Paranthropology

Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal

Contents

Welcome to Vol. 3 No. 3, the second anniversary issue of *Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal*. This issue is released alongside a hardback anthology featuring a selection of the best articles from the past four issues of the journal. As well as chapters from Lee Wilson, Mark A. Schroll, Charles D. Laughlin, Fiona Bowie, James McClenon, Fabian Graham, Serena Roney-Dougal, David E. Young, David Luke and myself, the book also features an exclusive Foreword from Robert Van de Castle and an Afterword from Michael Winkelman. The chapters were chosen for their theoretical and methodological contribution to the developing anthropology of the paranormal. For more information on the availability of the Paranthropology anthology go to page 69.

In *A Paradigm-Breaking Hypothesis for Solving the Mind-Body Problem*, Bernardo Kastrup details what has come to be called the 'filter theory' of consciousness as an alternative to the models of mind-body interaction currently dominating the scientific study of consciousness. In '*Child Witches': From Imaginary Cannibalism to Ritual Abuse*, sociologist of witchcraft Leo Ruickibe takes an in-depth look at certain contemporary African witch beliefs in the UK, with a particular emphasis on the kind of ritual abuse exemplified by the death of Kristy Bamu in 2010. In *Entheogenic Spirituality and Gender in Australia*, Joseph Gelfer details the findings of survey research into perceived gender equality in the Australia psychedelic community. Erwin Rooijakkers, a student of Transpersonal Psychology and Consciousness Studies at the University of Northampton, gives an experiential account of his own visits to other worlds. Lara Bauer's article explores the practice of psychic surgery in the UK, with reference to her own ethnographic fieldwork with a London based psychic surgeon. And finally, Liam Sutherland's paper explores the legacy of Sir E.B. Tylor's theory of animism, arguing that it is still a useful tool in the theorisation of religion.

We had originally intended to include a verbatim interview, conducted by Dr. Fiona Bowie and myself, with Prof. Erlendur Haraldsson in this issue. Unfortunately, due to some sort of technical malfunction, the audio recording disappeared and the interview was lost. It is a great shame, but we hope to be able to conduct more interviews in future. Indeed, we are currently arranging interviews with folklorist David J. Hufford, parapsychologist George P. Hansen and master stage magician Eugene Burger. So look out for those. **Jack Hunter**

A Paradigm-Breaking Hypothesis for Solving the Mind-Body Problem
Bernardo Kastrup

The modern scientific understanding of mental phenomena asserts that the brain is the sole causal agency of mind. This view is substantiated by the correlations ordinarily observed between subjective mental states and objective brain states. Yet, there is an increasing amount of evidence suggesting that, under certain extraordinary circumstances, the correlation between peak subjective experiences and brain states breaks. This strongly indicates either that the brain is not the sole causal agency of mind, or (and more likely) that it is not a causal agency at all. In this paper, an alternative hypothesis for the relationship between the mind and the brain will be discussed; one that is entirely consistent with current neuroscience data and increasingly supported by the latest scientific evidence. The hypothesis explains not only why brain states are, ordinarily, tightly correlated to mind states, but also how, under extraordinary conditions, subjective experience can occur independently of the brain. This paper offers a rational, evidence-based, yet fundamentally different perspective on the nature of consciousness, life, identity, and death than that offered by materialism.

Introduction

There is an undeniable correlation between brain states and subjective experience. Anyone who has ever been intoxicated with alcohol will be able to attest to marked changes in cognition accompanying the changes in brain chemistry. In addition, alterations of consciousness accompanying physical trauma to the brain, as well as the use of anesthetics and psychiatric drugs, are also examples of the tight link between mind and brain that many of us are personally familiar with. Laboratory studies have provided evidence that this correlation is even more specific than one could infer from direct experience: particular conscious experiences have been linked to specific neuronal activation patterns in the brain (Metzinger 2000). Experiments with Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) have also demonstrated that deactivation of specific brain regions correlates tightly to specific changes in subjective experience (Pascual-Leone *et al.* 2002). Therefore, any theoretical hypothesis purporting to explain the ontological status of mind must be able to explain why and how subjective experience seems, ordinarily, so tightly correlated to brain processes.

Yet, that mind states are correlated to brain states does not necessarily imply that brain states *cause* mind states. Assuming so is a known fallacy in science and philosophy called the *'cum hoc ergo propter hoc'* fallacy. For instance, the presence of large numbers of firefighters *correlates* with large fires, but firefighters do not *cause* fires. Similarly, the voices one hears coming out of an analog radio receiver correlate very tightly to the electromagnetic oscillations in the radio's circuitry, but that does not mean that the radio circuitry *synthesizes* the voices. Indeed, many logical possibilities remain open to explain the ordinarily observed correlation between subjective experience and brain activity, not only the materialist assumption that the brain causes the mind.

The Reigning Materialist Paradigm

By postulating that material brain states *are* (the sole cause of) subjective experience, the reigning materialist paradigm tentatively explains the ordinary correlations between subjective experience and brain states rather simply. Yet, such a paradigm is currently articulated in only a

vague and promissory manner, in that neuroscience does not specify precisely, or unambiguously, what measurable parameters of brain processes map onto what qualities of subjective experience. For instance, most neuroscientists assume a direct link between conscious experience and neuronal firings. Therefore, one would expect to find a consistent and straightforward mapping between the qualities of a subjective experience and measurable parameters of the associated neuronal firings; after all, the experience supposedly *is* (solely caused by) such firings. However, empirical observations in fact reveal an inconsistent and even contradictory relationship between the two (Tononi 2004a). Partly to deal with this kind of inconsistency, many neuroscientists speak of *specificity*: certain types of experience, regardless of their complexity or intensity, are supposed to be (solely caused by) the activation of particular subsets of neurons, regardless of the amount of neurons or neuronal firings involved (Gross 2002). Specificity thus seems arbitrary, for if experience *is* (solely caused by) particular neuronal firings, there should then be *some kind* of proportionality between the two.[1] Finally, there isn't even consensus that experience correlates with neuronal firings at all: Some neuroscientists postulate, for instance, that mental states originate from unobservable quantum-level processes taking place within neuronal microtubules (Hameroff 2006).

So we end up in a peculiar situation wherein *ignorance* is used to substantiate materialism: Since we don't know what specific material process is (the cause of) consciousness, given any individual observation neuroscientists can *always* postulate a hypothetical mapping between a physiological process and subjective experience that could conceivably explain such observation; all that is required is some (*any*) level of metabolism *anywhere* in the brain, which is not too difficult to find or reasonably assume.

The reason such surprising ambiguity is tolerated is this: when it comes to consciousness,

there is no way, *not even in principle*, to logically deduce the properties of subjective experience from the properties of matter (Chalmers 2006). In other words, there is no way to logically deduce conscious perception, cognition, or feeling from the mass, momentum, spin, position, or charge of the sub-atomic particles making up the brain. Indeed, nature abounds with structures wherein particles combine in extraordinarily complex and exquisite ways and yet seem to lead to no subjective experience at all. Even in the human brain this is the case: much of the neuronal processing in our heads, entailing the exact same kind of neurons that otherwise lead to awareness, is completely unconscious (Eagleman 2011). Such seemingly insurmountable difficulty in logically deducing the qualities of experience from the properties of matter is called 'the explanatory gap' (Levine 1999), or 'the hard problem of consciousness' (Chalmers 2003). This way, since we have no intuition to judge whether a particular mapping between a brain process and a conscious experience is at all reasonable, *any* proposed mapping seems just as good (or as bad) as any other; a fact easily misused in support of materialism.

In all fairness, neuroscientists readily admit that our current understanding of the brain is limited. As such, it is entirely legitimate that they remain open to many different alternatives for explaining conscious experience on the basis of material processes. But in doing so they are also acknowledging that, currently, there is no one mapping between specific parameters of brain physiology and subjective experience that is consistent with all empirical observations. Therefore, it is *not* possible to claim that the empirical data supports materialism, for such a claim would imply a coherent hypothesis (i.e. *one* mapping) that currently doesn't exist. To substantiate this further, let us briefly look at what Dr. Christof Koch, one of the world's leading neuroscientist in the field of consciousness research, considers the best materialist theory of

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[1] Technically, what I mean here is that, if the neuronal firings of an excitatory brain process are (the sole cause of) a conscious experience, then an increase in the complexity or intensity of the experience should be accompanied by a corresponding increase in the firings of that associated excitatory process, *given a constant level of inhibition.* It is understood that consciousness, in general, is related to an interplay between excitatory and inhibitory processes in potentially different brain regions.

consciousness available today (Koch 2011): Giulio Tononi's information integration theory (Tononi 2004b).

The Materialist Theory of Consciousness

Tononi's theory takes as input what he calls 'complexes': Neuronal processes in the brain, each with a given topology. The amount of information integrated by a complex, represented by the variable Φ, is then calculated for each complex based on its respective topology. The idea is that, when Φ crosses a certain threshold, the complex is considered conscious. The specific value of this threshold is determined through empirical calibration. When the calibration is reliable, researchers can then predict which brain processes cause conscious experience simply by looking at the corresponding Φ value.

Clearly, Tononi's theory merely provides a heuristic indicator for the presence of consciousness; an *ad hoc* rule-of-thumb. As such, it explains consciousness no more than a speedometer explains how a car moves: when the needle of the speedometer moves up, one knows that the car is moving; but that needle movement provides no insight into the fact that there is a combustion engine freeing up energy stored in the molecular bonds of hydrocarbons, thereby making such energy available for turning a crankshaft connected to an axle, which causes the car's wheels to turn, which in turn grip the irregularities of the road and, through Newton's third law of motion, cause the car to move. The latter would be a causal explanation, but Tononi's theory entails nothing analogous to it.

Let us look at an example from the field of biology to make this contrast clearer: the Krebs cycle of cellular respiration (Krebs and Weitzman 1987) is a full causal explanation for how energy is made available to an organism's cells. We know the inputs of the process: molecules of sugars and fats. We understand the oxidization reactions that progressively free up the energy stored in the molecular bonds of these sugar and fat molecules. We know in what form this energy becomes available to the cells: ATP. We know where all of this takes place: In the mitochondria. And, we know how the cells put the ATP to use. In other words, we have a closed and complete causal chain that allows us to deduce the properties of the observed phenomenon (i.e. the ability of cells to perform work), from the properties of the process correlated to it (i.e. oxidization reactions, cell structures like the mitochondria, etc.).

Tononi's theory does not offer us any such causal chain in the case of consciousness. It does not allow us to deduce, not even in principle, the properties of the observed phenomenon (i.e. subjective experience), from the properties of the process correlated to it (i.e. neuronal physiology). It only offers a heuristic indicator without any explanatory model for clarifying where subjective experience comes from, or why a certain level of information integration leads to such an extraordinary property as being conscious. Nearly all relevant questions remain unanswered by Φ just like all relevant questions about how the car moves remain unanswered by the speedometer.

Since Tononi's theory is claimed, by materialists, to be the best materialism has to offer, it is fair to conclude that materialism currently does not provide a sufficient explanatory framework for tackling the mind-body problem.

An Alternative Hypothesis

I hope to have established that the notion that consciousness is merely (the result of) material brain activity not only lacks explicit and specific elaboration, it cannot strictly be said to be supported by empirical observations. Therefore, it is legitimate and appropriate to offer alternative explanatory models.

All scientific models need, ultimately, to postulate ontological primitives: irreducible natural entities – which themselves can't be explained, but must be accepted as simply existing in and by themselves – on the basis of which to construct explanations for the rest of nature. Today, for instance, String Theory and M-Theory postulate imagined, abstract, undetectable 'superstrings' as the fundamental, irreducible building blocks of nature, on the basis of which every-

thing else is supposedly explainable in principle (Greene 2003). Materialism attempts to reduce conscious experience to physical entities like those. As such, it assumes consciousness to be derivative, not fundamental.

However, recent and powerful physical evidence indicates strongly that no physical entity or phenomenon can be explained separately from, or independently of, its subjective apprehension in consciousness (Gröblacher *et al*. 2007). If this is true, the logical consequence is that consciousness cannot be reduced to matter – for it appears that it is needed for matter to exist in the first place – but must itself be fundamental. From a philosophical point of view, this notion is entirely coherent and reasonable, for conscious experience is all we can be certain to exist; entities outside of consciousness being, as far as we can ever know, merely abstractions of mind. Such a notion also circumvents the 'explanatory gap' and the 'hard problem of consciousness,' since both only arise from the attempt to reduce consciousness to matter. Therefore, in the hypothesis elaborated upon below, conscious experience is itself taken to be an ontological primitive.

Now, if consciousness is primary and irreducible, then the brain cannot be the causal agency of mind; mind must exist *a priori*, ontologically preceding the brain. How can we then explain the empirical observation that, ordinarily, mind states correlate tightly to brain states?

The hypothesis here is that the function of the brain is to *localize* consciousness, pinning it to the space-time locus of the physical body. In doing so, the brain *modulates* conscious perception in accordance with the position and perspective of the body in space-time. Indeed, there would be clear survival advantages for the brain to evolve to do just that: by localizing and modulating subjective experience according to the space-time locus of the body, the brain coaxes mind to identify itself with the body and, therefore, contribute actively to the body's survival. When not subject to this localization and modulation mechanism, mind is unbound: It entails awareness of all there is across space, time, and perhaps beyond. It is difficult to imag-

ine such a state of mind as having a vested interest in the survival of localized and ephemeral aggregations of matter, such as physical bodies. Seen this way, the brain is a surprisingly effective mechanism constructed by evolution to capture, constrain, and put to use an otherwise unbound and irreducible aspect of nature: subjective experience itself. This can be seen as something analogous to how plants evolved to capture an otherwise unbound aspect of nature, sun light, and put it to use for the benefit of their own metabolism and survival.

According to this 'filter' hypothesis of mind-brain interaction, no subjective experience is ever created by the brain, but merely *selected* by it according to the position and perspective of the body in space-time, as Bergson so cogently argued (1912) over a hundred years ago. This selection process is akin to a *'filtering out'* of conscious experience: analogous to how an analog radio receiver selects, from among the variety of stations present concurrently in the broadcast signal, that which one wants to listen to; all other stations being filtered out and never reaching the awareness of the listener. As such, all subjective experiences exist *a priori*, irreducibly; the brain merely selects those that are useful for the survival of the physical body. The brain activation patterns that ordinarily correlate to conscious experience reflect the filtering process at work: They are analogous to the circuit oscillations in the radio's tuner, which correlate tightly to the sounds the radio produces. The presence of such circuit oscillations obviously does not mean that the radio is *generating* the broadcast signal itself, but merely selecting a subset of information from a preexisting signal. Analogously, brain activation patterns do *not* mean that the brain is generating the correlated conscious experience, but merely selecting it from a broader, irreducible superset.

Therefore, the ordinarily observed correlation between brain and mind states is a direct and necessary consequence of this selective filtering out of subjective experience: when the filtering mechanism (i.e. the brain) is interfered with – physically, as in a blow to the head, or chemically, as during anesthesia or alcohol in-

toxication – the filtering process that modulates our conscious experience is perturbed, so that corresponding perturbations of experience follow. Such perturbations are analogous to the confusing and incoherent sounds one hears when messing randomly with the analog radio's tuning knob. In conclusion, the hypothesis offered here remains consistent with all observed correlations between subjective experience and measurable brain states.

One last point must be made. For there to be a survival advantage in capturing an otherwise unbound consciousness within the space-time confines determined by the brain, consciousness must have materially-irreducible causal efficacy on brain function. In other words, there must be downward causation from consciousness towards brain structure and/or activity, otherwise consciousness would be merely a useless 'spectator' providing no survival advantage. As it turns out, there is indeed significant empirical evidence that downward causation does occur. Experiments have been performed in which subjects could physically alter their own neuronal wiring – thereby reversing previously diagnosed brain pathologies – simply by directing their conscious intent (Schwartz and Begley 2004). This surprising effect is known as 'self-directed neuroplasticity,' and it suggests that conscious intent is not only ontologically independent from, but can also causally affect, brain activity and structure, thereby potentially tilting the survival fitness of an organism.

The Predictions

An alternative hypothesis for addressing the mind-body problem is only useful insofar as it makes predictions that *differ* from the predictions of the mainstream materialist assumption. Below, I will elaborate on the two most important points where the 'filter' hypothesis discussed above departs from materialism in its predictions.

Firstly, the 'filter' hypothesis implies that consciousness, in its unfiltered state, is unbound. As such, consciousness is fundamentally unitary and non-individualized. The emergence of multiple, separate, and different conscious

perspectives, or egos, is a consequence of the filtering process: different egos, occupying different points in the fabric of space-time, retain awareness of different subsets of a universal superset of all potential subjective experiences; the rest being filtered out. It is the differences across subsets that give each ego its idiosyncratic characteristics, personal history, and sense of personal identity.

The part of the universal superset of subjective experiences that is filtered out becomes, then, the unconscious mind of the respective ego. Since each ego retains only an infinitesimally small part of the universal superset – given the unfathomable variety of conscious perspectives that exist in potentiality – the unconscious minds of different egos will differ only minimally; the vast majority of the unconscious being identical across egos. As such, the 'filter' hypothesis, unlike the materialist assumption, predicts the existence of a collective unconscious; a shared repository of potential experiences that far transcends mere genetic predispositions of a species. It is conceivable that, either through natural fluctuations or intentional interference with the filtering mechanisms that modulate our individual experiences, parts of this collective unconscious can occasionally percolate up into conscious awareness.

Secondly, and most importantly, the 'filter' hypothesis predicts that one can conceivably have experiences that do *not* correlate to one's brain states. Since here the brain is seen merely as a mechanism for filtering out experiences, it is conceivable that, when this mechanism is interfered with so as to be (partially and/or temporarily) deactivated, one's subjective experience could delocalize, expand beyond the body in time and space, and perhaps even beyond time and space as such. In other words, the 'filter' hypothesis predicts that transpersonal, non-local experiences can conceivably happen when particular brain processes are (partially and/or temporarily) *deactivated*. This possibility, of course, is excluded by the materialist interpretation.

The key element of this second prediction of the 'filter' hypothesis is that non-local, transper-

sonal experiences are predicted to correlate precisely to certain *reductions* of brain activity. This is counterintuitive from a materialist perspective, since the latter entails that experience *is* (solely caused by) brain activity.

The Evidence

Empirical evidence for the existence of a collective unconscious was, in the modern era, first compiled by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1991). Based on his professional experience with countless patients, as well as self-experimentation (2009), Jung has found that mental contents from the collective unconscious can percolate up to conscious awareness through dreams, visions, and other non-ordinary states of consciousness. Diligent students of Jung's work have no doubt that his characterization of the collective unconscious far transcends the scope of mere genetic predispositions. The observations of Jung have been confirmed and extended by many other modern psychiatrists and psychologists. Indeed, under the umbrella of the field of Transpersonal Psychology, an enormous body of empirical evidence has been accumulated for the existence of an unconscious segment of the mind that spans across individuals (*Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*). All this evidence is consistent with the 'filter' hypothesis discussed here, and contradicts the predictions of materialism.

Moving now to the second key prediction of the 'filter' hypothesis, there is indeed a broad pattern of empirical evidence associating non-local, transpersonal experiences with procedures that *reduce* brain metabolism:

a) Fainting caused by asphyxiation or other restrictions of blood flow to the brain is known to sometimes induce intense transpersonal experiences and states of non-locality. The highly dangerous 'chocking game,' played mainly by teenagers worldwide, is an attempt to induce such experiences through partial strangulation, often at the risk of death (Neal 2008). Erotic asphyxiation is a similar game played in combination with sexual intercourse. The effect has been described as 'a lucid, semi-hallucinogenic state [which,] combined with orgasm, [is said to be] no less powerful than cocaine' (Shuman 2007:80);

b) Pilots undergoing G-force induced loss of consciousness (G-LOC) – where blood is forced out of the brain, significantly reducing its metabolism – report experiences similar to the notoriously non-local and transpersonal NDE (Near-Death Experience) (Whinnery and Whinnery 1990);

c) The technique of Holotropic Breathwork, as well as more traditional Yogic breathing practices, use a form hyperventilation to achieve a similar effect: They increase blood alkalinity levels, thereby constricting blood vessels in the brain and causing hypoxia and dissociation (Rhinewine and Williams 2007). This, in turn, reportedly leads to significant transpersonal, non-local experiences (Taylor 1994). Even straightforward hyperventilation, done informally without specific techniques, can lead to surprisingly intense non-local experiences. For instance, an anonymous male reported the following: 'One of us stood against a tree and breathed deeply for a while and then took a very deep breath. Another pushed down hard on his ribcage or actually just at the place where the ribs end. This rendered the subject immediately unconscious…When I tried it, I didn't think it would work, but then suddenly I was in a meadow which glowed in yellow and red, everything was extremely beautiful and funny. This seemed to last for ages. I must say that I have never felt such bliss ever again' (Retz 2007);

d) Psychedelic substances have been known to induce highly complex, intense, non-local, transpersonal experiences (Strassman *et al*. 2008). It had always been assumed that they do so by exciting the parts of the brain correlated to such experiences. Yet, a very recent study has shown that psychedelics actually do the opposite. The study reported that 'profound changes in consciousness were observed after [the administration of the psychedelic], but surprisingly, only decreases in cerebral blood flow…were seen.' (Carhart-Harris *et al*. 2012:1) Indeed, the researchers 'observed no increases in cerebral blood flow in any region.' (Carhart-Harris *et al*. 2012:2) Even more striking, they reported that 'the magnitude of this decrease [in brain activity] predicted the intensity of the subjective effects.' (Carhart-Harris *et al*. 2012:1) In other words, the intensity of the experience was

inversely proportional to the activation of the brain, precisely as predicted by the 'filter' hypothesis;

e) The use of Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) can inhibit cortical function in highly localized areas of the brain by extinction of the associated electromagnetic fields. When the neuronal activity in the angular gyrus of a patient with epilepsy was inhibited in this way, Out of Body Experiences (OBEs) were reportedly induced (Blanke 2002);

f) If the trend above is consistent, we should be able to extrapolate it further: Brain damage, through deactivating certain parts of the brain, should also induce non-local, transpersonal experiences under the right circumstances. And indeed, this has been reported. Two prominent examples are the case of neuroanatomist Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, who underwent a profound transpersonal experience as a consequence of a stroke (2009), and a systematic study recently carried out in Italy (Urgesi *et al.* 2010). In the Italian study, patients were evaluated before and after brain surgery for the removal of tumors. Statistically significant increases in feelings of self-transcendence were reported after the surgery;

g) Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) are the ultimate example of non-local, transpersonal experiences associated with not only reduced, but *absent* brain activity. Evidence for the validity of NDEs continues to be collected under scientific protocols, and has been mounting (Kelly, Greyson and Kelly 2009).

The pattern here is not only clear, but striking. The most complex, coherent, intense, non-local, and transpersonal experiences people report are associated precisely with reductions, or even elimination, of brain metabolism. This is consistent with the 'filter' hypothesis discussed here, and contradicts the materialist assumption.

Conclusions

The broad pattern that associates peak transpersonal, non-local experiences with reductions in brain metabolism seems to contradict the tentative, promissory materialist solution to the mind-body problem. Instead, it substantiates the notion that the brain is a kind of 'filter' of consciousness, which selects from a universal superset of irreducible subjective experiences those which correlate with the space-time locus of the body. It is reasonable to think that there were survival advantages for the brain to evolve this capacity, which the empirical evidence for downward causation further substantiates. This 'filter' hypothesis explains how traditional techniques for the attainment of transpersonal insight work: by reducing the activity of certain brain regions, they (partially and/or temporarily) take the filtering mechanism offline, allowing consciousness to de-clench and expand beyond the space-time locus of the body. From this perspective, physical death is not the end of consciousness, but its liberation.

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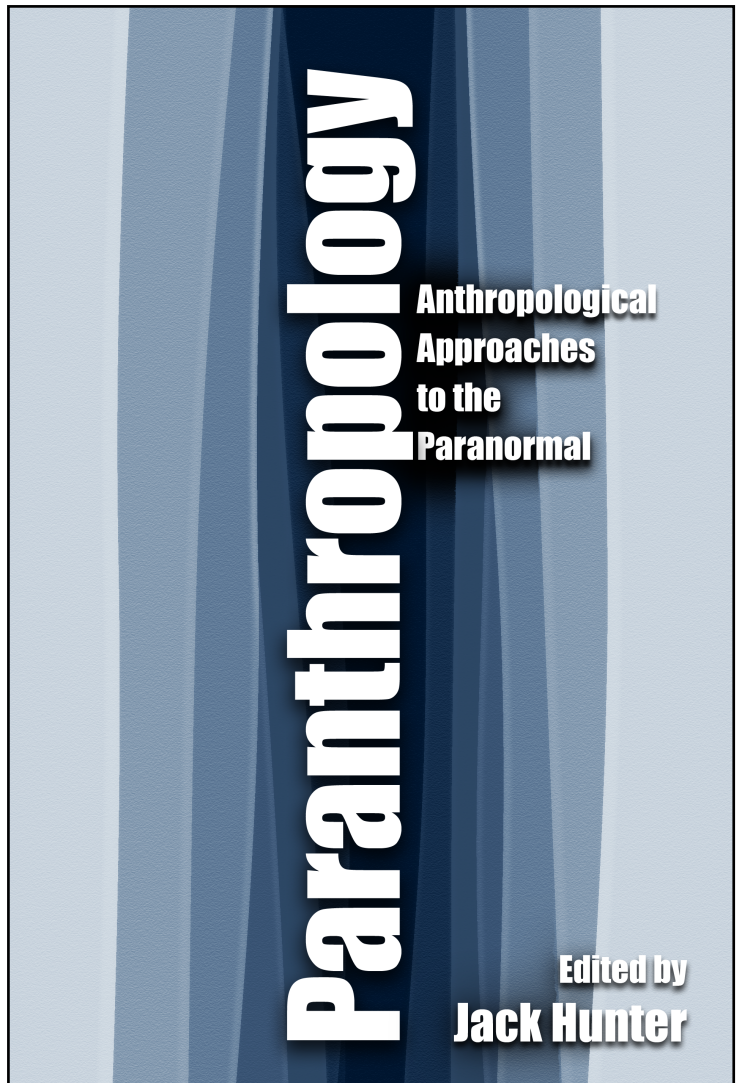
'Child Witches':
From Imaginary Cannibalism to Ritual Abuse
Leo Ruickbie

As Quidditch comes to the Olympic Expo Games in Oxford this year (Martinez 2012), the Seekers, Chasers and Beaters recreating JK Rowling's fantasy game are no doubt unaware that many children in the UK are languishing in an altogether different world of 'witchcraft and wizardry,' a world of *ndoki* and *kindoki*.

For fifteen-year-old Kristy Bamu a trip to London to celebrate Christmas in 2010 turned into a terrifying ordeal, ending only with his death. Accused of witchcraft by the people he was staying with – his elder sister and her boyfriend – Bamu was starved and beaten during an horrific four-day travesty of 'deliverance' to 'remove the *kindoki*.' Finally, forced into a bath to 'wash away the evil spirits,' Kristy drowned, 'too exhausted' to keep his head above water. His other sisters, then aged twenty and eleven, were also abused, but spared further beatings after confessing to being witches (BBC, 6 January 2012 and 5 March 2012; Topping 2012).

In the Langala language spoken in the Congo River region, the witch or *ndoki* (pl. *bandoki*), practises *kindoki*, an 'invisible power to do harm' using spells or psychic means. The *ndoki* is described as one who 'mystically eats his victims' in an act of what Friedman (1996:114) calls 'imaginary cannibalism.' Importantly, the *ndoki* can only attack members of the same family, hence accusations typically come from within the family (Bockie 1993:40-6; Friedman 1996: 114; MacGaffey 2000:56). They are believed to take the form of insects or animals, or to send forth animal familiars to destroy crops and livestock, and to kill people or steal their souls for use as a *nkisi* (fetish) (Morris 2006:157).

The Save the Children report on children accused of witchcraft found that most Congo-lese and, indeed, Africans in general, believed in an invisible world and that for them 'there was no clear dividing line between the "visible" and "invisible" worlds' (Molina 2006:9). This affected all levels of society and educational attainment, including those who were working with children, although other studies have shown a strong correlation between lack of formal education and belief in witchcraft (Tortora 2010). Within this frame of reference, witchcraft is a daily reality.

Bockie was careful to point out that *kindoki* 'does not necessarily refer to evil' (1993:45) and that *ndoki* should be classified as either (or sometimes both) 'day' (good) or 'night' (evil) *ndoki* (47; 56). Based on field research conducted in the 1970s, Bockie's description appears to have become dated. Molina (2006:9) noted that ideas of witchcraft developing in urban centres, primarily Kinshasa, cast witchcraft as entirely and always negative – a development driven by the Revivalist churches.

That is not the only change apparent in the terms of reference. In current usage among African immigrants to the UK the terms *ndoki* and *kindoki* seem to interchangeably signify 'witchcraft' or spirit possession. In an interview with the BBC (4 June 2005a), Sita Kisanga, one of three people convicted for the torture of an eight-year-old Angolan girl known as 'Child B' in the UK in 2005, described *ndoki* as both an evil spirit and witchcraft. Leo Igwe (2011), a researcher at the University of Bayreuth, Germany, talked of belief in 'a spirit of witchcraft.' Likewise, Anane-Agyei (2009:174) also translated *kindoki* as 'the spirit of witchcraft.' Robert Pull (2009:180), operational commander of the Metropolitan Police's ritual abuse unit, Project

Violet, talked of the accusations against Child B as 'a witch possessed by *kindoki*.'

In Congolese society, it is believed that the *ndoki* is often unconscious of practising *kindoki*, hence *ndoki* could also be seen as a possessing force acting independently of the host (Friedman 1996:213). This would explain why exorcism – 'deliverance' in Pentecostal terminology – is applied to suspected witches. It is also the case that, as traditional ideas of witchcraft were modified by the demands, first of Christian missionaries, then of the Charismatic Revival churches, a greater focus on Christian demonology became inevitable (La Fontaine 2009:119-120). La Fontaine (2012) emphasises that this brand of 'witchcraft' should no longer be thought of as 'traditional.'

In an interview with the BBC (John, 2005), London-based pastor Modeste Muyulu, put these changes into words when he said:

> We know that *ndoki* does exist. Back home and everywhere else too there are people who are used by the Devil to bring a curse or bad luck to other people's lives, even to kill them.

Following the conviction of Bamu's murderers earlier this year, Muyulu appeared on BBC's Newsnight (2012) programme to reiterate his belief in witchcraft and ask the crucial question: 'how do you deal with it?'

The UK registered charity Africans Unite Against Child Abuse (AFRUCA) was established in 2001 to deal with the broader problem of child abuse. In November last year AFRUCA held a conference in London on 'Witchcraft Branding, Spirit Possession and Safeguarding African Children' to explore the growing problem of witchcraft related abuse. More recently, Nigerian born Chuka Umunna, Labour MP for Streatham, organised 'the first ever House of Commons Summit' on witchcraft related child abuse on 18 April this year (Chuka.org.uk 2012). Already familiar in Africa, witchcraft abuse is increasing in the UK among African immigrant populations.

Research commissioned by the government identified 74 cases of witchcraft/possession related abuse during the period 2000-2005 (Stobart 2006). To date, the Metropolitan Police have investigated 83 cases of ritual abuse in the last 10 years (Laville 2012). But even that is only the tip of the iceberg. 'For every case that we hear about,' said Dr Richard Hoskins, an expert on African religions, 'there are at least ten others' (Dangerfield 2012). With the number of African immigrants (excluding Afro-Caribbeans) in the UK exceeding 500,000 and rapidly growing, the situation is likely to become worse (AFRUCA, n.d.).

According to AFRUCA (n.d.), witchcraft accusations against children are a recent development in African communities. They suggest that the social deprivation, health issues, familial disintegration and other stressors facing African immigrants in the UK leads to a blaming of children for these problems. This point was echoed by the government report (Stobart 2006: 25). An alternative explanation of *kindoki* was proposed by Mpolo (1981) who saw it as the 'context in which the individual discovers and actualizes himself,' which may have been more appropriate only to earlier understandings of *kindoki*, but certainly gives a psychological insight into the function of the accusations rather than their origination. La Fontaine (2009:123) saw a different source of strain experienced by immigrant families adjusting to a society that they saw as immoral and unable to discipline (punish) its children and their consequent fears for their own children becoming 'contaminated.' There was wider agreement on the role played by weak familial bonds within immigrant families themselves and the resultant emotional tension articulated in unequal power relationships (AFRUCA, n.d.; La Fontaine 2009:124; Stobart 2006). Max Marwick (1964), of course, famously explained the incidence of witchcraft accusation as a social strain-gauge. The problem here is in determining where that 'strain' lies, or whether in fact it has several foci.

The largest number of identified cases of witchcraft abuse (Stobart 2006) were among immigrants from the war-torn Democratic Re-

public of the Congo (DRC) where witchcraft abuse of minors is an established and persistent problem (Molina 2006; US Department of State 2011). The DRC is in a condition of near anarchy following the First (1996-1997) and Second Congo Wars (1998-2003).

Immigrants from other countries, such as Angola, came from similar backgrounds. Political instability, armed conflict and civil disobedience, and their resultant problems, are widespread in Africa. Health crises, particularly the HIV/AIDS epidemic, have been singled out as a decisive contributory factor in the rise of accusations, as well as environmental disaster, food shortages and unemployment (Foxcroft 2009:7-8). Rapid social change driven by Christian missionary activity (Brain 1970:177-179), or the post-colonial decline of traditional authority (Geschiere 1980:283) have also been seen as causing the rise of child witchcraft accusations.

In Africa, too, accusations directed against children are reported by UNICEF to have become prominent only in the last ten to twenty years (BBC 17 July 2010). Foxcroft (2009:5) identified the early to mid 1990s as the key years in this shift.

In both the UK and Africa, researchers have repeatedly drawn attention to the disintegration of social structures as a key factor in child witchcraft accusations. Hence we could see the shift in accusations in the DRC as linked to the destruction of public and familial networks and the change in the country's demographics: over half of the DRC's population are children (Waddington 2006:10) and almost half of all those dying in the wake of the Second Congo War were under five years old (Polgreen 2008).

However, even as early as 1970 'child witches' were being reported as a new phenomenon in Africa, particularly Cameroon (Brain 1970:178). Brain (1970:178) observed that, even then, 'witchcraft accusations and exorcisms were ten a penny.'

Whether new or not, witchcraft accusations against children are currently endemic in sub-saharan Africa. Cases have been reported from Nigeria, Ghana, Botswana, Angola, Liberia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Tanzania, Sierre

Leone, southern Chad, Malawi and South Africa, as well as the DRC (Foxcroft 2009:5, 7, 8, 9). There are a few, though slight, variations in the discourse surrounding these accusations. In Botswana, for example, the issues are couched in terms of 'Satanism.' High profile figures such as Isaac Kgosi, head of the Directorate of Intelligence Services, and Phenyo Segokgo, the newly elected president of the Botswana Movement for Democracy Youth League, have publicly declared their belief in a large-scale Satanic conspiracy responsible for their country's woes (Keoreng 2012; Piet 2012). As elsewhere, this is believed to involve children. In all seriousness it was reported that 'schools in Botswana are infested with Devil worshippers' (Ngakane, 2011). None of this should be too surprising. In 2009 Gallup asked 18,000 people aged fifteen or older in eighteen sub-Saharan African countries whether or not they believed in witchcraft. Ivory Coast returned the highest belief rate at 95 per cent, Uganda the lowest with 15 per cent. In the DRC's capital, Kinshasa, 76 per cent believed in witchcraft. Overall, the average was 55 per cent (Tortora 2010).

The tradition of anti-witchcraft cults or movements in Central and West Africa, such as the Aberewa, Bamucapi and Munkukusa movements, is well documented (Chanaiwa 1990:218; Bockie 1993:59; Richards 1935; Waite 1992:229). These typically blended traditional and Christian beliefs (Friedman 1996:209) and have been linked to the more recent Charismatic Revival (or Renewal), described as itself an anti-witchcraft movement (Fabian 2004:372). De Boeck forcibly argued that 'beyond any doubt the Pentecostal churches play a "crucial" role in the production of the figure of the witch' (de Boeck and Plissart 2004:173).

The role of religion is also apparent in the UK. Researchers and charities involved with African immigrant communities talk of 'rogue churches' (Dangerfield 2012) and 'breakaway churches' (BBC 4 June 2005b) among the 3,900 African Pentecostal churches now operating in the UK, a number that is expected to rise to 4,600 by 2015 (Topping 2012b). Debbie Ariyo, founder and director of AFRUCA, said that 'one

of the key beliefs of these churches is in witches and exorcising them' (Dangerfield 2012). An unnamed London social worker involved with African communities in the UK was quoted as saying that witchcraft abuse was 'spreading like bushfire' (Topping 2012b).

In both Africa and the UK financial gain is in part driving the witchcraft panic (Molina 2006:6). It has been frequently observed that pastors involved in exorcising witches/the possessed are running a lucrative business (Dugan 2008; Cimpric 2010; Oppenheimer 2010; Dangerfield 2012). In Nigeria, one evangelical preacher was arrested after charging over $250 per exorcism (BBC 17 July 2010). Speaking of the situation in the UK, Ariyo was quoted as saying that: 'The idea is to extort money from parents because if your child is branded a witch you will need to exorcise that child' (Dangerfield 2012). The same social worker mentioned above also attributed the dramatic rise of witchcraft/possession in African churches to financial gain: 'If you can charge £500 for an oil that is going to "cure" a child of evil spirits, you are going to make money' (Topping 2012b).

It is worth pointing out that it has been argued that a connection exists between witchcraft accusation and unproductive family members in times of economic hardship (Miguel 2005:1153, with regard to the elderly in Tanzania). Minors, like the elderly, also fall into the unproductive (or less productive) category. The recent Gallup survey found that poverty was associated with a higher belief in witchcraft (Tortora 2010). Children are often driven out of their homes following an accusation – as many as 20,000 street children in Kinshasa are believed to have been accused of witchcraft (Dangerfield 2012).

Traditional African beliefs were often situated in a 'moral economy' where success was a zero-sum game – 'one person's gain is always offset by another's loss (Harms 1999:21) – and witchcraft, specifically, was 'the dangerous appropriation of limited reproductive resources by selfish individuals' (Austen 2010:272). However, incapable of physically appropriating resources, the child witch is seen as preventing such appropriation by others, an easy scapegoat for

misfortune, especially that which is otherwise hard to explain.

Several characteristics can lead to a child being accused of witchcraft or possession in the UK, such as disability, mental health problems, retardation, or conversely high intelligence, delinquency, left-handedness, as well as social factors including fostering, living with a step parent or having parents who had been accused of witchcraft (AFRUCA n.d.:8-9). Bed-wetting, as in the case of Kristy Bamu, and even nail-biting can also be interpreted as signs of witchcraft/possession. Stobart (2006:16) found that disability (most frequently mental) was a prevalent factor, but also significant were nightmares. During the dream the children often described 'taking the shape of an animal and flying to other parts of the world to kill and eat people' (Stobart 2006: 22). Kisanga told the BBC (4 June 2005) that it was believed that 'the girl [Child B] goes to Africa in the night-time to do bad things'.

The importance of dreams also came to light during the trial of Kristy Bamu's murderer, Erik Bikubi. Bikubi described having 'visions of his brother entering his room and trying to strangle him at night.' As a result, Bikubi frequently moved house. Bikubi also believed that he had a special gift for detecting witches which made him 'the chosen one' (Topping 2012b).

These 'signs' have direct parallels in witchcraft accusation cases in Africa and particularly the DRC. Religious and community leaders in the DRC agree upon a similar range of physical signs of strangeness, disability and disease, and behavioural deviance (Molina 2006:12-13). This would suggest a continuity of belief stemming from the region of origin, which helps us to understand how such accusations could arise in the UK. Transmission routes for these beliefs are multiple and diverse. For example, Bikubi had conducted internet research on *kindoki* and visited Nigerian pastors based on the Holloway Road, London, but had also come close to being accused of witchcraft himself when still a child living in the DRC. He described being ostracised after having 'abnormal visions' and his family feared that he would be labelled a witch (Topping, 2012a).

Similarly, child witches in Africa were described as engaging in comparable activities. Night flying, attending witch conventions and cannibalism were all common themes.

Earlier this year, a group of school-girls from Francistown, Botswana, exorcised at Jehovah's Potters' House Assembly, apparently confessed to how they could 'summon a slice of bread, a needle, a blanket or mealie meal bag and instruct it to take them to the depths of the ocean where they hold meetings with their leaders and receive instructions' (Muyakwabo 2012). Molina (2006:11) noted that whilst previously witches in the DRC had been said to travel 'in peanut shells, on *fufu* spoons, in the bristles of brooms or on banana leaves' they now more frequently travel by aeroplane.

In Botswana, witch meetings involved 'eating human flesh and drinking blood,' with new recruits forced to eat human excrement (Muyakwabo 2012). Molina (2006:11) observed that 'the need to eat human flesh, that is, to draw on the energy and power of others, is related to the hierarchy of the second [invisible] world.' Here the amount of human flesh consumed is related to the prestige and power of the witch.

The witches' feast is an inversion of the conventions of eating and the social norms that they imply. Non-food, such as excrement, and taboo food, such as human flesh – the body or the things of the body – are the staples of the witches' table. Indeed, the symbolism of witchcraft specifically works through inversion (Ruickbie:2009), a point also made by Molina (2006:11).

The child as a relatively powerless agent in the physical world, is inverted in the invisible world and promoted to a position of power and influence. The child can become a leader, marry and accumulate wealth, for example (Molina 2006:11). As status decreases the potential for inversion increases. The further removed the child becomes from direct familial bonds sees a decrease in status and hence an increasing likelihood of accusation. The socio-psychological dynamic is the same as that which posits the elderly as supernaturally powerful agents. One

of the children in the Botswana case, for example, was described as being able to transform into an elderly woman (Muyakwabo 2012).

In the accusational scenario witchcraft becomes an enacted internecine nightmare of social reversal. The family attacks the family. The parents attack the child. The child attacks the parents. Sibling attacks sibling. The abundance of children in a society of low life expectancy provides the perfect replacement for the disappearing 'old crone' because the principle of symbolic reversal and the underlying economic determinants remain the same.

In the DRC the transmission of witchcraft generally follows one of three routes: inheritance; initiation by a family member; or through a bewitched substance, usually food (Molina 2006:13). Recently in Botswana it has emerged that 'the Satanism spirit' can be passed on by a simple glance, with terms such as 'infected' being used to describe the process (Muyakwabo 2012).

Here we see that without any outward signs of abnormality, any child could be involved in invisible crimes that only religious specialists can diagnose and treat, and the only proof of the alleged crimes is the child's own confession. It has also been observed that many of the so-called 'signs' of witchcraft identified in the UK cases, such as bed-wetting and behavioural issues, are within the range of normal childhood development (Molina 2006:5). Again, the consequence is that any child may be thought to have become a witch.

Branding as a witch typically leads to a spiral of abuse and neglect. The idea that witches are 'used by the Devil,' in pastor Muyulu's words (John 2005), disassociates individual agency and facilitates the intervention of the exorcist, and by concomitantly depersonalising the victim as 'possessed' also allows abuse. Stobart (2006:21) found that perpetrators talked of 'beating the Devil out of the child' or trying to 'squeeze the life out of the evil' through smothering and strangulation. In another case the victim's hair was cut 'to release the witchcraft' (BBC 26 January 2012). Such treatment is inevi-

tably traumatic and, in more than one instance, fatal.

Social strain may lead people to make more accusations, but it is the underlying belief system (however fluid and informal) that creates and sustains the possibility of making an accusation in the first place.

Stobart (2006) was right when she said that witchcraft accusations are 'not confined to particular countries, cultures or religions nor is it confined to recent migrants,' but this viewpoint is at odds with the current pattern of the witchcraft abuse of children in the UK. To be sure, witchcraft beliefs are far from 'confined,' but they are more prevalent in certain geographical and social areas than others (Tortora 2010). Stobart's own research shows that cases are concentrated in a particular demographic.

By downplaying cultural background, or even denying it as an influence, and marginalising witchcraft focused churches as deviant, organisations in the UK attempting to deal with the problem have created severe obstacles in their own path. Witchcraft accusations and related abuse are spreading rapidly in the growing African immigrant population in the UK, on a par with developments in the migrants' home countries. Overplaying immigration stressors as opposed to its many benefits, focuses on potentially the wrong sources of strain giving rise to accusation.

Some may have swapped their 'jolly hockey sticks' for broomsticks, but the supposed supernatural experience labelled 'witchcraft' in African immigrant communities in the UK is far removed from both Western media's portrayal of 'witchcraft and wizardry' à la Harry Potter and modern religious expressions of 'witchcraft' such as Wicca. Here we are again dealing with ideas of witchcraft as a form of magic directed against the well-being of the family/community where misfortune is given a supernatural explanation and scapegoats are sought among the socially deprived with terrible consequences. Despite all the good intentions it is a scenario likely to become more familiar.

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Entheogenic Spirituality and Gender in Australia
Joseph Gelfer

ABSTRACT: Entheogenic spirituality involves the consumption of psychedelic substances within a spiritual context. The entheogenic community in Australia prides itself on being inclusive, progressive and transgressive, but as in many new religious movements, alternative spiritualities and countercultural communities, there is some question as to whether these values extend to the domain of gender. This article presents the findings of an online survey that canvassed perceptions of gender within the entheogenic community in Australia; findings show that while the majority of the community believes its progressive values do indeed extend to gender, a significant minority do not, with noticeably different levels of satisfaction between male and female respondents.

"It's great to see all these beautiful, well-read and articulate men. But I have one question: Where are the women?"

This question was posed by a female conference attendee at Entheogenesis Australis during one of the Q&A sessions. The conference took place in December 2010 at The University of Melbourne and services the entheogenic community in Australia, one largely composed of people who are interested in psychedelic spirituality. This was a very good question indeed. Looking around, it was difficult to identify any gender imbalance in the audience—comprised as it was equally of beautiful men and women—but the speaker program told another story. Apart from a few anomalies, the speakers were all men.

The entheogenic community is one that prides itself on being inclusive, progressive and even transgressive. Certainly, in terms of welcoming forms of spirituality that are considered by mainstream society to be not only fringe but outright illegal, this is certainly the case. But the question posed above casts doubt on whether these inclusive, progressive and transgressive values extend into the domain of gender, asking whether the community simply echoes mainstream—or, following Mary O'Brien (1981), 'malestream'—society. In the following, some perceptions about gender in the entheogenic community in Australia are revealed. After a framing exercise introducing entheogens and how gender functions in loosely comparable communities, the results of an anonymous online survey are presented. By allowing the survey respondents to speak in their own voices, and then viewing those responses via a feminist analytical lens, we see that while the majority of the community believes its progressive values do indeed extend to gender, a significant minority do not.

Entheogens

Entheogens are psychedelic substances used within a specific context and with a particular intentionality on behalf of the user. The term is commonly attributed to Carl Ruck *et al* (1979) who sought to communicate a meaning of containing (or releasing) god and becoming god, and has since gained significant momentum (Forte 1997; Smith 2000). Various streams of influence can be identified within the historical and cultural construction of entheogens from considering them as artefacts of suppressed religious histories through to part of a (neo-) shamanic revival (Harner 1990; Heinrich 2002; Hoffman, Ruck, & Staples 2002; Merkur 2000; Ruck, Heinrich, & Staples 2000; Shanon 2002;

Wasson *et al* 1988; Wasson, Hofmann, & Ruck 1998; Wallis 2003).

Within a historical and (neo-)shamanic context, entheogens are often considered to be of a traditional and organic nature, such as ayahuasca, peyote, iboga, and amanita muscaria. However, from the beginning of the use of "entheogen" Ruck *et al* (1979) allowed room for interpretation, suggesting "the term could also be applied to other drugs, both natural and artificial, that induce alterations of consciousness similar to those documented for ritual ingestion of traditional entheogens " (p. 146). Consequently, entheogens now come in a fantastic array of chemical guises (Shulgin & Shulgin 1991, 1997; Strassman 2001), and even unlikely sources such as cough syrup (Carpenter 2006; Gelfer 2006) resulting in a variety of traditions (Clifton 2004; Lyttle 1988; Stolaroff 1999; Stuart 2002) including those in Australia (Tramacchi 2000), in which entheogens are perceived to function in a sacramental capacity (Baker 2005). Until recent years, consuming entheogens has been a distinctly subcultural activity, but it is now enjoying a renaissance due to the increasing popularity of ayahuasca tourism (Tupper 2008; Winkelman 2005) and its significant role in the popularisation of the 2012 phenomenon (Hoopes 2011; St John 2011).

William Richards (2002) argues that entheogens 'can be profoundly revelatory of truths, both spiritual and psychodynamic—truths that could prove highly relevant to our well-being, personally and culturally' (147). This statement reveals an assumption within the community that entheogens communicate some kind of authenticity unmediated by social construction, and that these 'truths' are of significant value to the individual. This, then, is the promise that should be extended into the realm of gender.

Gender in Alternative Spiritualities and Countercultural Communities

Examples of how gender functions within contemporary entheogenic communities— whether in Australia or other regions—are elusive, so in order to establish an expectation of what might be revealed within the anonymous online survey it is necessary to look instead to loosely comparable communities such as those of late twentieth century new religious movements (NRMs), alternative spiritualities and other countercultural communities. There is also something to be learned from how gender is framed when it occasionally surfaces in contemporary psychedelic literature.

Angela Aidala (1985) examined communal groups of both NRM and secular types from the 1960s and 70s in North America. She noted among the spiritual communities four distinct elements: a pre-defined and coherent framework for sex and gender; gender normativity was allocated elaborate transcendental justification; gender expectations received wide support; and, importantly, in none of the religious communes did ideological formulation or practice pose a direct challenge to the traditional allocation of greater social and economic power to men (297). Aidala also found that even within secular communal groups where 'free love' and sexual experimentation were encouraged, these 'more often than not, included continued discussion, negotiation, and conflict about changing sexuality and gender roles (297; see also Jacobs 1991; Pike 2007).

Of course, not all NRMs and alternative spiritualities are the same. Susan Palmer (1994) unpacks NRMs that function in three distinct ways: sexual polarity, sexual complementarity and sexual unity. Palmer's canvassing of NRMs spans those which assume male leadership (and those with female leadership), those which embrace partnership between male and female leadership, and those which seek to disrupt categories and boundaries between male and female. Similarly, Elizabeth Puttick (2003) offers a typology that includes on the one hand more traditional NRMs such as the Unification Church and International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and on the other hand more liberal NRMs such as the Osho movement and Brahma Kumaris. Puttick notes that it is significant that the former, 'tend to have a male majority, sometimes 2 to 1 or higher, whereas in more liberal NRMs the ratio is typically reversed' (242).

It is noteworthy, too, that even when gender issues are proactively 'addressed' within alternative spiritualities, things are not necessarily as they seem. One example is integral spirituality, as theorised by Ken Wilber (2000). This alternative spirituality claims to integrate both the masculine and feminine 'type' into its model of consciousness development. However, an analysis of integral spirituality literature shows not only a distinct bias towards the masculine, but a clear depoliticising agenda that seeks to dispel patriarchy as a myth, opting instead for understanding society historically as 'patrifocal,' an order that was decided upon jointly by both men and women (Gelfer 2009:103-115).

Moving away from NRMs and alternative spiritualities, two recent studies provide insights into the way gender functioned in countercultural movements of the 1960s: *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties Counterculture* by Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo (2009) and *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities* by Timothy Hodgdon (2008). Lemke-Santangelo argues that women in such communities were largely caricatured as 'earth mothers' and 'love goddesses' by both the mainstream culture and a curiously patriarchal culture that existed within their own communities. The women were conscious of at once embodying contemporary and even radical values (such as 'free love'), while also performing a domestic femininity in the community that would have been familiar even to their grandmothers. Hodgdon examines two sharply contrasting hip communities: The Farm and the Diggers. The Farmies identified a dangerous hyper-masculinity in modern men and the devaluation of women's maternal nurture, both of which were to be mitigated by a performance of 'knightly' masculinity. In contrast, the anarchist Diggers concluded that 'progress' had effeminised corporate men while brutalising working-class men. What both Hodgdon's subjects demonstrate is a distinct acceptance of gender normativity, albeit spun in different directions.

Another analogous community is the intersecting rave scene, which often mobilises en-

theogenic aesthetics and themes. Maria Pini (1997) sees much to commend for women in such spaces, which again are seen not just as progressive but Utopian. Pini refers to 'claims made by women ravers regarding the apparent ability of rave to dissolve social divisions based upon sex, sexuality, age, race and class' (118) and for women ravers to experience 'a non-phallocentric subjectivity' (125). However, Angela McRobbie (1993) notes women and girls are 'less involved with the cultural production of rave, from the flyers, to the events, to the DJ'ing, than their male counterparts' (418), and engage complex sexualised performances (418-419). Similarly, according to Julie Gregory's (2009) study or ravers, 'the overwhelming majority of interviewees discursively constructed older and younger female rave-goers—including themselves—as particularly misplaced within rave' (76, original emphasis), with the assumption that rave was not a space in which female raves intuitively belong. Rave is, then, as described by McRobbie, 'a series of social tensions (including those around gender and sexuality)' (422).

Readjusting our focus one again, Lemke-Santangelo states that, "Countercultural literature is virtually silent on the subject of women's drug experiences" (113). The anomalous way in which women's psychedelic experiences are presented within the broader body of psychedelic literature offers further insight into what we may discover in the following survey responses. Take, for example, the book Sisters of the Extreme: Women Writing on the Drug Experience (Palmer & Horowitz, 2000), which includes drug narratives from a variety of female authors. The question, of course, is would one find a book called Brothers of the Extreme: Men Writing on the Drug Experience? Probably not, as men's writing comprises the vast majority of all the other publishing on psychedelics.

Similarly, the Psychedelics Encyclopaedia (Stafford & Bigwood, 1992) contains an entry called "Women in Psychedelics":

Another manifestation of receptive Earth-orientated, feminine-centred qualities in psychedelic culture is the growing interest in "neo-pagan", pantheistic, Wiccan and Goddess-

focused ways of life … Many of these belief systems place high value on the feminine, receptive and healing qualities of the shaman who played an important role in archaic cultures now thought by many to be largely matriarchal … Much as in other arenas of Western culture, the exploration of psychedelic consciousness has been largely dominated by men—or so it would appear from the manner in which the movement has usually been documented. (Stafford & Bigwood, 1992, 52)

The entry concludes with some notable examples of women in psychedelic culture. Aside from the "Women in Psychedelics" entry indicating by its very existence the rather anomalous position of women in psychedelic culture, there are two other elements worth noting: a normative presentation of what constitutes the feminine (receptive, healing); a male dominated psychedelic culture is tabled, but somewhat suspiciously with the caveat, "or so it would appear". Across these and other well-meaning examples of psychedelic literature (Tolbert, 2003; Vogel, 2003), we are left with the occasional telling of what might be described as "women's stories in psychedelics" that rely on normativity or which seek the feminine as a technical solution to a more balanced approach to psychedelics (Adams, 2011).

Certainly, this poor representation of women has not gone unvoiced within the entheogenic community, at least in North America. In 2002, the Women's Entheogen Fund was established because, "while women have historically played a central role in investigating the use of entheogens, their work has been funded less frequently and has been consistently underrepresented in the scientific and popular entheogenic literature" (Harrisson, 2006, 34). Particularly pertinent within the opening quote of this article, Harrison goes on to state, "It has been especially distressing to see relatively few female entheogenic researchers presenting their work at relevant conferences over the years" (34). The Women's Entheogen Fund has now been extended into The Women's Visionary Congress, "an annual gathering of visionary women heal-

ers, scholars, activists and artists who study consciousness and altered states".

Following these loosely comparable examples of NRMs, alternative spiritualities, countercultural communities in the 1960s, and the representation of women in a broader psychedelic culture, it is reasonable to assume that there will be a perception of gender inequality in the entheogenic community in Australia.

Methodology

Data was gathered using an anonymous online survey that used a combination of fixed-, multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The survey was aimed at people aged 18 and over who self-identified as being members of the entheogenic community in Australia. Two organisations were used as gatekeepers to the community: Entheogenesis Australis (EGA) and Psychedelic Research in Science and Medicine (PRISM). While these organisations by no means define the entheogenic community in Australia, they nevertheless play an important role in its composition. Leaders from EGA and PRISM emailed an invitation to participate in the survey to their networks and posted notices on various subject-related discussion forums and social media sites. The survey was then mobilised in the community via a snowball method (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). The survey began with a range of framing questions that constructed a demographic representation of the community, as well as an indicator of which substances they had used within an entheogenic context. 148 respondents completed the survey.

Findings

Demographic and quantitative data derived from the survey includes the following:

Age: 28 respondents were aged between18–24 years; 62 aged 25–34 years; 34 aged 35–44 years; 17 aged 45–54 years; 6 aged 55–64 years; 1 aged 65+ years.

Sex: 97 respondents were male; 51 female.

Sexual orientation: 8 respondents identified as gay; 21 bisexual; 113 straight; 6 "other".

Employment (respondents could choose more than one option in this question): 43 respondents identified as being a student; 11 parent or carer; 17 unemployed; 80 professional; 14 trade.

Years involved with the entheogenic community: 8 respondents selected less than one year; 38 1–4 years; 42 5–9 years; 38 10–19 years; 22 20+ years.

Substances used in an entheogenic context (respondents could choose more than one option in this question): 45 respondents had used ayahuasca; 73 cacti; 107 cannabis; 94 DMT; 115 LSD; 128 mushrooms; 92 MDMA; 73 "other".

The survey then asked a number of open-ended questions designed to glean qualitative data, testing how respondents felt about gender as an aspect of the entheogenic experience, and how they felt gender functioned within the entheogenic community.

The first open-ended question asked, "Do you perceive a person's gender and sexual orientation to be a significant aspect of their entheogenic experience?" 63 percent of respondents answered negatively to this question. Mostly, these responses were answered with a simple "no". Where the answers were elaborated, the entheogenic experience was typically considered to be beyond gender, such as, "I feel that the entheogenic experience transcends boundaries such as gender" and, "As we aim to access the spiritual plane through use of entheogens, I believe gender and sexuality are irrelevant in these highest dimensions".

21 percent of respondents answered positively to this question. While there were plenty of simple "yes" answers, these respondents were more inclined than their "no" counterparts to elaborate as to why. The reasons as to why they answered "yes" were quite diverse. Some responses appeal to the idea that gender is a social construction: for example, "Although we could say that gender stereotypes (e.g. masculine active, feminine receptive) are an artificial

construct, I think that these would influence many people's experiences". Other responses appeal to the idea that gender is biologically determined: for example, differences were "probably due to innate differences in mental/cognitive processes. i.e. women are often more emotionally driven than men". The combination of the socially constructed and biologically determined was also addressed by one respondent:

"Yes, there are significant biological and hormonal differences between the brains of women and men, and significant differences in their cultural and psychological motivators and conditioning. Sexual orientation likewise is accompanied as a general rule by neurobiological and psychological variation. To assume that this would not impact on the entheogenic experience flies in the face of everything I have learned from my elders and from science and from my experience with entheogens, regardless of how un-politically correct it may be to state. However the variation between experiences does not mean that the chemical mechanism is any different, the experiences will presumably still fall into the same categories, Just the personal content, intensity and experience modality will vary."

A further theme that emerged from this question was that entheogens enable more authentic understanding of gender, as suggested by the following respondent:

"Entheogens reveal who one truly is, if the partaker is open to receiving that knowledge. For men and women, entheogens can be a gateway to getting in touch with their true masculinity or femininity. For women, it can also be about getting in touch with the masculine aspects of self (the inner warrior) and for men, it can be about connecting to their inner feminine. So gender is important, but not definitive, in an entheogenic context."

The remaining 16 percent of respondents to this question were unsure. Both male and female respondents answered yes, no or unsure to this question in similar proportions.

The second open-ended question asked was, "Do you perceive there to be anything different about the way gender and sexual orientation function in the entheogenic community compared to society at large?" 49 percent of respondents answered positively, with the overwhelming reason given being that the entheogenic community is more welcoming of diversity and open-minded than mainstream society. More respondents referred to the accommodation of differing sexual orientations in the community than general perceptions of gender. One respondent extended the acceptance of gay people as a fundamental part of the rationale behind the community:

"From my experience, representation of the gay community seems higher than in the general population. I believe that this is due to society forcing the gay community to challenge what is considered normal behaviour which then leads to questioning of other 'normal' behaviour such as the non acceptance of the entheogenic experience by law enforcement and policy makers."

29 percent saw no difference and typically answered with a simple "no". On the few occasions a more elaborate answer was provided it was suggested the community reflects mainstream culture, as typified by the following response from one woman:

"Not really, in order to facilitate the usage of DMT/Ayahuasca there are two men who are quite well known in the entheogenic community, unfortunately they both know the power they hold over everyone else who wants to use this in a spiritual way. They see themselves almost god like and infallible. I think like most men who run corporations. I haven't met any females who do the same as these men, if there were I don't think they would be

taken in with this god like mentality that the men do, I think women would come more from a place of love than ego."

The remaining 22 percent were unsure. We see here a small difference between the answers of men and women, inasmuch as women were slightly more inclined to see no difference relative to mainstream society, and were more inclined to give detailed reasons as to why.

The third open-ended question asked, "Do you perceive there to be equality in the entheogenic community surrounding issues of gender and sexual orientation?" 61 percent of respondents answered positively, either answering with a simple "yes" or reiterating the answers of the previous question in regards to acceptance of diversity. A number of respondents who answered yes provided a caveat such as there being more equality relative to mainstream society. Sometimes respondents answered positively, but gave a negative follow up, such as "Yes—though there will always exist inequality" and, "Yes. Trashbags can be sexist and discriminatory but that is no different from many other communities I suppose".

18 percent of respondents thought there was inequality. Some negative responses were framed simply in terms of statistical representation, such as "No, in terms of members, there seems to be a rarity of women. Of the people I've met, about one in eleven are women". Other negative responses suggest the community merely reflects mainstream society, such as "The community can be a bit of a boys club, and like elsewhere I feel that women have to prove themselves more to achieve recognition, and are often sidelined as just 'the girlfriends'". 21 percent of respondents were unsure. However, the difference between men and women's answers widen here: while 18 percent of respondents overall identified inequality, the figure rises to 31 percent among female respondents.

The fourth open-ended question asked was, "Is there anything about gender and sexual orientation that you would like to see function differently in the entheogenic community?" 48 percent of respondents answered negatively, largely

with a simple "no" answer. 25 percent of respondents answered positively, generally with a desire to see more gender equality: notably, this question was answered with greater emphasis on the role of women than sexual orientation. 27 percent of respondents were unsure. Again, we see a difference between men and women's answers to this question. While 25 percent of respondents overall wanted to see change, the figure rises to 37 percent among female respondents (or viewed from another perspective that incorporates unsure answers, only 33 percent of women clearly expressed satisfaction with the status quo).

The final open-ended question asked, "Is there anything about gender and sexual orientation in the entheogenic community that you would like to say that is not covered by the above questions?" 22 percent of respondents took the opportunity to answer this question, mostly reiterating points about the progressive nature of the community. Several respondents questioned the concept of the "entheogenic community" and what could be learned from an online survey. Several others among the female respondents reiterated their dissatisfaction with the way women were treated in the community, including the following response, which is the lengthiest and most detailed offered in the whole survey:

"There is little to no feminist critique of the entheogenic community. There are some people who are outspoken in their belief that women's contributions and women's experiences are inferior or unimportant to the community in general. Others however, maintain that there is equality within the community, but are unwilling or unable to examine the causes of obvious inequality (for example, the reasons why the presenters at the EGA conference are almost all men), choosing to blame it on the women for not 'wanting' to participate rather than examining the many reasons why women feel marginalised and unwelcome to participate within the community. The few exceptions are gener-

ally either held up as evidence of inclusivity (for example 'we had one woman amongst the six men on the panel, therefore we aren't sexist!'), used as evidence of exceptionalism (for example 'she may be a woman, but she does chemistry like a man.'), or treated as a special category of 'women's spirituality', separate from the more general category of spirituality (for example, shamans and female shamans). Many women's contributions to the field are ignored entirely, attributed to men or minimised. I believe that there is little to no difference between the entheogenic community and the broader Australian community in the area of gender and sexuality."

Discussion

Insights into how gender functions within the Australian entheogenic community can be found even from the demographic data harvested from the survey. Clearly, in any community reflecting a "natural" ratio of men to women, we would expect to find around 50 percent of each. However, 65 percent of survey respondents were men. This ratio of men to women does not say anything in itself about the values and perceptions of gender within the community, but it nevertheless suggests it is a space weighted towards men. Speculatively, it may be reasonable to suggest that this figure conceals a greater imbalance in numbers. Most people who research or teach in the area of gender and sexuality will have experienced significantly greater interest from women than men. If this insight were mapped on to the survey respondents it would be possible to conclude that a higher percentage of women than men in the community responded to the survey, which would move the ratio towards the statement voiced by one respondent that "about one in eleven are women". If we were to refer back to Puttick (2003) and her typology of traditional and liberal NRMs—the former, "tend to have a male majority, sometimes 2 to 1 or higher, whereas in more liberal NRMs the ratio is typically reversed" (242)—we would likely

align the Australian entheogenic community with the traditional.

The second pertinent insight we can gather from the data is in regard to sexual orientation. It is a highly problematic exercise to quantify the percentage of non-heterosexual people in society due to the elusive nature of what "homosexual" means depending on when and where a study was undertaken. In order to sketch a spectrum of what we might expect in the survey, Anthony F. Bogaert (2004) suggests a figure typically between 1 and 6 percent of people identifying as homosexual, while Randall L. Sell, James A. Wells and David Wypij (1995)—shifting the focus from homosexual "behaviour" to "attraction"—suggest anything up to 20 percent. In the survey a very significant 24 percent of respondents chose not to identify as heterosexual. More interestingly, there is a significant problematising here of the gay/straight binary, with three times as many respondents identifying as bisexual or "other" than gay.

But it is the questions regarding women's role within the community that are most revealing within the survey due to there being such a broad spectrum of perceptions. Right from the start of the survey, while there are often majority views, there are also significantly opposed minority views. In the first question, "Do you perceive a person's gender and sexual orientation to be a significant aspect of their entheogenic experience?" nearly two-thirds of respondents said "no". But what of the remaining third? The two primary types of responses in this group both speak to issues of power and gender: how gender stereotypes are socially constructed, and how experience is biologically determined (an argument often mobilised to justify the "natural" order to men's privileged positions).

The largest single group of respondents were positive about the community when asked the main questions: "Do you perceive there to be anything different about the way gender and sexual orientation function in the entheogenic community compared to society at large?", "Do you perceive there to be equality in the entheogenic community surrounding issues of gender and sexual orientation?" and "Is there anything

about gender and sexual orientation in the entheogenic community that you would like to say that is not covered by the above questions?" But when negative and unsure answers are combined we begin to see an even split in the community about perceptions of gender. Importantly, as the questions progress we see the opinions of men and women begin to diverge: men are inclined to see the community in a positive light and respond with short confident answers; women are inclined to see the community in a more problematic light and respond with more subtle and critical answers. As each question unfolds, these diverging opinions become more pronounced and the women's positions more expansive and critical.

A feminist analysis of this process would claim that the men in the community—either consciously or unconsciously—have more invested in the status quo as they enjoy certain privileges within it. It is therefore not surprising that men are less inclined to analyse the community and find problems. When asked the final question, "Is there anything about gender and sexual orientation in the entheogenic community that you would like to say that is not covered by the above questions?" it was the male respondents who took the opportunity to question whether much could even be learned from such a survey. Certainly, these may be methodologically sound criticisms, but equally they may be interpreted as a defensive response to the act of surfacing "gender issues" which are automatically assumed to highlight problematic male behaviours. This echoes the Psychedelics Encyclopaedia "Women in Psychedelics" article where the comment about men's domination of psychedelic culture is qualified with "or so it would appear" (Stafford & Bigwood, 1992, 52).

Conclusion

Within the loosely comparable examples of NRMs, alternative spiritualities, and countercultural communities in the 1960s we find two notable responses to issues of gender (or, more specifically, women's role within those communities): a large degree of silence on the matter which results in the perpetuation of

mainstream values, and women (albeit a minority) voicing dissatisfaction at their marginalisation. Broadly similar responses can be identified in the survey findings about the entheogenic community in Australia.

The issue of sexual orientation deserves to be treated separately from gender in this survey discussion. Certainly, queerness is valued and welcomed within the community in a way that would be hard to find elsewhere in communities that were not defined by queerness. While the survey questions referred to "gender and sexual orientation" there was both some slippage between the two in the responses, and generally different perceptions of each. The overwhelmingly positive response to inclusivity of sexual orientation (largely in reference to queer men rather than queer women) was not extended to the experiences of straight women. This disconnect between the experiences of gay men and straight women is noteworthy, as the two are often conflated in a discourse of patriarchy and homophobia where both are dominated by heterosexual men. However, it is possible that this conflation is responsible for the relative lack of satisfaction of women in the community: specifically, the commonly held assumption that the community is welcoming to gay men is automatically (and incorrectly) extended to women without addressing the cultural and political specificities of women's experiences (whether gay or straight).

Aside from queerness, certainly most members find the community more open to diversity than society at large and that gender equality has been realised. However, when it comes to straight gender politics there are significant levels of dissatisfaction among women (and some men) typified by the respondent who claimed, "Many women's contributions to the field are ignored entirely, attributed to men or minimised". Clearly, those inclusive, progressive and transgressive values do not fully extend into the domain of gender (at least according to the perceptions of the respondents, a significant but partial representation of how this issue actually plays out within the community). However, there appears to be some awareness of this fact within the community that has actively been identified not just by the conference attendee cited at the beginning of this article, but in public communications within the community (Şenol, 2012). And somewhat paradoxically, because those with access to communication dissemination within the community, it was mostly men who promoted the survey and discussion within the community, and they did so with enthusiasm.

This article is weighted heavily towards gender dynamics within the community: the socially constructed nature of the gendered experience within the community rather than the gendered nature of the entheogenic experience per se. A different line of argumentation might emerge if the specific entheogenic spiritual practices and performances of men and women in the community were examined. A further differing line of argumentation might emerge if the questions sought to reveal in greater depth if men and women's entheogenic experiences qualitatively differ. For example, are members' typical perceptions of gender confirmed or problematized by their entheogenic experiences? Is there some spiritual self or reality that is perceived as "authentically" masculine or feminine? And whatever the outcome of such lines of investigation, do they tally with the social dynamics presented here? For example, in the present survey, how do the 63 percent of respondents who felt that gender is not a significant aspect of the entheogenic experience bridge the gap between this belief and the practical reality of women's experiences in the community? As we see, across the domains of both gender and sexual orientation, the entheogenic community in Australia holds several positions simultaneously: a mirror to the malestream; an exemplar of queer-friendliness; probably more inclusive than mainstream society. It is a community in transition, seeking to bridge the gaps, caught in some elusive territory between what it is and what it aspires to be.

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Books by Joseph Gelfer
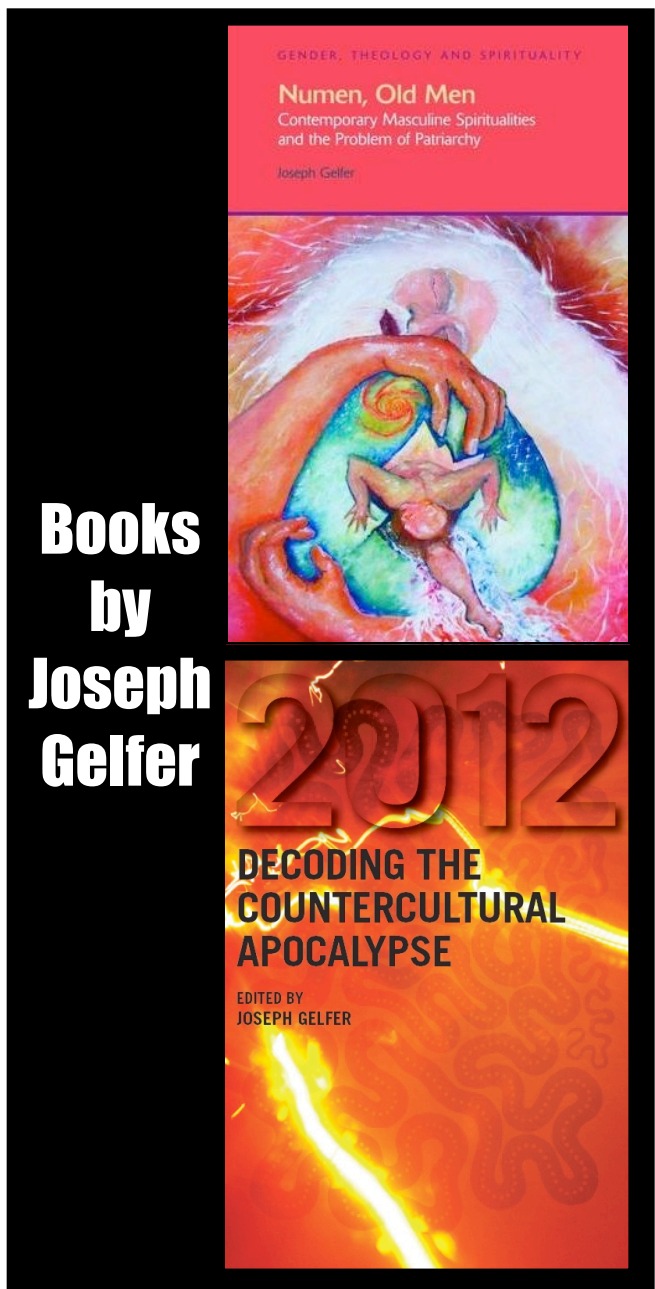
The Shamanic Flight of the Soul:
Visiting Other Worlds
Erwin Rooijakkers

Keywords: Shamanism, Transpersonal Experience, Other Worlds

It is somewhat presumptuous to disdain or condemn as fake that which does not appear likely.
                                   – Michel de Montaigne

Shamanic journeying, or the flight of the soul, is one of the central shamanic techniques, traditionally used by shamans to communicate with the spiritual world; a world believed by shamans to be full of knowledge, guidance and power. The shamanic journey is filled with mystery, and despite its ancient history, is little understood in Western culture (Engels-Smith, 2004). Shamans are highly respected members of their tribes and their commanding, communicating, and interceding with the spirits that visit them during their journeys is for the benefit of the community at large. Nowadays, shamanic journeying has become more widely known thanks to pioneering work by anthropologist Michael Harner (Walsh and Grob, 2005). It is now used in psychotherapy, taught in workshops and other settings, and so it has become possible for a layman like me to explore their magical world.

To facilitate a shamanic journey monotonous trance-inducing drumming, or the playing of other instruments like the didgeridoo or rattle, in combination with a dark environment, is used as a form of sensory deprivation, and is considered by some to be more effective as a method of reaching an altered state of consciousness than the widely used Ganzfeld technique in parapsychology (Storm and Rock, 2009). This trance is used to enter an apparently parallel and co-existing environment filled with separate entities, which influence the everyday world of the senses.

Does there really exist such an other world? For the shaman, without doubt, there does. Ac-

cording to them, beyond the Middle World where normal life is lived, there are two other worlds: the heavenly realms of the Upper World, where spirit teachers reside and where higher education and healing are received, and the Lower World, populated with power animals, who give guidance and knowledge on life and the self. The shamans truly are explorers and partners with the Other realms, they do not doubt the existence of spirits or any of the information they receive.

Should we take the shaman's claims seriously? The verdict of the sceptics is a definite no: every word received is a mistaken projection, and the soul-flight is dismissed as flagrant self-deception at best and psychosis at worst.

There's a certain kind of scepticism that can't bear uncertainty.

                                   –Rupert Sheldrake

I have always leaned towards the camp of the sceptic, and have never taken the shamanistic

world-view too seriously. Although I have read and heard stories from people experiencing discarnate entities by the use of the strong psychedelic *Ayahuasca* (cf. Erowid 2012; Luke 2011), I have never had such an experience myself that I would consider to be real, and doubted them to be more than mental projections. My own experiences that I would consider to be spiritual always fell within the mystical traditions of the East, where the non-dual experience of reality is central. The most profound transformations came about through the use of psychoactive substances or sleep deprivation, but have never entailed communication with 'spirits.'

When I heard that an experiential group-work session of my study would entail shamanic journeying (which was completely new to me at the time), I was afraid that nothing would happen to me, unless we were to take some kind of drug, and that the days would be filled with annoyance over my inability to experience such matters, and aversion towards those who could and would share their stories enthusiastically. Considering the fact that I have always been an avid supporter of philosophies that state that the world is yours to create and that your own ideas and beliefs shape reality, my stance was self-defeating, and I knew it.

The scientist who would explore the topic of consciousness...must be willing to risk being transformed in the process of exploration.

– Willis Harman

Abraham Maslow (1971) calls this type of self-limiting belief the "Jonah Complex": the fear of success and the unwillingness to believe in your own capacities. Looking back, I would diagnose myself with a severe case of it. Soon enough though, this initial scepticism about my own abilities would be shattered.

A group of students, including myself, partook in the shamanic journeying event under the guidance of Deena O'Brien, counsellor and shamanic practitioner. She started with a short lecture on the world-view of the shamans in which we learned about the different worlds

and the Tree of Life [*Axis Mundi*] which connects those three realms (Halifax, 1980)

We were told to imagine this Tree of Life, which can also be symbolized as a ladder or a cave, as a gateway to the Upper and Lower worlds. First, Deena called in the spirits of the four directions by using a rattle, and later the monotonous drumming would start in separate sessions of 20 minutes. I was convinced that some sensory deprivation and a bit of hypnotic suggestion by "calling in the spirits" would not do much for me. But I decided to participate and I was open to whatever was going to happen.

The Shaman is a self-reliant explorer of the endless mansions of a magnificent hidden universe.

–Michael Harner

Over the course of the weekend's journeying the objectives were exploring the spiritual worlds, meeting our power animals and spirit teachers, and attempting get answers to personal questions. The first journey to the Lower World was a most unexpected and thoroughly remarkable experience for me. Alex Grey's *Metamorphosis* summarizes the experience (Fig. 2).

I was not trying to think of an animal or anything but slowly a caterpillar showed up that turned into a butterfly. The butterfly showed me around a world full of mythical creatures. Every question I asked was answered by filling the heart with bliss. In shamanic journeying the information will come through a sense of "knowingness," a kind of sixth sense that is beyond seeing or any of the other single senses. The experience was not as vivid as in the image; it did not change ordinary imagination that much, but the feeling tone and feeling quality was significantly altered. All my sceptical worries of the morning were completely dissolved. I had lightened up considerably.

After the drumming stopped I opened my eyes and two questions arose immediately: what was the ontological status of this world I experienced? Or, in normal language: what was the nature of this experience? And secondly, does it matter?

In the case of the first question it was of no use asking my caterpillar-turned-butterfly directly, which I did, the only thing it could say was "just relax; it does not matter." Others who have asked their power animals about their ontological status received answers like "I am a part of you," "I am a part of God," or "I am Argon from the seventh plane" (Walsh 1991:97), so asking the animals themselves is not particularly helpful.

Roger Walsh (1980) does have a theory on the nature of the experience: he states that a cognitive schema involving one's expectations and an "evolving cosmological framework" exist prior to the shamanic journey. Walsh maintains that I would not have travelled to the Lower World if the facilitator did not explain this concept to me before. Walsh bases this constructivist view on the phenomenological differences between shamanic states that are consistent with their specific cultural milieu.

Since transpersonal psychologists acknowledge the possibility of realms of the mind that transcend our everyday egoic awareness, they might interpret the experience not as separate entities (or subpersonalities as other psychologists might do), but as transcendent aspects of the psyche "above and beyond" the ego (e.g., as aspects of the 'wider self' of William James; the 'Higher Self' of Roberto Assagioli; the 'highest self' of Abraham Maslow; the Self of Carl Jung, or the inner witness in Yoga and Eastern traditions). As said, shamans themselves tend to be realists regarding the journey. This means that for them, the soul flight is real, objective and independent of the shaman's mind-body state. In my experience there was definitely such a realist core, something that did not come forth out of my expectations or beliefs about the experience.

Compared to what we ought to be, we are only half-awake. Our fires are dampened, our drafts are checked; we are making use of only a small part of our mental and physical resources.

-William James

How could I possibly make all of these mystical creatures up? I definitely did not expect a caterpillar-turned-butterfly to be my power animal, if I expected to see anything at all in the first place. And how can you possibly explain the agreements in symbolic content of the persons who played hide and seek with their power animals in later journeys? I think we have to make up our own minds about the nature of the process and the sources of information.

Here, we arrive at the second question: does it matter? Does it matter what the nature of our experience was? I would answer, though slightly hesitantly, with "no." I do not care too much about the explanations or rationalizations of the experience. As the pioneering Western psychologist William James (1902/1960) states, the person who undergoes such a spiritual experience[1] needs no articulate reasons, but forms a justification in itself. What matters, is that for me, it was *really* meaningful. The ontological status of the inner world is not the issue here, the healing and letting go of old beliefs and fears is.

A single decisive spiritual experience may undo a whole edifice of reasoning and conclusions erected by the logical intelligence.

- Sri Aurobindo

In particular, the symbolic explanations of my power animal about my scepticism, and where the nagging feeling came from, were truly meaningful. The butterfly showed me through feelings in my body, and his own movement, that scepticism comes forth out of thinking about things that are far away and irrelevant to the here and now. When the animal flew far away I felt cold and alone, and when it landed in my heart I had extremely pleasant subtle sensations all over my body. The animal taught me to stay with my own heart, my own gut feelings, and not to escape from them by denying my own experience. I later discovered that these ideas are very similar to body-centred, somatic, and core-process psychotherapies (e.g., Cobb 2000; Kornfield 1996; Pierrakos 1987). In these mindfulness-based therapies awareness of the body, its feelings, and content and states of mind that arise, are used to learn more about the nature of the self and suffering.

To conclude, the journeying taught me that I underestimated myself and my own (?) creativity and inner wisdom, resources that are hidden beneath the surface of every human being. I escaped from my capacities, but the shamanic journey grounded me firmly in new possibilities, and taught me not to run from emotions but to dance with them. Shamans were the pioneers in exploring and applying these resources and I am truly grateful that we received the opportunity to get a glimpse of their magical world.

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1 William James (1902/1960) made this statement about mystical experiences. On the issue of whether shamanic journeying should be considered mystical, the jury is still out (Walsh, 1991). But, regarding the impact that this experience had it resonates with the idea of forming a justification in itself.

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Call for Papers

IUAES 2013 Panel: **The Extended Self: Relations between Material and Immaterial Worlds**
17th World Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences "Evolving Humanity, Emerging Worlds," University of Manchester, UK, 5th–10th August 2013.

Closing date for paper proposals: 3rd August 2012.

Panel Convenors: Fiona Bowie (University of Bristol), Emily Pierini (University of Bristol), Jack Hunter (University of Bristol)

Abstract
The tendency to see the individual as a material bounded entity with discrete boundaries, including the boundaries of a physical lifespan that defines a person as an individual, is largely a recent Western construct. We wish to invite proposals that explore the various ways people in many cultures, including Western ones, have expanded the notion of the individual, and of personhood to include relations with non–material entities and a life that goes beyond the boundaries of a single lifespan. The topics addressed can include relations with non–material entities; the nature of non–material worlds; forms of communication, including mediumship, clairvoyance, shamanic journeying, meditation, out of body experience, spirit possession and healing. We invite approaches that are ethnographic and experiential. Papers might include discussion of appropriate methodologies, ethical issues and ontologies. They might also tackle questions concerning personhood, consciousness, the mind and body, and their relation to materiality.

Papers should have an anthropological or ethnographic focus. Please, submit a paper title, a short paper abstract (under 300 characters including spaces), a long paper abstract (250 words) via our panel's page on the IUAES website: http://www.nomadit.co.uk/iuaes/iuaes2013/panels.php5?PanelID=1663

Psychic Surgery as a "Breaking Frame":
Ethnographic Observations of a London Based Psychic Surgeon

Lara Bauer

What repels me most when I am doing a psychic surgery, is when someone comes for an eye condition; I can see all the nerves blooding from the eyes with my mind-eye and it's really disgusting.
[Gary, a 24 year old psychic surgeon from London, 2012]

Sight allows insights. In a figurative sense, when we *see*, we *understand*. In the strict sense of the term, the implicit meaning associated is close – we recognize and understand what we see as *existent* in what we call *the sensory world*. Thus, in our image scheme, we see something because it *exists*. As a matter of fact, to have an existence, things need first to be observed and described.

Bioscientists and engineers have conceptualised many 'scopies,' employing technologies like micro*scopes*, stereo*scopes*, oto*scopes,* electrocardio*scopes* and so on, to extend the potential of our body-scopes so as to create a new visibility for the usually *invisible*. Ultraviolets, atoms and organs are now part of what we call an objectivist vision of the macrocosm and the human microcosm – the latter could be called the 'bodycosm.' These scientific observations have direct implications for our everyday perspective on our bodies. We put on sun cream, or we take pills to protect our invisible organs from invisible threats. This is a deep paradox, for our inner selves are not accessible to ourselves. We know we have organs, but we can't see them. Our inner body is out-of-sight and somehow out-of-insight. Only the 'surgeons' have the privilege

and the power to observe it, provided there are medical disorders to be fixed.

If biosurgeons can observe and manipulate the inner anatomy of people, psychic surgeons such as Gary, one of my main social actors[1], also claim to perform it, whilst employing a totally different methodology and cultivating another 'bodyscope.' By using technico-symbolic skills called mediumship, Gary pretends to have additional hands stemming from his guide (called Abraham), that energetically enter into the bodies of his clients. Once the connection with the energy of the body is achieved, he claims to see the anatomic structure of the area he is healing.

Now, the question is: how can anthropology approach this so-called paranormal phenomenon? Above all, and to moor the 'floating signifier' that constitutes the category of paranormality, we need to consider that the paranormal is nothing else than the alter ego of what we call normality. Thus, these are both popular categorisations that can be fully treated as data. The paranormal refers to a phenomenon that occurs in contradiction with the common course of the 'Order.' In many ways, it is close to the Goffmanian notion of a 'breaching frame' (1974) with the slight difference that paranormality always refers to the sacred. Secondly, the inherent dimension of strangeness evokes, *de facto*, a relative position. For insiders whose communications with spirits are one among many other activities of their everyday life, the mention of paranormality to qualify these phenomena is not conceived in the same way as outsiders use it. In accordance with the vernacular perspective these events, though considered to be common,

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[1] This methodological choice does not align with a culturalist posture. I am focusing on this particular actor for the moment because he has been influencing the psychic surgery movement.

are qualified as 'paranormal' because the latter is merely a 'floating category' of that expression, especially when used by the media.

The aim of this article is to give another kind of visibility to psychic surgery, a perspective that goes beyond the whether-it-works-or-not issue. As the processes involved interest me more than the results, I have been focusing on the work of practitioners. My privileged relationship with Gary, which has lasted for two years, allows me to illustrate a way of performing psychic surgery by taking his example with full consent. To begin this discussion an overall view of surgical phenomenology, and the place held by psychic surgery in this framework, is necessary.

Diachronic and Transversal 'Surgical Gestures'

Psychic surgery is not the only expression of parallel surgeries around the world, and the emergence of such practices does not only draw its inspiration from 'official surgery.' Right in the middle of a real archaeology, the 'surgical gesture' should be released from its Occidental print and redefined. Indeed, surgery is not an Occidental property. While it was institutionalised as such in London and Paris in the 1800s (Rabier 2010), physical anthropologists have reported elaborate surgical procedures in the prehistory of Europe and Asia, throughout antiquity, and pre-colonial societies in USA, Africa and Pacific islands (Cushing 1897; MacCurdy 1905; Newell 1913; Ackerknecht 1947; Johnson 1969; Kennedy 1987). Above all, the Indian Ayurvedic surgeries of the 4th century BCE have been described as particularly skilled in plastic surgery (Singhal 2002). At these times,

all these surgical procedures were performed in accordance with metaphysical beliefs, and this particular observation has not changed with contemporary collateral surgeries. Besides, and no less relevant, given the heterogeneity of surgical gestures across history, the so-called 'surgery' of modern Western medicine cannot maintain a monopoly of the term – biosurgery is thus more convenient. Without wanting to ancestralize surgery, I consider this information worthy of mention, since biosurgery is not the catalyst of psychic surgery, but rather acts more like a muse for it.

Second, there are various expressions of collateral surgeries around the world that could be subsumed as 'parallel surgeries,' and psychic surgery is only one of them. At first glance, the transculturality of these practices is not necessarily obvious, since a multiplicity of denominations, therapeutic frames[2] and surgical procedures[3] characterise them. Emic terms gathered so far include the following: psychic surgery for the United Kingdom and the Philippines, mediumistic surgery and spiritual surgery for Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zenna healing for Australia, surgical shamanism for the Yagua of Amazonia, and auric surgery, vibratory surgery and etheric surgery for Switzerland, Denmark, Germany and Portugal. On the other hand, if the appellations and methodology unfolded diverge in accordance with cultural contexts, these practices share certain matrices and features. First, the use of bioanaesthetics and bioasepsics is banned. Second, the therapists enter an altered state of mind[4] by invoking a figure of the metaphysic pantheon[5]. Then, they have recourse to the symbolic or effective artefacts of biosurgery, such as scalpels, syringes,

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[2] According with the definition Rouget gives to « shamanic trance » (1990: 66) and « trance of possession » (*op.cit*: 67), parallel surgery uses to be performed in both ways in Brazil and in the Philippines. Some in Salvador da Bahia, although less current, are performed without the intervention of a therapist medium (Bauer, 2007).

[3] In Brazil, two generic modus operandi characterize the operations – incisive spiritual surgery, i.e which cuts the skin and non-invasive spiritual surgery. From these to different panels ensue various ways of operating. If the first one has become famous with Joao Texeira de Farias known as "John of God", the latter is far more frequent in Brazil and performed the night amongst anonymous therapist (Bauer, 2009).

[4] It could be trance of possession or what I call 'partial trance' in the case of Gary.

[5] Entities invoked are heterogenic – spirits, biblical figures or fairy personalities. In England, they are called guides.

solvents, compresses, gloves and various terminological references to surgico-medical vocabulary and history, such as surgery, operation, surgical unit, incisions, convalescence, Ambroise Paré, Hippocrates, and very accurate anatomic terms. In other words, while biosurgical artefacts are reemployed by parallel surgeries, only the technical shape subsists. The meaning, though, is renewed: recycled in sacred significations. For example, in Kardecist Centres in Salvador da Bahia, the compresses do not serve to dress the skin – they are used to operate on the *perisprit*, that is to say the aura, which is seen as something smooth and perfectly fitting the body. In other words, the new function of the compress is that of a scalpel, and its signification is sacred. There is a bilateral reinterpretation – while science is sacralised, the sacred is reciprocally 'scientifized.'

Compared to the Philippines, where psychic surgery is presented as continuing 2000-years of unbroken practice (Alison & Malony 1981), the phenomenon is quite new in England, since the first psychic surgeon Harry Edwards (1893-1976), began to treat people from the 1940s until 1976. On the other hand, England turned out to be a more favourable field for its popularization and subsequent institutionalisation, compared to Brazil where spiritual surgery appears to be more underground – John of God excluded. In England though, the symbolic, or effective, use of biosurgical artefacts is less obvious. Harry Edwards used to share his healing method with British audiences by giving public demonstrations. One of them took place in London at the Royal Albert Hall, which was attended by up to five thousand people. He then founded the National Federation of Spiritual Healers (NFSP), and the actual Healing Trust Ltd.

Working Distracted on Purpose Throughout an Atypical Trance
So far, I have only met psychic surgeons, or spiritual surgeons, who enter into full trance while performing a parallel surgery. One of them, in Salvador da Bahia, was even capable of incorporating five 'identities' in only twenty minutes (Bauer 2007). It was the most awkward

situation I have ever experienced while conducting fieldwork – I had to introduce myself five times within a very short period to someone whom I thought was the same person, repeating time and again the whole discourse about the aim of my research, each time trying to remain as spontaneous as possible under such unusual circumstances. With the psychic surgeon Gary though, assisting his psychic surgeries did not necessitate a reintroduction of myself to the guide he is incorporating. And, if his relationship to the sacred is different from what I have observed so far, his reinterpretation of biosurgery also stands out. Gary, like other UK psychic surgeons, does not use any surgical instruments. In his particular case though, biosurgery signifiers have, in fact, shifted to his oral and body expressions. First, the therapist talks like a surgeon, with biosurgical and sacred terms are intermixed:

> We [Gary and his guide Abraham] are working with chemical balance, stimulating the motor neurones to improve his mood. Lucky people feel pain, unlucky people feel a knife. But when we work, we generally don't suffer too much because Abraham injects anaesthesical.

Second, his hands behave like instruments themselves. They reproduce surgical 'schemes of intervention' associated with an object (Rabardel 2005), those of incising, sharing, shifting, nudging and dressing. Interesting to note is that Gary is not aware of what his hands are doing. When I ask him about the meaning of the movements of his hands at a particular time, he usually marks a break, reflects on it and tries to interpret the gestures of his hands by deductive argumentation. In fact, Gary claims to be disconnected from them while he is undertaking psychic surgery:

> I work in a different way from the other psychic surgeons. They work with full trance, like John of God. I work with my hands in trance. Abraham takes control of my physical hands and moves them. I am

aware of them, I can remove it when I want and at the same time, I can feel his additional hands entering the body and I can describe what they do.

Indeed, Gary considers when he is healing that he possesses two types of hands: his physical hands – a category that would be a pleonasm for outsiders – and his additional hands. The latter are Abraham's (also called Abe), the top surgeon of the team he is working with. Gary thinks he is a spiritual renter boy, similar to the *tang-ki* of Taoist temples. He says he is sharing his consciousness with his guide and, in order for the latter to work properly, he needs to disconnect his attention from his hands. While his proprioception is still active in his physical hands, he feels pins and needles inside when Abraham is controlling them. This 'partial alternate state of mind' is also taught in his training:

> You'll learn to hold energy while drawing your attention to something else. You need to get able to divide your mind into compartments.

This is the reason why Gary says he works by talking to his clients, to get distracted from his hand-consciousness and to lend them, temporally, to his guide. In fact, any distraction is good. When his manager Vince stood alongside, during public events like *Mind, Body and Soul* in London Olympia, he could assist his psychic surgery. I observed that Gary was talking and having fun with Vince, while he was supposed to be healing a client. What I could not figure out at that time, was that this precisely constitutes his way of healing. During consultations though, I frequently observed that Gary is not talking with his clients but remains quiet instead:

> When I am not talking with clients, I am talking with him [Abraham]. About everything but the healing, for example the weather.

Gary's relationship with his guide is osmotic. His guide is described existing alongside him 24 hours a day:

> I feel all the time something switched on behind my head; either it's Abe, either it's a brain tumour.

Presented as a back and articulations specialist, Abraham is not only a guide; he also has a previous life story that doesn't interest Gary much, because what he was or what he has done are not important. However, to satisfy other's curiosity, Gary has given some details. Abraham is described as originating from the same time as his biblical homonym, but his life story is quite different. Born in Ur, a former village in today's Iraq, he used to live in a tribe as a chief:

> He looks biblical with all the cliché: barb and toga. [Indeed, Gary has a painting of him in his living-room]. He also has dirty hands. But he hadn't got this look when he was alive; it's my brain, which interprets his energy that way.

He is not described as a wise person, as Gary informs that he killed people. Once he passed over at the age of 65, he wanted to help Gary's kind:

> Once he passed over, he decided to work in the physical world with our body and work as a spirit guide. He needed somebody of the same soulgroup. When I was 18, he explained me everything and said he had picked me.

Abraham's dirty hands refer to the body energy he is working with. Sometimes, just before finishing a consultation and before washing his hands, Gary scratches his face with the back of his hand, carefully avoiding touching his skin with his fingers. When I asked him why he scratched his face in such a way he said:

> I just don't want to have crap on my body.

And that is the reason why, between each client, Gary goes and washes his hands. Sometimes at the end of a consultation, I see him blowing on his fingers. In other words, Gary seeks to avoid any contamination with the patient's energy because he can see and feel the sick energy his client. I also observed this particular feature in a Kardecist Centre in Salvador da Bahia, where the real use of the solvent was not to disinfect the body of the patient, but rather the body energy of the latter.

Methodology and Research Design:
Gary's Role in the Psychic Surgery Movement

The decision to focus on Gary's work so far could have stemmed from a strategic and rational choice, such as considering the fact that he has been playing a very significant role in the popularisation of psychic surgery and its institutionalisation in the United Kingdom. But the truth is completely different. Victim in October 2010 of an accommodation fraud attempt on the internet, I made up my mind to contact the social actors whom I had interviewed during my former stay in London. The first person I decided to contact was Gary because I remembered he was young and I thought he might have some good advice to give me. It turned out that Gary was seeking for a flatmate at that time, so I directly began my fieldwork by sharing his everyday life.

Gary has been working as an itinerant therapist for six years now. Having eighteen clinics across the suburbs of London, his circulation allows the spread of his reputation over different districts. Whenever there he gives public demonstrations of his method, as Harry Edwards used to do in his time. Other collateral psychic surgeons from the same cultural context have also complied with this translocal healing model, such as Ray Brown and Stephen Turoff. But Gary also crosses national boundaries, embarking on a 'transnational therapeutic tour' across Europe two or three times a year to give consultations in Norway, Germany, Switzerland, France, and Ireland. In his own country, or in Europe, the dimension of spectacularity during his public demonstrations is high. Although it is not necessarily of his own choice, Gary is often invited to perform on a stage with a red curtain behind him. Between each person selected from the public people would applause. The figure of the therapist becomes that of a star and the healing process looks more like a show. Moreover, Gary's strong sense of humour has a certain effect on the audience. People are usually amazed and book appointments for the next days right after the demonstration.

BBC4 also contributed to Gary's popularisation back in 2008 by broadcasting a documentary presenting him as the youngest psychic surgeon in the United Kingdom at that time. Ever since, most people have an idea, fuzzy or not, of the existence of this practice in England, and given all the lineage of psychic surgeons since the 1940s psychic surgery is somehow part of British common sense nowadays. Moreover, and ironically, it is in London, one of the two headquarters of biosurgery, that the Unity of UK Psychic surgeons (UUPS) was founded. Contacted by Nina Knowland, Gary, Andy Porter and the latter set up this organisation in 2008 as a governing body to gather and protect the rights of psychic surgeons across the United Kingdom, under the orders of the spirit of Harry Edwards. UUPS set up a code of conduct on healing practice and a disclaimer. Members who strictly comply with the protocols benefit from insurance in return. Thus, psychic surgery has a legal back-up in the UK.

Discussion: The Quest for the "Realest"

Compared to biosurgery, where patients are often under complete anaesthetic, psychic surgery is a very ingenious way of giving a live feed-back about the patient's organs and how they function while they are still conscious. Paradoxically, it does not necessarily mean that they are not in a sort of altered state of mind during the healing process. A breaking frame situation provokes a sort of short-circuit in our cognition that make us laugh or puts us under the influence – and that is why humorists perfectly master this art. Psychic surgery is by itself a breaking frame that provokes a cognitive disjunction, starting with its oxymoron. How

can surgery be psychic? In other terms, how can science be sacred and inversely how can the sacred be scientized? For Renard (2011), science has become a particularly inspiring muse for New Religious Movements. Indeed, Gary often reads scientific magazines on the train and seems very passionate about scientific matters. Moreover, and in accordance with the author, they both carry an aspect of the marvellous that overruns popular mental schemes. As a consequence, science much like the sacred, generates a 'cognitive vertigo' (ibid: 33). Psychic surgery is a fusion of science and the sacred, which increases this vertigo effect. People recognise biosurgical marks in the healing process, but their meanings have totally changed, if not shifted, to the opposite direction. They are often amazed, occasionally non receptive, but in both cases they feel cognitively lost. The signifiers no longer fit with the signified. The figure of the 'surgeon,' who is supposed in the common frame to act as a serious scientific professional, highly concentrated when he is performing, becomes with Gary's psychic surgery a surgeon deliberately distracted and happy to share his method with the public. Even more unsettling, the signifiers can even vanish – the fully equipped instrumentation of the biosurgeon becomes non-existent with the psychic surgeon. It is likely that under such a breaking frame, their technico-symbolic skills provoke a disconnect between self-consciousness and proprioception (Mancini 2012).

Parallel surgery can seem like nonsense, insomuch that conducting anthropological fieldwork on that subject is as fascinating as it is tiring. Whatever the place I am in, the people I am speaking with, the context I find myself in, I inevitably face ontological questions from my interlocutors: *is it real or not? Does it work or not? Is he a real healer or a charlatan?* People expect that, as a researcher, I must give the last word. The words I give, however, are often unexpected. As an anthropologist I cannot validate or invalidate what I see or don't see. Sometimes, people even seem to be very disappointed when they learn that I am not focusing on the results. I have been

told that I totally missed the point. Others have a cringe reflex when I begin to explain what parallel surgery is. In both cases, I often have strong reactions.

These reactions are symptomatic of an omnipresent quest for authenticity that seems to transcend every social boundary, such as a macrosocial fact. Speaking about 'exotism,' people often seem to be seeking for the 'realest' as if it actually exists – the real candomblè tradition, the real yoga method, the real alpaca shawl, the real hummus recipe, the real Grandma's home remedy, and of course – the real healer. This popular category, though, is much more powerful, for the category of the marvellous automatically implies a personal stance on the matter that leads to a radicalisation of positions in society (Renard 2011). There are pros and cons, and amongst the pros, there is the belief in real and false healers. Why would Gary and other psychic surgeons be less or more real than any other healers? Would what seems real for a specific social group not be sufficient grounds to consider their cosmology seriously? Even the badly-reputed psychic surgeons from the Philippines who are accused of 'fraud' based on their spreading 'fake' blood onto the skin of patients merit more consideration. Are magicians accused of fraud for making us believe that they are manipulating real magic? Michel's notion of the 'sacred trick' (2011) in reference to these 'fraudulent' psychic surgeons is at least interesting and worthy of deeper consideration. Every human investment deserves an analytic respect (Ghasarian 2004).

Parallel surgeries I have assisted have also shaken my own frames, not only as researcher but also as a whole person, and that is good news for the ethnographer because it becomes data for analysis in itself. An anthropologist conducting fieldwork is a person who keeps on living (Favret-Saada 1977). My subjectivity, my first-thoughts and reactions also reveal the force of the collective imaginary. I am realising that popular projections of the category of healers are very high. This probably stems from the principle of coherence between the profession and the attitude of everyday life. If a psycholo-

gist cannot break, a doctor cannot smoke, a humorist cannot be sad, and a jurist cannot cheat, then a healer cannot be egocentric. But that is not his only definition. A healer must correspond to all clichés of 'authenticity' – eating 'healthy,' being in phase with 'nature,' having 'experience,' and of course being 'wise' with all the implicit values the latter implies. As a psychic surgeon Gary already breaks the frame. But his method and personality increases that process. He never loses his sense of humour even when he is treating a person with a very bad condition, he is corpulent, he sometimes does not want to work, he does not remember the person he has already treated but manages to hide it when he sees him/her again, he eats gluten and dairy products and is not against alcohol, he is disorganised, he plays violent video-games, he is playful, he likes horror films, he can be disgusted by the condition he is healing – he has the wisdom of considering that you do not need to be wise to be a healer.

I am not perfect and I want people to understand that you don't need to be perfect to work with the spiritual world.

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Tylor and Neo-Tylorian Approaches to the Study of Religion: Re-Evaluating an Important Lineage in the Theorisation of Religion

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It is my contention that the work of Sir Edward Burnett Tylor on religion must be re-evaluated not only for historical purposes but because of its continuing relevance for the theorisation of religion. Tylor was novel in taking the act of crafting a definition seriously, advocating a minimal definition that could be applied across cultures (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:424), and was constructed at the start, not the end, of the study (Weber 1963:1). Unlike Émile Durkheim, another classical theorist, who defined religion in terms of that held Sacred (Durkheim 2001:46): including the values of free speech, the scientific method or the Nation (Durkheim 2001:332-333); Tylor did not widen the category of religion to potentially include almost anything. Nor was his theory constructed for missionary or theological aims, providing a theoretical lineage for those who wish to study religion as a human, social phenomenon and yet demarcate a clear area of research and a tool for analysis.

Timothy Fitzgerald has urged abandonment of the term 'religion' because many theories or definitions showed signs of being theological, or else are too vague to use it to pick out anything distinctive. He did admit, however, that there were theories which lay between his two poles, and that Tylor studied religion as human phenomena (Fitzgerald 2000:33). I have attempted to connect the two and hold that this middle position is actually rooted in Tylor's 1871 book *Primitive Culture,* and that this can help to overcome the apparently insurmountable theoretical issues with the category. Tylor began by disputing the claims of many observers that various Indigenous Peoples had no religion (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:417-418), by considering how 'religion' was to be defined.

The first requisite in a systematic definition of religions….is to lay down a rudimentary definition. By requiring in this definition the belief in a supreme deity or judgement after death, the adoration of idols…no doubt many tribes may be excluded from the category of religions. But such a narrow definition has the fault of identifying religion rather with a particular development…It seems best to fall back…and claim as a minimal definition of religion belief in spiritual beings. (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:424)

It is clear immediately that his definition focuses on belief and, by extension, the mind, and that his account of religion is dependent on conceptions of spirits: 'animism.' Animism for Tylor did not primarily refer to a specific type of religion, or stage of religious development (though confusingly he did sometimes use it in this way), but to the ever-present core of religions, the theory of souls and spirits (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:426-427), the latter considered to have developed from the former. He argued that human beings were considered to possess both a vital force which gives them life and a shadowy, ethereal second self, unified into the idea of the 'soul.' This originated in a fascination with what gives a body life and departs it at death and with images of deceased persons encountered in dreams and visions (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:428-429).

Their explanatory power partially accounted for the genesis and perseverance of religious ideas and why the idea of the soul was extended to other living things. Apparently animate forces of nature: the sun, the sea, thunder, fire and disease, appeared to be not just animated but personal (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:185). This idea was even

extended to inanimate objects because phantoms were encountered clothed, wearing jewellery, or even brandishing weapons (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:477-478).

The outgrowth of this was the notion of soul-like beings (spirits) conceived as personal, causal agents either embodied in nature or disembodied; which could explain the properties and processes of the cosmos and even the cosmos itself: 'personified causes' (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:108). Spirits firmly embodied in a rock, tree or river, as a soul in a human body, a disembodied spirit which can possess an object or person, and a more powerful, often anthropomorphic god like Poseidon controlling the sea but independent of it, all share the same root. The most important aspect is not their specific nature but the fact that they are considered to be personal, hidden and mysterious, yet powerful actors (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:184-185).

Contrary to Guthrie's assertion that Tylor ignored religious conceptions which were material (Guthrie 1993:24), he was keen to emphasise that in most forms of animism the spirits are not regarded as purely metaphysical, but as material beings which happen to be ethereal, insubstantial and invisible (Tylor 1871: Vol 1:457). In line with Guthrie's own approach, it is the personal and anthropomorphic aspects of these conceptions which are most important.

In many respects Tylor's animism is actually quite close to Harvey's 'new animism,' which adopted Irving Hallowell's account of Ojibwa relations with 'other than human persons' in stones, rocks, trees and thunder and applied this more generally to a network of relationships with persons 'only some of whom are human' (Harvey 2005:17-18).

While Tylor undeniably did speak of early animism, polytheism and monotheism as distinct stages following each other sequentially, this is an unfortunate self-imposed distraction from the main thrust of his argument. The underlying similarity of religions was of more interest than their differences, at least as part of a continuum in which the struggle between two great antagonistic epistemic systems - animism and materialism - was played out; the latter expanding at the expense of the former:

> The conception of the human soul is, as to its most essential nature, continuous from the philosophy of the savage thinker to the modern professor of theology…The divisions which have separated the great religions of the world into intolerant and hostile sects are for the most part superficial in comparison with the deepest of all religious schisms, that which divides Animism from Materialism. (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:501-2)

All religions contain at least a portion of animism and Tylor laudably drew attention to the fact that until the modern era, Christian Europe was nothing short of animist; with belief in vulnerable souls, dangerous ghosts, demons, fairies, protective angels, a scheming Devil, interceding Saints and an active and intervening God (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:187-188).

Tylor argued that as scientific knowledge of the world and its material properties and processes increases; spirits are less and less appealed to as explanations in the world, though rising to become powerful gods with more overall control over nature, they increasingly removed and less directly involved (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:175). Religions become more distinctly moral, though Tylor argued that all human beings were moral, morality was not always closely bound up with religion (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:427).

Souls, spirits and gods may also become more truly metaphysical, outside and beyond material phenomena, when material phenomena become better understood; the spirits are pushed out of matter (Tylor 1871: Vol 2:24). The sun is no longer the body or chariot of a god driving it across the sky. The gods no longer dwell on a mountain peak or in a physical heaven above a solid firmament, worlds of the dead are moved from a distant island. or the far west. to a different reality altogether (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:101). Religions and their conceptions do

appear to become more mysterious and 'wholly other[1]' in the face of scientific knowledge, and more dependent on faith, until some new evidence or theory appears to confirm their point of view that is!

Tylor argued that human beings were fundamentally similar, quoting the Italian proverb that 'all the earth is one country,' (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:6), and finding a remarkable commonality in human thought: repetitiveness coupled with rationality. In the absence of advanced scientific knowledge he argued that animism was an understandable, rational system (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:23). This did not entail that human beings were analytical philosophers (too much has been made of the term 'savage philosopher'), rather that the underlying rationale behind a system of belief can be unearthed, and once the premises with which human beings possess or inherit (and human beings for Tylor can be as slavishly conservative as they are rational (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:40)), their behaviour can be appreciated as rational within a given cognitive framework (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:484-485).

Much religious behaviour, including its most common rituals, like prayer and sacrifice, can be understood once it is realised that they are relations with personal beings that can be pleaded with, flattered, cajoled, bribed and even threatened (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:393). Over time, especially with the increasing aloofness of the gods and advancing materialism, rituals become more formulaic; inscrutable mysteries which still retain a trace of their former practical function (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:363).

Even apparently spontaneous and extraordinary aspects of religion like ecstatic trances, visions and miracles tended both to conform to certain regular types, especially those patterned by the religion and culture. Even initial, more spontaneous, experiences are either worked into the existing patterns or bring a new tradition to which others conform:

Want of originality indeed seems one of the most remarkable features in the vi-
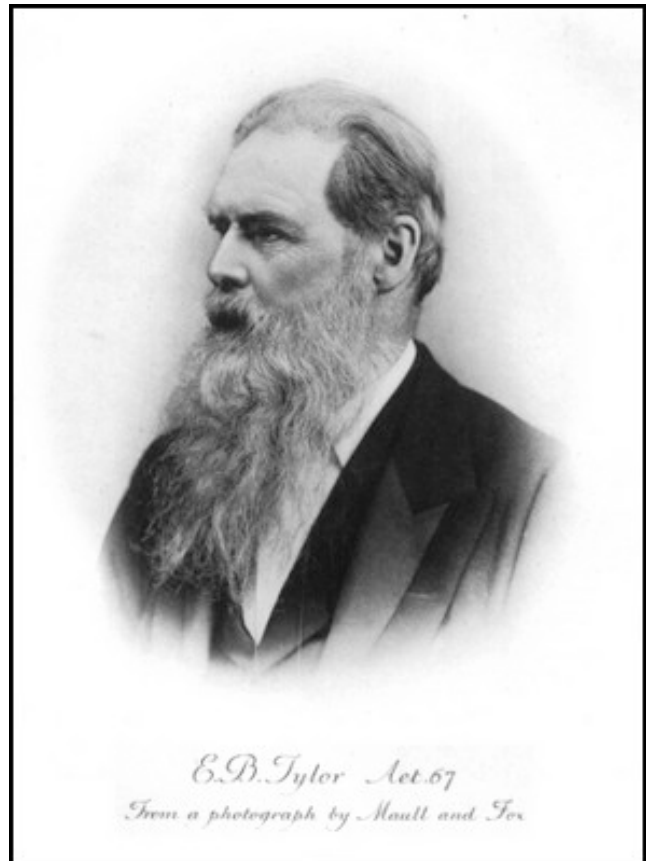
E.B. Tylor

sions of mystics. The stiff Madonnas with their crowns and petticoats still transfer themselves from the pictures on cottage walls…When the devil with horns, hoofs and tail had once become a fixed image in the popular of course men saw him in this conventional shape. (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:307)

It is a vicious circle; what he believes he therefore sees and what he sees he therefore believes. Beholding the reflexion of his own mind…he humbly receives the teachings of his second self. The Red Indian visits his happy hunting-grounds, the Tongan his shadowy island of Bolotu, the Greek enters Hades and looks on the Elysian fields, the Christian beholds the heights of Heaven and the depths of Hell. (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:49)

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[1] This term comes from Otto (1958)

The notion of the cognitive unity of humanity was challenged by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, who argued that one cannot assume that human thought is everywhere the same or that rationality is its defining feature. Lévy-Bruhl argued that conceptions reported in the thought of many Indigenous Peoples were 'pre-logical,' not devoid of reason but not concerned by contradictory statements (Bowie 2006:221-222). One of Lévy-Bruhl's classic examples was the statement that a person cannot be in two places at once, however Tylor actually addressed this very example by showing that it was rationally intelligible because of the notion of the projection of the soul, 'astral projection' or in some cases the miraculous power of a Saint (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:447-448). After a lifetime of research and reflection Lévy-Bruhl admitted that human rationality was more universal and human thought more uniform than he had at first realised and arguably had worked much harder for that realisation than Tylor (Needham 1976:167-168).

Arguably Tylor's comparative study of human thought could not have proceeded without the assumption of rationality, which appeared to present itself again and again in the operation of human thought as a key to unlocking many, if not all, doors. This was at a time when Indigenous Peoples were assumed from the outset to be nearly devoid of reason. It was for later generations of scholars to examine these most basic assumptions. This is also true of the fact that he was largely an armchair scholar (as was Lévy-Bruhl), pulling examples from across the world. This was an important process at a time when the boundary of the human race itself was not subject to consensus. A mountain of data had been amassed and demanded analysis. Sharpe has pointed out that it is unfair to judge a scholar out of their intellectual context (Sharpe 1986:89), and it is worth remembering that social science even approximating what we know today was still to emerge.

The intellectualist position has been heavily criticised for apparently focusing too much on individuals, Pals for example describes the Tylorian view of religion as a collection of individuals who happen to share the same beliefs (Pals 2006:46-47). This is a flippant way to describe his approach given that his account revolves around the reported belief-systems of communities. He was perfectly aware that practitioners of a religion do not always reflect on the object of their worship, or may hold to very different conceptions of it (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:168-169). At the beginning of his book *Primitive Culture* he was aware of the need to balance accounts of individuals and societies[2] (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:12-13), in a way that is largely common sense but which is reminiscent of C Wright Mills 'Sociological imagination' (Mills 1959), before Durkheim, Marx and Weber. He also knew well that pantheons often reflected the political structures of the societies in which they are found (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:125).

His definition, and by extension his theory, as Russell McCutcheon has described a definition as a theory in miniature (McCutcheon 2000:13), is clearly belief-centric and this approach has been greatly critiqued. Nonetheless, by belief Tylor did not mean that all religions had an equivalent of the Nicene Creed, and his approach is not incompatible with religions which are more Orthopraxic rather than Orthodoxic, based on practice not doctrine. An emphasis on ritual or result hardly entails an absence of belief, and it is surely untenable to assume that belief is a purely 'individual' matter simply because it is psychological.

Tylor's comparative concern with belief has its advantages, it allowed him to paint his the-

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[2] For evidence that Tylor was aware of the power and importance of social contexts see *Primitive Culture* Volume 1: pp497-498 where he describes how the Ancient Greek philosopher Democritus first conceived the doctrine of ideas by being raised in a thoroughly animistic culture. He argued that external objects 'throw off' images of themselves (ideas) which Tylor concluded arose from the notion of 'object souls'. "To say that Democritus was an ancient Greek is to say that from his childhood he had looked on the funeral ceremonies of his country, beholding the funeral sacrifices of garments and jewels and money and food and drink, rites which his mother and his nurse could tell him were performed in order that phantasmal images of these objects might pass into possession of forms shadowy like themselves, the souls of dead men.

ory with broad brush strokes and allow the fine details to be filled in later. At his time, from the position of his armchair, a focus on the finer details of myth and ritual could lead many to extravagant inferences. James Frazer, in his *Golden Bough*, inferred that Shiva and Parvati were vegetation deities simply because they were paired and some of the same symbolic and ritual elements were present in the cults of European field spirits and Ancient Near Eastern cults (Frazer 1981:277-278).

Rodney Needham argued that the concept of 'belief' should not be used by ethnographers because the greatest philosophers of the western tradition could not agree about its exact boundaries, and because belief did not appear to refer to a distinct experience or cognitive capacity (Needham 1976:61-62). He pointed out that the words used to translate it do not have close equivalents in many languages (Needham 1976:22-23), surely something which plagues all abstract concepts.

It is certainly true that we cannot know for sure if someone believes something or not, especially if they are speaking a different language and are embedded in a different cultural context (Needham 1976:31). However, it seems fairly clear that while all dimensions of the concept cannot be agreed on by philosophers (hardly a unique development), the feature which remains relatively constant is that people hold a certain proposition to be true for a relative period of time (Needham 1976:53-54). It is difficult to see how human beings could operate without this faculty. If people claim that they believe (or 'know') that there is a deity, or that they will be reincarnated, it is surely better to take them at face value.

Though no longer as secure as it once was, a classic formulation still taught in undergraduate epistemology is that to know something one must believe it to be true, for justifiable reasons and that it happens to be true (Sturgeon 1998:13-14). A person may not hold that proposi-

tion in their mind constantly of course, but if it is not contradicted or challenged by other beliefs it may well be kept in the background. Martin Stringer has argued that people can adhere to apparently contradictory belief-systems such as Christianity and Astrology and express scepticism about both because they firmly believe them in their specific contexts; they are 'situational beliefs' (Stringer 2008:50-51). That state of affairs could only operate if they were kept alive in the mind somehow, able to be drawn out and renewed again in certain contexts.

A focus on belief is, of course, only one way of approaching religion and I would hardly deny that it is complemented by those focused on ritual or social structure. No approach is complete without at least some account of what practitioners claim to believe, the religious universe in which they are embedded and in which they frame their actions (Smith 1978:131)[3]. The reverse is also true that no analysis is complete which does not situate these beliefs in a network of relationships, cultural and linguistic understandings and economic and power structures.

A focus on belief is hardly the most controversial aspect of Tylor's work that I must address; it is the cultural evolutionary model which he employs. It must first be stressed that he argued forcefully for the underlying similarity of human beings at a time when the boundary of the human race itself was not subject to consensus, to such an extent that it could be considered overly radical for this day.

It is also the case that he was hardly alone in doing so, Durkheim used Indigenous Australian societies as the base for his model of religion because he regarded them as the elementary forms of society and religion, from which all others developed (Durkheim 2001:81). Tylor's model that phases of technological advancement accompanied philosophical, mythological and religious changes is also hardly radically different from that of Marx. Even now outside of history departments the idea of linear, progressive ad-

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[3] "Heaven and Hell, to a believer, are stupendous places into one or other of which irretrievably he is about to step. To an observer, they are items in the believer's mind. To the believer they are parts of the universe; to the observer they are parts of a religion." (Smith 1978: p131)

vancement in all areas shows remarkable persistence. None of these are good defences of Tylor's evolutionary schema and are not intended to be, I merely seek to place it in a broader context. It is my contention that the evolutionary model far from constituting the backbone of Tylor's work is its vestigial tail.

His development theory was predictably the idea of a gradual linear progression from simple, less advanced ideas to more complex and advanced ideas. When Tylor wrote about cultural development, however, it is important to understand that he was frequently discussing *material* culture, technology and science (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:58) which undeniably do progress in this way.

One important fact about Tylorian evolutionism which I have never encountered in the literature is that he constructed it in response to degeneration theory. This was the notion that Indigenous cultures particularly, but to an extent all cultures, were the intellectual or literal descendants of a lost ancient civilization (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:35-36). Any element of culture considered 'too high' would be taken to be evidence of former advancement, surviving the process of degeneration. Though this may remind contemporary readers more of various forms of popular 'alternative' pseudo-histories, these were usually firmly theological. After all, Tylor asked how such an advanced civilization could have emerged without supernatural aid? (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:38) Prehistoric archaeology of course emerged around that time proving that human beings throughout the world began in low technological conditions.

Degeneration theory explains why Tylor clung to his development theory so forcefully even in the teeth of evidence he provided himself. The advantage of his model over the other is that adjusting for the inevitable influences, human beings in unrelated contexts could devise similar ideas and technology and that if no evidence of influence is found, such phenomena should be accepted as indigenous developments (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:63).

Tylor admitted that not all parts of culture progressed at the same pace but even this could not explain cases of beliefs and customs found in technologically advanced and scientifically knowledgeable societies which appeared to belong to an 'earlier' time altogether. These led him to create his famous theory of 'survivals,' elements of culture which have survived the transition into a more advanced era and still bear the mark of that earlier time (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:16). These were not simply quaint customs, the purposes of which are long forgotten (like throwing salt over one's shoulder originally being done to ward off spirits), but include entire peripheral systems of belief and practice which today we might refer to as non-dominant, popular or folk systems. These included accounts of inhabitants of parts of Central Europe and Shetland refusing to save drowning persons for fear of offending the water spirit which had claimed its victim (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:108). Along with cases of 'survivals,' Tylor also recognised cases of full-scale revivals. He took the example of the fear of and persecution of witches, which had been discouraged by the Christian Church only to be encouraged by them in the early modern era (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:137-138). Tylor included Spiritualism in this model because it reminded him so strongly of prototypical animism (Tylor 1871 Vol 1:17).

All these partial and complete exceptions serve to do is make his notion of clear linear progression unworkable and untenable. Now that technological progression has been separated from the indefensible notion of 'higher' and 'lower' cultures and degeneration theories have been chased out of serious history, we can safely allow this model to crash and pick out the material which is useful to us. Stringer has argued that Tylor's data undermined his argument but is still perfectly valid in itself, proving that a diversity of belief systems inhabit a given society, the 'stages' of Tylor's evolutionary model should be leveled off (Stringer 2008:104-105).

While Tylor continues to be influential in many unacknowledged ways, there are only a few scholars who consider him to be a direct influence on their work. In many respects the fact that Tylor has few slavish followers is a

good thing because it means that his theories are never adopted wholesale and uncritically.

I have been greatly interested in what I choose to call 'Neo-Tylorian' influences and affinities in the study of religion whether conscious or not, and have identified several features. As it is the theory of religion I am concerned with, a similarity with his theory of religion is crucial; and I label this critical and humanistic substantivism. This means that religion is defined in a manner which demarcates it clearly with reference to its commonly understood content but reflectively and with social scientific purposes in mind, treating religions as human rather than divine.

Scholars influenced by Tylor will have at least an intellectualist streak, finding a place for the beliefs of practitioners in their accounts. Lastly the 'Neo' element must be emphasised, contemporary writers will reject Tylor's evolutionism, the idea of a gradation of cultures and linear progression. The importance of socio-cultural context, power relations and economic systems has also imprinted itself firmly in the work of social scientists since Tylor wrote and these scholars are no exception.

In a loose sense Melford Spiro's classic definition of religion as culturally patterned relations with postulated superhuman agents (Spiro 1966:96), would constitute an important example. One of the only scholars to actually refer to himself as Neo-Tylorian, Robin Horton who carried on a strongly intellectualist tradition, argued that religion was an extension of human social relations beyond the confines of a purely human society, relating humans with their non-human alters (Horton 1993:31-32). Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Ter Haar adapted Tylor's definition in order to analyse the ways in which religious beliefs, belief in invisible worlds of spirits, affect the practice of politics in Africa (Ellis and Ter Haar 2004:3).

Not all of these theorists concentrate entirely on personal beings, however, though these do undeniably play an important part in many religious systems. This does have more of a precedence in the work of Tylor than may at first be apparent, as the centre of his theory is after all the soul rather than spirits and he devotes the first few chapters of the second volume to discussing beliefs about the afterlife, thus making room for belief in afterlives and soteriologies.

Felicitas Goodman introduced the term 'alternate reality' as a replacement for the supernatural, arguing that it referred to realms conceived of as parallel to this one with distinct beings and forces. Each culture has its own alternate reality patterned by its environment and accesses it through rituals and by inducing altered states of consciousness (Goodman 1988:6-7). James Cox adopted her term and used it as the defining factor of religion, but weighed down by relation to a specific community and a tradition bound by authority (Cox 2007:164). He also adopted Karl Popper's argument that a scientific proposition could be falsified and that statements about alternate realities could not be falsified (Cox 2007:150).

Along with these Jan Platvoet defined religion as postulations of meta-empirical community composed of a web of reciprocal relationships with non-falsifiable, or non-verifiable, meta-empirical beings, forces, qualities and laws (Platvoet 1999:262-263).

In an attempt to tease out the core ideas of this theoretical lineage I would argue that religion is used to refer to belief in 'extra-natural phenomena.' The heartland of religion is belief in what is termed 'the supernatural' as institutionalised among communities (the socialised supernatural), however, these phenomena are not necessarily 'super' or 'above' human beings, as Mu Chou Poo has argued in relation to Ancient Chinese religion (Poo 1998:6-7). To borrow an expression from Immanuel Kant, neither the groups nor institutions defined as 'religions' in a given society, nor their conceptions, necessarily represent the 'Summum Bonum' (Abbot 1898:206), the highest good or value of their society, nor their 'ultimate concern' in the language of Tillich (Ford 1999:49). Fitzgerald has argued convincingly that in Shinto, relations with the Kami are governed by, and subordinate to, the same supreme system of values as relations with human beings (Fitzgerald 2000:185). That is why it is best to separate out religious
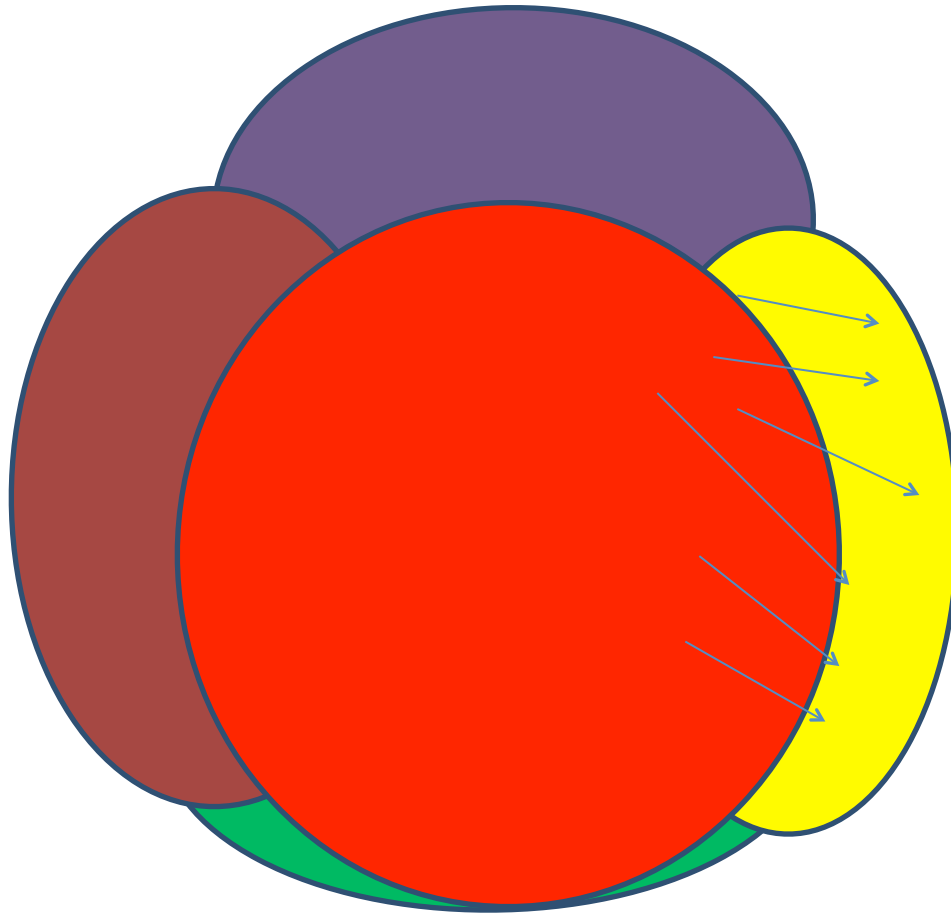
Model: The phenomenal world (red) with its additional, extra-natural spheres provided by tradition (purple, brown, green) and those extensions (yellow) provided by logic and empiricism (arrows)

factors from those held sacred which could include phenomena conventionally considered non-religious, and we cannot use religion to gauge the various positions and roles these beliefs and practices have in different societies.

Arguably all cultures show an awareness of religions after a fashion, at least as soon as they encounter other cultures with their own gods and cults (Sharpe 1986:1). Nonetheless it is certainly the case that a clear concept of religion, as we would want to use it for scientific purposes, is a modern phenomenon (Smith 1982:xi), and many languages do not have a word to translate it directly. Certainly terms like extra-natural only make sense in light of the development of modern science and its codification of nature (Platvoet 1999:251). That the concept of religion we use is related to the modern scientific world-view is not necessarily a problem for disciplines which still aim towards the scientific method in some ways and that it is impossible for scholars to avoid being 'situated' (Tweed 2006:55).

By extra-natural phenomena I include: beings such as gods and spirits, realms such as heavens, hells, purgatories and pure lands, as well as more abstract forces such as Karma or the Dao. For many religious adherents these are certainly part of nature or the order of the cosmos. They would not be especially interesting if they remained purely individual or philosophical, it is the fact that they affect the behaviour of large groups of people which makes their study vital.

I use the term 'extra-natural' to differentiate them from phenomena which partake in the rough, common core of human experience, which all human beings partake in, or culturally patterned 'common sense' world (Geertz

1973:111-112). To borrow a distinction from Kant, that shared core is the phenomenal world of the senses mediated through the psyche of the individual, as well as language and culture, as opposed to reality as it is really is; the noumenal which is unknowable (Kant 1998:360). Religions frequently claim to be able to represent the noumenal, filling in the gaps in knowledge that science could never hope to fill with empiricism and reason. The extra-natural phenomena are, therefore, the additions to this common core, it is true that the sciences have made their own additions - like atoms, germs and unseen dimensions - but these are the product of reason and empiricism rather than tradition.

Fitzgerald has astutely asked: what makes a divinity for religious believers more transcendent or supernatural than the value of liberty, secularism, democracy or the nation? (Fitzgerald 2000:17-18) On the one hand I would argue that it is necessary to maintain the philosophical distinction between an 'ought' system and an 'is' system, though they are closely bound up in practice. There is a real difference between a community's belief about how an individual should act, or society be governed, and belief in a deity. Without this distinction we could not tell the difference between the feminine statue of justice on top of the Old Bailey and a statue of the Virgin Mary in the window of a Cathedral.

All types of communities with their collective symbols, identity, values, beliefs and discourses can be considered more than the sum of their parts, acting on the individual from within and without. They are 'social leviathans'[4] and in a sense can never be 'false' (Durkheim 2001:4), even if they are not physical objects which can be studied like physical objects: they are 'Durkheimian gods.' The only real difference between these examples and a religious god or power is that they are held to be real ontological, or cosmological, facts, making them 'Durkheimian gods' but also 'Tylorian gods.'

On another front, however, though I have tried to outline the heartland of the concept of religion, this does not mean that I am confident enough to trace the exact boundary in its substantial and disputed borderlands. Arguably much of this disputed territory could be described under the term 'paranormal,' making it an important new area of research for Religious Studies. Belief in legendary 'cryptids,' like the shy plesiosaur of Loch Ness, would probably not form a religion. They are considered to be biological creatures, and proponents dream of empirical proof, but aside from a hesitation to swim in the waters, or a propensity to drag expensive detection equipment across them, they do not appear to form enough of a close network to affect their behaviour. On the other hand, however, many of the networks which form around belief in extra-terrestrials do, well and truly, cross the line into religions.

In any case, it is important to make distinctions such as these so we can gauge the ways in which groups can transform over time, the types of narratives they use and the ways in which they use them. It is my hope that the theory of religions can help us understand these processes by offering conceptual clarity, and that the work of Sir E.B. Tylor on religion can provide it with a solid bloodline, a sense of confidence and direction.

> Were scientific systems the oracular revelations they sometimes all but pretend to be, it might be justifiable to take no note of mere opinion…that preceded them. But the investigator who turns from his modern text books to the antiquated dissertations of the great thinkers of the past, gains from the history of his own craft a truer view of the relation of theory to fact, learns from the course of growth in each current hypothesis to appreciate its raison d'être and full significance and even finds that a return to an older starting points may enable him to find new paths, where

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[4] 'Leviathan' was the term used by the 17th century Political Philosopher Thomas Hobbes to describe the power of the State (Hobbes 1968)

the modern tracks seem stopped by impassable barriers (Tylor 1871 Vol 2:444).

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Liam Sutherland is a Religious Studies Postgraduate student at Edinburgh University undertaking a Masters by Research, on the relevance of E.B Tylor for the contemporary theory of religion, defining religion and modern scholars with a 'Neo-Tylorian' influence or affinity. He is a native of Edinburgh where he also completed his undergraduate degree in 2009. His dissertation was subsequently published in *Literature & Aesthetics* (2011), entitled "The Survival of Indigenous Australian Spirituality in Contemporary Australia." Liam has also written the essay "An Evaluation of Harvey's Approach to Animism and the Tylorian Legacy" for the Religious Studies Project. Recently, Liam has failed to defy RS stereotypes and ended up working part time for a Church.

Call for Papers

IUAES 2013 Panel: **Representing the non-representable: Visual Representations of Extraordinary Creatures in Ethnographic Films**

17th World Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences "Evolving Humanity, Emerging Worlds," University of Manchester, UK, 5th–10th August 2013.

Closing date for paper proposals: 5th August 2012.

Convenor: Dr. P. Khosronejad, Department of Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews

Anthropologists have long struggled with the problem of how best to conceptualize and account for the observable diversity of religious belief and practice in various societies. Also recently there has been interest among ethnographic filmmakers who survey healing and spirit possession rituals, exorcism ceremonies or religious gatherings among which supernatural forces (djinns, demons and spirits) are the main topic of the ceremonies. The aim of this panel is to investigate and discuss how such non-representable supernatural creatures could be studied and captured visually and ethnographically via documentary films. We invite anthropologists, visual anthropologists, ethnographic and documentary filmmakers to participate in our panel and to present a paper/ presentation about their visual experiences in this regard. We are especially interested in presentations which are based on film projects or ethnographic film researches, even if they are in their early stages.

Please submit your abstract by 3rd August 2012 via the official website of the congress:

http://www.nomadit.co.uk/iuaes/iuaes2013/panels.php5?PanelID=1713

Review:
Raymond Tallis: Aping Mankind
16/05/2012 Watershed Bristol
Jack Hunter

Keywords: *Consciousness, Mind-Body, Neuroscience, Rupert Sheldrake, Raymond Tallis*

In his recent book *Aping Mankind* (2012), former medical doctor and philosopher Raymond Tallis argues for a new approach to the study of human consciousness. The book is a considered critique of the contemporary preoccupation with neuroscience and Darwinian evolution as overall explanatory models for understanding what it is to be a human being. This preoccupation is evident within both the academic community and popular culture at large. In his talk for the *Bristol Festival of Ideas,* Tallis outlined a few of his reasons for deconstructing these increasingly popular assumptions.

To begin, Tallis set out to demarcate two models of the human being that are fundamental to the contemporary debate over the nature of human consciousness and free will:

(1) Human Beings as Conscious Agents with Free Will
(2) Human Beings as Mechanistic Biological Organisms

These two models were used to highlight the growing tendency in the sciences towards what Tallis calls *biologism*, the idea that human beings are best understood simply as biological organisms. Tallis then dissected the notion of biologism to find two underlying assumptions, which he called *neuromania* (the belief that neuroscience proves that consciousness is identical with brain function and that free will is an illusion), and *darwinitis* (a 'pathological form of Darwinism' whereby *everything* must be explained in terms of Darwinian evolutionary theory). Of these two perspectives, Tallis' presentation focused primarily on *neuromania.*

Tallis' first criticism of the assumption that neuroscience is able to provide a complete explanation of consciousness was that it is founded upon 'conceptual muddles.' Chief amongst these conceptual muddles is the idea that the 'brain activity' recorded using the technologies of neuroscience (including EEG, fMRI, and others), *is* the experience itself. Tallis highlighted this by stating that 'the brain is necessary to human life, but human life is not being a brain.' Such conceptual muddles lead directly into the second set of criticisms, namely the limitations of neuroscience itself. In order to demonstrate these limitations Tallis presented a couple of classic studies in neuroscience, the first of which was Bartels & Zeki's (2000) study on 'The Neural Basis of Romantic Love.' In this study 17 subjects who were deeply in love with someone were shown photographs of their loved ones and of friends of similar age, sex and duration of friendship while in an fMRI scanner. The fMRI scans that correlated with the photographs of loved ones showed restricted activity 'in the medial insula and the anterior cingulate cortex and, subcortically, in the caudate nucleus and the putamen, all bilaterally' along with 'deactivations...in the posterior cingulate gyrus and in the amygdala and were right-lateralized in the prefrontal, parietal and middle temporal cortices,' thus leading the researchers to conclude that these areas of the brain represent the 'neural basis' of romantic love. Tallis was quick to highlight the problems with this type of experiment, calling it a 'grotesque reduction' of a particularly complex emotional phenomenon. Romantic love is, after all, a multifaceted emotional state that is by no means static or unchanging. Indeed, it is precisely the complexity

of such emotions and experiences that under-pins Tallis' critique of neuroscience as a means to understand the nature of the human being. Neuroscience cannot get at the experience itself, it can only get at correlative physiological effects.

The second classic neuroscience experiment that Tallis discussed was Benjamin Libet's pioneering investigation into the act of making and carrying out decisions (Libet 1985). In Libet's experiment participants were asked to carry out the simple task of watching a light moving across an oscilloscope and, at a moment of their own choosing correlating to a specific position of the light on the screen, pressing a button while connected to an electroencephalograph (EEG) machine (to record electrical activity in the brain), and an electromyograph (EMG) machine (to record muscle movements in the arm). Again, Tallis highlighted the reductive nature of such experiments. In this particular instance the conclusion that free will does not exist has been drawn from an experiment dealing with a particularly simple action. What has been ignored is the fact that the simple action of pressing the button in Libet's experiment was part of a much broader set of conscious choices and deliberate actions, including: the decision to participate in the experiment in the first place, the deliberate effort to get to the lab, to get out of bed in the morning, and so on. In Tallis's words the action of pressing the button was 'part of a greater intentional whole' that has not been taken into account in the conclusions that have been widely drawn from Libet's experiment.

Throughout his presentation Tallis gave tantalising hints of new models for thinking about consciousness and intentionality. For instance, he suggested that: 'intention is a field rooted in the self in its world,' and that we need to 'look beyond the brain for the basis of consciousness.' Despite such claims, however, Tallis was adamant that he must not be considered a dualist, rather he argued in favour of a new conceptual model. Although he did not venture to suggest what this new conceptual model might entail, he did gesture towards an appreciation of the interconnectedness of consciousness, the body
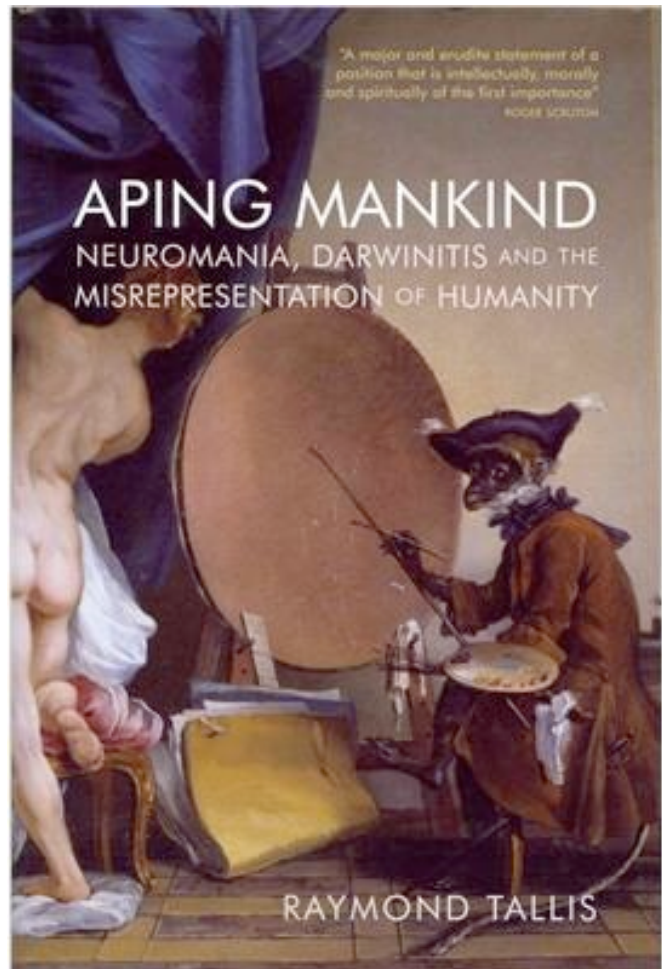
and the environment in his suggestion that the brain is not the only necessary condition for consciousness. He argued that in order for consciousness to exist the brain needs to be embodied and the body needs to be environed, as far as we are aware, and as such we cannot divorce these essential components from our analysis of consciousness.

Many of Tallis' critiques of *neuromania* resonate quite nicely with certain of the points Rupert Sheldrake has expressed in his recent book *The Science Delusion* (2012). Compare, for example, Tallis' critique of 'scientism' with Sheldrake's introduction to *The Science Delusion*:

> First, I want to make clear that what I am attacking is not science but *scientism*: the mistaken belief that the natural sciences (physics, chemistry, biology and their derivatives) can or will give a complete description and even explanation of every-

thing, including human life. (Tallis 2012:15)

In this book, I argue that science is being held back by centuries-old assumptions that have hardened into dogmas. The sciences would be better off without them: freer, more interesting, and more fun. The biggest scientific delusion of all is that science already knows the answers. The details still need working out but, in principle, the fundamental questions are settled. (Sheldrake 2012:6)

What we are seeing with these two writers is a general uneasiness with the contemporary materialist science of consciousness. Both authors reject the assertion that the models currently being put forward by the neurosciences and evolutionary biology are able to *explain* consciousness, and life more generally, in purely physical terms. It is refreshing to see this position so strongly, and so capably, put forward my serious thinkers (another recent exposition on this subject can be found in philosopher Keith Ward's book *More Than Matter? (*2010)). I feel that it is incumbent upon anthropologists to take such alternative positions seriously. Anthropology, after all, deals firsthand with the complexity of consciousness as it is experienced by both the ethnographer and their host culture, and, as Tallis has clearly demonstrated, it is precisely this aspect of consciousness (the way that consciousness is experienced) that defies the explanations put forward by the neurosciences. There is, therefore, a need for something more than a 'physical explanation': for a model that does not attempt to reduce the complexity of human consciousness to physical processes in the brain. It is entirely possible that a suitable model may already exist amongst the myriad alternative epistemologies and ontologies that human beings have developed throughout history and prehistory (Four Arrows 2012). Indeed, during his presentation Tallis argued the case for treating human beings not as automatic machines without free-will, but as 'selves,' which he describes as entailing the undeniable traits of

'viewpoint, the sense that one is (the feeling of "am"), and the feeling that one is in a setting that is centred on one's self' (Tallis 2012:114). Tallis argues that selfhood is an essential, unavoidable, aspect of human consciousness. But this is where the issue becomes yet more complex, because anthropologists have, for a long time, known that notions of self and of personhood are conceived of and experienced differently in different cultures (La Fontaine 1985). It is clear, then, that neuroscience, and science more generally, is a long way from a definitive understanding of the nature of consciousness. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that the dominant epistemological and ontological assumptions of Western science fundamentally limit our ability to comprehend consciousness.

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Review:
'Perspectives of Clinical Parapsychology: An Introductory Reader'
Edited by Wim H. Kramer, Eberhard Bauer, & Gerd H. Hövelmann
Callum E. Cooper

Keywords: Parapsychology, Anomalous Experience, Mental Health

It seems that recently clinical parapsychology, and awareness of how anomalous experiences may contribute to various health related issues, are increasing in popularity. Some early examples of medical psychology and psychical research explored relationships between purported psychic abilities and mental health 'issues' (for example Mitchell 1922; Ehrenwald 1948), such as hysteria and multiple personality disorder being underlying causes for purported experiences of telepathy, or at least demonstrating a relationship, for example. Later on through the twentieth century, there were various papers presented at the Parapsychological Association conferences (found in their proceedings: *Research in Parapsychology*), regarding psi and clinical practice. Also, a new awareness of how counselling approaches may be applied to cases of people reporting strange or mystical experiences began to emerge (e.g. Hastings, 1983). Recent conferences, and upcoming ones, have also set out to explore and increase awareness of these topics, for example: 'Exceptional Experiences, Health and Mental Health' (Liverpool Hope University, 2009) and 'Psychical Research in the History of Medicine and the Sciences' (University College London, due early 2013).

In 2007 the 'First International Expert Meeting on Clinical Parapsychology' was held from 31 May to 3 June, in Naarden, The Netherlands. This brought together a small group of professionals in psychology, psychiatry, mental health, counselling and more, to discuss their own experiences of working with people in the clinical setting who claim to have had strange experiences and/or abilities that they could not explain. Often these experiences were confusing, frightening or involved bereavement for the individuals involved. One institution which is mentioned several times in this book as a place for such counselling is the *Parapsychologische Bertungsstelle* (Parapsychological Counselling Office), founded in 1989 in Freiburg, Germany.

Just over a dozen papers have been compiled in this book, with several aimed towards counselling for people who have had anomalous experiences in which they clearly suffered from witnessing paranormal phenomena that they struggled to understand. The aim of the parapsychologists involved was to reassure the percipients that they were not alone in their experiences of seeing apparitions or having a psychic experiences, and explained that many people have had these experiences, and therefore the percipients were reassured that they were not delusional or mentally unstable. This should make us question whether more universities that support parapsychological research should also be offering a support network for people that need help following extra-ordinary experiences. Other papers in this book include group therapy approaches, theoretical, philosophical and practical guides to offering parapsychological counselling, paranormal belief and mental health lessons from case studies, and theoretical discussions of clinical parapsychology. All of these papers are well researched and explained from the authors' practical experiences of working with people who claimed to have had exceptional experiences.

I would personally consider this book as *more* than just an 'introductory reader,' as the subtitled states. Various topics are discussed in great depth, with a lengthy and yet thorough

bibliography section, which seems to take up about forty per cent of the book. This does not hinder the book in anyway. If anything, it not only offers new aspects of exploring anomalous experiences from clinical perspectives, but also helps the reader to explore the wide underlying publications which have been produced on the subject over the years, which may have gone unnoticed in many cases. Clinical parapsychology is steadily increasing in interest in various areas, such as the medical settings, alternative therapies, transpersonal psychology, and psychiatry.

When psychical research first began investigating spontaneous experiences, the emotional and other psychological side-effects of these experiences for the percipients may not have been at the top of the list of concern for the investigators involved. However, in current research and studies, even with paranthropology, the process of the experience is just as important as the exploration of the reported phenomena.

Kramer, Bauer and Hövelmann have produced what I hope will be the first of many texts of this nature, and there are at least two other recent publications which highlight the importance of – and the links between - anomalous experiences and mental health (see Simmonds-Moore, 2012; Murray, 2012). For some time, various individuals in parapsychology have argued that branching out into other fields of study is required if parapsychology is to progress, among many things, this book achieves just that, with the fields of parapsychology, counselling and mental health studies interlinked.

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Hastings, A. (1983). A counseling approach to parapsychological experiences. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 15* (2), 143-167.

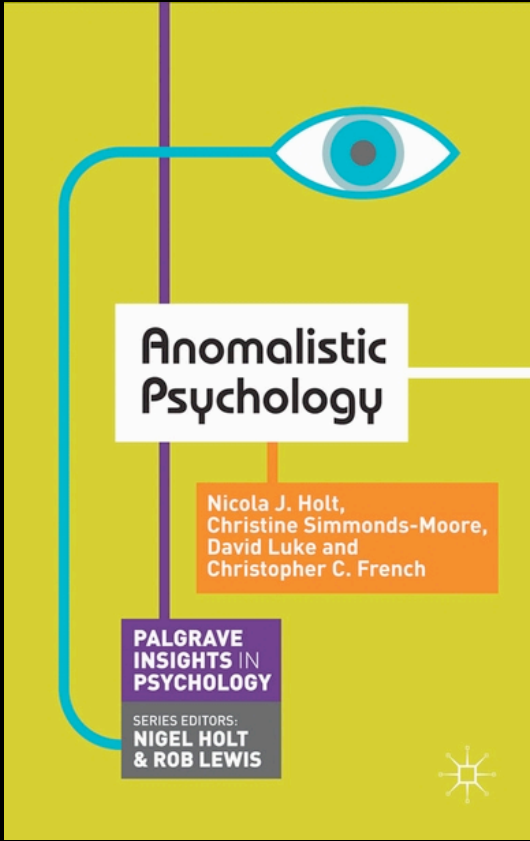Mitchell, T.W. (1922). *Medical psychology and psychical research*. London: Methuen & Co.

Murray, C. (Ed.) (2012). *Mental health and anomalous experience*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Simmonds-Moore, C. (Ed.) (2012). *Exceptional experience and health: Essays on mind, body and human potential*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Press.

For more information, and details of how to purchase the book, visit:

http://www.circee.org/clinical-parapsychology-introductory-reader.html

Recommended Recent Publication

Anomalistic Psychology

Nicola J. Holt,
Christine Simmonds-Moore,
David Luke and
Christopher C. French

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Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal

News & Events

Towards a Science of Consciousness 2013
March 3rd-9th2013,
Dayalbagh University, Agra, India

"Towards a Science of Consciousness (TSC) is the largest and longest-running interdisciplinary conference emphasizing broad and rigorous approaches to the study of conscious awareness."

TSC 2012 took place in Tucson Arizona from April 9th-14th.

See: consciousness.arizona.edu

Exploring the Extraordinary 4th

Conference
September 22nd-23rd 2012,
York, UK.

See: etenetwork.weebly.com

55th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association
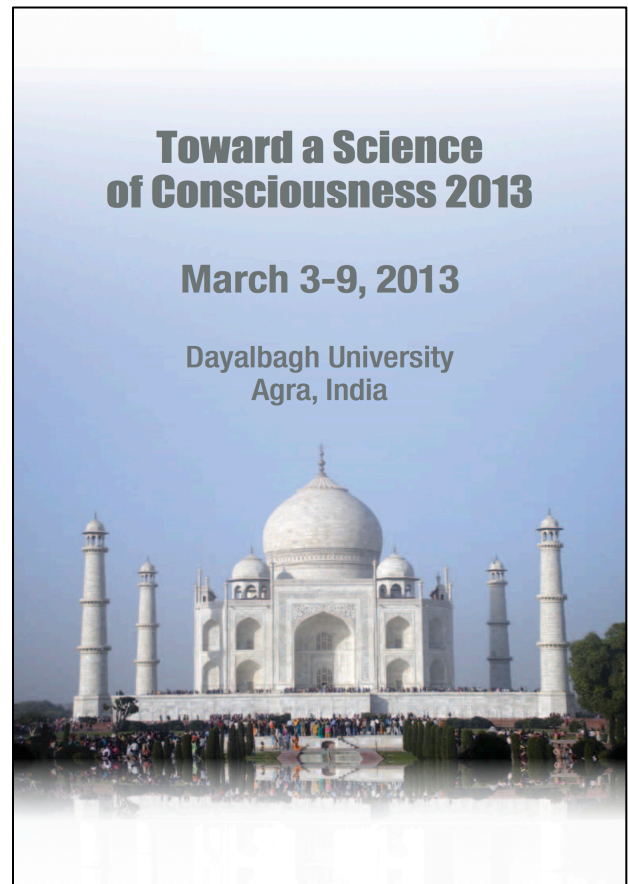August 9th-12th 2012,
Durham, North Carolina, USA

See: www.parapsych.org

'Animism' (Exhibition)
e-flux

311 East Broadway

New York, NY 10002

Through the medium of film, historical documents, and archival displays, this exhi-

Toward a Science of Consciousness 2013

March 3-9, 2013

Dayalbagh University Agra, India

bition seeks to interrogate the ways in which animism permeates modernity. A core work is the 62-minute documentary 'Assemblages' (2010), which explores Félix Guattari's take on animism, subjectivity, and psychiatry. The exhibition runs until July 28th 2012 in the e-flux gallery space, New York.

See: www.e-flux.com/program/animism-3/

Mayan Telesummit turns fears of 2012 'Apocalypse' into hope for 'Unification'
(http://news.yahoo.com/mayan-telesummit-turns-fears-2012-apocalypse-hope-unification-070453700.html)

News & Events

First nations leader denounces B.C. company's bid to remove spirituality from project reviews
(http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/First+nations+leader+denounces+company+remove+spirituality+from+project+reviews/6549065/story.html#ixzz1wSn5RgBj)

Do Psychedelics Expand the Mind by Reducing Brain Activity?
(http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=do-psychedelics-expand-mind-reducing-brain-activity)

Government Psychic Spies and Extraterrestrials
(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alejandro-rojas/allen-telescope-array_b_1492515.html)

SRI International, the contract research institute that spearheaded the development of remote viewing in the 1970s, has announced that it is to take charge of the management of Hat Creek Radio Observatory (HCRO), home of the Allen Telescope Array (ATA). The ATA was built by the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) and the University of California, Berkeley and was the brainchild of SETI pioneer Frank Drake. This is not the first time that staff at SRI International have been involved in attempts to make contact with alien intelligence, however. Paranormal researcher and journalist Alejandro Rojas here offers a short side-note on the historical relationship between remote viewing and extraterrestrials.

Lucid Dreaming: Rise of a Nocturnal Hobby
(http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18277074)

Popular interest in lucid dreaming has increased in recent years. Lucid dreaming groups are booming in the UK, as is attendance at long-established dream interpretation groups. Richard Wiseman, psychologist and creator of the smartphone app Dream:ON, claims that this new wave of interest is being led by technology. His is only one of many apps now on the market that seek either to externally affect the content of dreams or enable users to do so themselves. This piece by Sam Judah explores the increasing popularity of lucid dreaming as well as the potential implications for adherents.

Scientist: Evolution Skepticism Will Soon Be History
(http://www.sci-tech-today.com/story.xhtml?story_id=131007ENS0AF)

How True to Life are the Psychics and Psychologists in *Red Lights*?
(http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2012/jun/15/psychics-psychologists-red-lights?INTCMP=SRCH)

The recently released film *Red Lights* deals broadly with the theme of psychic fraud and the attempts made by a team of sceptical and cynical researchers to expose it. The film derives inspiration for some of its core storylines from real life persons and events, amongst them James Randi's 1986 revelation of the Reverend Peter Popoff scam, in which Popoff had been using a hidden earpiece to give his congregation the impression of receiving personal details psychically. In this review, parapsychologist Chris French offers his perspective on the representation of psychics and parapsychologists in *Red Lights* while expanding on some of the actual incidents and characters on which those representations are based.

Q&A: Why It's Sometimes Rational to Be Irrational

(http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2012/06/magical-thinking-hutson/)

Dave Mosher at *Wired* interviews science writer Matthew Hutson about his new book, *The 7 Laws of Magical Thinking*, in which Hutson argues that we are to some extent all believers.

The Mind Reader

(http://www.nature.com/news/neuroscience-the-mind-reader-1.10816)

In 2010, it was reported that neuroscientist Adrian Owen had for the first time exchanged information with a person in a vegetative state. The man in question, who had been in a vegetative state for five years, was placed in a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanner whilst the research team posed him questions. Changes in blood flow to certain parts of the injured man's brain convinced Owen that the man was both conscious and capable of communication. Many researchers, however, found this contention problematic. This article discusses Owen's attempts to fashion a clinically viable means of communication from his findings, as well as how he has responded to those who disagree with his conclusions.

To submit news and events items visit:

http://paranthropologyjournal.weebly.com/newsevents.html

Or contact the Editor directly via:
discarmates@googlemail.com

Contribute to
Paranthropology

We are always on the look-out for new articles, news, events, interviews and reviews.

Submissions for the October 2012 issue are now open. If you would like to contribute to the journal, or have an idea you would like to discuss, please get in touch with the editor via:

discarnates@googlemail.com

**The deadline for submissions is
September 15th 2012**

For more information and submission guidelines for articles, news, events, reviews and interviews visit:

www.paranthropology.co.uk

**A Joint Scientific and Medical Network
and Society for Scientific Exploration event**

Mapping Time, Mind and Space

18th – 21st October 2012

An Grianán Adult Education College, Termonfechin, Drogheda, Ireland

Invited Speakers:
Bernard Carr, Paul Devereux, Brenda Dunne, Robert Jahn, and Rupert Sheldrake

VENUE: An Grianán means `The Sunny Place' and it has a long educational pedigree originating in the Irish Countrywomen's Association - the oldest and largest women's association in Ireland. It is a well-appointed and charming manor house between long sandy beaches and the Boyne Valley. Perfectly-manicured grounds complete the 58-acre site, which includes luxury guest bungalows and paths for walking, including one leading to the beach.

THE EVENT: As well as presentations by the invited speakers, there will be time for selected papers submitted by members of both the SMN and the SSE (see Call for Papers overleaf). There will be an evening with one of Ireland's few remaining authentic *seanchaí* or traditional storytellers, **Eddie Lenihan**, and a group visit to the nearby Boyne Valley prehistoric monuments, including the mighty Newgrange (background picture here), which is older than Stonehenge, older than the pyramids, is replete with mysterious rock art symbols and has a solar alignment.

TRAVEL: An Grianán is on the coast road between Baltray and Termonfechin - 5 miles from Drogheda which is 35 miles north of Dublin. A bus service from Dublin Airport to Drogheda costs €5.00 each way; a taxi from Drogheda to the venue would be €14.00 (could be shared). A mini-bus from Drogheda to the venue *might* be possible, but we'll know closer to the time. People from the UK may prefer to bring their car on the ferry from Holyhead [send to SMN office for information].

BOOKING FORM

Joint SMN/SSE Conference, 18th – 21st October 2012

Please send to: SMN, PO Box 11, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos. GL56 0ZF, UK
Telephone: +44 (0)1608 652000, **Fax** +44 (0)1608 652001
Email: info@scimednet.org, website: www.smn-sse.no

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

_____

Email: _____ Telephone_____

Accommodation is either single *standard* or twin/double/three or four bedded *en-suite*. Note that there are a limited number of twin/double en-suite rooms, so early booking is advised.
Cost per person (includes all meals): £340.00 members, or £385.00 non-members.

Please reserve me:

☐ Single standard (not en-suite)

☐ Double en-suite based on two sharing

☐ Three-bed en-suite based on three sharing

☐ Four-bed en-suite based on four sharing

Special Meals: ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Vegan ☐ Other:_____

Payment options: *Cheques in Pounds Sterling (GBP) only (must be drawn on a UK bank) made payable to: SMN. Otherwise:*
Visa/MasterCard (credit or debit card):

Card Number: _____ **Expiry date**: _____**Security No**.:_____

Signature: _____
 Cancellations: A fee of £20 will be retained, or £75 after 17th September. No refund after 8th October.

CALL FOR PAPERS.

Please send title and an abstract of up to 200 words to: charla@scimednet.org (SMN members) or p.wadhams@damtp.cam.ac.uk (SSE members). Please be sure to include your name and email contact! Papers should address the conference theme in whole or in part in whatever disciplinary context, and will be subject to acceptance.

Exploring the Extraordinary 4th Conference

<u>FRIDAY, 21st September</u>

1.00-1.15   Introduction

1.15-1.45 'The spectacular supernatural: Victorian Spiritualism and the rise of modern show business' **Dr Simone Natale**, *University of Cologne*
1.45-2.15 'Extraordinary claims, uncanny history: Testing historical interpretations of Spiritualism and the First World War' **Ben McDonald**, *University of Melbourne*
2.15-2.45 'Reconstructing Seaford: A historical methodology to trace the rise of the psychokinetic theory of the poltergeist phenomenon' **Christopher Laursen**, *University of British Columbia*

2.45-3.00   Break

3.00-3.30 'A qualitative study of anomalous telephonic experiences' **Callum E. Cooper**, *University of Northampton*
3.30-4.00 'The nature and quality of child-parent relationships as predictors of adult paranormal and new age beliefs' **Dr Paul Rogers**, *University of Central Lancashire*

4.00-4.15   Break

4.15-4.45 'Listening for vampiric and 'other' worldly voices: Navigating dark occultural cyberspace in search of the extraordinary' **Dr Sean O'Callaghan**, *University of Lancaster*
4.45-5.15 'Revenant revolutions' **Jonathan Ferguson**, *Leeds Royal Armouries*

6.30-8.00   Dinner

Evening Activity: Films
8.00 The Fortean tales of Lapis Lazu, **Christopher Laursen**, *University of British Columbia*
8.30 Science and spirit(s), **Prof Charles Emmons**, *Gettysburg College*

<u>SATURDAY, 22nd September</u>

10.00-10.30 'Exploring extraordinary geographies: The overlapping spaces of the practical, the social and the otherworldly', **Dr Nadia Bartolini**, **Dr Sara MacKian** *& Prof Steve Pile*, *Open University*
10.30-11.00 'Crystals, angels and a discourse of healing: Exploring extraordinary therapeutic landscapes,'**Dr Sara MacKian**, *Open University*

11.00-11.15   Break

11.15-11.45 'GHosts, guests and hosts, and how to make them' **Sarah Sparkes**, *University of London*
11.45-12.15 'English heretic: An application of magical psychogeography and modern necromancy' **Andy Sharp**

12.15-12.45 'Expressions of spirithood: Performance and the manifestation of spirits,' **Jack Hunter**, *University of Bristol*

12.45-2.00   Lunch

2.00-2.30 'In the light and shadow: Turning the dead to keep the world alive,' **Dr Christel Mattheuws**, *University of Aberdeen*
2.30-3.00 'The shamanic journey: Ordinary into extraordinary reality', **Dr Zoe Bran**
3.00-3.30 'Magic, materialism and mushrooms: Psilocybin mushrooms user's constructions of the reality of psychedelic entity encounters' **James Thompson**, *University of Bath*

3.30-3.45   Break

3.45-4.15 '"Knock, knock… who's there?" Orientating to spirits in the spatial and personal environment' **Rachael Hayward**, *University of York*
4.15-4.45 'Ghostly interventions: Revenant landscapes and para-places' **James Thurgill**, *Royal Holloway University of London*
4.45-5.15 'The material remains of presence on an excavated hauntscape: A transductive ethnography of a spectral soundscape' **John Sabol**

Evening Activity: Dinner and Social Evening
7.00   Dinner venue tbc

<u>SUNDAY, 23rd September</u>

10.00-10.30 'Noise and the infinite' **Adam Potts**, *Newcastle University*
10.30-11.00 'Paramusicology: The fusion of music and the paranormal' **Dr Melvyn Willin**

11.00-11.15   Break

11.15-11.45 'Religion and the paranormal in pragmatist philosophy,' **Dr Guy Bennett-Hunter**, *University of Edinburgh*
11.45-12.15 'It takes one to know one: Imaginal cognition and the question of spiritual reality' **Dr Angela Voss**

12.15-12.30   Break

12.30-1.00 'Emotion, extraordinary experience and ethics' **Dr Madeleine Castro**, *Leeds Metropolitan University* & **Dr Hannah Gilbert**, *York St John University*

1.00   Lunch

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! Registration is £80 (£60) for full conference, or £40 (£30) per day, which includes lunch and refreshments. Email **ete.network@gmail.com** for a registration form.

Paranthropology: Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal
2nd Anniversary Anthology

We live in a world that is impossibly more fantastic than the present materialist and scientistic paradigms allow. In such a gross mismatch between the weirddom of the real and the Flatland of the boring and banal, it is so hopeful, and so refreshing, to see serious intellectuals take the strange so seriously. What we have with this new journal and this remarkable collection of essays is a cause for celebration.

Dr. Jeffrey J. Kripal, Author of *Authors of the Impossible: The Sacred and the Paranormal.*

***

Paranthropology has been a welcome, and much needed, addition to the field of anthropology and the social sciences. This volume provides a useful and well tailored introduction to the journal's impressive contributions, and is a fine testament to its achievements. Jack Hunter's edited collection brings together timely and fascinating additions to a serious study of the paranormal, a facet of culture often neglected in mainstream academia. These chapters explore this subject with careful and reflexive consideration, and help to pave the way for future explorations that go beyond the traditional treatments of such subjects. Furthermore, it raises important issues about the ethics of research and has much to add to ongoing methodological debates about process, conduct and representation. I sincerely hope that this will be the first of many such volumes, and that it is as inspirational to others as it is to those working within this area.

Dr. Hannah Gilbert, Founder of Exploring the Extraordinary Network.

***

Paranthropology has arisen at a crucial time for the academic study of the paranormal. For over a century the scientific research has been largely dominated by paradigms from psychology and physics. The laboratory findings of parapsychology demonstrate that many people can unconsciously influence a psychic event. Thus, psychic processes are inherently social, and social sciences are needed to understand them. *Paranthropology* explicitly addresses social processes. It provides a forum for new and diverse voices, an opportunity to present data neglected by others, and a chance for cross-pollination of ideas. Personally, I find *Paranthropology* exhilarating.

George P. Hansen, Author of *The Trickster and the Paranormal*.
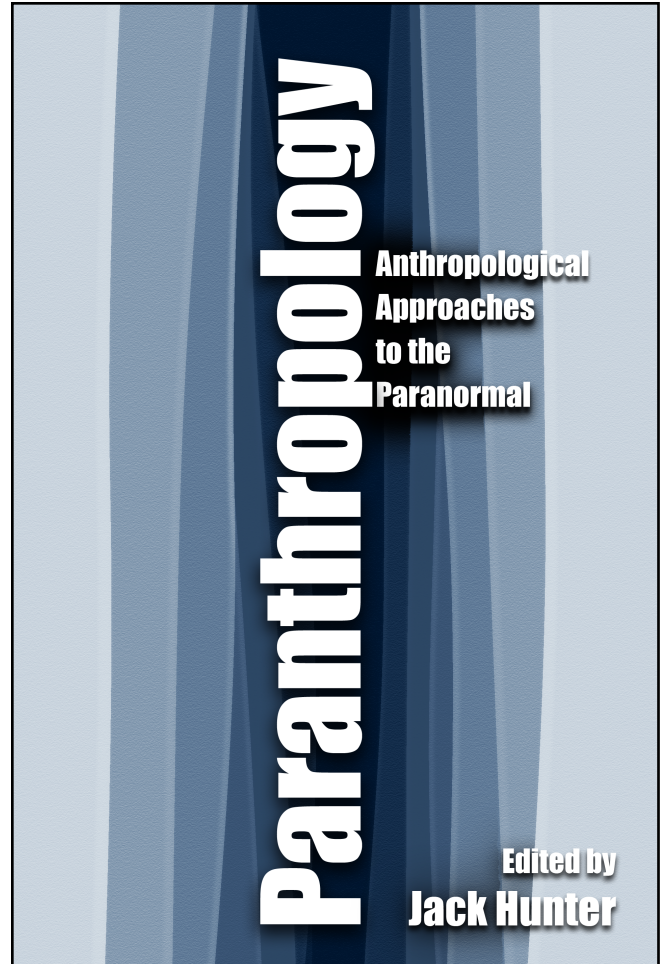
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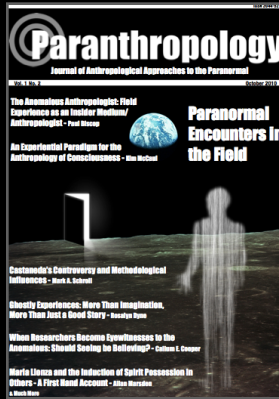
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