenomena suggestive of survival of personality and/or awareness beyond bodily death (survival phenomena).

When exploring the literature of psychical research, studies have given focus to anomalous experiences and/or abilities of children. For example, Barrett (1926) discussed the deathbed visions of children in his investigation of the phenomena of death and associated experiences. Stevenson (1966; 2001) investigated a great number of cases suggestive of reincarnation, with the phenomena in most instances being displayed within children. And there are many cases on record of poltergeist type phenomena involving very young agents (e.g. Gallagher, 2015; Playfair, 1980; Price & Lambert, 1936). The early research initiated by the Duke University Parapsychology Laboratory also saw empirical studies of potential ESP abilities within children (e.g. Bond, 1937; Rhine, 1937).

In the 1970s and 1980s, literature within parapsychology began to immerge offering general overviews of these combined phenomena relating to childhood experiences (e.g. Cooke, 1968; Tanous & Donnelly, 1979). However, the lead author of this presentation (Denney) argues that there currently remains a paucity of modern research which examines the characteristics of anomalous experiences in childhood and any research that does cover this topic is considerably outdated. Therefore, as part of an undergraduate dissertation project, an modern analysis was conducted.

Aim & Method

The aim of this study was to re-examine the characteristics of anomalous experiences in childhood, meaning that the main research question was 'what are the main characteristics of anomalous experiences in childhood?' The additional research question was 'how are the characteristics of anomalous experiences described in relation to the lived experience?' Semi-structured interviews were carried out and an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach was taken to this project (Smith, 1996). Eight adult participants took part and reflected on childhood experiences within the interview. IPA was utilised as it allows for the participant's lived experience to be married with a reflective and subjective interpretation; allowing the researcher to explore and reveal anticipated and unanticipated phenomena and produce accounts that centre directly on the participant (Smith & Eatough, 2007).

Findings & Conclusions

The analysis produced three super-ordinate themes: 'childhood trauma', 'needing the anomalous experience' and 'needing an answer'. The latter finding is discussed in relation to the body of literature on how paranormal beliefs can impact on how one perceives and characterises their experience. The finding of needing the anomalous experience is explained in relation to literature that highlights the *benefits* and *purposes* of anomalous experiences for the child and relates to the first theme of childhood trauma. The theme of childhood trauma is discussed with reference to research that illustrates the *effects of particular traumas* and *personality traits* and the *impacts* they have on a child with reference to anomalous experiences. The implications of these findings will be discussed in relation to parapsychological and clinical psychological research. The idiographic nature of this study was essential in demonstrating how the present research contributes to and expands on the existing knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of anomalous experiences during childhood.

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BRIEF REPORTS

The Evolution of a Ghost Hunter: How the Royal Oak Case Changed My Perception

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Although my interest in the paranormal can be traced back to my school days, I did not really start investigating phenomena until years later around 2008. It was around this time that with the influence of television shows such as Most Haunted and Ghost Hunters I ventured out at night like many others. Overnight team investigations and ghost hunting events became very popular.

Following my first overnight ghost hunt at Salisbury Guildhall, where I witnessed my own digital camera vibrate across the desk in front of me; I was hooked! However, it wasn't so much the sensationalism of such events that attracted me, but more the concept of discovering logical explanations. As it was popularly known back then; 'debunking.'

In fact, the experience did much more than that; it opened my mind to many more possibilities, helped me to discover the SPR, psychical research, the Scole Experiment and the work of Gurney, Myers, Tyrrell and many more. In fact, looking back now it is strange to think that one case would be the reason for my complete change of thinking and approach. Most importantly it would help me find the importance of telepathy in cases such as the Royal Oak.

The Royal Oak public house is situated on the outskirts of Swanage in Dorset. The pub is believed to be four converted terrace cottages originally but has been a pub for well over a hundred years now. It's current Landlady Rachael took over the pub's management almost by chance, but even that was said to be predicted by local psychic medium Teri. Who is also a close friend of Rachael as they both have a keen interest in spirituality?

Around 2010 the Royal Oak came to my attention as a possible location we could investigate. What sparked my interest were the claims of physical activity at the pub and that it was current. This was relatively unusual as the public locations we had been investigating were based on the original reports from years ago.

My own initial visit to the Royal Oak consisted of asking a lot of questions, looking at areas of the pub where supposed activity had occurred and interviewing some key people. What became apparent to me early on was that there was much more to this ghost story than a haunted pub. There was a huge spiritual mediumistic connection and possible links to past lives. The problem was that at that point in time, although not dismissive of mediums I had often based my own understanding on more solid concepts. This idea of individuals being in connected in a way that seemed highly unusual got me thinking. I knew I needed to understand more about the spiritual approach, especially as the Landlady of the Royal Oak appeared to hold a regular spiritual circle at the pub.

I needed to research such approaches as spiritual circles, but in a fashion that could be considered a little more structured to my liking. Oddly a work colleague interested in UFOs had been making me aware of a documentary he felt I should watch; 'The Afterlife Investigations.' This documentary among other things discussed the Scole Experiment. The whole concept caught my imagination and I found that I needed to know much more on this particular experiment from the 1990s.

I found the concepts in the Scole experiment amazing and the probable evidence quite compelling, although I remained somewhat sceptic too. However, the Scole Experiment highlighted the involvement of an organisation I had heard a little about previously; the SPR. Which lead to me becoming a member.

Over the years I would return to the Royal Oak many more times and attempt various approaches. This also included attempting a version of a Victorian Séance where we even had locals and visitors dress in period clothes too. It was also designed to tap into the Trance Mediumship that I had witnessed at the location to; 1) witness it further and; 2) see how the inclusion of a Victorian setting would affect this process.

Personally, I have had some very interesting experiences at the Royal Oak. Witnessing an illuminated arm behind my sister, what can only be described as a shadowy apparition, trans mediumship and transmogrification certainly sparked my interest in this location. There have also been audio and light anomalies over the years too. However, as a member of the SPR I've learnt a great deal, so understanding the source and mechanisms behind these experiences and phenomena is now far more important to me. This is my evolution from what could be called a ghost hunter to a researcher or investigator. Although the correct terms for this seem confused across the field.

Psychical research is a fascinating field, but not one that is easily found these days, in my opinion. Ghost hunting or the paranormal is more popular than ever as a hobby for many people the world over. However, the evolution from a hobbyist ghost hunter to a psychical researcher or even a serious ghost hunter is not as straight forward as many believe. It begins with the individual firstly, without their inspiration or drive to want to know more, to go beyond the rinse and repeat of weekend hunting; they will never push themselves beyond the cusp. I was lucky enough to stumble on a location that challenged me and made me look deeper, which helped me to find the SPR. In turn the SPR and its members have helped me find a better direction for my work in the field of psychical research. Whether it be the theory of past members such as Myers or Tyrrell, looking at things from an academic standpoint thanks to Cooper or Carr, even the input of serious ghost hunters like Parsons or Winsper; each and all have helped me learn and evolve my own approach to psychical research.

Researching the Researchers: An Exploration into the Experiences and Beliefs of Investigators of Paranormal Phenomenon.

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Much research exists across various disciplines using multiple methodologies that look at a range of different paranormal phenomenon as well as people's beliefs and experiences of such phenomena. So, parapsychologists, anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists have explored these beliefs from their own individual academic perspective (Irwin 2009). For example, much research has been carried out in the field of Psychology but very little within Sociology, for as stated by Castro, Burrows and Wooffitt (2014), sociologists do not really concern themselves with paranormal experiences. If they do, the focus tends to be on social and cultural functions (Irwin 2009) such as from a religious perspective. Therefore, as indicated by the sheer volume of studies and research that has been carried out, it is clear that paranormal phenomena are very much a part of society and hence, should not be overlooked by sociologists.

To date, little empirical research exists that looks at the researchers themselves and their own experiences and beliefs whilst carrying out their investigations. Whilst many may write about their own

experiences as part of their investigations, this is largely a reflexive account, rather than part of a research project.

Using a mixed methods approach comprising of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, forthcoming research aims to explore the experiences of investigators of paranormal phenomena and their reasons for doing so. For example, is this the result of their own experiences that they have had, and/or what they have experienced and witnessed as a result of such investigations? Furthermore, and crucially, what they make of such experiences?

The first stage of research will consist of an online questionnaire that will be distributed via several social media channels to researchers who are actively investigating any type of paranormal or unexplained phenomena, such as psychic abilities, ghosts or UFOs. The aim of the questionnaire will be to obtain an understanding of their investigations, experiences and beliefs. This will be followed by a number of semi-structured interviews in order to obtain a more in-depth analysis of researchers' experiences.

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Integrating Research, Training & Clinical Practice in the Treatment of Spirit Possession

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When experiencing so-called 'paranormal' or 'supernatural' phenomena, the seeker of help will normally call for either a paranormal investigator or a religious minister to 'exorcise' the offending spirit. For the anthropologist the latter may offer opportunities for discourse analysis when the exorcist engages the 'demon' in confrontational dialogue. Such dialogues may only be of special interest to a very small cohort of researchers with a specific interest in demonology. In complete contrast, the 'paranormal' investigator, in keeping with the modern preoccupation with the dramatic, thrill-seeking ghost hunter will seek out the experience of spirit encounters with technological aids to capture 'evidence' of a presence. But there is clear evidence that paranormal investigators don't generally have the knowledge or the skills in helping trapped earthbound spirits move on to 'The Light' where we all go when the spirit leaves the body. It is important to acknowledge that ordinary people suffer the influence of a variety of forms of discarnate spirit on a much wider scope than is common knowledge. There is therefore an imperative to research these common phenomena, without the drama of the 'ghost hunter' or the methodological atheism of the anthropologist, across all sections of society and ethnic groups, especially where they impact on mental health and criminal violence. The research protocol that I am presenting here is a simple one that is structured to provide demographic data, quantitative statistical analysis and, for the ethnographer or research psychologist, detailed qualitative discourse analysis. At the time of writing, the research database has accumulated a total of 345 cases, and it is anticipated that by the time of this conference it will have reached almost 500 cases of suspected spirit possession. The protocol is in its early stages of development, but it is anticipated that it will provide the foundation for all systematic research into spirit possession, poltergeist activity and related phenomena in the future where the demand for more cost-effective methods of treating mental health becomes critical. This presentation will demonstrate how clinical practice is integrated with research data collection and training with the intention of adding value to medicine in the search for best practice in the treatment of psychosis.

'What the Maid Saw: A Case of Remote Viewing During the First World War'

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This paper will present a case of what was then known as 'travelling clairvoyance' (remote viewing) involving SPR member Francis Gilbert Scott, MRCS, and his maid servant. In November 1914, Scott accidentally discovered that his maid could relate accurate information of events taking place on the Western Front while in a hypnotic trance state. A series of experiments was conducted with follow-up attempts at verification, which seemed to indicate that the phenomenon was genuine. The conditions of these experiments will be compared and contrasted with modern RV protocols to suggest possible refinements of the procedure.

Measuring Precognitive Effects Using a Fast Implicit and Fast Explicit Task

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There has been a dramatic growth in the use of modified cognitive paradigms to test whether priming or practice in the *future* can influence performance in the present. This has led some to suggest that fast implicit type tasks are more effective as they rely less on conscious cognitive processes. However, this view is neither consistent nor clear. For instance, Bem (2011) reported more robust precognitive effects using a slower explicit recall task (i.e., Expts. 8 & 9). Hence, the aim of this study was to conduct two fast thinking tasks, one that relies predominantly on implicit processes and one that incorporates more explicit processes and examine which of these two tasks elicits the most robust precognitive effect. The fast thinking implicit task selected was a speeded version of the *precognitive preference task* using erotic images which involves presenting the participant with two hidden target locations on a screen, usually depicted by two curtained areas, and requiring them to select the location with the hidden target picture behind it. The fast thinking explicit task was an explicit *precognitive recognition task*. In essence, this is a standard explicit recognition task with an additional 'precognitive' twist. The traditional recognition task has a study phase, during which stimuli are initially presented, followed by a test phase when a selection of the original stimuli along with new unseen items are presented and the participant needs to recognise the 'old' (i.e., seen before) and 'new' (i.e., not seen before) items. The precognitive twist is that following on from the test phase there will be a *post-test practise phase* during which half of the 'old' items will be presented again with an emphasis on practise and re-processing. The study was pre-registered at the Koestler Unit (<https://koestlerunit.wordpress.com/study-registry/>) reference #1036.

A total 166 of participants completed the implicit preference task (20 Male and 145 Female, with 1 failing to provide information on gender), aged 18y to 48y (M:20.8y SD: 4.8y), and one hundred and fifty nine participants completed the explicit recognition task (21 Male and 137 Female, with 1 failing to provide information on gender), aged 18y to 46y (M:20.9y SD: 4.3y).

Response time data was initially cleaned by removing any outliers using a low cut-off of 200ms or above 2.5 Sd from the mean, in a non-recursive manner (see Van Selst & Jolicoeur, 1994). For

response times and accuracy, the parametric assumption of normality was checked using both the Shapiro-Wilk test and values of skewness and kurtosis (e.g., DeCarlo 1997; Field, 2013; Razali & Wah, 2011). If all were violated non-parametric tests were used. Data from the implicit preference task and the explicit recognition task were analysed separately and all statistical tests were two-tailed.

For the implicit preference task, the first confirmatory hypothesis tested whether participants would correctly identify the location of an *Erotic* image in less time than a *Neutral* image. Analysis using a Wilcoxon non-parametric test showed no difference in median response times between *Erotic* and *Neutral* images, $Z=-0.517$, $p=0.61$, $r=-0.02$. The second confirmatory hypothesis tested whether participants would be more accurate at identifying the location of *Erotic* images compared to chance (i.e., 50%). A one sample t test comparing accuracy of responses to the *Erotic* images to chance showed no significant difference, $t(165)=0.363$, $p=0.717$, 95% CI (-0.21, 0.31), $d=0.02$.

For the explicit recognition task, the first confirmatory hypothesis tested whether participants would correctly recognise words that would be repeated later (i.e., Precognitively) in less time than those not repeated. Analysis using a repeated measures t test showed no difference in response times between *Repeated* and *Not Repeated* conditions (1073.8ms and 10859.9ms respectively), $t(158)=1.212$, $p=0.227$, 95% CI (-42.42, 10.15), $d=0.06$. The second confirmatory hypothesis tested whether participants would be more accurate (i.e., exhibit greater sensitivity) at recognising words which would be repeated later (i.e., Precognitively) compared to those not repeated. Analysis using a Wilcoxon non-parametric test showed no difference in median sensitivity levels between *Repeated* and *Non-Repeated* words, $Z=-0.4561$, $p=0.65$, $r=-0.02$.

Overall data from the implicit preference task and the explicit recognition task show no evidence of any precognitive effects. This raises the issue of whether there is no effect to find or whether this study simply failed to elicit them.

INVITED TALK

A Brief Introduction to Remote Viewing: An Overview of Remote Viewing - Its History, Applications, Results and the Science Behind It

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The US government pursued research and practical applications of extrasensory perception for almost a quarter of a century during the Cold War. The primary discipline to emerge from this was remote viewing, roughly describable as a form of disciplined clairvoyance with not just visual experience, but other perceptual modalities rolled into it. In 1995, with the Cold War safely put to bed (or so it seemed), the CIA publicly revealed the existence of what had become known as the Star Gate Program, and along with it many more details behind the application of remote viewing.

This presentation will introduce you to remote viewing, discussing briefly what it is, as well as its history and science. It will also focus on how remote viewing is done, what it can be used for, conditions under which it is performed, its shortcomings, empirical evidence for its reality and, if time allows, a remote viewing experiment in which everyone may participate.

Using Low-cost EEG Equipment to Screen for Individuals with Alleged Genuine Mediumistic Abilities? The Results from Numerous Field Studies

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The Spiritualist movement contains many examples of individuals purporting to enter into an altered-state condition from which philosophy and evidence of survival are alleged to be given from a discarnate influence. Since the formation of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in 1882, there have been many attempts by SPR members and researchers to find, test and gather empirical evidence of this type of phenomena using various methods. With notable SPR members adopting techniques, such as to obtain measures of possible psychological differences between the medium and discarnate influences (Carington, 1934), or the measurement of physiological responses made of the medium while demonstrating their alleged ability (Goldney & Soal, 1937).

Such cases are often limited to one or two participants recognised within the Spiritualist and scientific communities as being notable individuals with alleged genuine abilities. And though over the last decade further studies have been published showing the recruitment of slightly larger sample of participants (Delorme, Beischel, Michel et al, 2013; Hageman, Peres, Moreira-Almeida et al, 2009; Moreira-Almeida, Neto & Cardeña, 2008). These studies still fall short of anything close to meeting the participant sample numbers required to be able to form robust conclusions from the results gathered.

Fortunately, the membership of the Spiritualist religion within the UK has increased by 21% since 2001 (ONS, 2016) potentially indicating a new larger population from which to recruit participants. But to do so it would first be necessary to ensure the participants are representative of individuals with alleged genuine trance abilities and so a suitable and robust method to distinguish the alleged genuine participants from non-trance participants would need to be found.

In 2014 the author presented to the SPR Annual Conference in York (UK) the results from a preliminary field study investigating the physiological difference between a group of trance mediums engaged in some form of discarnate communication and a non-trance control group. Measured using a simple skin-conductance meter, notable physiological response differences were seen between groups. Suggesting a possible method of screening genuine trance mediums for potential further investigation.

Another common method of investigating trance mediumship with researchers is through the use of electroencephalograms (EEG) and other neuroimaging techniques. An advantage of such techniques is that they afford the researcher an opportunity to possibly identify specific neurological structures implicated during a trance demonstration. Unfortunately, such studies using neuroimaging technology frequently incur a high research cost burden, and therefore it's of paramount importance that participants recruited are truly representative of the target group. This arguably strengthens the need to be able to screen for indications of genuine abilities in participants at the earliest possible stage of the research.

A literature search of published research using neuroimaging techniques suggests that ESP and mediumistic phenomena may be associated with differences across the left and right cerebral hemispheres with modest support for right hemispheric contribution to such phenomena (Alexander, 2002; Williams, 2012). This therefore raises the following questions:

- i. could such brain hemispheric differences be associated with trance phenomena?

And

- ii. would the difference be measurable using low-cost EEG equipment, and in doing so provide a cost-effective screening tool?

To explore this hypothesis, over the past three years the author has conducted numerous neurological measurements in the field using a low-cost and commercially available 4-channel EEG headband that also provides research grade data accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals (Kovacevic, Ritter, Tays et al, 2015; Krigolson, Williams, Norton et al, 2017; Armanfard, Komeili, Reilly & Pino, 2016).

In this presentation, the author will share the results of neurological measurements taken from a collection of trance mediums, spanning different genders and ethnicities, but that also show a remarkable similarity between these mediums and suggested association of right hemispheric contribution. Along with discussing results from trance healers, Spiritualist healers and spirit artists working allegedly in a spirit-controlled condition.

The results support the hypothesis that there is a right hemispheric contribution associated with trance mediumship and through using a simple EEG headband it is possible to screen for individuals with alleged genuine abilities. Screening individuals at an early stage of the research using low-cost equipment while in the field afford the researchers with being able to target scarce resources effectively, a common situation in parapsychological research, whilst ensuring the participants used in controlled environments are genuinely representative of the target group.

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Deciphering the Messy Data of Contemporary Materialisation and Apport Phenomena: Is a Theory to Distinguish Mediumship from PK and Fraud Possible?

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Materialisations and apports have been the subjects of scientific study since before the founding of the SPR. However, contemporary phenomena have supplied enough precise data so that a refined theory about these complex phenomena might be made (or so it seems). Researcher Stephen Braude defines apportations (sometimes called “teleportations”) as cases where already existing objects disappear from one location and reappear (usually suddenly) in another location, while materialisations are cases where objects seem to be produced out of nothing. This paper will closely examine the evidence associated with the apport phenomena of contemporary physical mediums Michael Shane, Kai Mugge, and Nicole de Haas as well as materialisation phenomena of Amyr Amiden and “Katie the Gold Leaf Lady.” Michael Shane purports to apport items (mainly crystals) from his mouth, while Kai Mugge allegedly apport them from his eyelids and Nicole de Haas has phenomena related to teleportation of a known object in one location to another location. Amyr Amiden and Katie the Gold Leaf Lady also offer two examples of well-researched materialisation and apportation phenomena. Based on all this evidence, this paper asks whether a theory to distinguish between genuine apports created with the assistance of discarnate entities (aka mediumship), PK (ie apports created by the living agent psi) and fraud is possible and then proposes several lines of inquiry to do just this. Images, videos, and audio will be used to illustrate the differences between mediumship, PK, and fraud in materialisations and apports and a theoretical model will then be offered to transform this messy data into cleaner distinctions. The works of Stanley Krippner and Stephen Braude (among others) as well as contemporary séance reports will be referenced in this paper.

A New Survey of the Phenomenology and Impact of Perceived Spontaneous and Sought After-Death Communications

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A spontaneous After-Death Communication (ADC) occurs when a bereaved person unexpectedly perceives the deceased person. This may be through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, or touch, but commonly recipients might simply “feel the presence” of the deceased person or have a subjective impression of having received a contact or a communication, for example during sleep. ADCs occur frequently, with an estimated 25-50% of the bereaved having experienced one or more (Cooper, Roe & Mitchell, 2015), and have been reported in different cultures and times (Haraldsson, 2012; Sidgwick, Sidgwick & Johnson, 1894). Sought experiences are instances in which people purposely engage in

activity purportedly demonstrating contact with the known dead, this is commonly associated with séances through to one-to-one sittings with spiritualist mediums.

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 (recipients) 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.

Whatever the ontological status of ADCs, they are perceived as real by a great number of persons and therefore deserve to be taken seriously by researchers interested in the nature of consciousness. When engaged with and understood, such experiences, can be beneficial for the bereaved person in helping them come to terms with their loss (Cooper, Roe & Mitchell, 2015). For example, Drewry (2003) interviewed seven participants who reported relief, comfort, encouragement, forgiveness, love, joy, and most notably hope as a consequence of their alleged communication with the dead. Participants also felt a continued bond with the deceased, which was helpful when it came to coping with their loss. Experiences were considered beneficial, even if they were initially frightening.

The adaptive grief outcomes of post-death experiences were investigated by Parker (2004). Twelve people were interviewed who had been bereaved within the preceding year, of whom eleven experienced positive changes such as personal and/or spiritual growth. Parker concluded that the experiences were not due to any form of psychopathology, but served 'needs' of the bereavement process, especially when the experiences were regarded as veridical in nature. It is evident, then, that anomalous experiences can occur as a natural part of the bereavement process and can be beneficial for coping and recovery. The objective of this 2-year research project is to gain a better understanding of the phenomenology and the impact of spontaneous ADCs. Using an online survey methodology, we aimed to explore the incidence and coincidence of features of ADCs and their linkage to particular impacts upon recipients.

Present Research Aims

The present study aims to expand on previous large-scale surveys (e.g. Burton, 1980; Guggenheim & Guggenheim, 1995; Haraldsson, 2012; LaGrand, 1999; Rees, 1971) to examine a wide range of perceived ADCs, focusing on their *phenomenology* and covariates. We thus set out to answer the following questions: Who has an ADC? In what form (type) are ADCs reported? Under what circumstances do they occur? What attributions do people make to their ADCs? Who are the deceased persons supposedly initiating the contact and how are they related to the experient? Are there differences between countries?

The second objective is to analyse the *impact* of perceived ADCs on experients. The following questions will be addressed: How do experients experience ADCs? What is the impact on experients? How does it influence the grieving process? How does it influence personal beliefs? Does the national and social context influence individuals' experiences?

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 using the onlinesurveys platform (<https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/>), consisting of a varying number of questions (responses to earlier questions determine which subsequent questions

are presented). The main themes of the questionnaire include: 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 profile of the deceased person perceived (including cause of death). Data have been being collected in several European languages (English, Spanish, French). Data collection is complete and analysis of 1,003 completed questionnaires is ongoing. In this talk we will present our preliminary analysis of the English language survey.

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Conscious Spacetime. Experiences Beyond the Brain and Faster than Light. Towards a Science of the Soul.

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At the start of Towards a Science of Consciousness (TSC) conference 1994 David Chalmers clarified that there are *the easy problems*, mainly behaviour, that *can* be explained by the brain, and **the hard problem**, the conscious experience, for which even those who believe that the brain creates consciousness have to admit:

“No one has produced any plausible explanation as to how the experience of the redness of red could arise from the action of the brain.” (1) and

“The problem, the absolute mystery we do not know how to fit consciousness together with the world-view of science.” (2)

Tononi and Koch at TSC 2014 stated, “Indeed, as long as one starts from the brain and asks how it could possibly give rise to experience—in effect trying to ‘distill’ mind out of matter the problem may be not only hard, but almost impossible to solve.” (3)

So, they argued for an axiomatic approach to consciousness, Tononi's *Integration Information Theory* (IIT) which besides five "self-evident" axioms, uses at least two assumptions, which are neither self-evident nor necessary:

1. "I am seeing, hearing feeling something *here*, inside my own head." (*italics in org*, (3))

This is actually refuted by data, as *sensory experiences* are never localized in the brain/head but in the body or the surroundings.

Arguments for *Consciousness outside the head* also in (4,5,6).

But what about memory and thoughts, e.g. about future? They are not in space outside brain now, so must be in the brain? No. Einstein-Minkowski showed that spacetime is ontologically (at least) four-dimensional, that is all that has happened and all that will happen in time exist all at once, but outside the now (7). So it is argued that memories and thoughts are located in spacetime outside the now and thus outside 3D brain and that consciousness can extend in time as in space.

2. Tononi and Koch further states; "Every experience will have associated NCC" (neural correlate of consciousness). This is a plausible hypothesis but not self-evident and ought to be taken as a further axiom A1. It is possible to take an alternative axiom:

A2: There are two sets of conscious experiences:

M1, where experiences *have* NCC,

and

M2, where experiences *have no* NCC and M2 are not empty.

As there is no known explanation of *how* brain can "produce" any experience at all it is legitimate to take out-of-body experiences at face value and as a tentative support for A2*.

At first it seems impossible to *empirically* decide which of A1 or A2 best fits the set of *all experiences*, as neither seems possible to falsify. Near-death-experiences where people see past, present and future events at once can be interpreted as an experience of the 4D spacetime. When a person also "moves" to different events of his life, this can be interpreted as existence of an extra time dimension for moving in 4D and the experience can be interpreted as a 5D experience.^{[1][SEP]} My mathematical conjecture is that a 4D structure (brain in 4D spacetime) in no sense can "create", "produce", "emerge" etc. a 5D structure and that this could be possible to prove mathematically-logically. Thus existence of $\geq 5D$ experiences and a mathematical proof of the conjecture would constitute a proof that there are experiences not created by 4D brain. Experiences are then supposedly describable as located in an extension of Einstein-Minkowski's theory of relativity. Einstein missed the possibility of phenomena faster than light. This is possible to describe in 6D spacetime, three space and three-time dimensions (7), which include all future **possibilities** and give a better description of our conscious experience, both normal sensory experiences, mental experiences and e.g. near-death experiences and parapsychological experiences. I claim that there are no scientific facts telling against this view.

* Actually, we have the possibility to three different relations between NCC and conscious experiences c.e. and thus three different subsets of the set of all c.e.= $C.E.= \{\forall c.e.; c.e.\exists\}$

M1: $\{c.e. \in C.E.; c.e. \text{ has NCC}\}$

M2: $\{c.e. \in C.E.; c.e. \text{ has no NCC}\}$ (and thus fulfil even the stronger claim not being produced by the brain)

M3: $\{c.e. \in C.E.; c.e. \text{ has NCC and } c.e. \text{ yet not produced by the brain}\}$.

Taken OBE at face value support that M3 is not empty but not necessarily that M2 is not empty, i.e. an OBE seemingly can have NCC even if not produced by brain. But existence of experiences $\geq 5D$ + proof of conjecture gives strong support for M2 in a stronger sense that as an c.e. not produced by the brain and thus can have no NCC.

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Verification of objective existence of non-physical body

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The view that we, as human being, are made of more than just physical body is supported by anecdotal accounts of those who had out-of-the-body experiences, typically when they have nearly died; as well as by countless psychic individuals and skilled meditation practitioners who can leave their physical bodies and move around the space at will with a non-physical body.

However, as out-of-the-body experiences are subjective, and they usually happen spontaneously and cannot be controlled or repeated, nor can they be independently verified. As existing scientific theory cannot accommodate the objective existence of anything non-physical, these experiences are often regarded by mainstream scientific community as 'hallucination', fantasy or even 'mental illness'.

It appears that in order to study non-physical existence objectively, new theoretical framework needs to be established that not only explains non-physical phenomena, but also provide framework for systematic experimental investigation of non-physical existence.

In a recently proposed metacomputics model, it is presumed that an operating computer exists in Platonic realm. Key points of the model are as following;

- The platonic computer is made by, of, with, from Consciousness.
- i.e., Consciousness is hardware as well as software for the platonic computer
- Consciousness (power to conceive, to perceive, and to be self-aware) is the most fundamental and irreducible existence.
- Space and its contents arise from Consciousness via computational processing of the Platonic computer.

According to Metacomputics model, Multiverse is a set of multiple parallel universes within the same space. Each universe is produced by a platonic computer operating at a specific clock speed that gives the existence of that universe a specific vibration frequency. Although all the parallel universes superimpose in the same space, most people only tune into one vibration frequency and experience

only the physical universe. Whereas psychics can tune into more one vibration frequencies, similar to tune into different radio/TV channels, so they can experience more than one parallel universes.

Based on metacomputics model, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Phantom limb exists objectively in another parallel universe of Multiverse as a non-physical limb.
2. Phantom limb can be observed by psychic individual when he/she tunes into the vibration frequency of the particular level of Multiverse.

An experimental procedure has been established to verify the existence of phantom limb, assuming it is still attached to the rest of the physical body after amputation. The experimental procedure involves double blind experiments involves psychic viewing of phantom limb.

The experiment suggested above has profound implications to our understanding of the multiverse and of ourselves as human.

If the results are positive, it would prove that we are made more than just a physical body. When the physical body is gone, there is a non-physical body left behind. We are indeed in superposition of more than one layer of existence.

If psychic individual's ability to observe phantom limb can be proven to be reliable, then psychic viewing (referred to in esoteric circles as seeing with the "third eye") can be deployed as instrument to detect non-physical forms in parallel universes.

With such an instrument, vast new areas of medical, psychological, and philosophical research would open up. A new dimension of knowledge about the multiverse and ourselves as human can be explored. A new renaissance and new era of human civilization will start to dawn.

This talk will report on preliminary results on psychic viewing of phantom limb.

INVITED TALK

Out of Thin Air?

An Overview and Assessment of the Apport Studies Performed between 1928 and 1938 by Elemér Chengery Pap in Budapest

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Physical mediumship is characterized by the occurrence of phenomena that seem to defy currently prevailing standard theories of physics, such as inexplicable movements of objects (macro-psychokinesis) and the seemingly unexplained materialization of objects, sometimes in closed spaces (apports). Nevertheless, systematic investigations into apport phenomena have barely been performed. One of the few exceptions is represented by Elemér Chengery Pap's studies that were conducted from 1928 to 1938 in a "Metapsychical Laboratory" in Budapest that was specifically created to study physical mediums – especially apport medium Lajos Pap (unrelated to Chengery Pap). Chengery Pap summarized his research in a voluminous but little-known Hungarian treatise that ranks among the largest monographs of experimental parapsychology written by a single investigator.

In this presentation, I first provide an overview on Chengery Pap's research and laboratory, as well as on the most remarkable phenomena reported from Lajos Pap that he produced under apparently strict control conditions. They range from apports of various solid objects, liquids, snow, plants, ensembles of living insects, crawfish, to living vertebrates up to the size of a sparrow hawk. Chengery Pap collected these apports and exhibited them in show cases in an "apport museum" that belonged to his laboratory. Not surprisingly, these occurrences attracted the interest of numerous parapsychologists. Consequently, Chengery Pap and his medium were invited to hold a series of 10 experimental sittings in Nandor Fodor's International Institute for Psychical Research in London in 1935. The proceedings and outcomes of these test sittings, however, revealed remarkable loopholes in Chengery Pap's experimental approach and threw a rather critical light on Lajos Pap's judgment. In addition to this, I focus other unfavourable aspects of Chengery Pap's monograph such as the seemingly purposeful omission of important information about problematical aspects of Lajos Pap's mediumship. Finally, I describe experiences and results from my own studies of alleged contemporary physical mediums with a specialty on producing apports such as Kai Mügge.

In the light of all these findings, Chengery Pap's research approach and manner of presenting it cannot be regarded convincing, and the authenticity of Lajos Pap's phenomena remains questionable. Nevertheless, Chengery Pap's extensive treatise remains of historical significance in parapsychology and provides an instructive example highlighting some of the difficulties in studying physical mediums.

POSTERS

Science Can Now Explain Psi

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Psi has always been called parascience because there has never been any evidence for an information carrier. How can thoughts in one mind leak to another mind? Could that hidden carrier be a normal and vital part of life? Biologists are fully aware of a fundamental problem with genetics, which is that DNA cannot be a book of instructions directly controlling who we are. DNA probably works indirectly, enabling a data flow between parents and foetus, controlling the growth of mind and body. That flow of data relies on a hidden carrier, which is also the carrier for psi.

DNA is mainly a history of evolution, often described as junk DNA, where the DNA of the foetus is unique, being a 50% copy from each parent. The information for growth of a foetus, flowing from the parents, is accepted only because it's DNA is 50% the same as the parents, all other growth information being rejected. In this way life has always proceeded by a process of cell division and copying from a single cell, copying the form of the previous generation, by what we know as inheritance. This applies to single celled bacteria, plants, mammals and man. All life proceeds by the direct copying process that copies form, brain and mind. This mind-to-mind copying downloads instinct, and the brain operating system, to control all the bodily functions during life.

The same mind-to-mind flow is occasionally available later in life, when there is sufficient emotion or need. That natural flow of information is the explanation for psi, which relies on a quantum carrier of information, for which there is now sufficient scientific evidence. Evidence for this carrier will be detailed, showing that it is spinning quartz particles known to carry data. The evidence for the carrier comes from two quite separate reports where fluctuations in timing are closely matched. The first report was a scientific analysis of 2483 successful telepathy tests reported by James Spottiswoode as a result of the American government's investigation into the use of telepathy for wartime spying. Another report by Michel Gauquelin showed the same fluctuations in timing of the carrier, indicating that it originated from planets.

The new paradigm for genetics is supported by much evidence. It provides a clear mechanism for heredity, which also fills the missing link in evolution, both of which have been scientific mysteries up to the present. An examination of psychic phenomena will indicate how telepathy relates to healing, spiritualism, and hauntings where traumatic memories are stored in quartz which is compatible with the carrier. Reincarnation may now be understood as it is not transmigration of souls, but the natural process of inheritance with a person other than the parents of the child.

All the anomalies that have been mentioned represent a crisis for science, which has led to a new paradigm, offering replacement for the erroneous 75-year-old theory of genetics. Thomas Kuhn has described how science proceeds by a crisis of anomalies leading to a paradigm change. The above crisis in biology and psi indicate that a paradigm change is necessary, giving the explanation for psi.

Miss X and Mrs Sidgwick: A Comparison of Methodology

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Both Mrs. Sidgwick and Ada Goodrich Freer (Miss X) were important in the early work of the SPR. This paper will compare their methodologies in terms of epistemology and socio-economic background. It will contrast Freer's epistemological method with that of Eleanor Sidgwick's more ratiocinative approach.

Part 1: Eleanor Sidgwick

Eleanor Sidgwick is often glossed over when it comes to the early SPR and preternatural research in general. Her "skeptical" approach did little to impress spiritualists and skeptics alike but it affords a remarkable case of a researcher in an era of women's slow integration into the academic and medical world.

Part 2: Ada Goodrich Freer

Unlike Eleanor Sidgwick's approach, "Miss X" was a medium until she disavowed mediumship. Her articles provide a strange amalgamation of epistemologies (occultic, rational, scholarly) and her possible false history, fraud and plagiarism made her a target of skeptics. One researcher of the SPR who was not impressed was Eleanor Sidgwick. This section will quickly take a look at Freer's methods and why personalities like Sidgwick were suspicious.

Axel Munthe: A Pact with the Devil or a Case of Enlightenment?

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Axel Munthe (1857-1949) was a Swedish physician educated in Paris as the youngest physician in his time to qualify in France. Until his death he was regarded as one of the most outstanding intellects of his time becoming famous through his dramatised self-biographical account, *The Story of San Michele*. His free treatment to the poor, together with his volunteer work in the British Red cross and during the cholera epidemic in Napoli, along with his love of animals, all contributed to his reputation. This gave him a status as a high society doctor in London, Rome, and he became physician to the Swedish queen.

Munthe gained thereby an impressive list of personal contacts including Frederic Myers, Henry and William James, and Edith Balfour-Lyttleton. He was a member of the SPR and as a young physician he was present at the death of Myers in Rome. His medical education was nevertheless very short, and he worked mainly with hypnosis and suggestion, daring to criticise Charcot, his former mentor, and developing a view of hypnosis and placebo effects consistent with modern day concepts.

His autobiographical account gives expression to constant dialogues between dissociated sides of himself. His life had many tragic aspects to it including blindness. In a manner similar to Goethe's Faust, he saw himself having given up a promising medical career for his dream residence on Capri which finally he could no longer see and being seduced by high societal life when another part of him detested this and preferred the life of a recluse. He was convinced that he possessed from childhood onwards a remarkable psychic healing ability to which he attributed much of his success as a physician.

Contemporary Examples of Animal Magnetism An Explanation of the Powers of Franz Mesmer

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In his lifetime Franz Anton Mesmer was branded a charlatan by the scientific community on account of his claim of being able to cure many maladies and medical problems through animal magnetism. Notwithstanding this, although his specific claim to possess the power of animal magnetism has been discounted, his methods have had a vast influence in every branch of mental healing and spiritual healing and healing through hypnotism, as well as New Age techniques that involve not only “the power of suggestion” but also the physical “laying on of hands.” The list of actual movements that have adopted Mesmer’s techniques include eclecticism, phrenology, Spiritualism, mind cure, Christian Science, homeopathy, transcendentalism, New Thought, Theosophy, psychoanalysis, osteopathy, chiropractic, anthroposophy, holistic health, positive thinking, New Age healing, hypnotism, biophysics, biomagnetism, magnetobiology and psychiatry. This article reviews Mesmer’s techniques, and gives a broad overview of all the other branches of mental and spiritual healing where his methods are still used in one way or another, and presents recent scientific research that completely vindicates Mesmer’s original claim to possess the power of being able to manipulate the “magnetic fluid” in the living organism. In a research article in *Nature Genetics* entitled *Remote Regulation of Glucose Homeostasis Using Genetically Encoded Nanoparticles* (2014) it has been found using techniques in radiogenetics that the ferritin in our bodies (a paramagnetic material) can be manipulated not only by low-frequency electromagnetic waves (radio waves) but also by magnetic fields. Brain waves are also low-frequency electromagnetic waves, and as it is well known that the brain waves of a healer/hypnotist become synchronized with that of the patient, it is proposed that brain waves play a part in what Mesmer originally called animal magnetism.

Latest Research in Radiogenetics

In 2014, a research paper was published in *Nature Genetics* which launched a new direction in optogenetics which is known as radiogenetics (Stanley, Sauer, Kane, Dordick & Friedman, 2014). Radiogenetics will make it possible to remotely control biological targets in living animals without wires, implants, or drugs. A research team at Rockefeller University used electromagnetic waves to turn on insulin production to lower blood sugar in diabetic mice. A naturally occurring iron storage particle in the body, ferritin, when exposed to a radiowave or a magnetic field can activate an ion channel called TRPV1 which in turn leads to the activation of an insulin producing gene. These two proteins, ferritin, and TRPV1 acting together as a nano-machine can be used to trigger gene expression in vivo. And it is all done by radiowaves.

“The method allows one to wirelessly control the expression of genes in a living animal and could potentially be used for conditions like hemophilia to control the production of a missing protein. Two key attributes are that the system is genetically encoded and can activate cells remotely and quickly,” says Jeffrey Friedman, Marilyn M. Simpson Professor head of the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics at Rockefeller University. “We are now exploring whether the method can also be used to control neural activity as a means for noninvasively modulating the activity of neural circuits (“Radio genetics seeks to remotely control cells and genes,” 2014).

Radiogenetics is being heralded as being more effective than other systems in optogenetics that simply use light as the on/off switch which tend to be only effective near the skin and require permanent implants. Originally the researchers used low-frequency radio waves which heat or move the ferritin particles and the TRPV1 which is situated in the membrane surrounding the cell opens up a channel allowing calcium ions to flow through and activate a piece of synthetic DNA implanted

upstream to the gene they want to turn on. In this case, it was the gene that synthesizes the protein insulin, but it seems that in this way they can activate any gene of interest (“Radio genetics seeks to remotely control cells and genes,” 2014).

Interestingly the researchers were able to achieve the same result by manipulating the ferritin with a magnetic field, which obviously recalls the theories of Franz Mesmer in the 18th century about animal magnetism and the magnetic cure. It could well be the case that a hypnotist is able to channel his/her brain waves which are ELF radio waves to manipulate the ferritin in the cells and genes of his/her subjects. Mesmer himself stated that the magnets were immaterial to his treatment and what was essential was his state of mind towards the patient. He was willing the patient to be healed and there is a reasonable amount of authority for the proposition that the brainwaves (ELF radiowaves) of healer and patient become synchronized (Fahrion, et al., 1992) (Cade & Coxhead, 1996). Indeed, one-on-one interlocution or close contact in general seems to have a mutual effect on the brain waves of the participants (Pérez et al., 2017) (Diego et al., 2004) (Mohr et al., 2017) (Rozenkrantz et al., 2017). I stress that this new research used low-frequency radio waves and that is precisely what brainwaves are, and that they apparently act in exactly the same way as a magnetic field.

“The use of a radiofrequency-driven magnetic field is a big advance in remote gene expression because it is non-invasive and easily adaptable,” says Johnathan Dordick, who is Howard P. Isermann, professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering and vice president of research at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

You don’t have to insert anything—no wires, no light systems—the genes are introduced through gene therapy. You could have a wearable device that provides a magnetic field to certain parts of the body and it might be used therapeutically for many diseases, including neurodegenerative diseases. It’s limitless at this point (“Radio genetics seeks to remotely control cells and genes,” 2014).

“In this current study, we’ve shown that by opening the TRPV1 channel to allow calcium ions to enter the cell, we can turn on a gene. Since neurons can be depolarized by calcium and other positively charged ions, such as those the TRPV1 channel controls, we hope that this system may be effective at regulating neural activity,” says co-first author Sarah Stanley, a senior research associate in Friedman’s lab (“Radio genetics seeks to remotely control cells and genes,” 2014).

It is well settled that the ferritin protein is widely expressed in the brain (Han, Day, Connor & Beard, 2002). And a whole new area of genetic engineering is being developed called ‘magnetogenetics’ specifically concerned with targeting ferritin in the dopamine pathway of the brain in order to remotely control and influence specific behavioral patterns (Wheeler, Smith, Ottolini, Barker, Purohit, Grippo, Gaykema, Spano, Beenhakker, Kucenas, Patel, Deppmann, & Güler, 2016). In an unrelated area of research, it has been found that low frequency (RF) radio waves affect the expression of the c-Fos protooncogene in the brain (Jorge-Mora, Misa-Agustiño, Rodríguez-González, Jorge-Barreiro, Ares-Pena & López-Martín, 2011).

Suggested Experiments

Bearing in mind that we are here dealing with supranormal phenomena so any effects, if they are found at all, will be extremely subtle, it should be possible to monitor the brain waves of persons exposed to magnets and low frequency radio waves and compare them with the brain waves of hypnotized people in the presence of their therapist, and ‘brainwashed’ followers in the presence of their cult leader or spiritual leader.

Two trials coming up this year in the United States that are contemporary examples of animal magnetism at work in contemporary society. One is the trial of Elizabeth Holmes for the Theranos scam and the other is the trial of Keith Raniere who was the leader of a cult NXVIM that included many female actresses and socialites whom he had allegedly ‘brainwashed’ into becoming his sex-slaves.

A Comprehensive Qualitative and Psychometric Comparative Analysis of DMT Experiences (DMTE) and Near-Death Experiences (NDE) - in search of rich phenomenological evaluation of the “DMT theory” of NDEs

Pascal Michael

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As part of the currently ongoing DMT observational field study by Luke *et al*, various measures of individual differences such as temporal lobe lability, absorption and personality, as well as acute phenomenology such as mystical and near-death experience (NDE) were included. I intend to present how such baseline measures may correlate with the nature of the DMT experience elicited. For instance, absorption has already predicted DMT-induced NDEs (Timmermann *et al*, 2018), while temporal lability has yet to be explored as such a predictor but is associated with peak religious experiences (Persinger, 1985), sensed presence (Luke *et al*, 2018) and OBEs (Bos *et al*, 2016). Our preliminary results suggest similar correlations. I also plan to focus on the psychometric relationship between the DMT and near-death experience, central to my doctorate on the phenomenology of the two states. For instance, previously (Timmerman *et al*, 2018) DMT-induced mystical and near-death experiences were found to be significantly correlated, where ratings of NDE features were found to insignificantly differ between DMT-occasioned and ‘authentic’ NDEs. Again, our current data suggests converging results, however evident disparities between the DMT and NDE will be further discussed.

43rd International SPR Annual Conference
Holiday Inn, Leicester
20th – 22nd September 2019

Friday 20 September

13.00 - 14.30 Registration

14.30 - 14.40 Adrian Parker, Conference Programme chairman: Introduction

Altered States of Consciousness

Chaired by Chris Roe

14.40 - 15.00 Adrian Parker & Annekatrin Puhle: The Experiences of Skilled Lucid Dreamers

15.00 - 15.30 Alan Murdie: Dreams of Aberfan: A Forgotten Collection of Premonitions Received from the Public Concerning the Aberfan Disaster

15.30 - 16.00 Erika Annabelle Pratte: Integrating a Near-Death Experience

16.00 - 16.30 TEA/COFFEE

16.30 - 17.00 David Luke: Psi and the 'Spirit Molecule' DMT

17.00 - 17.30 Louise N Spiers, Chris A Roe, Melinda Spencer: This Other Side of Reality: An IPA Study of Spiritual Experiences in Epilepsy

17.30 - 18.30 **Panel Discussion** *What is Psi?*

Chaired by Adrian Parker with invited speakers:
Michael Nahm, Chris Robinson, Paul H. Smith, Steve Taylor

19.00 - 20.30 DINNER

Invited Talk

20.30 - 21.30 Steve Taylor: Awakening Experiences

Saturday 21 September

Historical Aspects

Chaired by Annekatrin Puhle

9.00 - 9.30 Muhamet Alijaj: The Work of Catherine Crowe and Edward William Cox and their Influence on the Early SPR

9.30 - 10.00 Fotini Pallikari: Angelos Tanagras - The Theory of Psychobolia in the History of Greek Parapsychology

EVPs

- 10.00 - 10.30 Ann R. Winsper: Interpreting Electronic Voice Phenomena: The Role of Auditory Perception, Paranormal Belief and Individual Differences
- 10.30 - 11.00 TEA/COFFEE
- 11.00 - 11.30 Sean Richards: 'More Voices and Faces from the Greetings Project': A five-year investigation into Instrumental Trans-Communication

Belief and Experiences

Chaired by Glenn Hitchman

- 11.30 - 12.00 Abigail L. Wright & Callum E. Cooper: The Psychology of Dogmatic Scepticism towards Parapsychology
- 12.00 - 12.30 Chris Roe: A Representative Survey of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences
- 12.30 - 14.00 LUNCH

Psychic Detection

Chaired by Cal Cooper

- 14.00 - 14.30 Zofia Weaver: Does Evidence from Psychic Detection Tell Us Anything about Survival?

Invited Talk

- 14.30 - 15.30 Chris Robinson: What Psychic Experiences Have Taught Me

Spontaneous Experiences

Chaired by Cal Cooper

- 15.30 - 16.00 Charlotte Denney & Callum E. Cooper: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Childhood Anomalous Experiences

- 16.00 - 16.30 TEA/COFFEE

Brief Reports

- 16.30 - 16.50 Ashley Knibb: The Evolution of a Ghost Hunter. How the Royal Oak Case Changed My Perception
- 16.50 - 17.10 Urszula Wolski: Researching the Researchers: An Exploration into the Experiences and Beliefs of Investigators of Paranormal Phenomenon
- 17.10 - 17.30 Terence Palmer: Integrating Research, Training & Clinical Practice in the Treatment of Spirit Possession

Remote Viewing

Chaired by David Vernon

17.30 - 18.00 Leo Ruickbie: What the Maid Saw: A Case of Remote Viewing During the First World War

The Elusiveness of Psi

Chaired by Adrian Parker

18.00 - 18.30 David Vernon: Measuring Precognitive Effects Using a Fast Implicit and Fast Explicit Task

18.30 - 20.00 DINNER

Invited Talk

20.00 - 21.00 Paul H. Smith:
A Brief Introduction to Remote Viewing: An overview of remote viewing - its history, applications, results, and the science behind it

Sunday 22 September

Mediumship

Chaired by Jan Pilotti

9.00 - 9.30 Chris Connelly: Using Low-cost EEG Equipment to Screen for Individuals with Alleged Genuine Mediumistic Abilities? The Results from Numerous Field Studies

9.30 - 10.00 Martha Maxine Meilleur: Deciphering the Messy Data of Contemporary Materialisation and Apport Phenomena: Is a Theory to Distinguish Mediumship from PK and Fraud Possible?

10.00 - 10.30 Evelyn Elsaess, Chris A. Roe, Callum E. Cooper, Alejandro Parra, & David Lorimer: A New Survey of the Phenomenology and Impact of Perceived Spontaneous and Sought After-Death Communications

10.30 - 11.00 TEA/COFFEE

Theories of Psi

Chaired by Bernard Carr

11.00 - 11.30 Jan Pilotti: Conscious Spacetime. Experiences Beyond the Brain and Faster than the Light - Towards a Science of the Soul

11.30 - 12.00 Simon Duan: Verification of Objective Existence of Non-physical Body

Michael Nahm

12.00 - 13.00 Out of Thin Air? An Overview and Assessment of the Apport Studies Performed between 1928 and 1938 by Elemér Chengery Pap in Budapest

13.15 - 14.00 LUNCH

Pascal Michael: *A Comprehensive Qualitative and Psychometric Comparative Analysis of DMT Experiences (DMTE) and Near-Death Experiences (NDE) – in search of rich phenomenological evaluation of the “DMT theory” of NDEs*

E V P

Parapsychology

P r e m o n i t i o n s

L u c i d
D r e a m i n g

N e a r - D e a t h E x p e r i e n c e

S p i r i t u a l E x p e r i e n c e s

R e m o t e V i e w i n g

C o n s c i o u s n e s s

P s i

S p i r i t P o s s e s s i o n

G h o s t H u n t i n g