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Paranthropology

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Eileen Garrett's Haitian Diary - Eileen J. Garrett

& More

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Welcome to the October 2011 issue of *Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal*. This is simultaneously the last issue to be published in 2011 and the first issue to be peer-reviewed by our new review board. Although there are still improvements to be made, the establishment of a peer-review process is a significant step forward for this journal and will hopefully result in an increase in high quality contributions and a boost in academic respectability for both the journal itself and the topics it aims to discuss. As I'm sure you can see from the contents list the articles featured in this issue cover a wide range of theoretical and thematic ground: from crop circles and neo-shamanism to dream telepathy and mushroom madness.

In *The Anthropology of the Possible*, Dr. Lee Wilson presents the case for a new approach to anthropological scepticism, an approach which does not *a priori* neglect the possibility of paranormal phenomena. This theme is continued in Prof. David E. Young's article *Dreams and Telepathic Communication* in which the author recounts a number of unusual dream experiences which ultimately led to the conclusion that it is important, as anthropologists, that we take our informants seriously even when it comes to the paranormal experiences of our hosts. Dr. Christel Mattheeuws's article *Believing the Malagasy* argues for the ethnographic necessity to treat the world-views of other cultures not simply as alternate ways of thinking about the world, but as working ways of living in the world which must be participated in to be understood. Mark Schroll's contribution *Neo-Shamanism, Psi and their Relationship with Transpersonal Psychology* explores the links between contemporary neo-shamanic beliefs and practices and the experience of psi and alternate realities. *Mushroom (and Masalai) Madness in Melanesia*, by Henry Doesedla, details the author's researches and experiences as an ethnobotanist, archaeologist and anthropologist in the highlands of Papua New Guinea in the 1970s, focussing specifically on the indigenous use of psychoactive fungi. In *Crop Circles as Psychoid Manifestation*, Dr. William Rowlandson undertakes an exploration of the crop-circle phenomenon through the lens of Jungian psychology, and in *What's Wrong with Parapharmanthropology?* Dr. David Luke argues for a multidisciplinary approach to the study of the paranormal and warns of the dangers of reducing paranormal experiences to their neuro-physiological and neuro-chemical correlates. Additionally we have included an inspirational piece by the Victorian anthropologist and folklorist Andrew Lang as evidence of his prescient approach to the study of the paranormal, and are privileged to be able to publish, for the very first time, an extract from the 1954 diary of Eileen J. Garrett, founder of the Parapsychology Foundation, in which she describes her experiences with practitioners of Vodun in Haiti. We hope you enjoy...

Jack Hunter (Editor)

The Anthropology of the Possible: The Ethnographer as Sceptical Enquirer

Lee Wilson

Introduction – The Sceptical Anthropologist

This paper is both an argument against sceptical anthropologists and for a sceptical anthropology. It is an attempt to recover the notion of scepticism from its common association with incredulity, and explore the possibilities for ethnography informed by philosophical scepticism as a mode of enquiry. Before confusing the issue further, it may help if I clarify just what it is that I have in mind to argue against before proceeding to define what it is that I am arguing for. I want to do this with reference to an event in Cambridge, an ethnographic moment in a community of social anthropologists, which took place while I was in the process of writing my PhD.

In the Michaelmas term of 2004 I invited a friend, an English filmmaker who I had met during fieldwork in Indonesia, to preview a rough cut of a planned documentary to an audience of social anthropologists in Cambridge. The footage was of a rather remarkable Taoist mystic that he had introduced me to whilst I was living in Java. The man, a Kung Fu practitioner and healer, was said to possess the ability to be able to project Qi, or 'vital energy', beyond his body. The ability to manipulate Qi was a skill that he employed in his clinical practice as an acupuncturist. It also enabled him to perform seemingly extraordinary feats. As far as I was able to ascertain from being treated by him, he was indeed capable of generating what seemed like electricity from his body. I found this, to say the least, rather intriguing, and I was pleased when the opportunity arose to invite my friend to present the film that he had made with the healer to colleagues in Cambridge.

The film showed the healer performing a number of feats, including treating patients in his clinic with Qi in quite dramatic fashion. He also pushed a chopstick through an inch thick wooden bench and demonstrated what seemed to be telekinesis, the ability to be able to effect objects from a distance without physically contacting them. The presentation was little more than raw footage cobbled together as

a show reel, shot over a number of years in Indonesia with the healer.

There were problems in the way that the film was presented, it tended towards exoticism, and of course the validity of what it purported to show was impossible to verify. As the presenter himself pointed out, there was nothing shown that could not have been emulated by any competent stage magician or illusionist. Yet in spite of this I was somewhat taken aback by the antipathy and avowed disbelief of some of those that watched the film. I had hoped that it might provoke a discussion about the possibility of such phenomena, what the implications might be if this man were indeed able to perform the feats the film claimed to show. Anthropology, it seemed to me (in retrospect rather naively) was a discipline ideally suited to explore the possibility of human potential in accordance with 'non-western' accounts of self and reality. Instead the film was met with considerable hostility.

Some weeks later, I found myself in discussion with a colleague over aspects of my fieldwork dealing with claims to supra-normal abilities of a similar fashion to those shown in the film. As the conversation turned to how I might deal with the analysis of these claims I was met with a wry smile and the observation 'but of course, you believe in all that, don't you.' The problems with the concept of belief notwithstanding, this comment, and the reaction of many of those who watched the footage of the Taoist mystic, is I feel indicative of a pervasive scepticism that underpins the professional practice of many anthropologists. That is, a general incredulity towards many of the beliefs expressed by those that they work with in their capacity as social scientists. While recognised as valid and interesting, beliefs or claims that seemingly contradict, stand in opposition to or outside of the ethnographer's 'frames of reference' (Goodman 1978: 2-3) are construed to be axiomatically flawed. In this respect the basis for scepticism, for doubting the existence of certain phenomena, hinges upon the assumption that other 'sequestered beliefs about the world' hold true (Klein 2005). It is this exhibition of incredulity that I argue here is deleterious to the practice of anthropology,

and which I have in mind when talking of the sceptical anthropologist.

That which is beyond doubt within the realms anthropological theory is of course moot at the best of times. However, I think it is fair to say that the basis for anthropological exegesis is an intellectualism that privileges certain forms of knowledge in the explication of the words and deeds of others. The seemingly anomalous and incongruous are made reasonable in anthropological accounts, often via recourse to sociological or psychological reductionism. It would seem at times that the spirit of Ernest Gellner, like an anthropological counterpart to Jacob Marley, continues to wander through the collective unconscious of anthropology. The rattle of the ponderous chain of rationalism that reverberates throughout the intellectual history of the discipline continues to dog the sense making activities of ethnographers.

Sceptical Doctrine

I have characterised the sceptical anthropologist as one given to doubt based upon the dogmatic assertion of certain propositions being more likely to be true than others. This notion of scepticism differs from the interpretation of sceptical doctrine that I argue for as a legitimate mode of ethnographic enquiry. The origins of philosophical scepticism are attributed to Pyrrho of Elis, an ambiguous figure living somewhere around 360 to 270 BC (Annas and Barnes 1994: ix). The most celebrated account of philosophical scepticism available to us today is the work of Sextus Empiricus, probably dating from around the second century AD. In the 'Outlines of Scepticism,' Sextus sets out the case for Pyrrhonic philosophy, arguing that it 'is an ability to set out oppositions among things which appear and are thought of in any way at all, an ability by which, because of the equipollence in the opposed objects and accounts, we come first to suspension of judgement' (Sextus Empiricus 1994: 4). This does not necessarily entail the affirmation or negation of conflicting accounts, but 'equality with regard to being convincing or unconvincing: none of the conflicting accounts takes precedence over any other as being more convincing' (1994: 5). There are no grounds for the assertion of any proposition, and in the absence of epistemic certitude, the preferred attitude is suspension of judgement, or *epoché*. This is not a simple rejection of what is apparent. Rather Sextus contends that '[w]hen we investigate whether existing things are such as they appear, we grant that

they appear, and what we investigate is not what is apparent but what is said about what is apparent – and this is different from investigating what is apparent itself' (1994: 8). Suspension of judgement is then far more than fence sitting on the part of the enquirer. To the contrary, it is an attempt to bring forth the full force of all claims and counterclaims, and in doing so free the enquirer from the burden of assertion and focus the attention more keenly on enquiry itself.

A common objection to scepticism is that life without concurrence to certain things is impossible. In response to this line of argument Carneades, head of the Academy in Athens from the middle of the second century BC, introduced the notion of the plausible. That is, while it is impossible to establish which appearances are true and which are false, we are able to make a judgement as to what seems more plausible and distinguish this from the implausible or less plausible. While no less emphatic than the Pyrrhonic tradition on the impossibility of absolute truth, Carneades made a concession to probabilistic interpretation. That is, pragmatically in our everyday lives we might be guided by the plausibility of certain appearances. This is not a question of belief, but the basis for action in the light of the realisation that we cannot strictly know anything (Barnes 1998). That which is plausible may of course be false, and Carneades famously argued both sides of any given argument in order to refute the possibility of epistemic certainty. It is this Carneadesian interpretation of sceptical doctrine and the notion of plausibility that I argue is a useful basis for the practice of ethnography.

Striking from afar

Thus far I have drawn a distinction between common scepticism, the *a priori* rejection of certain claims as false or mistaken, and philosophical scepticism that holds that one cannot know the true nature of things and therefore has no basis for the assertion or denial of anything. To some extent epistemology is a response to the challenges raised by scepticism (Stone 2000: 527), and of all disciplines anthropology is perhaps least recalcitrant to the notion that epistemic certainty is at best an ideal. Pluralism, and for that matter juxtaposition, are after all anthropological watchwords. However, the conception of a sceptical anthropology I have in mind is a more critical process of enquiry. Before explaining why I think such an approach is not only valid but also necessary, I will

attempt to show how sceptical doctrine might frame ethnographic engagement.

To return to the Taoist mystic that I mentioned earlier, the claims that he makes to be able to project some kind of energy from his body are commonplace in Indonesia. The cultivation of 'inner power,' or *tenaga dalam*, is a practice commonly associated with the Indonesian martial art of Pencak Silat. Proof of the ability of practitioners to project their energy beyond their body is to be found in their ability to knock down assailants without physically contacting them. This phenomenon, commonly referred to as 'striking from afar' (*pukulan jarak jauh*) has in the last decade or so become extremely popular throughout Indonesia (see for example Aba Mardjani 1993; Widi Yarmanto 1995; Zaenal Effendy 1993). The ability is often demonstrated in spectacular fashion, the adept sending would be assailants hurtling through the air with a mere of gesture in their direction. Medal Sari, a group that I have worked with in the town of Cianjur in West Java, are typical of Pencak Silat schools that practice the cultivation of 'inner power' as part of their curriculum. The head of the school, Bapak Nurul Ahmad Hamdun, or Bapak Papi as he is known more familiarly, regularly leads demonstrations of inner power. The following account is typical of these performances.

The senior instructors had gathered prior to the demonstration at the school's purpose built training facilities on the outskirts of Cianjur. The wide, open veranda of the school's clubhouse, a traditionally constructed building of wood and woven reed walls, edged a large concreted training area. Many of the local community are members of the school, and a large crowd had gathered on this particular afternoon to watch the demonstration that was about to take place. The performance began with an exhibition by the senior instructors of the movements through which, it is claimed, 'inner power' might be cultivated. In unison the instructors moved across the training area, performing the specific bodily postures and breathing exercises that, while based upon the repertoire of Pencak Silat, are no longer used to develop mere physical prowess. When they had finished, Bapak Papi stepped down off the terrace, and faced the five men at a distance of around three metres. Adopting ready stances, the men began to inch toward their teacher in a threatening manner. Bapak Papi stood in front of them, smiling, watching them as they drew closer. Abruptly he gestured towards his would be assailants. The men, still a metre or so from him, reacted immediately and

violently, doubling over as if they had been physically struck flying through the air to land with an audible thud on the concrete training ground. They writhed on the ground as in apparent agony and some of the onlookers rushed to their aid, fetching them water. One by one the men regained their feet, returned to square off against Bapak Papi, and the performance was repeated. Once more they flew through the air, always in the indicated direction of the force of the non-physical blow they had received. At the end of the demonstration the bedraggled instructors thrashed around on the ground, some in convulsions, all taking some time to recover.

I had on several occasions asked Bapak Papi if he would strike me with his 'inner power.' One day he finally acquiesced to my requests. However, rather than demonstrate himself, he called upon one of his senior students to oblige me. We faced each other as Bapak Papi explained to me that it was necessary for an assailant to feel genuinely angry towards his intended victim. Inner power would only work if one's attacker's intentions were real. First his student was to attack me and I was to try to repulse him. The man began to move towards me. However, unlike other members of the school that I had witnessed in prior demonstrations, I gave no visual cue that I was attempting to use my inner power. The student glanced towards Bapak Papi, who, looking on, urged me to contract my abdomen in the manner that was conducive to the generation of inner power. Before I was able to comply with his instructions the student flew backwards, tumbling head over heels as he hit the ground, my inner energy apparently propelling him some three metres or more. He kept rolling, seemingly unable to stand. Bapak Papi, laughing at the situation, told me that it was because I was still projecting my inner power, that I should relax and allow his student to regain his feet. He did so, and our roles were then reversed. I was to play the part of the assailant and the student would attempt to defend himself. I began to approach him, trying to summon some genuine antipathy for the man as I had been instructed to do. At a distance of about one metre he endeavoured to strike at me non-physically. I continued to advance. He began to give ground and then fell. He regained his feet, only to fall again to the concrete, this time with more force. Rolling backwards, in seconds he had covered the ten metre width of the training ground, tumbled off the edge of the training area and plunged headfirst into the brackish pond next to the school. Bapak Papi, with a broad smile on his face, proclaimed that what had

transpired was quite normal and that my *tenaga dalam* had been too strong for his student to cope with.

The phenomenon of inner power presents an interesting dilemma for the ethnographer. As I mentioned, it is a hugely popular practice in Indonesia, and many large schools are now multinational organisations with representation throughout Europe and Australia. While the demonstration of 'striking from afar' varies little from place to place, the explanations of what inner power is and how it might be developed number almost as many as the schools that teach it. Ranging from the secular to the sacred, inner power is explained through popular accounts of quantum theory, electromagnetism, bioelectrical properties of the body, wave theory, Qi, 'white' magic and spiritual development. Yet for the large part these explanations matter little to the practical demonstration of the possession of inner power. It is efficacy that matters, and adepts learn to demonstrate their ability through participation with others in their school, following the rules governing these interactions.

To begin to look at these events from the perspective of the sceptical enquirer, the first point to make is that I have no basis for denying or asserting the validity of the claims made to the efficacy of inner power. My testing these claims experimentally in fact proves very little with respect to the explanation that was offered for why I was able to overcome Bapak Papi's student. Inner power can be empirically tested, and explained whether the exponent is successful or not in demonstrating their abilities on an assailant. The performance of inner power thus provides the basis for its own substantiation. It is however the consistency of appearances and the close scrutiny of the conditions under which these claims are made that define a space for critical engagement.

To examine these claims more closely, the performance of inner power observes a strictly hierarchical relationship. The teacher defends against the senior instructors who in turn use the senior students as their fall guys. The display is an affirmation of the existence of inner power, the efficacy of their senior of and the school as a whole. Demonstrating 'striking from afar' usually takes place with member of one's own school, and the majority of schools refuse to test their abilities outside of their own group. When this does happen, it usually takes the form of offering oneself to be struck. Non-reaction to the attacker is then claimed as proof of the superior strength of defender's school. Other strategies might be employed to support the validity

of claims. Behind closed doors, with curtains drawn and speaking in hushed tones, a teacher well known locally for possessing esoteric knowledge took a less public approach to substantiating the phenomenon. When testing the inner power of a friend of mine whom he had met for the first time the man was flung violently across the room. After repeating this twice, he proclaimed that my friend had great potential. In acting as the revelatory agent he thus established his position as spiritual preceptor.

In light of these observances I might look to other explanations of the claims made to inner power to do with status, secret knowledge, initiation, and so forth. That I can do this with a degree of confidence is not because of the greater faith I have in my own frames of reference or the impossibility, according to these paradigms, of the development of inner power or affecting one's opponent from a distance. It is because in the light of appearances some explanations seem more plausible than others.

Conclusion

Vitebsky, writing on shamanic practices but relevant here, argues for the need to relinquish 'narrow concepts of scientific validation towards understanding different people's assumptions about the nature of reality. Procedures like "reality testing" do nothing other than test one preconceived notion of reality against another' (Vitebsky 1995: 142). Shamanic cultures have particular ontological and causal assumptions about the cosmos they inhabit. 'If one shares these assumptions, then the possibility of effective shamanic action follows' (1995: 142-143). There is a resonance here with the sceptical inclination to follow appearances, to make no assertions as to the ontological status of objects. However, I would argue that the practice of anthropology demands more of us.

The challenge faced by the ethnographer is to become familiar with the customs and conventions that define and are modified by social action. Inasmuch as this is possible, it then remains to make the now familiar unfamiliar, to give account to one's peers, and occasionally those that we purport to represent, why it is that these customs and conventions prevail. To the extent that *understanding*, making sense of things and actions, hinges upon embodied and unarticulated knowledge (Taylor 1992: 177-180), learning to live in accordance with these practices takes considerable effort on the part of the ethnographer. Coming to reflect on and articulate these practices is not simply a matter of description.

Bernard McGrane argued some time ago that this is the fundamental paradox that lies at the base of the anthropological edifice. Making his case with reference to the work of Carlos Castaneda, he contests that if the anthropologist ‘*becomes a native*, if he submits to that absolute laceration that alone gives him access to the “other world,” he can no longer *be an anthropologist*, he can no longer *do* anthropology, for the tiny yet pivotal reason that then “anthropology” does not exist. It ceases to be and ceases to be conceivable. Doing our “anthropology” is not within the parameters of membership, not within the form of life’ (1989:125-126, emphasis in original). However, in locating forms of life antagonistically to one another, McGrane’s empiricism seems to deny the possibility of the anthropological project on the grounds of mutual exclusivity. In this he makes certain assumptions about the practice of anthropology that I want to bring into question. Commensurability, Viveiros de Castro reminds us, is the remit of accountants. It is incommensurability that is the stuff of anthropology (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 9).

As a particular mode of critical thinking about the world and our place in it the remit of anthropology is not to reduce one form of life to another. Veena Das remarks that ‘anthropological knowledge is precisely about letting the knowledge of the other happen to me’ (1998:192). It is the interplay between forms of knowledge and diverse perspectives that holds my attention, the possibility of disclosure, discrepancy and insight generated from juxtaposition and reflection. The critical space for this engagement might be generated by the sceptical practice that I have attempted to outline here, an appetite for enquiry sharpened by the withholding of assent. A sceptical anthropology thus draws into question the grounds for all knowledge leaving only the play of ‘fluxes of knowledge’ (Deleuze 2006: 50) and the acceptance of incessant enquiry as the only means of stabilisation in epistemic free-fall. The notion of sceptic, as the Spanish poet philosopher Miguel de Unamuno points out, ‘does not mean him who doubts, but him who investigates or researches as opposed to him who asserts and thinks that he has found’ (de Unamuno, 1924).

In closing, I return to the Taoist healer who provided the initial impetus for this disquisition into the realms of the possible. A man of some means, he guards his privacy closely and an oath sworn to his teacher prescribes the use of his abilities for material gain. He runs his clinic and teaches the few students

that he has accepted for no direct financial remuneration. From my experiences with the man, as far as I have been able to ascertain he is able to generate a force from his body, which he describes as Qi, which seems to me to have electrical like properties. That he can do so is in contradistinction to conceptions of the body that hold sway in western medicinal theory and, as far as I am aware, the laws of physics that currently prevail. Therefore, from the perspective of sceptical enquirer I am willing to acknowledge the possibility of this man’s abilities being exceptional. That is, not easily be explained in accordance with current scientific paradigms. Further, that these paradigms may need modification, or even revision, in the light of more plausible explanation. In this respect, my desire to validate my experiences and the abilities of the Taoist healer is more than an exercise in Johnsonian stone kicking. Rather, it is an attempt to broaden the scope of anthropological enquiry to engage with the possibilities of human potential in all its myriad forms.

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¹ I use the term 'vital energy' to here translate Qi for the sake of expediency. For the problems with glossing the term in this way, and for one of the best explications of the notion of Qi in English, see Kaptchuk (2000: 43–52).



Lee Wilson is currently a research associate in the department of archeology and anthropology at the University of Cambridge, where he completed his PhD in 2006. His long term interest in the so called supernatural was further piqued by several experiences and encounters in both Indonesia and the UK that challenged materialist paradigms of explanation in which he had been thoroughly indoctrinated. His research interests also include the practice and pedagogy of Indonesian martial arts on which he has published widely, and he is currently working on an ethnography of civil militia groups in Indonesia. He remains committed to the ideal of an open society, and to democratic alternatives to the UK monarchy.

Submissions for the January 2012 issue are now open. If you would like to submit an article, 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
December 15th 2011**

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Commentary

David E. Young on “The Anthropology of the Possible” by Lee Wilson

I like this little article, especially the description of scepticism, not as disbelief in the face of previously unknown phenomena, but as the willingness to consider both the evidence for and against such phenomena without prejudice. This reminds me of Gregory Bateson’s admonition to anthropologists that if they wish to get inside a culture, to its emic reality, they must be able to suspend disbelief. Though we may not be able to leave our own cultural baggage behind and accept what we see and hear, we can at least attempt to suspend our scepticism and “act as if” this new reality is real and not some kind of trick. If we are incapable of suspending disbelief, at least temporarily, we have little chance of seeing the things that members of our host culture see, particularly when it comes to sacred events and rituals. Likewise, in healing rituals (my own particular interest), those who are sceptical have little chance of being healed. To be healed, the mind must believe that healing is possible and give the order to the brain, hormonal, and immune systems to create the chemicals and energies that can do the healing.

In the book edited by myself and Jean-Guy Goulet, *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience*, we argue that it is essential for anthropologists to take their informants seriously. This does not mean believing everything our informants tell us, but it does mean that we seriously consider the possibility that what we see and hear are real, instead of always repeating the mantra, “According to my informant....” When I delivered a paper at a conference some years ago on personal experiences with visual telepathy, there was a violent reaction from a couple of prominent anthropologists in the audience. One stood up and denounced me for trying to introduce the paranormal into anthropology. He said that should be left to psychologists, after which he stormed from the room. I found it strange that members of a discipline such as anthropology, which is dedicated to exploring the boundaries of what it means to be human, should have large areas of research that are considered taboo. To me, this is not a scientific attitude. The true spirit of science is to try to fathom

the nature of reality in a systematic and replicable way, even when findings are contrary to normally accepted versions of reality.

Regarding *qi*, I myself experienced external chi while investigating traditional Chinese medicine in China. At one conference where qigong masters were demonstrating the ability to move the limbs of individuals who had suffered paralysis from automobile accidents (as a form of therapy) without touching them, I was invited onto the stage with some other volunteers. We stood facing the audience while the master stood behind us where we could not see him. After doing some qigong meditation exercises, we began moving our arms and hands in unison with what the qigong master was doing. I felt that someone had taken control of my motor abilities. At another conference, I was cured in five minutes by a qigong master of a severe stomach problem that was preventing me from delivering a paper. He did about 10 minutes of meditation, after which he held the palm of his hand over my abdomen. The pain and discomfort immediately disappeared for the duration of my stay in China.

In summary, I applaud the intent of this article, which is to help open up a discussion about the investigative procedures of anthropology, including the role of healthy skepticism.

David E. Young

Dreams and Telepathic Communication

David E. Young

Foreword

This paper was prepared for an anthropology conference in 1991. It provoked a violent reaction from some anthropologists in attendance who strongly argued that anthropology should not deal with paranormal phenomena. I was shocked and depressed that an important area of human experience, especially for traditional cultures that do not regard such experiences as unusual, should be considered taboo by anthropologists. I did not send the paper to a journal as originally planned; thus it has been in a file all of these years. In discussing the issue of topics that are taboo to anthropology with a friend, Dr. Jean-Guy Goulet, we decided to collect stories from anthropologists who had had unusual experiences while conducting fieldwork. This resulted in an edited book, *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience* (Young and Goulet, 1998). Some of the issues discussed in this paper, such as the importance of taking one's informants seriously, are explored in a more thorough fashion in *Being Changed*.

I have not updated the following paper, although a good deal has happened in the meantime, including the creation of the journal in which this paper appears. I hope that the appearance of *Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal* indicates a new willingness on the part of anthropologists to consider investigating all aspects of human experience.

Introduction

People in some cultures emphasize the communicative aspect of dreaming. Dream communications are believed to come, for example, from other people, from the realm of the spirits, or from those who have died. Anthropologists have recorded "stories" about dream communication, regarding them as personal documents: either psychological coping devices that can be analyzed psychodynamically or as culturally defined texts that can be analyzed semiotically. Such analyses have

produced interesting and fruitful results. There is evidence, however, that at least some dreams may be more than personal documents. They may, on occasion, involve telepathic communication among individuals. This paper relates case examples that have been collected by the author and summarizes the experimental findings of psychologists who have investigated this possibility. Factors affecting the telepathic communication of information via dreams also will be outlined. Finally, the paper speculates about some of the implications for anthropological research of exploring the possibility that dream telepathy might, in fact, exist.

Examples of Telepathic Dreams

The Eagle Vision

The following account was related to me by a Dakota Native who was in the M.A. program at the University of Alberta when I was teaching there. The vision occurred several years ago in Edmonton, Alberta.

"The eagle came...and I saw my mother [who was in London, Ontario at the time] standing beside me say, 'It's O.K. my son.' And I looked at her but as I looked...the eagle grabbed me right on the chest. Five days later I was pierced [hooked through the chest muscles and suspended in a sun dance ceremony] in that same place where the eagle had grabbed me.

When I related this information to my older brother, he said, "Yeah, well you know the sun dance is beginning here in four days time." And I was just shocked. I had not heard about the sun dance. I knew there was a pow wow going on which was traditionally carried on every July. But here all of a sudden was a sun dance that was being put on and nobody had informed me about it. But the eagle came in my vision and informed me, hey, it's time to go down there to the sun dance and get pierced. And that's why it grabbed me in the chest.

To Sioux people, when the eagle comes like that, it is a vision of death. A lot of people misinterpret that, thinking it's a physical death. But actually what they're talking about is something similar to the old Christian idea of dying to be reborn into a more spiritual plane. And that's what happened to me. Because after I came back from that sun dance, for the first four days after the sun dance, I attended sweats every day, and the last day I attended two sweats, one in the morning and one

in the evening to help me to relax and to reorient me back into what was happening around here.

But you see the whole thing was that the grandfathers had spoken to me and they had sent this bird, this messenger, this eagle to tell me, and the eagle played out what was going to happen in that it came and grabbed me right on the chest. This happened about 1:30 in the morning. Of course I didn't sleep after that. I was wide awake after that. I was soaking wet. When I phoned home a few days later, after I had come back from the sun dance, my mother already knew I was going to the sun dance on the very same day that I had that vision."

Comment

Anecdotes like this are difficult to assess from a scientific point of view. The vision was not recorded immediately after it happened, and we do not have independent verification from the key players such as the mother or the elder brother. It would, of course, be possible to attempt verification, but the value of collaborative accounts would be reduced by the fact that several years had elapsed since the events described in the vision account.

Many anthropologists would not be bothered by the fact that this account is difficult to verify. They would argue that what is important in accounts such as this is the meanings that are attributed to the events described in the accounts and the roles such accounts play in Native culture. I would not quarrel with this, but for purposes of this paper, I find it interesting to ask whether or not there is any kind of evidence to support the contention of Native informants that dreams and visions can be communication devices.

Posing the question in this way raises numerous issues. For example, to entertain the possibility that visions can involve communication from the "grandfathers" [spirit messengers], we have to assume that the "grandfathers" do, indeed, exist. When confronted with the difficulties such an assumption presents to the "scientific" mind, my informant, who is quite sophisticated in such matters, explained that the "grandfathers" (and "grandmothers") exist in our own collective unconscious, like the archetypes postulated by Carl Jung (1960). Therefore a message from the "grandfathers" is not a supernatural event but a prompting from a deeper level of intuitive understanding. In other words, a vision is a way of bringing to consciousness something that is already known unconsciously.

An interpretation such as this is useful in that it gives the non-Native a toehold on difficult conceptual

terrain. But it does not really solve the problem of whether dreams and visions can serve as communication devices. It is just as difficult to verify that the source of a "message" in a dream or vision is the collective unconscious as it is to verify that "grandfathers" (conceived of as spiritual entities with a separate ontological existence) communicate with human beings.

Despite the difficulty of dealing scientifically with communications from "entities" such as "grandfathers" and "grandmothers," it should be possible, in principle, to obtain evidence relating to the possibility of communications from other people in dreams and visions. As far as I know, anthropologists have not made a serious attempt to collect this kind of evidence. I would like to relate two personal experiences that might provide some evidence. I will then turn to experimental evidence generated by psychologists.

Three Transformation Dreams

Wolf Dreams

On Wednesday, January 23, 1991, my wife was told about two related transformation dreams by an associate at her office, whom I shall refer to as Mary. Mary provided a written account of the dreams as follows:

"In what I think was the summer of 1978, I was tossing and turning, trying to sleep, because I was uncomfortably pregnant with our second son. I got up and went to sleep in our guest room. My husband got up and went to work and I stayed to sleep longer in the guest room double bed [a pull-out sofa that had recently been purchased from a used furniture store]. I felt like I was awake but must have been still sleeping when I looked up beside the bed to see what looked like my twin sister Jane. I was asking, "Jane, is that you?" and her face took the shape of a wolf's face and then went back to being Jane's face and then into a wolf's again. It scared me but I just felt that it was a bad dream.

In the summer of 1982 my cousin Debbie came out to visit us from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her brother Ian also was living in Edmonton at that time. Debbie, of course, slept in our guest room and in the same double bed I had slept in earlier. One morning she came out to breakfast and said, "I had the weirdest dream last night. I dreamt that I looked up from the side of the bed and my brother was standing there. I asked him, "Ian is that you" and his face took the shape of a wolf's face and then went back to Ian's and then like a wolf and back to Ian again" Believe me, I never told Debbie about my dream

before that, but I did when she told me her experience. We couldn't believe it."

My wife told me about these dreams the same day the dreams were related to her. We were driving home from work late in the evening. We were quite intrigued with the dreams and had a lively discussion. When we reached home, our daughter Terry was already asleep. The next morning, she volunteered a dream that had profoundly disturbed her during the night and that had certain parallels to the dreams my wife and I had been discussing on our way home. Our daughter recorded her dream three days later, as follows:

"There was a knocking at the door. I went to answer it, but as I looked through the screen door I saw two large dark figures, monster-like and grotesque, each standing about six feet high. Shivers ran up and down my spine. I knew they were here for me. I ran down the stairs and into a bedroom and locked the door. My sister had seen them too. My mother was in the room and didn't believe a word I said to her.

Then there was a strong, heavy pounding and the doors shook with the force of the angry creatures. I watched the brass doorknob slowly turn in terror, and the lock pin flew off and hit the floor with a "clink." Then the door started to open and all that was seen on the other side was darkness. I frantically slammed the door in horror and my sister aided me. Then my mystified mother opened the door and stepped out. We stared in horror. She calmly asked the things to leave. One of the monsters grabbed her and started shaking her around the neck. I had to stop them. I ran out and told them to leave her alone and take me instead. The second monster grabbed me by the arm and dragged me up the stairs. I was too scared to feel the pain.

At the kitchen table was my dad and brother Chris. They didn't even turn their heads as we entered the room. They were both in a daze. I turned to face the monster that still had a tight grasp on my arm. His face was pitch black with rough, evil features. Then, strangely, his face turned into Chris' face. I stared, frightened. This illusion lasted for about two to three seconds, which seemed like longer, and then the monster's face came back.

Then the monster took me over to the table, let go of my arm and looked down. He then told me to kill him. I refused but he said it was either him or me, and he would have to torture me. So I grabbed a large butcher knife and cut him up into little pieces. A piece of his body got up and slithered into the kitchen. A few seconds later our dog Sandy emerged from the kitchen, but it wasn't really Sandy. I could tell because her eyes were totally black with no white, and I sensed darkness. She came to me, held out her paw, and I slaughtered her. I put all

the pieces of bodies into the garbage disposal and ground them all up."

Comment

In the two dreams related by my wife's associate, the face of the dreamer's sibling is transformed into a wolf and then back again. In our daughter's dream, the face of a monster is transformed into the face of her brother and then back again. The monster later turns into a dog. The parallels are so striking that they are unlikely to be due to chance. It seems more reasonable to assume that my wife's associate was thinking about her own dream (due to the fact that her cousin was sleeping in the same bed in which the horrible nightmare had occurred) and transmitted visual imagery from that dream to her sleeping cousin. Likewise, my wife and I, very much caught up in discussing this strange coincidence, transmitted visual imagery (or at least the key themes involved) to our daughter who was asleep.

Turtle Dream

Two weeks after the above events, my wife and I were invited to attend a Native ceremony in Edmonton that has some similarities to the traditional "shaking tent" ceremony. Ceremonies of this sort are viewed as extremely powerful occasions on which a shaman undergoes certain rituals to invite spirits to enter a dark room to communicate with the congregation. These spirits heal, answer questions concerning future events and deal with problems bothering those in attendance. They also can assist the shaman in "out-of-body travel" to investigate situations at a distance. The following excerpt from my journal is dated February 8, 1991. Fictitious names have been substituted for the originals.

"James called at 7:00 yesterday evening to say that a ceremony had been set up for around 8:30, to be held in the home of a friend of his, Peter, who lives near West Edmonton Mall. On the way home from the university, we had picked up some ribbons one meter in length: blue, green, white, and yellow, two of each. We took one of each color along plus three \$20 bills in a plain envelope. We also took along a pack of tobacco, a glass jar filled with raspberries from our garden, and a rifle with a scope that is not used any more. I wrapped the rifle in a blanket.

The night before the ceremony, my wife and I had had very vivid dreams that woke us from our sleep. My wife dreamed that she was running from a black bear but when he caught up with her, he continued on past. I dreamed that I was outside working in the garden when two cougars came toward me. I

was frightened but they passed me and continued toward the house. When we arrived at Peter's house, James and his friends from a small town in northern Alberta had not arrived yet. We were asked to go downstairs (the basement of the townhouse). At the head of the stairs were large banners, one on each side. On the left banner was a large black bear and on the right banner was a large cougar.

When we went downstairs, blankets had been laid out on the floor. Peter's wife was sitting at the south end of the blankets with their two small children. There was another woman present who sat on the west side. My wife was told to sit on the west side as well, and I sat on the north side. After a while, James arrived with three friends, all male. A male student from the university also attended. We got ready to give James the ribbons, the envelope, and a pack of tobacco. The student from the university was a little embarrassed as he had not brought anything, so I gave him two of our four ribbons. These gifts were then presented to James. It did not seem appropriate to present the gun at that time so I left it in another part of the basement.

It took around half an hour to set up for the ceremony. James sat on the east side with one of his friends. Another friend and the university student sat on the north side next to me, and the remaining man sat on the west side next to the women. Each of the men had brought their pipes, which were filled with tobacco and put in the center of the blanket area, lined up in a row. Several cans of tobacco were also put in the middle, the ribbons from various participants were divided and placed on each side of the altar area, and three or four eagle wings were laid out on the edges of the altar. We presented the raspberries, which were put in the middle. Finally, some rattles were arranged in front of the singers who had also brought drums with them.

When everything was properly arranged, James was tied up with ropes: fingers spread [divided] into two clusters on each hand, with the hands tied behind his back; legs bent with ankles tied to thighs; and legs pressed against the chest and tied to James' trunk. Since he could not move, he was tipped on his side and laid down on the east side of the blankets. A candle, situated in the middle of the altar area, which supplied the only source of light, was snuffed out, and the assistants began to sing and drum. After a while, the rattles began flying around the basement, sometimes high and sometimes low; sometimes toward the middle of the altar area and sometimes in close proximity to the heads of the participants. The fanning of eagle wings could also be felt on occasion. After several songs, the candle was relit and James was sitting upright with no indication that he had ever been tied. Most of the participants lit up cigarettes and relaxed for around ten minutes, telling stories, laugh, and joking. Everything was in Cree.

Then the candle was extinguished again, and the second round of singing and drumming began. Before too long a

strange voice, as if in the distance, began coming from the middle of the altar area. It talked in Cree for a while and then a couple of the assistants asked questions, which were answered by the spirit visitor.

At the completion of the round, the candle was relit and one of the men explained part of what had happened. He said several grandfathers had entered, the most powerful of which was the bear. They had given their messages to a turtle spirit who had acted as spokesman. The grandfathers speaking through the turtle spirit said that the individual with the headache would be cured. Furthermore, although spirit protectors had been on the job earlier, their protection would intensify. They also informed James and his friends that the vision quest they were planning should start the next day (Friday) and should last for four days. A site they had visited earlier at the lake would be suitable for the vision quest.

We thanked Peter for hosting the ceremony and went home, talking about the experience all the way home. When we reached home, the children were already in bed. We slept soundly without remembering any dreams.

February 9

This morning, we told our daughters about our experience last night. Terry said it was strange that a turtle had attended the ceremony as she had dreamed about a turtle. She was riding her bicycle along a country road when she noticed something in the ditch alongside the road. She went on past a little ways, but then stopped, thinking, "That looked like a turtle." Since she had never seen a turtle in Alberta, she turned around and went back. Sure enough a turtle was in the ditch. When Terry got off the bicycle to look at it, it retracted its head into its shell. I asked her if she frequently dreamed about turtles. She said that she could not remember ever having dreamed of a turtle before."

Comment

My wife and I were quite moved by the ceremony. We talked about the events that had transpired on the way home, focusing upon the role of the turtle. We were intrigued by the turtle because we had never encountered this spirit in any of our experiences with Native people in Alberta. We were quite dumbfounded the next morning to learn that a turtle had appeared in our daughter's dream.

It was obvious that the turtle in the ceremony and the turtle in our daughter's dream had very little in common. If we had not had a similar experience two weeks earlier, we might have dismissed the presence of the turtle in our daughter's dream as an unusual coincidence. But the parallels with the first experience were too striking to ignore: in both cases, my wife and I had been very much involved in an

animated discussion about a specific theme while driving home late at night; in both cases, our daughter had a dream the same night that appeared to have picked up on the theme my wife and I had been discussing.

We came to the conclusion that we unconsciously might have transmitted images to our daughter. I decided to investigate this hypothesis and eventually contacted R. D. Kuiken, a psychologist who runs a dream laboratory at the University of Alberta. I asked Kuiken if he had ever encountered anything credible on dream telepathy. He said he had and referred me to a book, *Dream Telepathy*, by Montague Ullman and Stanley Krippner (1973), which is discussed below. After reading this book, I was able to find a number of additional publications on dream telepathy in the psychological literature.

Experimental Studies of Dream Telepathy by Psychologists

The study of dream telepathy originated with the Society for Psychical Research, founded in England in 1882 (Douglas 1976:74). One of the founders of the Society, F.W.H. Myers, coined the word telepathy that same year to describe transference at a distance of thoughts, emotions, and “less-definable impressions” (Ullman and Krippner 1973:12). The Society collected thousands of case histories of spontaneous paranormal experiences including telepathic dreams. Many of these case histories were published in a two-volume work titled *Phantasms of the Living* (Gurney, Myers, and Podmore 1886).

With the invention of the electroencephalogram, it became possible to monitor dreams, and Montague Ullman, with the aid of Gardner Murphy, then Director of Research for the Menninger Foundation, established a dream laboratory in 1962 in the Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. The director of the laboratory was Stanley Krippner, coauthor of *Dream Telepathy*, cited above. After initial experimentation, Ullman and his associates formulated a research design in 1964 that involved having a subject sleep in a sound-isolated room while his EEG tracings were monitored by an experimenter in a nearby room. An “agent” (the individual designated to transmit the message) spent the night in a third room, also acoustically isolated. The experiment ran for twelve nights and involved seven male and five female subjects, one each night. After the subject was asleep, the agent randomly selected an art print from a group of twelve, using a random

number table. Prints for the set were chosen on the basis of emotional intensity, vividness, color, and simplicity. Also, they had to be sufficiently different from one another to minimize possible confusion and to make the judging task easier. The agent concentrated on the “target” print whenever the experimenter signaled that the subject had begun a REM (rapid eye movement) period as indicated by the EEG. At the end of each REM period, the experimenter woke the subject and tape recorded the dream report, after which the subject went back to sleep again. In the morning the experimenter used his notes to refresh the subject’s memory of the dreams, and recorded the subject’s associations.

The results were evaluated in two ways. First, the following morning, the subject was shown the set of twelve pictures, including the target picture, and asked to identify which picture corresponded most closely to his/her dream. This picture was given a rank of 1. Second best was given a rank of 2, etc. If the score for the “target” print was 6 or higher, it was regarded as a “hit.” Second, the transcripts, together with the set of twelve prints used on the twelve different nights, were sent to three independent judges who did not know which print was used on a particular night. The judges were asked to rank the set of transcripts for each night’s dreams against all of the twelve prints. Thus, a specific judge might say that a particular set of dream transcripts corresponded most highly with Painting X and least highly with Painting Z. A mean score was computed for each comparison. If the mean score for the “target” print was six or higher, the correspondence was regarded as a “hit.” If all of the judges selected the picture that was used as a “target,” it was recorded as “a direct hit.” A more sophisticated statistical analysis was performed later by a professional statistician.

The basic design was altered in a variety of ways that cannot be described here. Sometimes, statistically significant results were obtained – sometimes not. Results depended partly on the agent and partly on the subject. An example of a successful experiment involving a “good” agent, Sol Feldstein (a doctoral student at City College of the City University of New York) and a “good” telepathic subject, Dr. William Erwin (a young New York psychologist) is as follows. The print used for transmission was *Zapatistas* by Jose Clemente Orozco, 1931, Museum of Modern Art, New York (http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=79798). The painting depicts Mexican-

Indian followers of the Mexican revolutionary, Zapata. The traveling revolutionaries, a few mounted, most on foot, are followed by women and are shown against a stark background of massive mountains and clouds.

The subject had five dreams the night this painting was selected as the target. The last four did not have any apparent correspondence to the print. The first, however, showed a striking correspondence.

"A storm. Rainstorm. It reminds me of traveling – a trip – traveling one time in Oklahoma, approaching a rainstorm, thunder cloud, rainy; sort of a distance...it was on a much greater scale than this rainstorm; a very distant scene....It had an aspect of grandeur about it...My associations go to almost a Biblical scene of some sort...almost as though you were dealing with an early element of creation....it was to the left of me, in a way...direction was important, and distance was important.

For some reason I got a feeling of memory, now, of New Mexico when I lived there. There are a lot of mountains around. New Mexico, Indians, Pueblos; now my thoughts go to almost as though I were thinking of another civilization. The association to New Mexico, I think, has to do partly with a feeling I had in living in New Mexico....You're surrounded by mountains...the name of one of the mountain ranges in New Mexico, Sindre Christo...." (Ullman and Krippner 1973:99).

Associations

"...my first dream impressed me very much....I spent a few summers in Santa Fe...and during the Fiesta a great many of the Indians came in with their wares...it seems there were heavy clouds behind this....Perhaps the coloring in New Mexico fits it, the mesa as it runs up the mountains....Here it gets into this epic type of thing...a DeMille super-type colossal production. I would carry along with it such ideas of the Pueblo going down to the Mayan-Aztec type of civilization" (Ullman and Krippner 1973:101).

The judges assigned the target painting Zapatistas a mean rank of 1.7, a highly rated "hit." The subject's assessment is not provided.

The experiment involving Drs. Erwin and Feldstein was repeated the same year, over a series of 7 nights, with Feldstein attempting to influence Erwin's dreams each night, using a different target print each night. This produced some very interesting results. For example, the experimental target for the second night of the experiment was Chagall's Rabbi, a Pinch of Snuff, depicting an elderly rabbi sitting at

a table with a book and snuff box in front of him (<http://www.globalgallery.com/enlarge/38985/>). The agent was an orthodox Jew, but the subject was a Protestant Christian. In the subject's third dream, he said his dream "had to do with, well, a feeling of older people. The name of Saint Paul came into mind" (Ullman and Krippner 1973:112). And in the subject's fifth dream, "This doctor, Dr. Heimsdorf, is a professor in humanities and philosophy. He was sitting...and he was reading from a book...." (Ullman and Krippner 1973:12). The following morning, Erwin said, "So far, all I can say is that there is the feeling of older people....The professor is an older man. He smoked a pipe, taught humanities as well as philosophy. He was an Anglican minister or priest" (Ullman and Krippner 1973:12). All three judges picked the rabbi as the print with closest correspondence – a "direct hit."

This procedure was repeated with the same participants for seven nights, using seven different prints or famous paintings. Three judges ranked the seven potential targets against typed transcripts of the subject's dream reports; the judges also gave confidence ratings to their ranks. When analyzed by analysis of variance techniques, both ranks and ratings were statistically significant. Significant results were also obtained with the subject's rating of the pictures.

Over the next couple of years, experiments of this type were repeated on different occasions with mixed results. Although some subjects and agents were not adept at dream telepathy, others were. Overall, the results were considered to be extremely encouraging.

Replication

An attempt was made by Belvedere and Foulkes (1971) to replicate these results, using the same basic procedure, but with additional safeguards. For some reason, the original results were not reproduced. One possible explanation is that the experimenter unwittingly influenced the subject, either during the night when the dreams were being recorded, or the next morning when additional comments were solicited (Hansel 1980:249). Another possible explanation is that the extra precautions introduced into the replication experiments inhibited the ESP power of the participants (Hansel 1980:253).

This situation is not unique. ESP experiments are notoriously difficult to replicate. J.B. Rhine, for example, set up a laboratory at Duke University in the early 1930s to treat ESP phenomena "as though

they were measurable psychological variables” (Evans and Evans 1983; Rao 1982). Initially, results were very promising and Rhine claimed that he had found clear evidence of telepathic abilities in many of his experimental subjects. Skeptics, however, were unable to replicate his findings in their own laboratories.

It is clear that spontaneous telepathy is a phenomenon that, by definition, is not predictable and cannot be produced on command in a laboratory setting. The problem is compounded by the fact that the variables that appear to be associated with telepathy are the very variables that work against the objectivity of scientific experimentation. Here are some of the variables that have been suggested above:

- Psychic ability of the sender and of the receiver. Some individuals may have more psychic ability than others, although most people may have some ability, depending upon the circumstances.
- Emotional state of the participants. A high level of involvement may result in clearer images being formulated,
- Relationship among the participants. Gardner Murphy (Leeds and Murphy 1980) suggests that most instances of spontaneous telepathy occur between parents and children, between husbands and wives, and between siblings or close friends,
- Cultural and personal background of the recipient. Transferal of images is not literal. Images are frequently altered and recombined in a way that is meaningful to the recipient.

Implications

General Implications

1. If they exist, telepathic communications via dreams would have great power because they would affect individuals when they are highly suggestible. Although memory of dreams may be repressed upon waking, a dream could continue to affect the dreamer in a variety of subtle ways:

- Telepathic communication might be primarily emotional in both content and impact as in the case of jealousy or anger. The response on the part of the recipient might range from a feeling of slight unease to depression, or even illness and death. This

might, on occasion, be a partial explanation for phenomena such as “floating anxiety” (anxiety whose cause or object cannot be ascertained), the “evil eye,” or “voodoo death.” On the other side of the coin, the emotion communicated might be positive such as love. In this case, the response might be a sudden and unexplained sense of contentment, well-being or security.

- Telepathic communication might be primarily cognitive in both content and impact. For example, the communication might involve an insight or a call to action, in which case the response could be a “Eureka experience” (which often has been experienced as having an external source such as a “muse”) or an unexplained impulse to do something out of character.

2. The above speculations concern spontaneous telepathic communications in which neither the sender nor the recipient is aware that a transmission has occurred. For this reason, phenomena such as depression or the Eureka experience generally are attributed to unconscious psychic processes. In many traditional cultures, however, the possibility of telepathic communication is explicitly acknowledged and individuals learn to “be on the lookout” for “messages” from other people, both friends and adversaries. Having skills in remembering and interpreting dreams and visions is obviously adaptive in such a culture. It also would be advantageous to learn how to “send” telepathic messages effectively. Skill in sending, receiving, and interpreting telepathic messages is essential to the shamanic role, but it would be useful to ordinary people as well. For example, a hunter or trapper deep in the bush would find it useful to sense that his presence was urgently required at home.

Implications for Anthropological Research

The phenomenon of telepathic communication via dreams and visions has been resistant to scientific confirmation and thus will continue to be controversial. Nevertheless, the possibility of telepathic communication cannot be dismissed. Personal experiences such as those related in this paper lead me, at least, to take the accounts of Native informants concerning dream telepathy seriously. I would argue, in fact, that it is always a good policy for anthropologists to take their informants seriously. This does not mean that we should be gullible and

accept whatever our informants tell us. Rather, we need to “suspend disbelief” and respond to our informants’ accounts with an open mind. If we were to keep an open mind concerning the possibility that images and messages can be transmitted in dreams and visions, how would it influence the way we go about doing anthropological research? The following are a few preliminary suggestions.

1. When we collect data on dreams and visions, we should carefully record information that might allow independent verification of what an informant believes to involve dream telepathy. Often, Native informants will, as a matter of procedure, include confirmatory evidence since they know that other people expect such details. For example, in the eagle story related earlier, several types of confirmatory evidence are offered:

- Immediately after the vision in which he was pierced by an eagle, the informant called his elder brother on the telephone to receive help in interpreting the vision. It should be possible to talk to the elder brother to obtain an independent account of how the informant described the experience.
- The informant claims that his mother was present at the time of the eagle piercing to advise him not to be afraid. It should be possible to talk to the mother to determine whether she believed herself to have been present at that event.
- The symbolic piercing by the eagle was interpreted as meaning that it was time for the informant to be pierced in a sun dance ceremony. According to the informant, such participation did, in fact, take place. He has the scars to prove it and he can relate the names of other individuals who attended the ceremony. These individuals should be able to confirm the informant’s version of what happened at the ceremony.
- The informant claims he called his mother in Ontario after the sun dance ceremony, only to find that she already knew what had happened. In other words, the mother had been the recipient of a telepathic communication (or an out-of-body experience) for the second time. The mother should be able to confirm that: (1) her son called her following the ceremony, and that

(2) she had been engaged in “long-distance communication.”

I am not arguing that the anthropologist is obliged to follow up on these leads in order to confirm the informant’s story. Whether or not that would be fruitful depends upon a variety of factors such as how long ago the event occurred, whether the validity of the confirmatory evidence has been compromised by the fact that the various individuals involved have heard the informant’s story and have talked to each other about it, etc. The point I am making is that although there have been humorous exceptions, most Native informants do not expect the anthropologist or others to be gullible. Storytellers frequently take a very concrete, empirical approach in which they say: “This is what happened to me and here is the evidence I can bring to bear.”

Even if following up on the leads offered by the storyteller do not produce the kind of data that would confirm (or disconfirm) details of the story, it would be useful to follow up on these leads anyway whenever practical. If this were done, it would help us come to a better understanding of how “historical” and “mythic” strands (or “public events” and “interpretation”) are combined in the construction of a story (see Tedlock 1991 for an interesting discussion of the social construction of dream accounts and how such accounts can facilitate communication between anthropologists and informants).

Conclusion

It is not uncommon for anthropologists to hear stories concerning so-called psychic phenomena such as telepathic communication or out-of-body experiences. Such stories have provided a rich source of data for various types of traditional anthropological analysis: psychodynamic, functional, structural, and semiotic. But anthropologists generally have not taken such stories seriously in the sense of viewing them as data relevant to the “scientific” investigation of dream telepathy. For this reason, we generally do not follow up on the confirmatory leads offered by our informants.

There has been a major emphasis in anthropology in recent years upon the importance of understanding the meaning of stories offered by informants. This emphasis on emic reality was much needed to help offset earlier positivist trends that emphasized the “scientific” aspects of anthropology and the importance of quantitative data. The newer

emphasis, however, does not need to conflict with an attitude on the part of anthropologists who view Native informants as co-investigators and traditional knowledge as indigenous science.

In other words, Native epistemologies frequently are not so alien that they preclude cooperation between informant and anthropologist concerning questions such as whether or not dreams and visions can involve telepathic communication. Questions of this sort appear to be etic, but if they are of interest to one's informants, they also may have emic validity. If so, there is no reason that informant and anthropologist cannot be co-investigators. If Native informants are correct in their claim that telepathic communication does exist, it would be advantageous for anthropologists to acknowledge the phenomenon. Such acknowledgement would be well-received by informants who frequently view anthropologists as narrow-minded skeptics. Moreover, if telepathic communication does exist, it would be useful for anthropologist to learn to be sensitive to cues indicating external influences on our dreams. In brief, there is a good deal to be gained and very little to lose in taking our informants seriously.

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David Young was born in the United States and spent his childhood in Sierra Leone, West Africa. He received a B.A. in sociology and philosophy from the University of Indianapolis, a B.D. in religion and anthropology from Yale University, an

M.A. in Asian Studies from the East West Center, University of Hawaii, and a Ph.D. in anthropology from Stanford University. David taught anthropology at the University of Alberta in Canada until he retired in 1999 and moved to Japan to continue teaching anthropology at Kansai Gaidai University. He retired in 2003. Together with his wife, Michiko, he has conducted research on Japanese aesthetics for many years. Michiko Young was born in China and raised in Japan. After graduating from Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, she moved to the United States with her husband, and then to Canada, where she worked for many years in the international affairs office at the University of Alberta.

Believing the Malagasy: Towards a Methodology for Studying the Paranormal Among Other Normal Things

Christel Mattheeuws

There are plenty of human and other voices in Madagascar's forest. There are plenty of reasons why concerned scholars of different backgrounds believe that these voices should be heard. I defend the argument that 'local voices' can only be heard, understood and taken seriously if we believe what we hear. This belief can only grow within a dynamic learning process by which perceivers develop, change, and move in, and along, with what is perceived and experienced. I start from two extremes in the academic community. On the one hand, positive scientists believe in a truth value of natural laws that exist independent from the human mind and that can be learned and translated through, and in, mathematical language. On the other hand, human sciences are characterised by a multitude of approaches that lie on a spectrum between the two extremes of positivism and subjectivism. Anthropologists can study all kinds of world-views and human phenomena using these different approaches, but they cannot apply a truth value to the studied world-views. Hence, positive and human sciences hold in common that they have a 'detached' vision of the world enforcing the view that human beings can be defined by their distinctive capacities to know the world and act upon it, control it and manage it. Going against the mainstream, people like the physician and Goethean scientist Bortoft (1996), and the anthropologist Ingold (2000), advocate a relational view of the world where everything appears and evolves in a wider field of relations. I will introduce this view from my own observations and experiences in Madagascar and abroad.

Malagasy Astrology, Ecology of Life, & Goethean Sciences.

My research in Madagascar has focused on form-giving practices in the land of the Zanadroandrena, an extended family living in Bezanozano, Central East Madagascar. I understand them as ongoing practices of participation in the becoming of the land they inhabit. I argue that I have seen Zanadroandrena cultural practices as *manifestations of* complex (re)generative life processes and not as

representations. In this argument my ethnography is an example of Ingold's *Ecology of Life* (Mattheeuws 2008). In his disagreement with the view that human societies appear on the surface of a biologically preformed world, Ingold wants to show that if "*the perceiver*" is *always moving, learning and becoming*, then the same must surely also go for the world he or she perceives and inhabits (Ingold 2000: 166-68). He advocates a new approach to 'organism' and 'environment' by extending to all life-forms the anthropological notion of the human person as a point of emergence within a wider field of social relationships. To picture this, Ingold proposes *the model of fungi*, fruiting bodies situated as leaking things at one particular node of a meshwork of strands or fibres (mycelium) in the ground. The world, he says, is a meshwork of life-paths, a field of interwoven lines, and not of interconnecting points as a network is described (2008a, 2009a, 2009b). It is a meshwork of leaking things, because the boundaries between things are as fluid as the things themselves (Ingold 2009a, 2009b). In this model, the boundaries we draw between human beings, other living organisms, the world of organic and inorganic materials and objects, physical phenomena like the weather and human creations vanish. *Life is lived in the open, rather than being contained within the structures of the built environment. A relational world shapes a kind of environment that affords scope for growth and movement* (Ingold 2009a). We can gain knowledge of the world as a meshwork of leaking things by following their movements or flows in the growth, dispersal, expansion, contraction, binding and dissolution of places, beings, and phenomena (Ingold 2008c).

My fieldwork consisted simply of walking along people's life paths as they occurred during the time I was present in the village. I became gradually aware of the twists and turns, the flows, renewals and dead ends, the slow motion and high speed moments in the life of people, rice, cattle, rivers, land, weather, ancestors and other spiritual beings, and, last but not least, of my own research which had been absorbed into these movements. After fieldwork I decided to bring these movements into my written work. I was aware that my ethnography should become a fabric

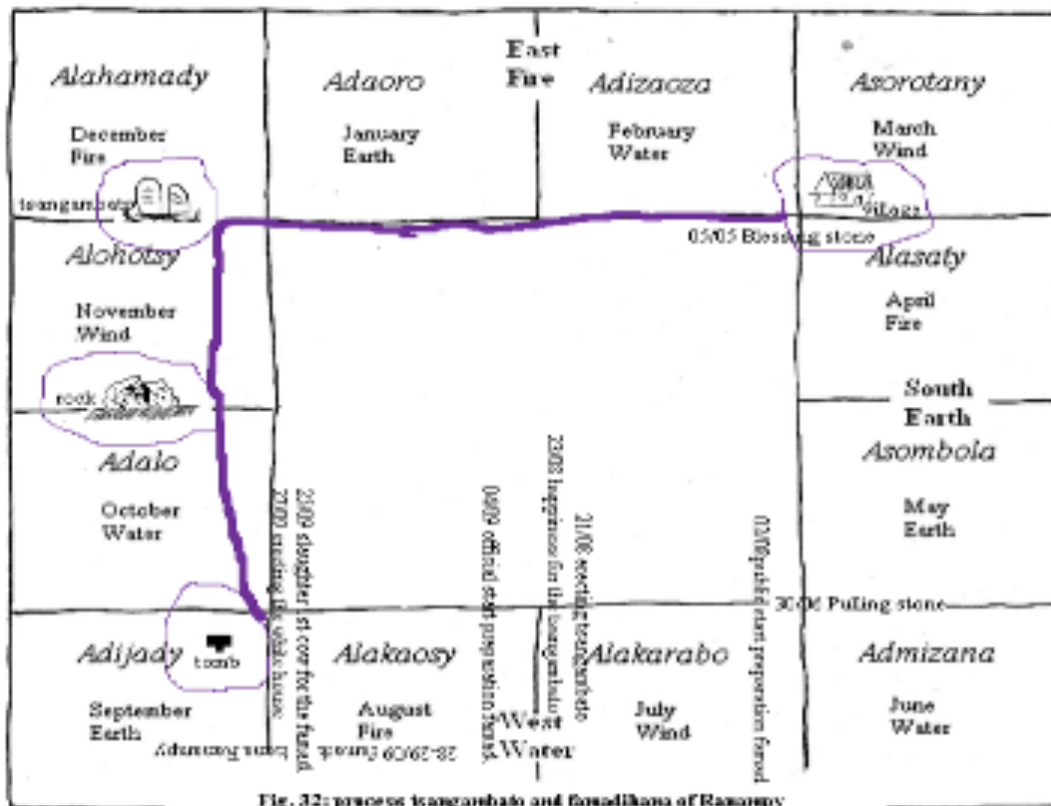


in which all aspects of Zanadroandrena land were integrated because of the unifying character of all that people did or said. With trial and error I realised that the astrological generation of places, beings, things and activities was the only way by which I could weave the movements I had observed and experienced into a fabric that brings forward all aspects of Zanadroandrena land as it is constantly changing, without falling apart.

There is no space here to go into the technical details of the Zanadroandrena astrology. I give you only some of the main features. Fig. 2 is the *sarin'tany* (an image of the earth with the astrological destinies along the four cardinal directions with the East at the top), of a part of Zanadroandrena land. It shows a village, one of its tombs and a couple of standing stones. The standing stones are elevated in an intermediate place between the village in the Southeast and the tomb in the Northwest to solve an astrological problem in the construction of the tomb that had killed several people, among whom an astrologer. The thick line is the astrologically established path created along the deviation of the standing stones. The Zanadroandrena astrological vision of the world shows that everything emerges and changes in fields of relationships. The monthly moon phases are emergent change of the moon in relation to the sun, the astrological destinies (considered as invisible forces that can only be seen and felt by astrologers) are emergent change in

relation to the moon phases, the day is emergent change in relation to the sun, the weather is emergent change in relation to the wind and finally the world is emergent change in relation to the destinies. The relationship between the changing moon, the appearances of the destinies and the generation of things is not causal. Their relationship should be understood as appearances in the same moment which is appreciated as a new beginning. One can imagine this as different things being caught in the same weather circumstances since the Zanadroandrena understand the qualities of the destinies in terms of the weather. The land of the Zanadroandrena is an earth-sky land. As you can see from figure 2, there is a strong relation between a thing, a destiny and a solar month. Beings, things and phenomena are not self-contained entities but rather are born, take shape and evolve in fields of relationships with other moving beings and phenomena that do not only influence each other but also intertwine and bind life-paths, forming new bodies. A year, *taona*, also means in Malagasy: carrying, pushing, encouraging.

When I was about to submit my dissertation, I realised that I had been able to draw a parallel between the ecology of life and astrological practices in Madagascar but that this had said nothing about my own experiences of transformation and my shift towards a relational understanding of the world. In order to understand my experiences of



transformation as “a perceiver” I turned Ingold’s argument around saying that “*perceivers*” in a relational world that is constantly moving and changing must also change, transform and become. This is the argument of Goethe (1749-1832), who dedicated his life not only to writing poetry but also to studying nature. Goethe said of his own approach to nature: “that which has been formed is immediately transformed again, and if we would attain in some measure a living comprehension of nature, we must ourselves remain as mobile and plastic as the example nature presents to us” (Colquhoun 1997: 149). Goethe, who saw the earth and the atmosphere as a pulsating, oscillating organism, refused to study nature by reducing it to a unity of solid bodies. He describes the scientific investigations he met in his time as bringing phenomena to torture rooms. Goethe formulated a specific research methodology that studies nature from within, through the process of developing new organs of perception. Doing research along Goethean lines means treading a path of conscious development, of believing that we are the most adequate instrument to know the world on the one hand, and always wanting to make it a better instrument on the other. Since the researcher develops and refines his or her capacities of seeing in the research process, we can only learn Goethean methodology by doing it (Holdredge 2005,

Bockemühl 1998). The whole learning process is a conversation with nature (including people), demanding that we listen first before we question or answer. We don’t go to nature, but let nature come to us and let it gradually reveal itself ... as a whole ... (Holdredge 2005).

It is difficult to define *the whole*, especially to people who do not practice Goethean science. It is a unity without unifications since the nature of the whole is that it is always whole. It is not a thing among things since it is nothing substantial. It is the idea, or the theory, of the phenomenon that we can see in all the different parts, once revealed. The primal phenomenon in the plant is, according to Goethe, the leaf. “The leaf” is the plant-ness or footprint of the plant, the instance of the coming into being of all the different stages and forms of the plant that appear as one irreversible movement of manifold transformations. “The leaf” is the moving form, that which displays itself in the midst of change (Goethe 1863). In my studies of the Zanadroadrena landscape the idea, or theory, that gradually disclosed itself from the land and its inhabitants was the astrological generation of all beings and things. According to Goethe, the eye owes its existence to the light. The eye sees light because it has developed in it. Likewise, I could see astrology because my eyes had been developed in an

astrological attitude to life by following the Zanadroandrena life-paths, making me intimately entwined with Zanadroandrena land. In the finest reading of the happenings in Zanadroandrena land, I would learn that only the destiny that was given to the land as a whole, and to the Zanadroandrena community, was the “primal gesture.” It was in the light of this destiny that the appearances of everything else in the land should be understood, as *the whole* that is reflected in all its parts, giving Zanadroandrena land its particular character in comparison to other people's land. The Zanadroandrena call this destiny the spirit, or knot, of their land from which their customs and habits are derived.

Conclusion

The three knowledge systems that have been disclosed over the course of my research and writing converge in the following respects. They are all life-centric, and concentrate on generative or morphogenetic processes. All advocate a holism that is relational, thinking of a world as continually in formation rather than as a totality greater than the sum of its parts. In this kind of holism, every phenomenon enfold its relations to all the other. In all three, knowledge emerges through active, perceptual participation in the coming-into-being of the world. Knowledge in the three approaches is not a subjective state of the knower and is not ontologically separate from the known. Finally, all three point in the direction of a relational development of the body, mind and other beings and phenomena in practical engagements.

In relation to Madagascar, I plead for the development of Malagasy science as a human approach to life that does not only focus on knowledge but also on the becoming of the researcher and the target groups (observers of any kind) in relation with the becoming of the object of study. The forest people do not only suffer from substantial loss of the basic means of survival and self esteem, but also from a loss of bodily, mental and spiritual skills that open up dimensions and perspectives of life that have long been lost. I do not treat Malagasy science as an indigenous science or a traditional knowledge system opposed or different from contemporary ways of thinking. I believe that Zanadroandrena land is particular as a moment in the world's becoming, but the knowledge system which makes this particularity appear is

shared by other Malagasy communities. The shared knowledge system in Madagascar to which I refer is the system of the four cardinal directions used all over the country for the orientation of people, buildings and places. The meanings of the cardinal directions, along with the different shapes and places of houses, villages, cultivations, communities of the living and the dead, individual people, natural places, ritual centres and rituals, vary extensively, however. In my view, these variations are linked to different understandings of life-processes and the positions that a community or particular members of a community self-consciously take in these processes. Landscape and weather might play an important role in the appearances of Malagasy social and cultural particularities in common fields of relations. This role is, in my view, not deterministic but part of a relational perception of the world. This brings us beyond the scope of Madagascar since the ecology of life approach in anthropology proposed by Ingold, and Goethe's phenomenology of nature give a very similar view of the world, and of the relationship between human beings and the environment. Therefore I do not treat Malagasy science as an indigenous science.

From experiences I learned that pleading for a Malagasy science is not equal to giving local communities unconditionally voice. The present policy and education in Madagascar has already introduced the understanding of development, progress and sustainability in the conventional way along many paths. Supported by the streams of all kinds of funding and organisations in the different levels of society, local people start to believe that following the conventional way of progress and development is the only way to live or to survive. In my view, however, the alleged advance of modern sciences and societies is achieved not through the dynamics of world development, but through the control and imprisoning of manifestations of life for scientific or other goals. It is therefore very challenging to promote a policy arena in Madagascar that is driven by the Malagasy way of understanding life as a paradigm for progress and development. We need to create room for this way of understanding within the country and supported by similar movements abroad as a common ground where human scientists, life scientists and local communities can practically collaborate in addressing the problems of environmental change and development. This is only possible when we, Malagasy and foreign

scholars, are willing to learn and see in a Malagasy way

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Dr. Christel Mattheeuws



Honorary Research Fellow in the department of anthropology at the University of Aberdeen, Christel Mattheeuws graduated in Eastern Philology and History (Sinology) at the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium). She obtained a special diploma in Social and

Cultural Anthropology at the same university. In December 1999 she started fieldwork in Madagascar and was initially a Ph.D. student in Leuven. She became a full-time student in Aberdeen in 2007 and graduated in 2008 under the supervision of Prof. Tim Ingold. Her main fields of interests have always been religion, philosophy, development and ecology (with a strong attraction for islands and mountainous regions) that she gradually explored in her academic choices, in travelling (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Taiwan, Kenya, Guinea Conakry and Madagascar) and visits of development projects, international contacts, and practical trainings in both development and biological agriculture. Her recent academic career is still very young and its present direction is much influenced by Tim Ingold's work, Goethean Science and her experiences in Madagascar. While she has been trained in a body-centred phenomenology of human beings, her new visions have become life-centric, exploring the "organic" relationships between human beings and all other worldly manifestations. She focuses on the relationship between perception, form-giving processes of both the material world and less substantial phenomena and different kinds of knowledge. christel.mattheeuws@abdn.ac.uk

Foreword from the 1895 Edition of 'Cock Lane and Common Sense' Andrew Lang

Since the first publication of *Cock Lane and Common-Sense* in 1894, nothing has occurred to alter greatly the author's opinions. He has tried to make the Folklore Society see that such things as modern reports of wraiths, ghosts, 'fire-walking,' 'corpse-lights,' 'crystal-gazing,' and so on, are within their province, and within the province of anthropology. In this attempt he has not quite succeeded. As he understands the situation, folklorists and anthropologists will hear gladly about wraiths, ghosts, corpse-candles, hauntings, crystal-gazing, and walking unharmed through fire, as long as these things are part of vague rural tradition, or of savage belief. But, as soon as there is firsthand evidence of honourable men and women for the apparent existence of any of the phenomena enumerated, then Folklore officially refuses to have anything to do with the subject. Folklore will register and compare vague savage or popular beliefs; but when educated living persons vouch for phenomena which (if truly stated) account in part for the origin of these popular or savage beliefs, then Folklore turns a deaf ear. The logic of this attitude does not commend itself to the author of *Cock Lane and Common-Sense*.

On the other side, the Society for Psychical Research, while anxiously examining all the modern instances which Folklore rejects, has hitherto neglected, on the whole, that evidence from history, tradition, savage superstition, saintly legend, and so forth, which Folklore deigns to regard with interest. The neglect is not universal, and the historical aspect of these beliefs has been dealt with by Mr. Gurney (on Witchcraft), by Mr. Myers (on the Classical Oracles), and by Miss X. (on Crystal-Gazing). Still, the savage and traditional evidence is nearly as much eschewed by psychical research, as the living and contemporary evidence is by Folklore.

The truth is that anthropology and Folklore have a ready-made theory as to the savage and illusory origin of all belief in the spiritual, from ghosts to God. The reported occurrence, therefore, of phenomena which suggest the possible existence of causes of belief not accepted by anthropology, is a distasteful thing, and is avoided. On the other hand,

psychical research averts its gaze, as a rule, from tradition, because the testimony of tradition is not 'evidential,' not at first hand.

In *Cock Lane and Common-Sense* an attempt is made to reconcile these rather hostile sisters in science. Anthropology ought to think *humani nihil a se alienum*. Now the abnormal and more or less inexplicable experiences vouched for by countless living persons of honour and sanity, are, at all events, human. As they usually coincide in character with the testimony of the lower races all over the world; with historical evidence from the past, and with rural Folklore now and always, it really seems hard to understand how anthropology can turn her back on this large human province. For example, the famous affair of the disturbances at Mr. Samuel Wesley's parsonage at Epworth, in 1716, is reported on evidence undeniably honest, and absolutely contemporary. Dr. Salmon, the learned and acute Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, has twice tried to explain the phenomena as the results of deliberate imposture by Hetty Wesley, alone, and unaided. The present writer examined Dr. Salmon's arguments (in the *Contemporary Review*, August, 1895), and was able, he thinks, to demonstrate that scarcely one of them was based on an accurate reading of the evidence. The writer later came across the diary of Mr. Proctor of Wellington, near Newcastle (about 1840), and found to his surprise that Mr. Proctor registered on occasion, day by day, for many years, precisely the same phenomena as those which had vexed the Wesleys.

Various contradictory and mutually exclusive theories of these affairs have been advanced. Not one hypothesis satisfies the friends of the others: not one bears examination. The present writer has no theory, except the theory that these experiences (or these modern myths, if any one pleases), are part of the province of anthropology and Folklore. He would add one obvious yet neglected truth. If a 'ghost-story' be found to contain some slight discrepancy between the narratives of two witnesses, it is at once rejected, both by science and common-sense, as obviously and necessarily and essentially false. Yet no story of the most normal incident in daily life, can well be told

without some discrepancies in the relations of witnesses. Nonetheless such stories are accepted even by juries and judges. We cannot expect human testimony suddenly to become impeccable and infallible in all details, just because a 'ghost' is concerned. Nor is it logical to demand here a degree of congruity in testimony, which daily experience of human evidence proves to be impossible, even in ordinary matters.

A collection of recent reports of 'fire-walking' by unscorched ministrants, in the South Seas, in Sarawak, in Bulgaria, and among the Klings, appeals to the present writer in a similar way. Anthropology, he thinks, should compare these reports of living witnesses, with the older reports of similar phenomena, in Virgil, in many books of travel, in saintly legends, in trials by ordeal, and in Iamblichus. Anthropology has treasured the accounts of trials by the ordeal of fire, and has not neglected the tales of old travellers, such as Pallas, and Gmelin. Why she should stand aloof from analogous descriptions by Mr. Basil Thomson, and other living witnesses, the present writer is unable to imagine. The better, the more closely contemporary the evidence, the more a witness of the abnormal is ready to submit to cross-examination, the more his testimony is apt to be neglected by Folklorists. Of course, the writer is not maintaining that there is anything 'psychical' in fire-walking, or in fire-handling. Put it down as a trick. Then as a trick it is so old, so worldwide, that we should ascertain the modus of it. Mr. Clodd, following Sir B. W. Richardson, suggests the use of diluted sulphuric acid, or of alum. But I am not aware that he has tried the experiment on his own person, nor has he produced an example in which it was successfully tried. Science demands actual experiment.

The very same remarks apply to 'Crystal-Gazing.' Folklore welcomes it in legend or in classical or savage divination. When it is asserted that a percentage of living and educated and honourable people are actually hallucinated by gazing into crystals, the President of the Folklore Society (Mr. Clodd) has attributed the fact to a deranged liver. This is a theory like another, and, like another, can be tested. But, if it holds water, then we have discovered the origin of the worldwide practice of crystal-gazing. It arises from an equally worldwide form of hepatic malady.

In answer to all that has been urged here, anthropologists are wont to ejaculate that blessed word 'Survival.' Our savage, and mediaeval, and

Puritan ancestors were ignorant and superstitious; and we, or some of us, inherit their beliefs, as we may inherit their complexions. They have bequeathed to us a tendency to see the viewless things, and hear the airy tongues which they saw and heard; and they have left us the legacy of their animistic or spiritualistic explanation of these subjective experiences. Well, be it so; what does anthropology study with so much zest as survivals? When, then, we find plenty of sane and honest people ready with tales of their own 'abnormal' experiences, anthropologists ought to feel fortunate. Here, in the persons of witnesses, say, to 'death-bed wraiths,' are 'survivals' of the liveliest and most interesting kind. Here are parsons, solicitors, soldiers, actors, men of letters, peers, honourable women not a few, all (as far as wraiths go), in exactly the mental condition of a Maori. Anthropology then will seek out these witnesses, these contemporary survivals, these examples of the truth of its own hypothesis, and listen to them as lovingly as it listens to a garrulous old village wife, or to an untutored Mincopi.

This is what we expect; but anthropology, never glancing at our 'survivals,' never interrogating them, goes to the Aquarium to study a friendly Zulu. The consistency of this method *laisse a desirer*! One says to anthropologists: 'If all educated men who have had, or believe they have had "psychical experiences" are mere "survivals," why don't you friends of "survivals" examine them and cross examine them? Their psychology ought to be a most interesting proof of the correctness of your theory. But, far from studying the cases of these gentlemen, some of you actually denounce, for doing so, the Society for Psychical Research.'

The real explanation of these singular scientific inconsistencies is probably this. Many men of science have, consciously or unconsciously, adopted the belief that the whole subject of the 'abnormal,' or, let us say, the 'psychical,' is closed. Every phenomenon admits of an already ascertained physical explanation. Therefore, when a man (however apparently free from superstitious prejudice) investigates a reported abnormal phenomenon, he is instantly accused of wanting to believe in a 'supernatural explanation.' Wanting (*ex hypothesi*) to believe, he is unfit to investigate, all his conclusions will be affirmative, and all will be worthless. This scientific argument is exactly the old argument of the pulpit against the atheist who 'does not believe because he does not want to believe.' The writer is only too well aware that even scientific minds, when bent on these topics,

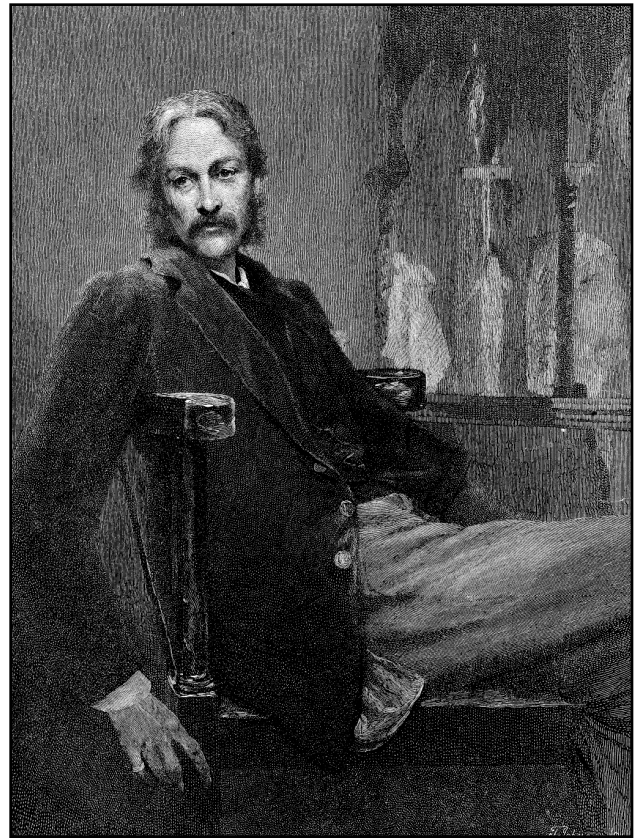
are apt to lose balance and sanity. But this tendency, like any other mental bad habit, is to be overcome, and may be vanquished. Manifestly it is as fair for a psychical researcher to say to Mr. Clodd, 'You won't examine my haunted house because you are afraid of being obliged to believe in spirits,' as it is fair for Mr. Clodd to say to a psychical researcher, 'You only examine a haunted house because you want to believe in spirits; and, therefore, if you do see a spook, it does not count'.

We have recently seen an instructive example. Many continental savants, some of them bred in the strictest sect of materialists, examined, and were puzzled by an Italian female 'medium.' Effects apparently abnormal were attested. In the autumn of 1895 this woman was brought to England by the Society for Psychical Research. They, of course, as they, *ex hypothesi*, 'wish to believe,' should, *ex hypothesi*, have gone on believing. But, in fact, they detected the medium in the act of cheating, and publicly denounced her as an impostor. The argument, therefore, that investigation implies credulity, and that credulity implies inevitable and final deception, scarcely holds water.

Mr. J. W. Maskelyne, the eminent expert in conjuring, has remarked to the author that the old historical reports of 'physical phenomena,' such as those which were said to accompany D. D. Home, do not impress him at all. For, as Mr. Maskelyne justly remarks, their antiquity and worldwide diffusion may be accounted for with ease. Like other myths, equally uniform and widely diffused, they represent the natural play of human fancy. Inanimate objects are stationary, therefore let us say that they move about. Men do not float in the air. Let us say that they do. Then we have the 'physical phenomena' of spiritualism. This objection had already occurred to, and been stated by, the author. But the difficulty of accounting for the large body of respectable evidence as to the real occurrence of the alleged phenomena remains. Consequently the author has little doubt that there is a genuine substratum of fact, probably fact of conjuring, and of more or less hallucinatory experience. If so, the great antiquity and uniformity of the tricks, make them proper subjects of anthropological inquiry, like other matters of human tradition. Where conditions of darkness and so on are imposed, he does not think that it is worth while to waste time in examination.

Finally, the author has often been asked: 'But what do you believe yourself?' He believes that all

these matters are legitimate subjects of anthropological inquiry.



Andrew Lang (31 March 1844 – 20 July 1912) was a Scottish poet, novelist, literary critic, and contributor to the field of anthropology. He is best known as a collector of folk and fairy tales. The Andrew Lang lectures at the University of St Andrews are named after him.

Neo-Shamanism, Psi, and Their Relationship With Transpersonal Psychology

Mark A. Schroll

Introduction

This article represents an ethnoautobiographical reconstruction and remembrance of a confluence of events that initiated my continuing process of awakening and personal discovery of shamanic wisdom. *Ethnoautobiography* is defined by Jurgen W. Kremer as:

creative self-exploratory writing (or oral presentation) that grounds itself in the ethnic, cultural, historical, ecological, and gender background of the author. Part of such writing is the investigation of hybridity, categorical borderlands and transgressions, and the multiplicity of (hi)stories carried outside and inside the definitions and discourses of the dominant society of a particular place and time. As creative and evocative writing and storytelling, ethnoautobiography explores consciousness as the network of representations held by individuals from a subjective perspective and brings those representations into inquiring conversation with objective factors related to identity construction (Kremer: 9, 2003).

The present article's demonstration of ethnoautobiography is in contrast to my more detailed theoretical exploration in "Toward a New Kind of Science and its Methods of Inquiry" (Schroll, 2010a)-methods that Peter N. Jones compared to the jazz style of Miles Davis:

Schroll argues that our present methods fail to provide the means to fully comprehend aspects of consciousness, simply because we are always trapped within our own meta-narrative. His suggestion is that we find ethnographic methods that include within their approaches an understanding of methods and techniques that allow us to experientially encounter them. Our becoming transformed and then recollecting our ethnoautobiographical experiences is the means, he argues, toward a new kind of anthropology. In this sense, Schroll is arguing for the same thing that Miles Davis played so well—we must not

only study the physical characteristics of space but also the nonphysical characteristics. We must not only play the notes, or experientially encounter aspects of space, but we must also play the space around the notes, allowing ourselves to become transformed by the physical and nonphysical characteristics of space (Jones: 43-44, 2010).

First of all, this article will clarify my views on shamanism and neo-shamanism. According to Stanley Krippner, "The term *shaman* is a social construct, one that has been described, not unfairly, as "a made-up, modern Western category" (Taussig, 1989, p. 57) (quoted in Krippner: 2002, 963). In its most wide-ranging description, Krippner defines shamanism as a:

body of techniques and activities that supposedly enable its practitioners to access information that is not ordinarily attainable by members of the social group that gave them privileged status. These practitioners use this information in attempts to meet the needs of this group and its members (Krippner: 963, 2002).

What then is *neo-shamanism*?¹ Fiona Bowie asked this question as a reviewer of this article. Good question and providing a complete answer will require the contributions of additional articles and authors. The briefest reply to Bowie's question is provided by Roger Walsh, who posed this problem of definition as a challenge for anthropologists, to which I might add can also be viewed as a challenge for anthropologists to catch up with understanding contemporary culture. More to the point, in an attempt to sum up the mess we are in, and because the word shaman is itself a social construct, this, as Walsh tells us, has led French anthropologist Roberte Hamayon to edit a book:

with a telling title: *The Concept of Shamanism: Uses and Abuses* [Francfort & Hamayon, 2001]. In it she lamented, "For more than a century the question of what shamanism really is in the final analysis has hindered all attempts to define it." In fact, the problem has become worse rather

than better. The popularity of shamanic practices in the West, divorced from their traditional cultural context and goals, has created thousands of practitioners and a movement that is to be called—what? “Neo-shamanism” is one term in vogue (Walsh: 11, 2007).

We will revisit this problem of definition and explanation later in this article, but I will tell you now, do not expect to find a definitive answer.

Second, I will examine the relationship between shamanism and transpersonal psychology—again, without a definitive conclusion—but more an attempt to summarize my personal encounters with each. Third, to demonstrate I am not just another haphazard academic trying to assess the phenomena I have referred to so far, I offer an experiential encounter that contributed to awakening my relationship with shamanic wisdom. Fourth, this article's focus is not an attempt to significantly elaborate on our technical knowledge of psi and/or psychical research beyond my previous definition and discussion (Schroll, 1987; 2008; 2010a, 2010b, 2011b). Instead I briefly examine shamanism's relationship with psi phenomenon as it relates to my direct encounters with extraordinary experience. Fifth, *Paranthropology's* relationship is woven throughout this article and its conclusion. Furthermore the specific points discussed in this article's introduction are an elaboration on their more general reference in relationship to the historical growth and development of the anthropology of consciousness raised in (Schroll, 2010c).

Shamanism and the Neo-Shamanic Revival

In 1989 Walsh published a series of articles on shamanism in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* and *ReVision*. (Walsh, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c). Immersed in this literature, I was invited by Stephen Glazier to organize a symposium on shamanism for the 1990 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) conference, held in Virginia Beach, Virginia. I accepted this invitation, motivated by the theme of creating a symposium to deepen our commitment toward envisioning a technology of transcendence or a renaissance of mysticism with an ability to produce the necessary transformation of consciousness to awaken a heart-felt response to the environmental crisis. Clarifying this idea in a marginal note in Larry Peters' article “Shamanism: Phenomenology of a Spiritual Discipline” (Peters, 1989), I wrote. It will

[only] be through an authentic cultivation of *communitas* and the deep ecology movement that we will be able to transcend our presently destructive interaction with nature, and, thereby, transform our presuppositions about reality.

This reflection reminded me that Joan Townsend had expressed a similar viewpoint:

Periods of religious enthusiasm are not uncommon in the history of the Western world. This latest trend seems unusual, however, and distinct from earlier religious movements such as the Great Awakening of the 1740s and the Second Great Awakening after 1790 in the United States, because it combines a number of different systems of belief and is fostered by a network of individuals sharing a communication system that is unprecedented. . . this new mystical movement owes its initial definition to the “hippie” and related movements that began in the 1960's. . . . characterised by the search for a new meaning in life, . . . a feeling of kinship among all people. . . and the valuing of simple, “natural” lifestyles and conservationist concerns. Significantly, there was also a strong interest in nonorthodox theologies, especially spiritualist, mystical, and Eastern religious philosophies, as well as Native American culture, including shamanism (Townsend: 74, 1988).

Townsend referred to this movement as *neo-shamanism*, adding, “important to the development of neo-shamanism in the West were Michael Harner's work. . . . [and] the publication in 1969 of Carlos Castaneda's doctoral dissertation in anthropology. . . . Thus by the early 1970s the stage was set for the rise of neo-shamanism” (Townsend: 75, 1988). Here I must interject, at this phase of inquiry I had yet to organize the symposium “Castaneda's Controversy: Examining Consciousness Studies Future,” which took place April 3, 2003, at the 23rd Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness (SAC) conference. This attempt to understand contemporary culture and provide some analysis is discussed in (Schroll, 2010d).²

Flashback to 1990—inspired by the shared sense of vision in this passage with my own, I telephoned Townsend on April 20, 1990, to discuss these ideas. Our conversation convinced me we were moving in the same direction, suggesting an elaboration on her work might be titled “Authenticity and Delusion: Shamanism and Neo-Shamanism.” She agreed,

accepting my invitation. Another important contribution “Personal Reflections on My Journey Into Shamanism” emerged through my phone conversations with Michael Schneider. This was his first public discussion of a life-threatening illness and miraculous recovery that called Schneider to become both a Certified Shamanic Counselor and a close associate of Michael Harner. I also invited papers by Paula M. Raines, “Living Mythically—Dreams and Synchronicity in Shamanism: Traditional and Modern” and Judith E. Kahn, “Power Animals: Metaphor, Myth and Reality” (Schroll, 1990).

Flashback to early 1990, when I was in the midst of organizing the SSSR shamanism symposium, I received an article from Daniel C. Noel titled “Archetypal Merlin and the New Shamanism” (1989). At the time Noel's article did not grab my attention, yet in retrospect I realize my error in not taking it more seriously. His article is very relevant now. In fact had I studied this article more carefully I would have learned Noel was the Editor of *Seeing Castaneda: Reactions to the “Don Juan” writings of Carlos Castaneda* (1976). Thus long before Harry Potter's pop-culture tales of sorcery, Noel's article was a more reasoned response to Castaneda's work in an attempt to discover if there was a lineage of indigenous shamanic wisdom within the Anglo ancestral heritage. Peeling away the caricatures and distorted persona's of Hollywood's various cartoon versions of Arthurian legend, and inspired by his reading Count Nikolai Tolstoy's book *The Quest for Merlin* (1985), Noel discovered that “in pre-Celtic times Merlin [was] descended from a divine figure of prophetic inspiration worshiped in southwestern Wales” (Noel: 46, 1989). In our present era, the archetypal significance of Merlin's legacy belongs to the worldwide resurgence known as neo-shamanism.

Archaeologists and anthropologists will surely raise questions regarding the historical reality of Merlin, and yet this is exactly the kind of criticism raised in response to the work of Castaneda. Reliable fieldwork methodologies and well-documented historical data have had, and will continue to have important roles in archeology, anthropology and theory construction. Nevertheless, Noel's views on Merlin are not in opposition to these methods. Noel's inquiry is instead opening a psychological window allowing us to see, bear witness, and embody the archetypal significance that Merlin's legacy represents for Britain. This re-embodiment of Merlin as exemplar of shamanic wisdom personifies the same

iconic source of enthusiasm that Don Juan offered North America. Moreover, as I pointed out in (Schroll, 2010d): “Considering the importance of raising both public and scientific awareness of shamanism, if Castaneda had not bestowed this discussion with his charisma, colleagues such as Michael Harner . . . might have had to invent him” (Schroll: 4, 2010d).

Likewise my personal mythology (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988) resonates with Noel's discovery that C. G. Jung “actively identified his psychology, if not his own personality, with Merlin's powers” (Noel: 47, 1989). Furthermore Noel's assessment (drawing upon the wisdom of Heinrich Zimmer and Emma Jung) that Merlin became his own “anima-figure” and/or contra-sexual soul-manifestation reminds me of the central characters in my 11-year recurring dream (CF #2), telling us:

This seems not so much an endorsement of a bland androgyny as a plea for all of us, men and women alike (and in interaction), to heed Merlin's cry, to practice a re-animating, transformative attention to all expressions of soul (Noel: 49, 1989).

Still, I remain open to other possible interpretations. Finally, to ask why we have lost our contact and forgotten the legacy of Merlin (and shamanic wisdom in general) is a complex question I have taken up in (Schroll, 2011c), and whose discussion exceeds the limits of this article.

Shamanism and Transpersonal Psychology

My inquiry into shamanism and neo-shamanism continued to deepen after this conference, becoming entwined with my studies of transpersonal psychology. One of my first insights into the relationship between shamanism and transpersonal psychology came to me through the work of David Zeller. Zeller has focused on the use of the prefix trans, as employed in the words *translucent and transparent, meaning a going through*. Zeller goes on to say regarding the word transpersonal, that the experience of the “transpersonal is something from beyond the personal, which is brought down through the personal in order to manifest” (Zeller, 1984). One slight catch that may hang up some of us is Zeller's spatial reference to the transpersonal coming down and through us, that seems to suggest the transpersonal originates from some otherworldly higher dimension. We must remember our language

came into being and reached perfection in a Euclidean or flatland universe. Shamanism also refers to upper, middle and lower world journeys.

Support for Zeller's reference to the transpersonal as something which is beyond the personal, that is brought down through the personal in order to manifest, can be found in Felicitates D. Goodman's book *Ecstasy, Ritual and Alternate Reality* (1988). Goodman suggests that the defining characteristic which makes us human is our ability to become fully integrated with reality as a whole, by learning to perceive both the usual (normal or ordinary) state of consciousness and alternate states of consciousness.

Featured on the cover of Goodman's book jacket is an artistic representation of a fully integrated human being, possessing the ability to look in one direction and see the usual (ordinary) state of consciousness and turning the other way contemplate alternate states of consciousness—a small terra-cotta statuette unearthed in Tlatico, Mexico, whose origin dates back to the year 1300 BCE. Goodman describes this statuette as a:

. . . delicate woman with tiny breasts, two finely shaped mouths, two pronounced noses, and three large eyes, for the two faces share one eye (Goodman: 44, 1988).

This statuette has unfortunately influenced Goodman's cognitive constructs about ordinary and non-ordinary reality in a way that has limited her ability to understand the problem of consciousness. That is, unless I have misunderstood Goodman's point of view because of a poor translation of her thoughts on these matters (Goodman, 1996), she continues to simply talk about consensus reality and some kind of alternate reality. While I do not have a problem with the idea that there is “a” consensus reality and “an” alternate reality, I am suggesting (in support of Ralph Metzner's theory of personality (Metzner, 1990, 1996, 1998)) that there is not merely “a” reality and “an” alternate reality, but that there are a plurality of realities or worlds. Consciousness is not simply two dimensional, but multidimensional—whose only limitation is our narrative construction. More recently I have explored this idea further with Susan Greenwood (Schroll & Greenwood, 2011), drawing on Thomas B. Roberts (2006) contribution that encourages our “transitioning from the single-state paradigm to the multistate paradigm” (Schroll & Greenwood: 55, 2011). Telling us: “The multistate paradigm recognizes that our minds and bodies can

produce and use many mind-body states” (Roberts: 113, 2006).

There is also an eerie similarity between the statuette Goodman describes and the Roman (and possibly earlier Etruscan) deity *Janus* who, as Metzner tells us, is “associated with doorways, gateways and passageways” (Metzner: 36, 2009). Metzner elaborates:

His image with two faces in opposite directions could be found above the doorways to a house or temple, or on coins of the realm. His name is embedded in the roots of the English words *janitor* and *January*. Janitors are gatekeepers and Janus was the gatekeeper of the gods (and humans) (Metzner: 36-37, 2009).

This former passage about *Janus* reminded me that in Metzner's book *The Well of Remembrance* (1994), he makes a thorough examination of the story of Odin/Woton (the leader of the Nordic gods and goddesses) who gave one of his eyes to drink from *the well of remembrance*. Metzner suggests that the significance of Odin giving up one eye indicates that he gave up some of the ability to perceive the outer world in exchange for heightened ability to perceive other-worlds. Like Metzner, I choose to argue for a view of consciousness that is multidimensional, composed of many worlds, states, domains, or levels of reality. The purpose of exploring these worlds, or expanded states of consciousness, is to bring the healing insights and energies of those realms back into this world.

Rolling Down the Highway: A Personal Encounter with Alternate Reality

In July of 1977, just two days after my psychedelic mushroom experience (Schroll, 2005), I was accidentally thrown out of the bed of an El Camino sport truck moving at 50 to 55 miles per hour (or 80 to 88 km per hour). I survived this experience unharmed, except for a few friction burns from tumbling down the blacktop road for a quarter of a mile (or 0.4 km) at high speed.

Let me rewind time a bit to give the complete story. Some friends of mine lived in the country and several of us piled into the bed of the El Camino as we were being given a ride back to the city to get something to eat. The driver was initially going very slow, as we were on a dirt road; I assumed he was going to maintain this speed during the 10-mile journey back to the city. I was sitting toward the back-end of the El Camino, and a friend of mine (Joe Holmstrand) told me I should sit closer to the cab; I

carelessly replied “no worries,” adding that I would be able to hang on. I should have known better as the tailgate was down. Soon after the driver reached a black top road, he quickly accelerated to 50-55 miles per hour. Joe tried to catch me, but the momentum sent me flying out headfirst.

Somehow I knew that I needed to tuck into a ball, which I did. I do not remember the impact with the road. My next awareness was that I was watching myself like in a dream and at this moment it was my awareness that I had always existed in this dream state—a state of pure total bliss. I was no longer aware of my body at all, just my head floating or skating across what appeared to be an icy pond.

Then abruptly the blissful experience ended. The awareness of my body—that I was in fact in a body—returned; as complete recollection of everything that had just happened began flooding into my awareness as I lay face down on the road. Meanwhile I am sure that my friends expected to find me dead or at least seriously injured. Instead, I stood up and started to dance, feeling a surge of power in my body juxtaposed with a sense of cosmic interconnectedness. I could see the El Camino backing up to me and I ran to meet it. The driver got out and Joe asked if I was okay. I told them all that I had never felt better in my life! They all stared at me in amazement, as we all examined my body for injuries. My elbows and knees were both scraped, and to this day I have scars from this experience.

Three years later when I began learning about out-of-body experiences (Schroll, 2011a) and near death experiences, I recalled my experience of rolling down the highway; where what I described as dreaming could very well have been an out-of-body experience. In retrospect, although I am very glad to have had this experience—indeed it ranks as one of my most profound transpersonal experiences—the technique is tricky. I therefore do not recommend anyone trying to replicate this technique.

Shamanism and Psi Phenomenon

Following this experience of rolling down the highway and my mushroom experience (Schroll, 2005), for at least the next five years, the occurrence of psychical phenomenon in my life increased dramatically.³ According to Harner, one possible explanation for the increase in psychical phenomenon in my life directly following these experiences is that the shamanic journey to alternate upper and lower world realities⁴ can be thought of as analogous to plugging ourselves into a psychic power

source. Harner adds that shamans make these journey's to become psychically charged to be able to heal (Harner, 1993). Investigations of shamans healing abilities have been explored in (Krippner & Villodo, 1986; Villodo & Krippner, 1987).⁵

But how exactly does it work? More precisely, how do shamans use psi to heal? The bottom line answer is, we still do not know. Walsh elaborates:

Having surveyed ethnographic, clinical, and laboratory research, what can we conclude about the possibility that shamans employ psi in their diagnostic and healing work? Certainly there are some remarkable anecdotal reports of psi in shamans and other native healers. In addition, the conditions used in tribal magic rituals often correspond to those reported to facilitate psi, and many laboratory studies and meta-analyses seem supportive of psi. However, as yet we have no good experimental studies of shamans. Therefore, for those whose minds remain open, the question of whether psi plays a role in shamanism also remains open (Walsh: 234, 2007).

Walsh's conclusion is therefore an invitation for readers of *Paranthropology* with an interest in investigating psi and shamanism that further research is needed. Indeed my article on methodology was written as a guide to assist this inquiry (Schroll, 2010a).

Finally, one avenue of inquiry that seems to be a dead-end for those of us interested in shamanism and psi is the work of Timothy L. Hubbard. Hubbard's thorough inquiry of cognitive science's understanding of consciousness concluded that elements of shamanic cognition are possible without possessing any special sensory abilities (Hubbard 2003b). I agree with Hubbard's thesis—as far as it goes—that aspects of shamanism do not require special psi abilities. These include the shaman's ability to read the language of myths and dreams and utilize archetypal methods. Nevertheless focusing on the neurochemistry associated with shamans and non-shamans misses the essential point of shamanism (and transcendence in general), which is *an attitudinal shift*. It is a shift in ethics, and in the way we approach problem solving. It is a shift in the way that one relates to other people and the nonhuman world: a shift in the thoughts, words, and deeds of one's daily life. But I also want to clarify that while I disagree with some of Hubbard's conclusions, at the same

time I have greatly benefited from our conversations (2003a).

Conclusion

If successful, I have hopefully helped to clarify in this article that shamanism's revival is contributing to animism's resurgence; that is, the growing interest in earth-based spiritual traditions that have broadly been referred to as paganism, Gaia consciousness, Goddess spirituality, psi, and modern witchcraft (Schroll, 2011c). All these movements (both in the USA, UK, and throughout the world) have to a greater or lesser extent rallied around the term neo-shamanism. This orientation is consistent with the view of consciousness as a multiverse composed of many worlds, states, or levels of reality. The shaman's purpose for exploring these worlds, or expanded states of consciousness, is to bring the healing insights and energies of those realms back into this world.

Although our ability to understand the psi abilities of shamans remains unknown, it is my hope that this article has helped clarify the contribution neo-shamanism is making in our lives. What we do know is that through repeated trips to these multidimensional realities the shaman—like any explorers of foreign territory—constructs a cognitive map. This map represents the learned component of shamanic journeying. According to Harner:

... the learned component of the shamanic state of consciousness includes information about the cosmic geography of alternate reality, so that one may know where to find the appropriate animal, plant, and other powers (Harner: 26, 1980).

Harner's reference to "other powers" reminds us that getting involved in the practice of shamanism is not about our quest for enlightenment or personal gain, it is about acquiring knowledge for healing or divination. Shamanism is about giving. Shamanism is about the creation of cooperative relationships within other communities. And, as Harner has pointed out, "the more you give, the more the spirits cheer you on" (Harner, 1993).

Notes

1. Dr. Robert J. Wallis, Director of the MA in Art History and Associate Professor of Visual Culture, Richmond University, UK, promotes a self-reflexive ethnography in his inquiry of neo-shamanism. Wallis uses this term as a means of describing contemporary

movements and their emergence from historical shamanic wisdom within Britain (Wallis, 2000). This perspective shares much in common with the view of ethnoautobiography that I discuss in this article.

2. Nor had I yet been invited by Michael Winkelman to give the plenary presentation "Shamanism's Challenge to EuroAmerican Science: Mythic Insights from An 11-Year Recurring Dream" April 6, 2000, at SAC's 20th anniversary conference held at the Clarion Santa Rita Hotel, Tucson, Arizona. Continuing to unfold this inspiration June 27, 2005, as "Transpersonal Lessons in Philosophy of Science from an 11-Year Recurring Dream." Paper presented at the Annual International Association for the Study of Dreams conference, Berkeley Marina, Berkeley, California.
3. Space limitations prevent me from my discussion of these psychical phenomenon, which shall be taken up in future articles.
4. It's still an unanswered question as to whether the shamanic state of consciousness carries the shaman to a separate "ontological domain," that is, "a separate physical world"; or whether the shamanic journey provides the shaman access to a separate "epistemological domain," or "realm of knowledge." I first posed this question in an invited lecture (Schroll, 1992), then sat it aside to work on other projects. This question resurfaced after serving as a reviewer of an article that raised similar concerns (Rock & Krippner, 2007). I later spent a week in New York City in late March 2008 discussing these concerns with Adam Rock (who I also invited along to my interview with Montague Ullman on March 26, 2008 (Schroll, 2008). Rock later elaborated on my these discussions in (Rock & Krippner, 2008).
5. As Stephan V. Beyer has pointed out (2009), not all shamans are healers. Some are clearly *sorcerers* with the expressed purpose of doing harm to others (Beyer, 2009). Harner agrees: "Over my decades of work in shamanism I've come to certain conclusions that helped me understand the Shuar, including their

preoccupation with sorcery, or bewitching. In other words, 'sorcery' commonly implies hostile or amoral action, and it is typically contrasted with healing" (Harner: 162, 2005). Despite this clarification, the words *shaman* and *sorcerer* continue to mistakenly be used to mean the same thing. Resolving this confusion exceeds the limits of this article, yet it definitely needs to be taken up by someone who is interested in pursuing this line of inquiry.

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Mark A. Schroll, Ph.D., Serves on Paranthropology's Board and is a frequent contributor to this journal. Research Adjunct Faculty, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto, California, and Co-Editor-In-Chief, Restoration Earth: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Nature and Civilization. Email: rockphd4@yahoo.com.



Mushroom (and Masalai) Madness in Melanesia: Drug Traditions and Cultural Change in Highland Societies of Papua-New Guinea Henry Dosedla



Following several years of ethnobotanical fieldwork among New Guinean highland tribes in the 1970s, which at that time had only been in contact with Europeans for one generation, a number of floral substances including fungi were investigated which played an important part within local medical and shamanistic traditions and their concomitant mythological backgrounds. Besides ritual drug consumption within exclusive male cults dealing with spirits (known as masalai) some tribes also used particular mushrooms regularly causing a collective state of intoxication of both sexes. Additionally there were a number of cases of individual consumption of various herbal drugs for other reasons. Since the introduction of non-traditional plant specimens over the course of European contact there have been

distinct cases of permanent spiritual disablement which were studied. On the other hand there is a significant tradition of "obsession by masalai (spirits)" not caused by any drugs but by ritual practice which may be of revealing importance in this context.

Geographical and Ecological Conditions

Soon after primary European contact the indigenous population of the formerly isolated *Wahgi* region in the interior highlands of Papua-New Guinea (PNG) gained considerable anthropological interest concerning their local tradition of the so-called "mushroom madness", which mainly occurred throughout the basin of the River *Wahgi* linking the Western Highlands Province (WHP) with the adjacent *Simbu* Province (SP). The region is further divided into the tribal areas of the *Ndemboka* of the

upper *Wahgi*, a western branch of the *Mbowamb* who are dominated by the *Melpa* of the Mount Hagen region. Their Eastern neighbours are called the *Middlewahgi* who are closely related to the *Kuma* of the adjacent *Simbu* Province. All these tribes have their distinct idioms which share some commonalities, and at the time of first European contact also shared the features of a traditional subsistence system exclusively based on stone tool technology thus literally representing a Neolithic culture. Though cultural change was already progressing at the time of my field research during the early seventies of the last century, many remote places still remained practically untouched (1).

Though agriculture and pig husbandry were the main source of nutrition, hunting, fishing and gathering a wide range of forest products were also additionally important. Thus precise knowledge of the entire faunal and floral habitat was of significant importance and included the practical use of various poisonous substances (2). According to common dietary rules the consumption of mushrooms was not considered appropriate for adult men but only for women, children and old aged people, which was explained by the pretence of causing bad breath. This, however, is contradicted by the fact that the forest habitats of these regions are abundant with numerous species of mostly delicious mushrooms contributing a great deal to the diversity of the daily diet (3). Though there were also a few seriously poisonous species that had been known of for generations there were no remembered cases of consumption with immediate lethal result. The only exceptions were suicides frequently caused by personal misfortune and mostly executed by hanging (4), which may have been accompanied by narcotic mushroom consumption. As far as the customs of mushroom madness are concerned it must be noticed that there are distinct differences depending on various local traditions.

Toxic Properties of Mushrooms

Since Melanesian fungi species for the most part are related to numerous mushrooms also common in Europe the same also applies to the toxic kinds responsible for so-called mushroom madness. The apparent confusion within the published records on this topic may be explained in various ways. Besides the fact that most authors only repeat the same superficial statements of the first explorers and missionaries, which lack any scientific relevance, some of them never visited the region while others

had spent just a few weeks or months in the region and were either mycologists without anthropological ambitions or anthropologists lacking any botanical background. The only exceptions are the reports on mushroom madness by HEIM & WASSON (1965) (5) and by M. REAY (1974) (6) which deal exclusively with the local tradition of the *Kuma*, though they are apparently founded on several linguistic misunderstandings. Most significantly this is illustrated by the fact that all authors apply the vernacular term of “*nonda*” to indicate a distinct type of mushroom of the genus *Boletus* as the main source of mushroom madness. On the other hand the term “*nonda*” among all neighbouring language groups is simply the common generic name for mushrooms of all kinds. In order to indicate distinct types of mushrooms each of them is further known by an individual name according to its appearance or quality as for example “*nonda aglpugl*”, “*nonda raima*” or “*nonda komprogh*” in *Ndemboka* with the meanings of “dog’s back mushroom”, “cassowary mushroom” or “tough mushroom.” According to local informants mushroom madness is not a single feature caused by a single type of mushroom but instead there are various traditions according to different tribal areas.

The most prominent type of mushroom in the context of mushroom madness has been identified as *Boletus manicus* which according to mycological evidence is closely related to the European type *Boletus satanas* commonly known as “devil’s mushroom.” Significantly among New Guinean highland tribes this mushroom bears the vernacular names “*nonda koropugl*”, “*nonda temp*” or “*nonda pim*” in *Ndemboka* with the meaning of “goblin’s back mushroom”, “water spirit mushroom” and “ogre mushroom”, or other names indicating the mushroom’s relation with supernatural powers. Since the same applies likewise to synonyms in the *Yuwí* language of the *Kuma* this may explain why REAY mentioned four types of “madness mushrooms” (7). Though there are similar types of *Boletus* bearing various vernacular names, referred to containing portions of indole and thus having comparable toxic qualities (GILLI 1978), there is yet no absolute proof that they are related species, or rather different developmental stages of the same type. As in the case of the European *Boletus satanas*, younger specimens of this type may depend on the right season and the proper dose for either harmless or effective consumption.

For this reason *B. manicus* according to *Melpa* and *Ndemboka* may be consumed, most of the time,

without expecting severe problems or causing nausea, whereas older specimens, having developed a distinctly bitter taste, are known to cause states of considerable intoxication if consumed, and were restricted to warriors in order to make them daring and fierce during tribal fights, as well as for all sorts of other ritual or “magical” purposes. Thus it depends on secret knowledge “owned” by traditional “ritual experts” who in turn depend on circumstances to decide on the proper application from case to case. According to common belief the most powerful mushrooms of that kind are not found growing near any settlements, rather they are only found in the primary forest region at high altitudes regarded as sacred regions. Mushroom consumption was also an aspect of regular initiation rites among the Ndemboka which, in several gradual steps, were held at a mountain cave where ritual experts were also trained and ordained (8).

On the other hand *B. manicus* in its juvenile state, as well as some types of *Brittlelegill* of the *Russulaceae* family, were frequently used by women in order to provoke intensification of sexual activity and thus played a distinct part within the context of traditional courting parties in which both sexes used to take part on special occasions. The more this applies to the Middlewahgi tribes and especially to the neighbouring Kuma where, prior to European contact, the “mushroom madness” at times took up the character of a season of several days marked by communal sexual activity. Significantly, on these occasions women used to behave in a frenzied and sometimes considerably aggressive way. According to local informants women then started to roam around in the villages, often dressed up like “warriors” armed with digging sticks, spades, clubs and even spears or axes, thus threatening everyone on their way and trying to rape youngsters, other women or even pigs and dogs. Consequently most men were rather inclined to avoid contacting them and preferred hiding away in the bush. After all, since severe injuries never occurred the whole activity seemed to have a rather carnival like character thus allowing the release of tensions caused by prevailing traditions of sexual antagonism (9).

The bodily effects typically resulting from the consumption of these mushrooms were described as a state of “shivering” combined with temporary “deafness”, also meaning a condition of sensory deprivation usually interpreted as a sign of temporary madness, which is expressed by a traditional Kuma dance vernacularly called “*komugl*

tai” (or in pidgin terms “longlong” meaning “mad dancing”) primarily consisting of shivering movements. In some cases informants discussing the effects of mushroom consumption in that context reported an additional so-called Liliput-effect, resulting in the vision of tiny creatures approaching the consumer. Having personally tested such mushrooms I never experienced any toxic effects, but this may be due to a different personal sensitiveness towards stimuli of that kind. This is also backed by the statements of some informants, who suggest that since the introduction to the local population of the effects of betel nuts and alcohol the attraction of traditional drugs has gradually lost ground.

During an investigation in the distant area of the Asaro tribes, in the Eastern Highlands Province, I was once offered a dish of cooked mushrooms which consisted of a quite different kind of mushrooms, of a lamella bearing type most likely belonging to the *Russulaceae* family. My hosts, seemingly amused, offered me a rest in a house expecting me to feel tired, and in fact I immediately fell asleep. During my sleep I became aware of crowds of tiny warriors of a distinct turquoise colour throwing spears at me and trying to enter my bed, which rather amused me. When getting up after a short while my hosts shook with laughter laughing asked me about my dreams thus indicating that this kind of hallucination apparently seems to be a traditional local feature, as also among the neighbouring SinaSina tribes (10) reputed for their regular excessive mushroom parties. Similar encounters with mushroom consumption among the Kewa tribes or the Gende both inhabiting adjacent highlands regions apparently suggest that ritual use of certain mushrooms were of some specific meaning throughout the rest of the interior New Guinean highlands, the headwaters of the Sepik and most other areas including coastal regions, which must be preserved for continuing research.

Toxic Properties of Traditional Herbal Drugs

As a matter of fact several herbal drugs are of common traditional use among the highland tribes inhabiting the Wahgi Basin of interior Papua-New Guinea. Most of them are in practical use as a fish poison, by means of which fish may become paralyzed so that they can be caught easily by hand (11). Various kinds of *Euphorbia* species are employed in this way, as is a distinct shrub or tree of the genus *Derris* known by the vernacular name of “*nde temp*” (most likely *Derris eliliptica*) which must be mentioned in this context producing a significant

milky sap. On occasion of fishing trips considerable amounts of that plant are cut into pieces and thrown into the waters thus causing a state of temporary disorientation in the fish which enables easy catching by means of nets or baskets (12).

While according to common opinion this kind of a fishing poison was never used in any other context, and by no means had ever been tried out for any other reasons, it was used in a secret way by members of one of the spirit cults among the Ndemboka devoted to a water demon named *Temp* (in Melpa called *Eimp*) (13). Since the origin of this cult was explained by a typical “rite de passage” myth participants underwent a symbolic trip to the lower world by consuming this drug which has a somewhat stifling effect causing states of claustrophobia and strong impressions of crawling through endless narrow tunnel systems.

Another traditional ritual plant with significant hallucinogenic effects, probably due to considerable contents of lysergic acid amide, is known by the Ndemboka term *Kan Nunjákal* (which means “toggling vine”) has been botanically identified as *Ipomoea cairica* (L.). Though children would occasionally eat the seeds without harm, greater amounts are collected for ritual purpose and crushed in stone mortars in order to improve their effectiveness. The powder is also used for “black magic” by so-called “*morn wua*” (literally “poison men”) (14).

Some herbal drugs of traditional importance, which only occur in some isolated highland areas, have been identified as formerly unknown species of the *Rubiaceae* family bearing nr.249 and nr.171 of my ethnobotanical collection. Accordingly they became officially registered as *Uncaria Dosedlae* Gilli and *Psychotria hageniana* Gilli (15). Since both contain considerable amounts of the psychoactive alkaloid mitragyne their leaves are utilised for their tranquillizing effects for medical as well as ritual purposes. These leaves were important items of intertribal trade systems (16). Another herbal drug used for similar effects but of general availability in most areas is *Hypericum kunaianum* Gilli (nr.76) (17).

Leaves and bark of other shrubs or trees are also deliberately burnt for the sake of producing effective smoke. Of particular use in this respect was *Galbulimima Belgraviana* (E.v.M.) Gilli (nr. 346), containing hallucinogenic piperidine derivatives, reputed to cause states of “travelling through the skies”. For lesser narcotic effects the smoke of *Fragraea ceilanica* Thunb. subsp. *Ternatana* (Miq.) Gilli (nr.351), of

Macaranga hageniana Gilli (nr. 27), and sometimes also of *Freycinetia hageniana* Gilli (nr.259) may be used. As a counter to head aches caused by these drugs *Evodia hageniana* Gilli (nr.13 A) is regarded a useful remedy (18).

For their aphrodisiac effects some kinds of *Urticaceae* are applied onto the skin which could be identified as *Pilea mediophylla* Gilli (nr.266), *Pilea alta* Gilli (nr.188) and *Elatostema frutescens* (Bl.) Hassk. var. *parvifolia* Gilli (nr.334). For stimulating erection *Pygeum hagenianum* Gilli (nr.129 B) and as an abortive seeds of *Solanum papuanum* Dosedlae (nr.422) and *Begonia Dosedlae* Gilli (nr.139) are in common use. In occasional cases of bleeding *Selaginella Dosedlae* Gilli sp.nov. (nr.228) or *Drymoglossum crassinerve* Gilli sp. nov. (nr.211 B) are applied for their reputed antibiotic effects (19).

Drug Effects and Mythological Plant and Fungi Lore

A great portion of mythological lore recorded from the tribes inhabiting the Wahgi region deals with traditional beliefs concerning the floral environment. Thus a number of tales explain the various names of plants, their origins and particularities. Such stories apply primarily to plants used in a medical or ritual context. Some common distinct narrative features apparently reflect the hallucinogenic properties of mushrooms since stories about encounters with the spiritual world usually start with a stereotypical introduction about humans collecting mushrooms when they suddenly come face-to-face with a demon, an ogre or another sinister creature referred to by the term “Masalai” for bush spirits, which, deriving from coastal regions, has greatly replaced former vernacular terms.

Another type of narration, dealing with the feature of travelling through the skies, is also likely a depiction of drug experiences caused by certain plants. The same applies to a number of traditional stories dealing with encounters with the spiritual world by either entering a cave or subterranean tunnels or via pools, lakes or rivers. Other versions of this narrative feature deal with humans penetrating into a rock or becoming turned into stones, or describe humans being devoured or torn into pieces by monsters. These features also frequently figure in dreams as well as visions evoked by certain traditional drugs. The same applies to vivid descriptions of various types of traditional spirits covering a wide range of distinct conceptual patterns (20).

Traditional Trance Techniques

Some elements of tribal rituals consist of distinct mechanical techniques that lead to states of altered consciousness which are part of the initiation complex. During some of the various stages of Ndemboka initiation, significantly those taking place in a cave, candidates had to undergo long periods of fasting and deprivation from daylight, they were also painfully beaten by the stinging branches of *Urticaceae* thus evoking vivid dreams of encountering the spiritual world (21). In the case of the Enga, inhabiting the regions North of the Wahgi Basin, initiation candidates also underwent a period within a cave where they additionally had to endure a permanent jet of cold water hitting their eyes thus causing lasting visual irritations which were explained as getting their eyes washed in order to enable them to gain insights into spiritual realms (22). Walking across glowing embers (as a distinct part of a spirit cult in the Kewa region south of the Wahgi headwaters), is carried out in a state of trance which local informants explained as resulting from a kind of hypnosis caused by the rhythm of drums. The use of any drugs in this context is denied (23).

Cultural Change Concerning Drug Consumption

Over the course of cultural change following primary European contact young people gradually became intent on making use of traditional drugs without their former ritual context for fun and excitement. They started extracting the milky sap of the fish poison shrub for soaking tobacco with. Apparently smoking cigarettes of that sort would result in dreadful encounters with, and attacks from, evil spirits after which victims remained in a state of stupefaction for several hours with a long lasting inclination to paranoia. Similar but even worse effects were experienced with consumption of *Boletus manicus* when accompanied with alcohol. This frequently resulted in severe cases of running amuck possibly due to these mushrooms containing amounts of the amino acid coprine which interacts negatively when consumed with alcohol. This extreme behaviour is commonly explained by some state of possession by a Masalai bush spirit who is forcefully "pulling" his victims. Since the introduction of *Datura sp.* cases of severe intoxication were frequent when local villagers became attracted by the soft leaves of that plant and used them for wrapping meat in order to cook in hot ashes, which according to local informants occasionally resulted in long lasting insanity.

A topic of contemporary concern is the apparently growing addiction of a younger generation of New Guineans towards all sorts of drugs of non-indigenous origin which have overwhelmed them in recent years. In the course of the introduction of beer and all sorts of alcohol there were various attempts at creating some kind of locally produced substitutes ranging from burying bananas to ferment them to making wine out of vernacular raspberries, identified as *Rubus rosaeifolius Dosedlae Gilli* (nr.45 A) (24), and primitive ways of distilling a mixture of sweet potatoes, sugar cane and bananas extremely rich in harmful methyl and in some cases causing blindness or even casualties. Similarly negative consequences resulted from the rather careless introduction of cannabis and poppies by Australian tourists as well as from the intended introduction of coca, heroine and numerous synthetic drugs by other criminals after gaining national independence in 1975 which until recently have been responsible for innumerable casualties and the growing destruction of traditional social values.

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Footnotes

- 1) GITLOW 1947
- 2) DOSEDLA 1974
- 3) DOSEDLA 1974
- 4) STRAUSS-TISCHNER
- 5) HEIM & WASSON 1964
- 6) REAY 1959

- 7) REAY 1959
- 8) DOSEDLA 1977
- 9) MEGGITT 1964
- 10) ALLEN 1967
- 11) DOSEDLA 1974
- 12) DOSEDLA 1984
- 13) VICEDOM – TISCHNER 1943
- 14) GILLI 1978
- 15) GILLI 1978
- 16) DOSEDLA 1987
- 17) GILLI 1978
- 18) GILLI 1978
- 19) GILLI 1978
- 20) DOSEDLA 2012
- 21) DOSEDLA 1978
- 22) BOWERS 1965
- 23) DOSEDLA 1981
- 24) GILLI 197



Henry Dosedla conducted fieldwork as an archaeologist and social anthropologist during the early seventies among the last societies representing Neolithic standards in Melanesia dealing with their environment management, mythological folk biology, medical traditions and religious concepts including divination systems Dosedla was also engaged in several development programs and documented gradual stages of cultural change and related social effects. After retirement from the Prehistory Department of the German Museum of Agriculture at Hohenheim University/Stuttgart his further research and publications have focussed on parallels between recent archaic societies and conditions in prehistoric Europe.

Crop Circles as Psychoid Manifestation: Borrowing Jung's Analysis of UFOs to Approach the Phenomenon of the Crop Circle

William Rowlandson

All these phenomena; UFOs, Crop circles, even the cattle mutilation in the states, are all artifice in one form or another. All this stuff, these are fluctuations in the syntactical machinery of reality. The main thing to understand is that we are imprisoned in some kind of work of art. (Terence McKenna)²

Jung suggested that he would risk his reputation as an empiricist by investigating the phenomenon of UFOs. In his 1958 publication *Flying Saucers*,³ Jung begged the reader to indulge him his foray into this controversial phenomenon: 'But I must take this risk, even if it means putting my hard-won reputation for truthfulness, reliability, and capacity for scientific judgment in jeopardy'. Indeed, he laments to his reader 'that I do not do this with a light heart' (312). Is this the case for critically evaluating the phenomenon of crop formations? Certainly not. A sociologist or art historian would think nothing of evaluating the graffiti of Banksy, whilst the spectacular artwork of the crop formations is considered off-limits. Would the formations be considered fertile ground for investigation if it were revealed that they were, themselves, original Banksys?

At first glance, I could save myself the (enjoyable) labour of writing this article by simply reproducing Jung's text replacing 'Ufo' for 'crop formation.' However, we must observe one fundamental distinction. We are not presented with the same initial question that Jung identifies: 'are they real or are they mere fantasy products?' (309). This is because crop formations *are* real. Of that there is no dispute. Whilst one may concur with Jung in the simple conclusion: '*something is seen, but one doesn't know what*' (312 original italics), it is important to note that with the UFO, something is seen by *someone*, whilst for the crop formations, something is or can be seen by *anyone*. Just drive down the A303 in August. Regardless of supposition of authorship, crop formations are not rumours or hearsay. This is a profoundly important basis, as whilst Jung begins his investigation with an analysis of 'collective visions', such as those of 'the troops at Mons in the First World War, the faithful

followers of the pope at Fatima, Portugal, etc.' (314), these visions are seen only by those present, who share the particular vicissitudes of their historical moment. Indeed he qualifies this by citing cases 'where one or more persons see something that physically is not there' (314). Crop formations, however, are not visions. One can walk in them. They exist empirically. Our question, therefore, would naturally seem to be a different one: not 'are they real or fantasy,' but 'are they all made by man?' This question, I would hope, would only seem peculiar to those who have never seen a crop formation close up, those who have never seen the profusion of images spanning nearly three decades,⁴ those who are unaware of the heated and inconclusive debate between researchers who claim non-human agency and crop circle makers who claim authorship, or those who resolutely fail to appreciate any of the many unknowns concerning the phenomenon and who, like the good Dr. Dryden cited by Jung,⁵ are firm in the knowledge that speculation otherwise constitutes 'an offence to human dignity.'

This article is the product of a group discussion of the Centre for the Study of Myth at the University of Kent whose objective was to imagine how Jung would have appraised the modern phenomenon of crop formations. How would he approach this most fundamental of differences in that the UFO is rumour – albeit widespread and persistent – whilst the crop formation is apparent and physically verifiable? How would he assess their myriad designs, their location, their relationship to the individual and the collective, the peculiar debate between those who claim non-human agency and those who do not, the reports of paraphenomena from both sides of the debate, and their ultimately mysterious nature? Despite the dissimilarities between UFOs and crop formations at a phenomenological level, I feel nevertheless that one can fruitfully uncover much of the phenomenon that is the crop formation by employing the method and the language of depth psychology in the fashion that Jung investigates the UFO: the archetype, the symbolic attitude, the mandala, psychoid manifestation, synchronicity, the

interrelation of *physis* and *psyche*, modernity's loss of the sacred, and the numinosity of the symbol.

What are they? The anatomy of a mystery

The use of the word 'circle' can be misleading, as whilst most of the patterns that appear in crop observe concentric designs, there are many other geometric forms, such as triangles, squares, planes, pentagrams, etc. There are depictions in 3D, such as cubes, rhomboids, spherical knots, pyramids polyhedra and overlapping planes. There are digital coded texts, humanoid faces, animal designs such as the serpent and the butterfly, glyphs, fractal models, forms of the golden ratio, crosses, cones, stars, waves, and spirals. Most people in Britain are familiar with the phenomenon, as stories have occasionally reached headline news; patterns have been reproduced in artwork and have been employed and parodied in advertising. They predominantly appear in wheat, but formations regularly appear in oil seed rape, barley, maize (seldom), and grass. They mostly appear in the UK, and mostly in Wiltshire.

There is a debate that has spanned over two decades between researchers – such as Busty Taylor, Colin Andrews, Pat Delgado, Roy Dutton, David Caytons, Robert Hulses, Lucy Pringle, and Peter Sørensen; and 'makers' – such as Jon Lundberg, Rod Dickinson, Rob Irving, Wil Russell, and Matthew Williams.⁶ The essential argument pits those who believe in the non-human agency behind (some of) the circles against those who maintain that they are man-made. However, this is a poor generalisation; neither side is a united camp and the debates are complex. I am keen not to be drawn into this debate owing to the long history of mudslinging across the divide; what is important, however, is that the debate does not lead to the expected conclusion that if they are made by man, then there is no mystery. On the contrary, the relationship between circle makers and mystery runs very deep. This needs elaboration.

Grant Wakefield's 1998 documentary film *Croppies* presents this oppositional discussion between researchers and makers. It reveals, however, that many researchers are under no illusion that many – if not the vast majority – of circles are man-made, and that many makers: a) also consider non-human agency behind some circles, b) suggest that there may be some deeper level of consciousness motivating their circle-making activities, c) report many instances of paraphenomena in connection with the circles. This perspective is best summed up by researcher-cum-maker Peter Sørensen:

Some people ask me, 'If you believe the circles are made by humans, why do you still come here and video them?' Well, two reasons: Surprisingly *there is still a lot of mystery* – strange lights in the fields at night, telepathy in the creation of the designs, circle visitors affected profoundly mentally and physically, and much more. Just because humans are flattening the crop doesn't mean that there's no magic involved! In fact, in a way this is just as wonderful – I mean, *WE are the ETs!* But deeper than that, I'm convinced that some **esoteric Muse** is whispering in the ears of many of the artists, guiding their work at night. Throughout history many great artists, poets and even military generals credit the Muse for their inspiration. I think She is an Intelligence that that has been looking out for humanity over the millennia, giving us gentle nudges to keep us on the path towards our Destiny. That's why the designs are so powerful that many millions of people have had their lives uplifted by these 'spiritual machines.' They function similarly to Tibetan mandalas – which are also made by humans under the guidance of something higher, and transport the viewer to spiritual realms. Whether on oriental silk or in a field of wheat, simply gazing at mandalas changes you for the better.⁷

Sørensen's language here is striking for its kinship with Jung's investigations into the psychoid dimension of UFOs and other paraphenomena. He also is one of the few researchers to specify the *mandala*, which we will investigate later. The full unedited interviews of Wakefield's documentary were collected and shown as a 3-hour film by Matthew Williams called *Circlemakers*. A remarkable aspect of these talking heads is that not one of the circle makers feels that there is not something mysterious about the circles. Doug Bower, for example, one of the pioneer circle-maker pair Doug and Dave, points at a deeper stratum of consciousness that may have motivated him and continues to motivate other circle makers:

Well this is a little bit of a mystery attached. Although we've had a lot of fun making the circles over the years, when we started reading reports that some of our designs and patterns that we were creating had a connection with the Hopi Indians in America, Mongolia,

Aborigine tribes, cave paintings, etc. And what mystifies me most of all is – where is the connection of this? Why is it that I could sit down and in half an hour create a pattern on a piece of paper? It was just as if my hand was being forced round with the pen to do this pattern. I don't know where it came from. But then you read afterwards in the newspapers and magazines that it seems that there's a connection between what I drew that evening and what we were going to create in the fields with the Hopi Indians and Aborigine people; and it seems to me that it could be a connection between languages. That mystifies me very much, because it makes me feel as if that there is something unknown to us that we've no knowledge of at all.⁸

The interviewee named Danny, meanwhile, pursues a remarkable angle into the phenomenon. To begin with he describes how his life was at a low ebb and he decided on a whim to sell up and camp out in the Avebury landscape. The transformative aspect of this bold move is immediately apparent, regardless of the association or not with crop circles. He soon becomes a circle maker. His description of his activities is ecstatic; he felt great interconnection between people and reality, he felt surrounded by magic, he observed the synchronous relationship between dreams, drawings and doodlings and the appearance of crop formations, he witnessed mysterious balls of light and felt strange energy forces. 'It all gave the increasing idea that all gaps and divides were illusory. That everybody and everything was connected in some way or shape. You know?' He appears fully conversant with the deeper spiritual levels involved in being a crop circle maker:

I think the real motivation to go to so much effort is the idea of being able to do something for somebody you don't know, that you've never met, and you're maybe never even likely to meet – something that hopefully will be positive in their life, will help them, maybe heal them, take them onto a new level, help them meditate, just give them a calm moment away from everything; just to do something positive, completely selflessly for someone else, is just the most wonderful gift in the world. [...] I don't see it as a joke and I don't see it as shamming people. It's a wonderful, beautiful, special, magical, land, place and experience to

interact with these things. It's not a joke, it's bigger than a joke. This is something quite divine, something special, subtle and magical. You know? It's not a joke. [...] It's like painting a picture and then saying that the image is false. No image is false.

Danny, like the more prosaic Bower, even suggests that he and the other makers are compelled by a transcendental consciousness:

I think circle makers could be unconscious channellers. I can only really speak for myself, in that I've had quite a few experiences where we diverted from the planned course and it seems to have been relevant at a later date. [...] When we weren't necessarily going with our plan special things seemed to happen that were relevant later. Or you might do a drawing and then someone else will do that design before you've even had a chance to do it. So I certainly think there's a lot of telepathy or even channelling, or there may be some interaction at some level with this other consciousness. There does seem to be this other consciousness interacting with the circle makers and the believers at some level. It seems to kind of have a giggle with people, you know, have a little laugh with people, the coincidences are too often and too prevalent for it to be telepathy, 'cos I don't believe I'm telepathic, but things happen, you know, that shouldn't happen, but they do.

He also talks of doing invocations before creating the circles, asking for protection and guidance. And so it continues; all the interviewees bar none report having witnessed dancing balls of light; all report synchronous appearances of circles that they had imagined or drawn but not made in the field. Like Danny, Rod Dickinson, for example, reports experiencing paranormal phenomena whilst creating or visiting crop circles, experiences that for him heighten the art. He suggests that it is precisely the magical dimension to the circles that draws researchers and makers alike. 'Mr. G' discusses making circles from the early 1990s, and then adds:

We felt at the time that quite possibly something else was involved, and what that something else is we don't really know, but we're saying that there seems to be some kind

of intelligent response to what we're doing, and some intelligent interaction. And that's what has really interested us. [...] Even the man-made formations, they seem to carry something with them sometimes, something spiritual, I think. [...] We know we're interacting with something. We don't know how much we're being used or manipulated by this something. Whether this something is entirely benign I don't know.

Wil Russell opines that 'You don't know what role you play in the phenomenon,' and that 'I consider myself an architect of temporary sacred sites.' Paul Randles, another circle maker, demonstrates a degree of spiritual relationship with the crop circles akin to the most ardent believer. He feels that a) paraphenomena occur in their score around the formations, b) not all are made by man, c) man and this Other are interacting in the creation of the crop circles.

It must be stated, of course, that all the interviewees quoted above are sharply criticised by many of the researchers as being hoaxers, debunkers, cynics and deceivers. And yet it is striking how open they all are for the possibility of magic and paranormal. In this respect they share far more with the researchers than many of the researchers would care to acknowledge. Lucy Pringle, for example, has observed psychological and physiological effects upon visitors to crop formations, from anxiety and foreboding coupled with quickening pulse or severe lethargy, to euphoria and excitement, coupled with a sense of peace, a sense of optimism and a lighter step. She even – rather alarmingly – warns pregnant women or those wishing to be pregnant not to enter a crop formation. Nancy Talbott, co-founder of the BLT Research Team, documents some curious physical reactions:

A wide range of anecdotal reports exists of the effects on people. [...] It seems clear that many people experience unusual physical effects in some crop formations -- and, again, most often when the crop circles are relatively new. These effects range from the unpleasant ("splitting" headaches, dizziness, disorientation, heart palpitations, a sense of "dread") to the euphoric (a strong sense of "peace," a feeling of joy, a sense of "oneness," and a feeling of love) and, in the 1996 "Julia Set" formation near Stonehenge, to the really bizarre. After visiting the "Julia Set," a lovely 915 ft. long

fractal spiral made up of 149 circles of varying diameters, more than a dozen women reported menstrual abnormalities, the most unusual of which was the reoccurrence in several post-menopausal women of their previous normal menstrual cycles.⁹

Talbott's webpage, in fact, is full of further details about, for example, plant abnormalities (such as wilted stems), long-term growth effects of the crop, light phenomena, equipment failure, and animal and human reactions. Many others have reported equipment failure, from erased film rolls to faulty computers and measuring devices. Others have reported abnormal weather conditions, strange dancing lights such as those of ufology, and even sinister military aircraft haunting a particular valley.

Some researchers, also, wittingly or unwittingly, evoke a further level of mystery integrally associated with the world of ufology: the government conspiracy. I am keen not to be drawn into this murky debate, which Patrick Harpur recognises as essentially 'daimonic,' with its sinister Men in Black, intelligence spooks, cover-ups and psy-ops. Richard D. Hall's alarmist documentary film, *Crop Circles: The Hidden Truth*¹⁰ digs into the background and identity of crop circle maker Jon Lundberg and asserts that the MI5 have been behind the circle makers, their activities and their website, as part of a secret operation of disinformation. Colin Andrews, also, published in 2009 *Government Circles* a book that digs deeper into this shadowy world of conspiracy and intelligence agencies. Without exploring further, it is important to note that such conspiracy theories add deeper layers of mystery and intrigue to the already mysterious and intriguing world of the crop formations.

Symbiosis and paradox

Rob Irving, a circle maker who has angered many researchers with his outspoken critique of their credulity, conversely emphasises the paranormal and magical aspect of the formations, describing, along with other makers, the balls of light, and noting that there is something essentially mysterious about the fact that humans are making them.

If you assume for a moment that they're all manmade – all of them – the fact that people are experiencing things and being healed and feeling good. That to me is very, very interesting, and needs investigation. Science

doesn't look at that. So even at its basest level, if you stripped the phenomenon down to nothing, to complete non-ness, no paranormal reasons, the fact that people are interacting with them in the way that they do is, I think, very interesting. [...] And that as it stands is sufficiently paranormal.

Irving, like other circle makers, is thus fully aware of the need both researchers and makers have for each other. Both are drawn into the same mercurial world of the circles, perfectly encapsulated by Wakefield's conclusion to his documentary: 'Year after year believers and circle makers continue to dance around each other in a phenomenon that's become so much more than the sum of its parts.'¹¹ Matthew Williams describes how he started making circles in order to test the researchers, but promptly started to notice the sheer oddity of the phenomena. He describes making a circle that was later visited by researchers unaware that it was man-made. Williams comments that these folk underwent an experience of healing that seemed to him utterly genuine. His initial 'testing' of the research was thus problematized.

Firstly you have to understand that circles *are* having an effect and that people *are* experiencing strange things [...] once you realise that crop circles are real, no matter whether I make them or a UFO makes them or maybe an alien makes them – they all attract paranormal phenomena [...] it's a very large magical symbol, like a talisman. It has a power and an energy that goes beyond the simple form and shape.

Williams' comments here are particularly important, as, in tune with all the other interviewees, he refutes the title of 'hoaxer' with which the circle makers are branded, emphasising that the researchers and makers are both responding to the same magic, and that a circle is a circle regardless of its authorship. Thus they are all real.

Dickinson, similarly, stresses that the researchers ought to pay respect to the makers as the two are locked in a strange symbiosis. 'What people believe is fundamental to the practice of making circles. But not in the sense of mocking the belief. In fact, you're actually interacting and engaging with the belief. There is a totally symbiotic relationship with the circle makers and the people that research them.' Dickinson comments on the strange situation

whereby researchers are so keen to believe in non-human agency that they disregard the circles that they know to be man-made, however impressive they may be. This leads to the peculiar paradox whereby the greater the art form the less visible the artists – indeed the better the circle the less possible that a (human) artist can exist. 'There is a curious paradox where circles researchers love the creations that we artists make but on the other hand hate the idea that they are made by artists and not by some form of paranormal entity. As a consequence they're stuck somewhere in between those two things'. Lundberg also acknowledges this symbiosis.

Part of the reason you go to so much trouble is to take to something which is seemingly beyond human endeavour. So that people go out to the fields, or they see it in the press, and they say, 'my god this is amazing, it could not be done by people. But the motivation of the circle makers is to push it as far as possible so that people think that it can't be made by people. [...] The whole power of our work lies in the fact that they are authorless. As soon as you claim a formation, you kill it.

What other art form in history displays this astonishing paradox whereby the art is most active when it least resembles art and most evokes the supernatural? Irving, again, points to the heart of this bizarre artistic phenomenon.

People have got completely the wrong idea of art, I think. They view it in terms of objects, but it should be viewed in terms of experience. If you look at a painting it's not the painting that needs to be valued, it's the experience you get from it, which is the art, the value in the meaning. [...] And there's nothing greater than a great crop formation that has a symbolism. [...] It's going to be like this temporary sacred site. And you're going to get more buzz than if you visit Canterbury Cathedral. Because you understand that people built that, but mystery is important.

But why have people 'got completely the wrong idea of art' in relation to the crop formations? Here, I feel that despite acknowledging paranormal aspects of the phenomenon, neither Lundberg, Irving nor Dickinson offer plausible explanations for the man-made provenance of some of the more spectacular

formations; nor do they satisfactorily discuss the sheer *improbability* that some are feasible. Whilst many formations have been claimed by artists as their creations, many have not. This is not necessarily simple anonymity, though, as there are many patterns that push the bounds of human capacity to such an alarming degree that they slip off the scale and into the unknown. It seems improbable that these most challenging circles are made *in situ*, by individuals or teams with ropes, planks and marker posts. There are many reasons for this assertion: they appear for the most part overnight, sometimes near well-inhabited locations, often beside major roads such as the M4, M5, A4 (especially past Avebury), A30, A303, A360 (Stonehenge-Devizes), A361 (Devizes-Avebury), A345 (Pewsey), and along the Kennet & Avon Canal. Some are so vast that the artists would require many hours, which, during the short night hours of June, would bring their incomplete formation fully into the dawn. There are reports of fields in which a formation appears whilst the observer is absent for only an hour or so. Researchers Busty Taylor, Colin Andrews, Roy Dutton, David Caytons, Robert Hulses and others have scrutinised the lay of the crop in certain formations. Of some, they are convinced that the intricate weaving, the swirling lay, the undamaged stalks, the isolated circles away from the tram-lines, lead to the conclusion that these formations cannot be made by people with planks. They also analyse formations which demonstrate no signs of human activity in their formation, such as trampling, post marks, sweep-marks of the rope, discarded detritus, miscalculations, signs of haste, etc. Following the particularly huge and elaborate 409-circle formation in wheat at Milk Hill on the Wansdyke, Wiltshire on 12th August 2001, often known as the 'Jaw Dropper',¹² Lucy Pringle received a message from 'a team of hoaxers called the Circle Makers', which one would assume to be the same group of the eponymous website, in particular Irving and Lundberg:

"If this formation were man-made, allowing for time to get into and out of the field under cover of darkness, the construction time left should be around four hours. Given that there are over 400 circles, some of which span approximately 70 feet in diameter, that would mean that one of those circles would need to be created every 30 seconds – and that's not even allowing any time for the surveying, purely flattening. This formation pushes the

envelope and that's a MASSIVE understatement." (Pringle 2004: 8)

The reports of crop circle makers, therefore, appear insufficient to dispel the mystery of the provenance of many of the circles. Now, of course, and referring back to the symbiotic relationship between makers and researchers, all the interviewees quoted above, especially Irving and Lundberg, may be bluffing in order to maintain the air of numinosity, claiming paranormal experiences and feeding Pringle's credulity by disclaiming the Milk Hill formation. This is possible, given their trickster qualities inherent in being circle makers, yet were the bluffing revealed, then it would only remove *their* experiences of paraphenomena, not those of the researchers. Furthermore, were they to claim authorship of the Milk Hill formation, there would be no *a priori* necessity to believe them, especially if the researcher maintains that the formation is, indeed, beyond human capability. They could claim authorship of Stonehenge. It would not mean that they built it. Yes, many circle maker teams have been filmed creating highly complex and ambitious formations, even with the striking lattice-work lay of crop in the flattened areas. Nevertheless, even to the most hardened sceptic, there remain formations that *do* defy plausible explanation.

Thus our present position constitutes an absence of knowledge, a mystery. If they are all man-made, they are still mysterious as they appear at the limits of human capability. If some are not man-made, then who or what is behind them? Jung examines how absence of knowledge of the UFO leads to a vast range of speculation: 'All these reports have naturally resulted in a clamorous demand for explanation' (321). Jung lists some of the many options that 'human fantasy' evoked: secret Soviet weapons, Martians or Venusians concerned about the recent nuclear activity on Earth, other galactic civilizations seeking to colonise a new habitat after their own is devastated, etc. Similar conjectures are offered to explain the authors of the crop formations. From this position, where scientific investigation is yet to determine the causal nature of the phenomenon, and metaphysical speculation is commonly ridiculed by the naysayers, what avenue of enquiry could be deemed fruitful? Here, I believe, Jung has blazed the trail with his investigation into the UFOs. 'As a psychologist, I am not qualified to contribute anything useful to the question of the physical reality of Ufos. I can concern myself only with their

undoubted psychic aspect' (313). Specifically choosing to avoid speculations about the ontological dimension, Jung concentrates on the psychic effect, and uncovers much about the relationship between the UFO, the witness, and the readers of the witness reports.

We are, therefore, in the mercurial world of the daimonic as examined by Patrick Harpur (1994), where the mysterious and the numinous can be at once blissful and dreadful, welcoming and terrifying, enlightening and deceptive, helpful and mischievous... It is also significant to analyse how the multiple layers of the phenomenon and the many practical and theoretical approaches to it evoke the language of Jung. We can see how Sørensen and the circle makers interviewed by Wakefield conjure a sense of *prima mobile* that motivates the activities of researcher and maker alike. As we shall now see, Jung, in his investigations of the UFO, appraises the *psychic cause* out of which the visions arise, acknowledging the force of the collective unconscious in motivating people towards particular unknown goals. Most of the interviewees also describe instances of synchronicity or 'strange coincidences'. Again, in analysing the enigmatic matters of the crop circles, Jung's inquiry into the UFO phenomenon provides many helpful avenues. In particular, we must keep in abeyance the question of artist and, as Irving suggests, pay closer attention to the art itself.

Projections and Mandalas

Jung works from Aimé Michel's premise that 'Ufos are mostly seen by people who do not believe in them or who regard the whole problem with indifference' (320 #4). From this standpoint he argues that the UFOs appear precisely to those 'who would never have thought that a religious problem could be a serious matter' who are consequently now 'beginning to ask themselves fundamental questions' (320). This is to say that the UFOs are preaching to the *unconverted*, whose scepticism grants them reliability. 'Eye-witnesses of unimpeachable honesty announce the "signs in the heavens" which they have seen "with their own eyes," and the marvellous things they have experienced which pass human understanding' (321). This conversely builds a bridge to the crop formations, aligning the phenomena rather than differentiating them. Jung is suggesting that the greater the scepticism, the more real the phenomenon. Here I am reminded of Jez and Midnyte, two circle makers interviewed on Matthew Williams' film. Both are self-confessed

sceptics whose initial circle designs were accomplished not in order to prove that all circles are human-made, but that all circles *could* be human made.¹³ They both soon are transformed by anomalous and 'magical' experiences.

Jung clarifies his assertion later in the work during the interpretation of UFO dreams: 'A psychic content can only appear as a projection when its connection with the ego personality is not recognized. For this reason the wish hypothesis must be discarded' (341). Jung therefore suggests that the UFO is an eruption of the sacred upon the psyche of those who have suppressed the capacity for the sacred. The UFOs can, in this sense, be deemed on one level dream symbols, on another, compensation projections.

Is this argument helpful for the crop formations? Can crop formations be a 'psychological projection' (318)? Firstly, Jung identifies the socio-historical context in which the vision of the UFO occurs. 'But if it is a case of psychological *projection*,' Jung argues, 'there must be a *psychic cause* for it. One can hardly suppose that anything of such worldwide incidence as the Ufo legend is purely fortuitous and of no importance whatsoever' (319). Jung outlines the collective '*emotional tension*' commensurate with post-war industrial society, the Cold War and the threat of nuclear warfare. He also outlines individual 'psychic dissociation' which leads to 'abnormal convictions, visions, illusions, etc. [...] when there is a split between the conscious attitude and the unconscious contents opposed to it' (319). This is familiar territory for any reader of Jung – something he had addressed over twenty years previously in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933). His analysis points at a collective psyche that is imbalanced, in which key elements are suppressed which resurface as neurotic or psychotic behaviour, as mass hysteria, or, in the case of UFOs, as multiple visions.¹⁴ 'Projections have what we might call different ranges, according to whether they stem from merely personal conditions or from deeper collective ones' (320). This is a promising lead for us and would chime with the crop formations were they illusions; but of course, Jung outlines how these repressions manifest themselves in *human behaviour*, such as 'religious, philosophical, political and social conflicts' (320) and in visions; not in manifest physical phenomena. Where projection equates to an unwitting distortion of perception, a vision of 'something that physically is not there' (314), then it cannot serve as an adequate origin of the crop formation. However, as I examine later in this article, if we scrutinise Jung's theory of synchronicity, in

which psyche and matter interact, the concept of projection becomes more apposite.

From his evaluation of collective psychic imbalance, and thus having considered the context out of which the UFO arises, Jung assesses the form of the vision. Some are cigar-like; the majority are circular. Naturally for Jung this round form immediately is associated with the mandala. The mandala is of central importance for Jung, as 'in the products of the unconscious we discover mandala symbols, that is, circular and quaternary figures which express wholeness' (*MDR*: 324). Where a mandala may be dreamt, drawn, described and discussed, across time and lands, so, Jung argues, are they a symbol of the 'whole' Self. This evaluation of the UFO as mandala is of such importance for our present discussion as to warrant being cited in its near entirety:

The round bodies in particular are figures such as the unconscious produces in dreams, visions, etc. In this case they are to be regarded as *symbols* representing, in visual form, some thought that was not thought consciously, but is merely potentially present in the unconscious in invisible form and attains visibility only through the process of becoming conscious. The visible form, however, expresses the meaning of the unconscious content only approximately. In practice the meaning has to be completed by amplificatory interpretation. [...] If we apply them to the round object – whether it be a disk or a sphere – we at once get an analogy with the symbol of totality well known to all students of depth psychology, namely the *mandala* (Sanskrit for circle) This is not by any means a new invention, for it can be found in all epochs and in all places, always with the same meaning, and it reappears time and again, independently of tradition, in modern individuals as the “protective” or apotropaic circle, whether in the form of the pre-historic “sun wheel,” or the magic circle, or the alchemical microcosm, or a modern *symbol of order*, which organizes and embraces the psychic totality. As I have shown elsewhere, in the course of the centuries the mandala has developed into a definitely psychological totality symbol, as the history of alchemy proves.
[...]

In so far as the mandala encompasses, protects, and defends the psychic totality against outside influences and seeks to unite the inner opposites, it is at the same time a distinct *individuation symbol* and was known as such even to medieval alchemy. The soul was supposed to have the form of a sphere, on the analogy of Plato's world-soul, and we meet the same symbol in modern dreams. This symbol, by reason of its antiquity, leads us to the heavenly spheres, to Plato's “supra-celestial place” where the “Ideas” of all things are stored up. Hence there would be nothing against the naïve interpretation of Ufos as “souls.” Naturally they do not represent our modern conception of the psyche, but give an involuntary archetypal or mythological picture of an unconscious content, a *rotundum*, as the alchemists called it, that expresses the totality of the individual. I have defined this spontaneous image as a symbolical representation of the self, by which I mean not the ego but the totality composed of the conscious and the unconscious. (325-7)

No further explanation of Jung's mandala is needed here.¹⁵ Of importance, however, is the translocation of the mandala image from the UFO to the crop formation. Firstly, like Jung, we must appraise the socio-historical context out of which the crop formations have arisen. Jung, writing about UFOs over fifty years ago, runs through the evils that aggrieved society of his time which we are fully conversant with today: the peril of nuclear warfare, geopolitical tension, pollution, overpopulation, famine, to which today we would add viral epidemics, climate change, terrorism (in all its guises) and natural catastrophes. The root of these dangers, for Jung, is overpopulation, which will inevitably train people's eyes and minds on the heavens: ‘Congestion creates fear, which looks for help from extraterrestrial sources since it cannot be found on earth’ (323). There are numerous bridges spanning the half-century to the present. Fears and anxieties breed hope for redemption. This is the language that we are now immersed in, where we are daily fed news of environmental and ecological impoverishment, wars and famines, social tensions, disease, and natural disasters whose origins likely lie in the human impact upon the planet. This, one could argue, is a narrative that saturates our conscious and unconscious psyche, as it did, with variations, in Jung's day. And out of

this chaos, Jung would argue, emerges the need for order, manifest in the mandala, a symbol of wholeness, of the numinous, of salvation. 'The present world situation is calculated as never before to arouse expectations of a redeeming, supernatural event' (328). And eyes are still trained on the heavens, observable in the varied eschatological narratives circulating the blogosphere, from the failed Rapture in North Carolina of May 21st 2011, to the predicted era-shift of the winter solstice of 2012. Hope of redemption from the heavens has not waned.

Crop formations are more commonly known as crop circles. To browse the images in books, calendars or webpages, to gaze at a particular formation from a hilltop, or to wander through its labyrinthine lines, is to be immediately struck by the predominance of concentric patterns with which they are formed. They, like Jung's UFOs, are mandalas, appearing in profusion at the final decade of the old millennium and the beginning of the new – a period of social and environmental upheaval and its attendant psychic disorder. They also fall into the precessional equinoctial shift and can thus be seen alongside UFOs as 'manifestations of psychic changes which always appear at the end of one Platonic month and at the beginning of another' (311). In this respect, the contemplation of the crop formation, the interpretation of the possible meaning and the evaluation of the geometric and aesthetic design, all constitute the contemplation of the mandala, the search for wholeness. Jung explains how the mandala is meaningful in modernity:

The mandala is an archetypal image whose occurrence is attested throughout the ages. It signifies the wholeness of the self. This circular image represents the wholeness of the psychic ground or, to put it in mythic terms, the divinity incarnate in man. In contrast to Boehme's mandala, the modern ones strive for unity; they represent a compensation of the psychic cleavage, or an anticipation that the cleavage will be surmounted. Since this process takes place in the collective unconscious, it manifests itself everywhere. The worldwide stories of the UFOs are evidence of that; they are the symptom of a universally present psychic disposition. (*MDR*: 334-5)

Here we can forge some close links between the social context in which the formations appear and the psychic state of the observers: the vision of wholeness

that our fragmented society and religions fail to offer. This is further qualified with a reflexion on the meticulous and complex geometry that are employed in the formations' construction. Jung observes that the mandala is not only concentric, but generally reproduces mathematical order. 'Psychologically, the rotundum or mandala is a symbol of the self. The self is the archetype of order par excellence. The structure of the mandala is arithmetical, for "whole" numbers are likewise archetypes of order' (424).

The arithmetical dimension of the mandala is strikingly visible. Whilst there is much to be speculated here on the nature of authorship of the formations, let us keep the focus on the mandala image; and again I urge readers to take the time to contemplate the images of crop formations available online, concentrating especially on the spectacular formations between around 1998 and 2003. The crop formations, with the exception perhaps of the uncanny Chilbolton Radio Telescope formations of 14th August 2001 are indisputably awe-inspiring examples of the mandala aesthetic, of a grandeur only seen elsewhere in religious-inspired art and architecture, stone circles, or in the mysterious Nazca Lines in Peru. As Jung suggests, the mandala is many-levelled: it speaks *from* the unconscious and yet it also speaks *to* the unconscious. We can draw a mandala, whose origin lies in our unconscious, and yet we also contemplate the mandala, and thus find solace in its archetypal and numinous quality.

They are impressive manifestations of totality whose simple, round form portrays the archetype of the self, which we know from experience plays the chief role in uniting apparently irreconcilable opposites and is therefore best suited to compensate the split-mindedness of our age. It has a particularly important role to play among the other archetypes in that it is primarily the regulator and orderer of chaotic states, giving the personality the greatest possible unity and wholeness. (326-7)

It is in this sense that the crop formations – as an aesthetic creation and thus keeping in abeyance speculation of the identity of the artist – are archetypal symbols of transformation. And yet there is a deeper significance to the geometric power of the crop circle mandala, and that is the conjunction between the circle and the square, another archetypal motif of the unconscious.

Squares and circles

Jung, as we have seen, placed great emphasis upon the mandala as a symbol representing the archetype of the individuated self. The essential quality of the mandala, however, is not simply the concentric forms, but the relationship between circle and square. This an elementary motif in the architecture of dreams, visions and sacred art from east to west across the millennia. Jung first intuited this essential quaternary pattern imposed upon the circle in the conjunction of dream analysis and alchemical texts, studying his analysands' mandala drawings alongside reading, for example, the alchemist Michael Maier's description of an oroboric circle that "has related the four qualities to one another and drawn, as it were, an equilateral square, since contraries are bound together by contraries, and enemies by enemies, with the same everlasting bonds" (*Aion* CW 9 part 2: 264). The square-circle conjunction symbolises the interrelationship between order and chaos, the structure upon the structure-less, the solid ground of ego-consciousness within the sea of the unconscious, a position of security from which the self can work towards achieving wholeness. 'Mandala means "circle."' There are innumerable variants of the motif [...] but they are all based on the squaring of the circle' ('Concerning mandala symbolism' CW 9 part 1: 357).¹⁶

The power of symbol runs deeper yet. Whilst crop formations can be observed from nearby hillsides and from aircraft, many of them also invite visitors to walk through their enmeshing pathways. Some are thus labyrinths, mandalas whose twisting uni- or multicursal patterns lead circuitously towards the centre, symbols of the archetype of the self. 'The mandala' writes Schlamm, 'expresses the path to the centre of psychic totality, the goal of individuation, realized through the circumambulation of the self' (2009: 2).¹⁷ Thus one can walk the labyrinth of the crop formation, physically enacting the symbolic path towards the self, the journey of individuation. 'The mandala,' writes Jung, 'is the center. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the center, to individuation' (*MDR*: 196). Photographs and accounts are legion in the various archives of people walking these concentric paths, spiralling towards or away from the centre, meditating alone or in groups, holding hands and forming a ring either around the outside of a smaller formation or in the centre of a larger one. Likewise there are numerous accounts of

the energising and healing power of such circumambulation.

But what is the significance of this complex geometry and labyrinthine pattern within the mandala? How does the motif of the square and the circle affect us, the witnesses to the crop formations? I feel that we can fruitfully concur with Jung that the 'psychic cause' can be the suppression of the capacity for the sacred within society: 'Physical hunger needs a real mean and spiritual hunger needs a numinous content' (343). As such, what is the 'psychic effect'?

Numinosity of the Archetype

There are many approaches to an analysis of the psychic effect of the crop formations. Indifference, obviously, could be one. Yet many people are not indifferent to them, and examine the impact the formations have upon them. Firstly, there is the immediate and powerful visual impression; they are large beautiful figures in impressive megalithic landscape, and thus they embody the aesthetic splendour inherent in the hill forts, barrows, cairns, cursii, standing stones and stone circles whose habitat they share. Secondly their particular circular and geometric design is the mandala.¹⁸ Thirdly they are mysterious, for whilst many have been claimed by artists as their creations, many have not, and many seem to defy human capability. Lastly they appear to produce or accompany paranormal activities, from the ubiquitous dancing balls of light, to telepathic transmission of designs, precognitive dreams and ghostly apparitions. Four powerful features, therefore, inevitably convey a strong sense of the numinous, of the sacred. They are profoundly 'religious' sites, and, as Jung repeatedly suggests: '*in religious experience man comes face to face with a psychically overwhelming Other*'; and, in tune with all his work, the question is not of the ontological status of the Other, but of its psychic impact: 'As to the existence of this power we have only assertions to go on, but no physical or logical proofs' (345 original italics).

Thus we can bring the argument back to that of the historical context out of which Jung described the emergence of the UFO. To fail to be struck by the aesthetic mandala beauty of the crop formations; to fail to contemplate the possible labyrinthine pattern; to fail to appreciate the relationship between the circles and the landscape, the barrows, burial chambers and standing stones; to fail to be baffled by the mystery of the circle makers; to fail to consider the curious anomalous phenomena that accompany a visit to the circles – one would have to fail on every

one of these counts in order *not* to be struck by some sense of numinosity. Thus, I would argue that unlike the matter of UFOs, which the sceptic can disregard as hallucination or delusion, one can only fail to be struck by something numinous, something Other, with the crop formations by consciously, defiantly, stubbornly, ignoring the whole phenomenon.¹⁹ This willful position of defiance, Jung would argue, would demonstrate a psychic imbalance, a suppression of a fundamental aspect of the psyche. This decries a 'spiritual hunger [which] needs a numinous content' (343).

One of the drives of depth psychology is to orientate people towards psychic wholeness, to confront the repressed aspects of the psyche by recognising their compensatory manifestation in dreams and shadow desires, to reintegrate these dimensions before they engulf ego-consciousness. Jung examines the repression of the numinous:

Besides its formal mode of manifestation the archetype possesses a numinous quality, a feeling-value that is highly effective in practice. One can be unconscious of this value, since it can be repressed artificially; but a repression has neurotic consequences, *because the repressed affect still exists and simply makes an outlet for itself elsewhere, in some unsuitable place.* (340 emphasis added)

UFOs, Jung argued, appear to those most resistant to an experience of the transcendental. They thus constitute a manifestation of the numinous such as with dream symbols. Could we argue that the crop formation constitutes a similar mode of psychic representation, originating precisely from the collective suppression of the numinous? Clearly this hypothesis would only apply in proposing a drive arising in the collective unconscious and manifesting through the circle makers. But what of the circles that are assumed to be beyond man's capabilities? This question is only fruitless if we observe a rigid distinction between psyche and matter – a predominant scientific principle aside from at the quantum level and there only within certain parameters. However, once again Jung provides a fruitful avenue of enquiry here with his radical theory of synchronicity, wherein matter and psyche are observed to interconnect.

It is at this stage that a radical hypothesis can be presented: crop formations are the psychoid manifestation in matter of unconscious psychic

content, perhaps manifesting through the medium of these many artist circle makers. We need not concern ourselves unduly whether they are all man-made or not. Our suppression of the numinous, of what Jung called the symbolic or religious attitude, constitutes a collective neurosis, causing the crop formations to erupt as reified compensatory content upon the landscape. Crop formations are thus a dream manifest in matter.

Synchronicity

Symbols, I must point out, do not occur solely in dreams. They appear in all kinds of psychic manifestations. There are symbolic thoughts and feelings, symbolic acts and situations. It often seems that even inanimate objects cooperate with the unconscious in the arrangements of symbolic patterns. There are numerous well-authenticated stories of clocks stopping at the moment of their owner's death. (*Man & His Symbols*: 41)

Jung, always defending his position as psychologist, can sidestep the questions of the physicality of the UFOs just as he avoided metaphysical speculation about the ontological nature of, for example, Swedenborg's angels. He makes this abundantly clear: 'Psychologists who are conscious of their responsibilities should not be dissuaded from critically examining a mass phenomenon like the Ufos, since the apparent impossibility of the Ufo reports suggest to common sense that the most likely explanation lies in a psychic disturbance' (324-5). When, for example, the scarab beetle flew into Jung's office at the precise instant that a woman was recounting her dream of the scarab beetle, Jung understood the significance of the wholly improbable occurrence without losing himself in speculation of authorship. He did not question the causal pathways that led to that precise combination of events. On the contrary, he felt that laws of causality were not in operation, but *a-causality*. This principle, familiar even to those unfamiliar with Jung, is the principle that is operational beneath all meaningful coincidences, divinatory acts, clairvoyance, telekinesis, precognitive dreams, odd physical actions such as the stopped clocks cited above, and the well-known Pauli Effect.²⁰ Jung experienced many forms of synchronicity years before he had developed the explanatory theory, from the spontaneous shattering of the bread knife and the sudden splitting of the round walnut table at his

house in his youth (*MDR*: 105), to the banging bookcase in Freud's study that he explained to Freud as 'an example of a so-called catalytic exteriorisation phenomenon!' (*MDR*: 155). Whilst much can be discussed concerning synchronicity, what is important for our present study is that Jung, exhibiting the essential religiosity that motivated his entire life's work, considered matter and psyche as interconnected when influenced by archetypal energy; indeed psyche flows into matter and vice versa.

In his investigation of these synchronistic phenomena, Jung proposed that archetypes act as the mediating principle that accounts for the meaningfulness of the coincidental psychic and physical events. In the 1952 essay "Synchronicity: an Acausal Connecting Principle" Jung explains the presence of the archetype: 'By far the greatest number of spontaneous synchronistic phenomena that I have had occasion to observe and analyse can easily be shown to have a direct connection with an archetype' (*CW* 8: 481). In particular, motivated (but not *caused*) by the archetype, matter and spirit vibrate together: 'In archetypal conceptions and instinctual perceptions, spirit and matter confront one another on the psychic plane. Matter and spirit both appear in the psychic realm as distinctive qualities of conscious contents' (*CW* 8: 216). In this sense, the psychoid nature of archetypes is seen to extend beyond a neurophysiological basis into the general dynamical matrix of all matter and energy.

Since psyche and matter are contained in one and the same world, and moreover are in continuous contact with one another and ultimately rest on irrepresentable, transcendental factors, it is not only possible but fairly probable, even, that psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing. The synchronicity phenomena point, it seems to me, in this direction, for they show that the nonpsychic can behave like the psychic, and vice versa, without there being any causal connection between them. (*CW* 8: 215)

With this doorway opened, our analysis can now move to a tentative explanation of the crop formations. They are synchronicity at its most spectacular and dazzling: dream mandalas, stopped clocks, scarab beetles, fish and kingfishers on an epic scale. This is a tremendous cognitive leap unless we

view Jung's matter-spirit interrelationship as examined in his theory of synchronicity. However, we can take this hypothesis further. The argument has hitherto pointed at material manifestation as *compensation*. 'Experience has amply confirmed that, in the psyche as in nature, a tension of opposites creates a potential which may express itself at any time in a manifestation of energy' (414). I will also argue that they manifest the *conscious* desires and wishes of those for whom the numinous is nurtured. This is particularly evident in the spiritual responses that visitors to circles display when they do not know that the circle is man-made.²¹

The UFO's shape and size suggest little of the psychic state of the observers, save for the circular form (mandala), the cigar-shaped form (phallus – a line of enquiry Jung chose not to pursue, perhaps owing to its association with Freud)²², and its technological attributes. The crop formations, however, depict glyphs of all manner of images that appear to correlate uncannily with the conversations, dreams and visions of both the researchers and makers alike. Perhaps more uncannily, they also reflect, sometimes in almost mocking form, particular hot topics – memes buzzing through the blogosphere. Of the first variety, Nancy Talbott recounts the multiple cases of formations appearing in the dreams of Dutchman Robbert Van Den Broeke prior to their advent in the crop.²³ Lucy Pringle documents a crop formation appearing that she had dreamt some nights earlier: 'she saw the dream formation, new and unreported, lying below her in a yellow oilseed rape field! Correct in every detail, it was stretched out like a string of pearls over a distance in excess of 200 metres. Imagine the excitement!' (27). Pringle then proposes that the formation itself represented the forthcoming 1999 solar eclipse. Many other testimonials report formations appearing after, for example, a group has discussed a particular pattern that they would like to see.

Of the many examples, one can immediately point to the eerie 'Grey' alien face in Sparsholt, Hampshire on 15th August 2002, alongside the haunting binary digital message, which correlates to popular discussions of alien authorship of the crop formations, the use of the alien face as a design on clothing and the on-going discussion of UFOs. An image of an eye atop a pyramid in Highclere, Hampshire on 21st July 2002 correlates to popular theories of the global conspiracy, elite cabals and the Illuminati, as articulated subtly by Robert Anton Wilson, or belligerently by radio host Alex Jones.

Numerous fractal designs, including a representation of the Mandelbrot Set, reflect the resurgence of interest in psychedelic plants as expressed by Terence McKenna, who closely associated psychedelic vision with the knowledge that 'nature is self-similar across scale.' A remarkable corridor with doors leading off that emerged in wheat at the West Kennett Longbarrow, Wiltshire on 28th June 2007 firstly points to the subterranean mystery of the barrow itself, and secondly evokes the corridor into which Alice plunges at the bottom of the rabbit hole, wherein she finds the physio-active bottle – a reflection of the sheer oddity of the crop formation phenomenon itself. "“Curiouser and curiouser!” Cried Alice.” A perfect Yin Yang appeared on Stantonbury Hill, Somerset 7th July 2007, a symbol of changing harmony that is today popular (and perhaps bereft of meaning) in all manner of marketing strategies. Two wavy (Celtic?) crosses appeared in Wiltshire in 2008, which commentators described as an allusion to the mythic Celtic pagano-Christian past. Sidereal animal forms appeared in 2009: jellyfish, starfish, and small crustaceans, which may reflect current rates of extinction amongst planetary fauna. The jellyfish was also seen to resemble the pattern of solar radiation deflected by the earth's magnetic field, correlated with NASA predictions of increased solar flare activity. Other patterns of 2009 were seen in connection with forecasts of solar induced geomagnetic storms. An elaborate design known as the 'Aztec headdress' appeared by Silbury Hill on 5th July 2009, which was immediately absorbed into the narrative of the Maya calendric end of the 'long count' and the 'new era' following the winter solstice of 2012, as popularised by Daniel Pinchbeck. Lastly, a cartoon-like figure of a 'Grey' smoking a pipe, complete with a wavy plume of smoke, took all observers by surprise near the Cherhill White Horse, Wiltshire on 27th July 2011. Whilst some commentators see the image as too ribald to be taken seriously, others have suggested that the Grey may be smoking DMT, which connects the image to the provocative research into the entities encountered whilst under the brief influence of DMT (see Strassman 2001 and Luke 2011).

The list is as endless and varied as dream analysis, but what I am keen to indicate is that the observers are somehow participating in the crop circle manifestations, whether through discussions about the formations themselves, or whether researching other phenomena (*para* or otherwise). In this sense, as understood by Jung, the act of observation constitutes

participation, further interweaving the trajectories of psyche and matter, further developing the mercurial daemonic quality, and further creating a sense of the numinous. It also develops a curiously conscious, and perhaps teleological dimension to the formations, reflected in many of the commentaries as a form of guide towards a new state of consciousness perhaps associated with the new Platonic month of Aquarius. 'As a numinous factor,' Jung writes, 'the archetype determines the nature of the configurational process and the course it will follow, with seeming foreknowledge, or as though it were already in possession of the goal to be circumscribed by the centering process' (CW 8: 209).

Ontology

We need to look closely at how Jung describes the material manifestation of psychic content. It is clear that in his investigation of UFOs, he refrains from allowing the projection to be materially independent, *despite its objective appearance*. It is because of our incompleteness, the fact that 'our present-day consciousness possesses no conceptual categories by means of which it could apprehend the nature of psychic totality,' we are unable to recognise the psychically generated structure of the UFOs. We consequently must perceive them 'not as forms inherent in the psyche but as existing somewhere in extra-psychic, metaphysical space' (335). However, Jung admitted later the possibility for independently existing psychoid matter: 'I have, therefore, even hazarded the postulate that the phenomenon of archetypal configurations which are psychic events par excellence may be founded upon a psychoid base, that is, upon an only partially psychic and possibly altogether different form of being' (MDR: 351).

And yet, how can we avoid considering the physical forces? Was not Jung himself torn between his desire to be a scientist and his inclination towards philosophy, theology and metaphysics?²⁴ This is evident not least in his strident riposte as footnote in his work on UFOs: 'It is a common and totally unjustified misunderstanding on the part of scientifically trained people to say that I regard the psychic background as something "metaphysical," while on the other hand the theologians accuse me of "psychologizing" metaphysics. Both are wide of the mark: I am an empiricist [i.e. he is Kantian, as he declares elsewhere], who keeps within the boundaries set for him by the theory of knowledge' (328).²⁵ There is so much to be elucidated from this, especially given the arbitrary nature of the terms

employed, such as 'empiricist' and 'theory of knowledge.' Jung is obviously torn between intuition and education, as, perhaps, we all are. Even when he does consider the ontological possibility of the UFO (in the final chapter of his investigation), he concentrates not on the phenomenon itself, but on the psychic response to it, the projection of psychic energy upon it. 'Should something extraordinary or impressive then occur in the outside world the unconscious content can project itself upon it, thereby investing the projection carrier with numinous and mythical powers' (414). His theory of synchronicity would allow for the interrelationship of psyche and matter to the extent that the alchemist and his chemical brew undergo the same transformations in synergy, but it will not allow for the *physical manifestation of matter*. The first can conform, however radically, to certain patterns of quantum theory involving the manipulation of matter; the second flies in the face of all scientific theory. Hence Jung robustly maintains that, despite being detected by radar, UFOs are projections. 'The psyche can move the body,' he argues, 'but only inside the living organism. That something psychic, possessing material qualities and with a high charge of energy, could appear by itself high in the air at a great distance from any human mediums – this surpasses our comprehension' (416). It would appear that Jung could incorporate radar blips into the theory of synchronistic material influence without straying into science fiction or metaphysics. I see no epistemological difficulty with pursuing Harpur's daimonic angle, and considering an order of existence that is both material and psychic; an ontological dimension proposed by Henry Corbin as the *mundus imaginalis*, 'or "imaginal" world filled with intermediary beings and possessing its own geography' (Schlamm 2007: 76). This, I would propose, is the dancing space of the crop formations.

It is striking also how Jung dedicates thousands of words to the analysis of *dreams of UFOs*, and not witness reports. This is problematic as he has sidestepped the numerous reports of abduction where many abductees show physiological trauma such as bruising and scars, and psychological trauma manifest in tension, nightmares and insomnia. I feel that we cannot overlook the distinction in this matter between waking experience (which may nevertheless be psychoid) and a dream of something which, in some cases, scarcely even resembles the general literature of ufology.²⁶ I could dream of a crop circle made of butter the size of Belgium, but that may not

further our research into the phenomenon itself. One may argue that choosing to analyse dreams rather than witness reports demonstrates Jung's reluctance to approach the matter head-on and reflect more openly on the phenomenological and ontological questions. It is clear why many people are unsatisfied with his appraisal of UFOs, as they will be trawling the pages of Jung's essay seeking an answer to the question: '*But are they real? Stop evading the question, Herr Professor.*'

We can be spared this frustration when considering crop formations, despite observing their archetypal content, simply because we know that they are real. The question that will not go away for us, though, is, '*But are they all made by people?*' In this respect, despite their manifest materiality, they actually belong to the same sphere as the Harpur's daimons and Jung's UFOs, as whilst, as Jung acknowledges, the UFOs are made more real through their appearing to sceptics rather than *a priori* believers, nevertheless this body of documentation will never constitute empirical evidence to naysayers.²⁷ The same is true of the crop formation, not of the phenomenon itself, but of its provenance. As such, following Jung's desire for 'empirical' research within the parameters of the 'theory of knowledge' – i.e. following a Kantian model of the limits of the epistemology of philosophy, where knowledge dissipates into opinion – all we can accordingly conclude with any degree of critical certainty, is that the many mysterious aspects of them, plus the labyrinth-mandala geometry, imbue them with numinosity. And yet how do we position ourselves against the backdrop of the 'crass undervaluation of the psyche in our predominantly materialistic and statistical age' between the conflicting polar refuges of 'unbelief or credulity' (346)? With regards the provenance of the crop formations, 'Either there are hard-and-fast facts, or else it is nothing but illusion' (346), which may be translated as – all are man-made or none is man-made. Neither position has been answered satisfactorily, and as such one can hold fast with Jung in his assertion: 'As against this I have urged that the psyche be recognized as having its own peculiar reality' (346). They thus correspond to the liminal psychic-material dimension of the daemonic.

Concentrating on the psychic cause and effect of the UFOs, however, Jung very subtly does not rule out the possibility of the phenomenon as possibly real, extrinsic to human agency.

Should it be that an unknown physical phenomenon is the outward cause of the myth, this would detract nothing from the myth, for many myths have meteorological and other natural phenomena as accompanying causes which by no means explain them. A myth is essentially a product of the unconscious archetype and is therefore a symbol which requires psychological interpretation. (329)

Again, one may argue exactly the same for the crop formation. Regardless of authorship, these phenomena are mythic. If all the circle makers are people with planks; if it is the military; or if the authors are techno-geeks with some secret hardware that enables them to create patterns in the landscape at a distance, then they are wittingly or not manifesting dazzling archetypal forms of unconscious content. Therefore, in one fundamental respect, it is irrelevant *who* is creating them. This is a position emphasised by crop circle artist Rod Dickinson.

It would seem that Jung's psychological explanation of the UFO is something of a smokescreen *unless*, and only unless, we pay greater heed to his intuition that the archetypes influence *physis* as much as *psyche*. Be that as it may, such a perspective still gives, in his words, only a 1% chance for the UFOs to be empirically distinct from human agency. But here, of course, we are in the very metaphysical territory that Jung was keen to avoid. In brief, if UFOs and the authors of crop formations are, indeed, ontologically independent life-forms, then this is the most ground-breaking discovery of modern history. It is metaphysics made physics. If, as is possible with UFOs, they are illusions or hallucinations, then we are dealing with a collective hallucination of unprecedented proportions! If, however, they are psychoid manifestations, then we are in the realm that has been kept at bay since the Enlightenment and the concomitant demise of hermeticism, neoplatonic magic, alchemy, and divination: the *physis-psyche* conjunction that Jung labelled synchronicity.

We return, therefore, to our initial point of departure. Having read Jung closely for a number of years, I feel confident to suggest that no psychoid manifestation in his analysis has appeared in the same concrete material form that the crop formations have. Neuroses and psychoses, the surfacing of complexes into ego-consciousness, biblical exegesis, the painting of mandalas, dream analysis, the strange boiling and bubbling of the alchemists' retorts,

alembics and flasks and the mercurial fumes arising thereof, apparitions of the Virgin, Swedenborg's visions of the fire in Stockholm, mass uprisings such as that instigated by the Third Reich, mediumship, religious symbols, astrology, I Ching and other divinatory practices, daemonic forms, UFOs... None of these multiple facets of human experience demonstrates the unequivocal physical, material, empirically verifiable solidity as the crop formation. All these phenomena above are matters of human behaviour, fleeting visions of the few, subtle languages easily ignored. Even synchronicity, Jung's most visionary of psycho-physical principles, can and is readily denied and refuted. Yet one cannot refute a crop formation, one can only question its provenance. Whilst mysteries are legion in our relationship with the universe, such as infinity, death and time, it is rare to witness an empirical phenomenon for which there is no consensual explanation. Presented with this absence of knowledge, we would expect two essential epistemological avenues to emerge: firstly scientific analysis into the phenomenon, and secondly the wealth of spirited explanations of their provenance, leading from the mundane to the cosmic. At the present moment both avenues lack the verifiability that Jung would have sought. Thus the most fruitful means of investigating the phenomenon, I would argue, is to appraise their psychic effect – as Jung would surely have done – as dreams, as symbols of the archetypes arising from the unconscious. This constitutes a middle way, in some respects forming a semiological appraisal in its concentration on the utterance and not the utterer, or as Rob Irving suggests, concentrating on the art not the artist. But it also provides a respite either from the urgency to fix a scientific certainty or the desire to cogitate metaphysical abstractions. In this sense we, like Jung, can maintain a degree of Kantian empiricism (albeit reluctantly). This is important vis-à-vis authorship. If we pursue the line of psychic-matter interrelationship, we can evaluate the phenomenon through the lens of *acausality* without losing ourselves in the murky world of authorship or agency. I can reiterate a point made earlier; when Jung observed the scarab beetle he appraised its significance, not the infinite pathways of causality that led the beetle to fly in the window coincidental with the woman's dream account. As with the signifying aspect of astrology, Tarot or the I Ching, the connection is through *correspondence* not causality. Yes, this is a leap of faith, but reality in my experience exhibits this quality.

To conclude, therefore, I would suggest that makers and researchers alike are motivated by the groundswell of desire for numinosity that Jung described as motivating the UFO phenomenon. I concur with Patrick Harpur that the daimonic is the liminal matter-spirit boundary governed by trickster Mercurius, and that the crop formation is a strikingly mercurial phenomenon. Artists who make the formations are subject to unconscious urges and witness bedevilling anomalous occurrences. Researchers become so keen to propose non-human authorship that they at times dogmatically ignore self-evident man-made formations. Some circles appear to mystify even the circle makers, who are nevertheless trickster enough characters as to be perhaps bluffing in their mystification in order to perpetuate the marvel. People experience empowerment and healing in circles that are revealed to be man-made, whilst circle makers report circles appearing that they had drawn but not created. Some circle makers may be in the employ of secret government agencies; some researchers have witnessed mysterious Men in Black. However, as Borges in “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,” Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea in *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*, and Eco in *Foucault’s Pendulum* have acknowledged, conspiracies and secret organisations exist in the liminal space between fact and fiction, fantasy and reality. In this respect, and demonstrating the trickster nature of the crop circle makers, Lundberg et. al. may well covertly encourage such investigation in order to intensify the mystery. Nobody is in control. Nobody has the last word. Mercurial mysteries abound. Jung suggests that “The cause must strike at the roots of our existence if it is to explain such an extraordinary phenomenon as the Ufos’ (324). I would argue that roots of our existence are expressed in the crop formations. They are our dreams.

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² www.circlemakers.org/mckenna.html

³ CW 10: *Civilisation in Transition*, 307-437 (all undated references here are to this edition).

⁴ Readily available on the internet.

www.cropcircleconnector.com,
www.temporarytemples.co.uk, www.lucypringle.co.uk,
www.bertjanssen.nl/cropcircles, www.ukcropcircles.co.uk,
www.cropcircleresearch.com, www.blresearch.com,
www.cropcirclesecrets.org, www.circlemakers.org.

⁵ ‘The other article, entitled “No Flying Saucers, U.S. Expert Says,” concerns the categorical statement made by Dr. Hugh L. Dryden, director of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, that Ufos do not exist. One cannot but respect the unflinching scepticism of Dr. Dryden; it gives stout-hearted expression to the feeling that such preposterous rumours are an offence to human dignity’ (318).

⁶ Some of whom are associated with the www.circlemakers.org group. See also Schnabel 1993, and Irving & Lundberg 2006.

⁷ www.cropcircleconnector.com/Sorensen/PeterSorensen99.html

⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNdqNrDbHZc&feature=related The following quotes are all transcribed from these interviews.

⁹ www.blresearch.com/otherfacts.php

¹⁰ Available for view on Colin Andrews’ website: www.colinandrews.net/HiddenTruthDVD.html

¹¹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAs7w7ZWa3M&feature=related

¹² See www.lucypringle.co.uk/photos/2001/uk2001df.shtml, also www.temporarytemples.co.uk/imagelibrary/2001.html, also www.youtube.com/watch?v=1upFc7FDhH8

¹³ In this sense they are like Thor Heyerdahl and his reed boats or Tim Severin and the Brendan Voyage – not to prove that people crossed the Atlantic before Columbus, but to prove that it is possible in such ancient craft, thereby substantiating claims of pre-Columbian oceanic crossing.

¹⁴ Again, readers of Jung would be familiar with his evaluation of the myth of Wotan becoming a projection of the German people leading to the rise of the Third Reich. See ‘Wotan’, and ‘After the Catastrophe’.

¹⁵ For detailed analysis of the mandala, see Jung “Concerning mandala symbolism” CW 9 part 1: 355-385, and “Mandalas” CW 9 part 1: 385-391. See also Leon Schlamm’s entry on Individuation in *The Encyclopaedia of Psychology and Religion*, October 2009: ‘Jung also argued that the ultimate unity of the archetypes of the collective unconscious as well as of the multiplicity of the phenomenal world, equated by him with his concept of the *unus mundus*, is expressed with particular clarity by the symbol of the mandala. The mandala, an instrument of contemplation frequently used by Eastern and Western religious traditions to provide spiritual instruction, is a magic circle, square, flower, cross or wheel, divided into four or its multiples, which emphasizes a central point of orientation and an ordered unity of its many parts. While refusing to identify the individuation process with the soteriological perspectives and goals associated with these religious symbols, he recognized them to be numinous, archetypal images signifying the wholeness of the *self*, the microcosmic nature of the psyche, and the divinity incarnate in man. As early as 1916, Jung began to produce his own mandalas and to understand them as cryptograms of the development of the *self* and the psychic process of centring taking place within him. This practice, which he encouraged his analysands to emulate, led him to the conviction that the mandala expresses the path to the centre of psychic totality, the goal of individuation, realized through the circumambulation of the *self*’ (2).

¹⁶ My colleague Matthew Watkins has pointed out that the square-circle relationship visible in Jung’s mandalas is not to be confused with the ancient Greek mathematical question of the squaring of the circle.

¹⁷ See *Aion*: 219 & 224 for Jung’s appraisal of the ancient process of circumambulation towards the centre as present in Gnostic texts.

¹⁸ We should reiterate that the mandala is not an archetype, but the representation or image thereof. 'I have often been asked where the archetype comes from and whether it is acquired or not. This question cannot be answered directly. Archetypes are ... factors and motifs that arrange the psychic elements into certain images, characterised as archetypal, but in a way that they can be recognized only from the effects they produce. They exist pre-consciously, and presumably they form the structural dominants of the psyche in general. They may be compared to the invisible presence of the crystal lattice in a saturated solution. ... Empirically considered, however, the archetype did not ever come into existence as a phenomenon of organic life, but entered into the picture with life itself' ('Two Essays on Analytical Psychology' CW 7, par. 109). Elsewhere he writes: 'The archetypal representations (images and ideas) mediated to us by the unconscious should not be confused with the archetype as such. They are very varied structures which all point back to one essentially "irrepresentable" basic form. The latter is characterized by certain formal elements and by certain fundamental meanings, although these can be grasped only approximately. The archetype as such is a psychoid factor that belongs, as it were, to the invisible, ultraviolet end of the psychic spectrum. It does not appear, in itself, to be capable of reaching consciousness' (CW 8, 213).

¹⁹ Note that this is not a commonly-held feature of the debate: the question of Other would traditionally fall only on suppositions of alien authorship. Here I concur with the interviewees of Wakefield's documentary: the mystery is alive with the crop circle makers as much as with the believers in non-human authorship.

²⁰ Wolfgang Pauli, Austrian theoretical physicist and one of the pioneers of quantum physics and friend of Jung, was notorious for causing equipment failure and breakage simply by being present. This recurrent incidence of telekinesis, and the many conversations Jung had with Pauli, led Jung towards his definition of the theory of synchronicity.

²¹ In the summer of 2010, the Circlemakers team were employed by BBC quiz show QI to create a crop circle in oil seed rape of the show's logo. Two Norwegian women visited it and were visibly moved by the formation, unaware that it was a corporate endeavor. www.circlemakers.org/new_documents.html

²² Sometimes a cigar-shaped UFO is just a cigar-shaped UFO.

²³ www.bltresearch.com/eyewitness/eyewitness7.php

²⁴ See Hyde 1992.

²⁵ A number of commentators, not least Jung himself, have observed his vociferous appeal to the reader not to consider him anything other than a rational scientific empiricist. Note a later footnote to the text on UFOs: 'Here I must beg the reader to eschew the popular misconception that this background is "metaphysical" [the inverted commas betray a certain disgust at the term]. This view is a piece of gross carelessness of which even professional people are guilty. It is far more of a question of instincts which influence not only our outward behaviour but also the psychic structure. The psyche is not an arbitrary fantasy; it is a biological fact subject to the laws of life' (346). It is important to note that this footnote pertains to a paragraph in which he declares: 'Since the discovery of the empirical unconscious the psyche and what goes on in it have become a natural fact and are no longer an arbitrary opinion' (346). Some may suggest that in equating the unconscious to a natural law of physics, he is demonstrating a level of dogmatic faith in *his* discovery such as he observed in Freud's defence of 'pleasure and its frustration' (348) being the sole roots of psychic illness.

²⁶ Jung writes of Dream 1: 'I shall cite two dreams dreamt by an educated lady. *She had never seen a Ufo*' (330), and of Dream 5: 'This dream comes from a woman with an academic education. It was dreamt several years ago *without reference to Ufos*' (368 emphasis added on both).

²⁷ Let us not forget, indeed, that Doug and Dave made their first formation a circle so as to make people believe that a UFO had landed.



Dr. William Rowlandson is Lecturer in Hispanic Studies at the University of Kent. He is currently preparing a book concerning Borges and Mysticism, focusing in particular on Borges' abiding veneration for Swedenborg and Dante. A chapter of the book appraises Borges' poetics through the lens of Jung's vision of individuation. William's book on Cuban poet and novelist José Lezama Lima concentrated on Lezama's equation of poetry and the numinous. He is former co-Director of the Centre for the Study of Myth, at Kent, in which he co-ran a reading group that focused predominantly on Jung. William is a native of Salisbury Plain.

Commentary

Mark A. Schroll on “Crop Circles as Psychoid Manifestation” by William Rowlandson

Overall this article reminds me of a marginal note I wrote in David Bohm's (1987) *Unfolding Meaning: A Weekend of Dialogue with David Bohm*. This book is a collection of lectures and conversations that took place on May 11, 1984, at a small, country hotel in the Cotswold village of Mickleton, Gloucestershire, England. I should also add that there is a strong connection between William Rowlandson's discussion of Jung's concept of synchronicity and Bohm's “Soma-Significance: A New Notion of the Relationship Between the Physical and the Mental” (pp. 72-99). This then was my response to Bohm's views on soma-significance in that marginal note: “The whole of our waking lives is a mandala that we weave and which constitutes the personal unconscious. Time in this domain is linear, rational, serial and causal. The whole of our biological lineage as a human species extending from here to the ends of the ever expanding universe is the mandala the cosmos as a whole is weaving. This cosmic mandala constitutes the collective or transpersonal unconscious, and is a non-linear domain, indeterminate, synchronistic, and acausal. Together they form the Self.”

I have been so busy with other projects the past 12 years that I've not fully developed my views on Bohm's soma-significance beyond my doctoral dissertation and writing this marginal note. Rowlandson's article definitely serves as one avenue of inspiration to resume further exploration and enquiry into this research.

I've often wondered if there is such a thing as Gaia Consciousness, and if it is the Earth that is speaking to us through the creation of these symbols? Wondering further if these symbols are some kind of encrypted message that is attempting to awaken within humankind a transformation of consciousness in response to the growing number of eco-crises and cultural upheaval? Something that I and Susan Greenwood have referred to as “Worldviews in Transition/Worldviews in Metamorphosis.” Is this the real message crop circles are hoping to convey? Is this the real meaning of UFOs (both their physical manifestation in abduction encounters and in our

dreams)? John E. Mack was exploring these questions up to the moment of his untimely demise, as well as attempting to raise questions about the ontological status of the abduction experience and ways in which we could create reliable methodologies to further this enquiry. I would have worked on this project with Mack had he lived longer.

I also wonder what role (if any) Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphogenetic fields may play in our understanding of crop circles and UFOs? Is it really a pre-existing archetype (from beyond space-time and physical reality) that we are somehow collectively tuning into, or that is somehow becoming manifest? Or, like physical laws (which are not laws at all but conceptual approximations for computations), are archetypes also approximations? Or is it an even deeper mystery than this, whereby physical laws and archetypes are in the process of continually coming-into-being, co-emerging, and co-evolving with us? If this latter suggestion is more clearly the way to frame the question, what then? Does this invite the possibility (like Christian Ratsch's reference to vision plants as “exogene-neurotransmitters” whose alkaloids communicate directly with our neurochemistry), that it is humankind's challenge to decode the message encrypted within Crop Circles (and UFO encounters) in order to save ourselves from bringing about our own extinction?

Likewise it is long overdue to challenge to the limitations of Kantian empiricism, a challenge that began with the early discussions of quantum theory. This challenge is an untapped resource toward the advancement of a new paradigm by the present generation of philosophers, anthropologists of consciousness and transpersonal psychologists. Renewed interest in psychedelic research offers a promising means to gather data that can help researchers to further this enquiry.

These and more are the questions that Rowlandson's article raises for me. Thus it is my hope that this article's publication in *Paranthropology* will serve as a catalyst to continued dialogue and investigation of these most important questions.

Mark A. Schroll

Eileen Garrett's Haitian Diary

Eileen J. Garrett

As an avid reader of the Journal of Paranthropology and a supporter of its editor, Jack Hunter, recipient of our 2010 Eileen J. Garrett Scholarship I think it fitting that I herewith submit for publication the beginning of Garrett's "Haitian Diary" written in the early 50's. As Executive Director of Parapsychology Foundation, the organization she created in 1951 as a worldwide forum supporting scientific exploration of psychic phenomena, and as her granddaughter, I have recently been on a voyage of discovery within a sea of contents of what I refer to as "Mystery Boxes" which contain materials she collected and allowed to languish in storage unread for years. I was drawn to these recollections for their educational and historical value but also because I well remember with elation the receipt of a much beloved doll she brought me home from Haiti and the less enthusiastic receipt of the "healing packets" she references which the family safe guarded with great respect and some trepidation not really knowing what to do with them. I will in future share more contributions from the Mystery Boxes as warranted. I trust you will find these writings of interest.

Lisette Coly
Parapsychology Foundation
www.parapsychology.org
lisettecoly@parapsychology.org

Haiti - 1953

The Parapsychology Foundation had been approached in the year 1953 by members of the Bureau of Ethnology in Haiti to ask if some paranormal phenomena, as they take place in Haiti, could be studied. Accordingly, I visited the Republic of Haiti accompanied by Monsieur Jean Andoire, business executive, and Miss Lenore Davison, my secretarial assistant. While there, I was permitted to participate in some of the religious ceremonies that give to a large segment of Haiti's rural population some spiritual consolation. What I observed during

this, and later ceremonies, was not essentially new. I had observed like phenomena in hundreds of European seance rooms. But the setting of the Haitian ceremony, which takes place in the dimly lit court, or peristyle, attached to each village, which is no more than a thatched roof supported by columns, and open to the elements, is impressive. The altars devoted to the worship of the Pantheon of Gods are, however, neatly kept and always closed, although the priests offer ready access to the serious student.

Within the Vodun services, now highly colored with Roman Catholic symbolism, for the official religion of the island is Roman Catholic, there are manifestations that are usually described as paranormal, and certainly the dancing, singing, and the rhythmic beat of the sacred drums provide much needed release from tensions to a rural people whose earning capacities are restricted by the poverty of the island. I, personally, discovered no black magic in Haiti, only the simple belief with patience and faith to take the accusing and stern words of the Pantheon of Gods, and seeking to obey them. Fortunately, the Gods can also be humorous when things go well. The Gods make their presence felt by taking control of the priests and the devoted alike. Control can happen suddenly, and at such times, the possessed one may dance, fall down as in catalepsy, roll around in a form of ecstasy, then get up and sit down quietly as though nothing had happened. The worship is mostly ancestral, though the Pantheon does suggest a number of spirits, probably worshipped by the Africans of Dahomey, and some of the names given to these entities do suggest that these peoples' beliefs did, in fact, stem from Dahomey and the Gold Coast. It is no tribute to the white man that the ritual, song and words thereof, as well as the methods of worship, have had to be recalled, I suspect, from the deep sub-conscious of a suffering people, husband parted from wife and children, and brothers from brothers by the slave owners lest their religious beliefs might indeed basically bind them together. Free of their French masters, and hemmed in without too much interference from an outside world, the Haitians have recorded their ritual in song and dance memories with greater accuracy than their brothers on other islands, who have accepted Western religious beliefs. Alas, the outside world is fast

advancing by plane and tourist boat, and the monies which are eagerly paid for something "different" or "sinister" or "magical" must sooner or later cause the Haitian Gods to withdraw. For just as Pythia ceased to enter into holy trance behind the massive columns of the departed Apollo, and give answers which determined the fate of the Western world, I suspect that the cross of Baron Samedi, who is protector of the living and the dead may also become but a memory clung to by the very old. However, I was still able to get away from the "shows" in the cities, and within the country find people living along the lanes called to their worship by the beat of the drums.

For one who has been raised in a meagre economy, and in an agricultural climate where one naturally turns away from the highly developed methods of farming, and trusts the elements and saints for special guidance and protection, the religious life of the Haitian peasants presents no problem. I was able, therefore, to attend their ceremonies confident that I would achieve a oneness with their beliefs which must be as my own religious beliefs are, of a spiritual-philosophical nature, where symbolism plays its important part in interpretation and understanding. To be a guest within the peristyle, to sit among the people, and drink the excellent coffee that grows in their soil, and which is hospitably offered, is to participate in a communal experience with simplicity and dignity not always found within our own progressive civilization.

All this is stated because nearly every visitor approaches Haiti with his imagination clouded with misconceptions, such as images of black magic and frenetic orgies. Within the Vodun ceremony, where a people are gathered together in prayerful and single-minded purpose, natural forces are evoked to help sustain and heal, but these can only appear in miraculous form, as the Bible teaches, because of the devotion and belief they demonstrate from within themselves, their long contact with the very nature, the elements of the earth itself. These happenings cannot be demonstrated without such simple acceptance. Theirs is an effort to transcend their hungry and poverty-stricken state, and arrive at a unification of spirit between goodness, or God, and man. Again I emphasize, it is only with faith and belief such manifestations as I have witnessed can happen. Would that this faith had not become almost forgotten, for it is this alone that is the truth behind all religious impulses.

It is, therefore, with some expectancy and understanding that I entered into a study of the

literature of Vodun. The work of Dr. Dorsainvil, a prominent psychiatrist, was not lost on such scholars as Professor F.W.H. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Professor Richet. For those who would seriously study the religion of Haiti, there are numerous, well documented, observations made by the Haitian Bureau of Ethnology.

During my first visit to Haiti, I was fortunate enough to be taken inland and away from Port-au-Prince to inspect special Vodun villages. I did not ask this privilege, but was taken by the then liaison officer of the United Nations' Technical Assistance Board to visit the village of an important *hungan*, one Anis. I was also accompanied by Miss de Pradines, who understood Creole, and has knowledge of religious ritual as well as of the ceremonies of the *hungans*. As soon as I arrived, I was greeted by Anis, and he asked when I prepared to leave that, this being Sunday, I should return on the following Wednesday to take part in a ceremony where I should be presented to the Gods. I did not take this seriously at the time, but declared that I would not be in town, as I anticipated returning to New York on that very day. However, this was frowned upon by Miss de Pradines, and indeed also by the U.N. representative, who pointed out that many sought to attend the rituals, but that permission was not easily granted. Thereupon, I decided that I had better wait over and attend the ceremony, which I learned had been suggested to the *hungan* by his controlling *Loa*, or guardian spirit.

My visit on the second occasion was a welcoming one. The people were gathered, some two hundred or more. The *hounsis*, or young priestesses, were dressed in red, although there were a few novices in white. It was explained to me again that the Petro rites would be open to me. There are two rituals -- Petro and Rada. Anis, and Joseph who trained him, belonged to the former. The difference between the two services is, as I found later, contained in their ritual, the Rada being more passive though, essentially, the same Pantheon rules over all. After the rolling of the drums, and the "opening of the gates," as the ceremony is called, "Papa Legba" was asked to receive homage, and have my presence explained. The *hungan* conceded he had received affirmation from the *Loas* that I was to be admitted to the rest of the ceremony. I went from the larger gathering to a small room withdrawn from the worshippers. There I was accompanied by Miss de Pradines. In an adjoining room to the temple, in which Anis was lying on his bed, apparently in a trance, I sat and waited. We could see Anis in repose through the

trellis that separated us from his room. He appeared withdrawn. In a few moments he began to speak, but he did not change from his relaxed and "sleeping" position. As in the case of the trance medium, the voice that spoke to us was of a different calibre than that of Anis. Miss de Pradines explained that it was Papa Ogoun who spoke, giving her a lengthy series of commands as well as welcome for me.

On awakening the hungan questioned Miss de Pradines very thoroughly as to the content of the messages. Since he spoke in Creole, I was dependent on Miss de Pradines for their translation and meaning. Later the same proceeding took place, but this time, being alert, I looked to see who might address me. I "clairvoyantly" saw the figure of a commanding African woman, and described her. This pleased the hungan, who smiled and declared that she came always with Papa Ogoun and Papa Badagris (Brothers? Obviously a duality of worship.) She was named Simbi between the Waters. Having demonstrated to the hungan's satisfaction that I would accept the reality of his Loas, and had been able to see the female in "Simbi," I was taken to what was described as a small and private chapel, where the hungan meditated to make contact with his particular Loas, whom he served. There, within a locked compartment, where there was an altar upon which were many artifacts: medications, healing packets in many different colors, and some beautiful polished stones used for healing, he demanded that I examine the packets, gayly trimmed with beads and ribbons, and adorned with feathers. Within each, there were powdered herbs for healing, the external adornment denoted their use, as well as their positive and passive strength and capacities. Touching each, I explained my feelings and sensations as to their ritual use.

Anis appeared content thus far, and now asked that I follow him to yet another withdrawn room, where a charcoal burner rested on the floor, as well as a large dagger guarding the entrance. Anis went out into the night to gather herbs, I was told, for the final ceremony. Outside, the crowd continued to worship Dambella -- with their graceful and sinuous movements they emulated his movements, those of a serpent. Their dancing and chanting had to continue, it was explained, to keep the continuity of the Loa's presence with Anis until the ceremony was complete. From the edge of the jungle, Anis returned with several sweet smelling herbs, wild mint and basil among them, all wet with dew. They were sprinkled with rum, and Anis sprayed us all with the spirit,

washing his mouth with alcohol which he spat out. I never saw the people take a drink during the ceremonies. Alcohol is used freely to salute the several Loas, but it is poured on the ground at their several altars. It anoints the bearers, the drums and the participants in the ritual, and the earth before the altar also. The lips are touched by the hungan and those who serve him, but the alcohol is consumed by fire and poured upon the earth, and used in devotions when the food is cooked and offered to the Gods. I suspect that the number of rum bottles we see within the different temples give the visitor, who may be allowed to look within, the feeling that much spirit is consumed. Since the Haitian is poor, there is little money for personal drinking of spirits, but a great deal of alcohol enters into his ceremonies. I have never personally witnessed it being used for anything but salutations to the Loas, and for cleaning purposes and general devotions.

The final part of the ceremony was simple. The herbs were placed within a red silk square which was sprinkled, as were the herbs, with rum. A healing stone was imbedded within the fresh herbs. The brazier was prepared with what looked like maize, again sprinkled and set alight. When it blazed high, the hungan held the square containing the stone -- burned, the stone would fall. I was told to hold my hands as in supplication within the flames. This I did, while the hungan softly chanted. Having examined my hands to assure himself I was not burned, he appeared satisfied, and went out again into the night. We were told to await his return. The time did not seem long. Now, one could give one's self to the jungle night and the drums; from the chants, as they sharply rose and fell, one gathered that the crowd outside was happy. The noise rising and ebbing away at intervals gave me a sense of the pounding ocean. Anis returned with a cloth filled with sweet herbs freshly gathered. They were pungent, clean; within the cloth were healing packets gaily decorated and associated with the Loas who had welcomed me. I was also given two large bottles of "concoctions" which, I was told, Miss de Pradines would carefully explain, were concerned with magic. I was instructed then, as was Miss de Pradines, as to the method of ritual that the Gods demanded, and asked if I would carry these out faithfully. I was wise enough to say "Yes, but on my own terms." I realised enough to know that back in New York, I could not prepare daily offerings to the Loas, light the Vestal flames, and do daily devotions as did their servitors. In this I was wise, as later events proved.

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I was then given a large parcel containing the artifacts necessary for a mambo who serves the govi... with which to summon the Gods. The govi in which the spirits rest might be vaguely compared to the Cabinet which the medium claims to need to hold the power. I was also instructed that ceremonies were to be held in December which I must or should attend. However, the hungan, sensing that I might have difficulty to return so near the Christmas season, informed me that he would, if I had to be absent, hold the ceremonies on my behalf. I was able to return. The events will be recorded later.

In conclusion to this visit, I was not permitted to say farewells. There would be no parting, since a part of me would always remain with the initial group; their village was my dwelling place, and this I feel is really true. I have grown fond of the Haitian people, and feel for them a deep responsibility. I read all that happens to their country with the hope that they may emerge to keep their faith, so hardly won, so prayerfully achieved.



Eileen J. Garrett (March 17, 1893 – September 15, 1970) was an Irish medium, founder of the Parapsychology

Foundation in New York City, and a leading figure in the scientific study of paranormal phenomena during the mid-20th century.



The Parapsychology Foundation is a not-for-profit foundation which provides a worldwide forum supporting the scientific investigation of psychic phenomena. The Foundation gives grants, publishes pamphlets, monographs, conference proceedings and the *International Journal of Parapsychology*, hosts the Perspectives Lecture Series, conducts the Outreach Program, maintains the Eileen J. Garrett Library with its collection of more than 12,000 volumes and 100 periodicals on parapsychology and related topics, and is proud of its quality paperback imprint, *Helix Press*. For more information on any aspect of the Foundation visit www.parapsychology.org

What's Wrong With Parapharmanthropology (Apart From the Name)?

David Luke

I'm compelled to make a response to Fabian Graham's commentary on Jack Hunter's (2011) piece in the last issue on "Reflecting on Paranthropology." In discussing Hunter's musings on the remit of the (re-)emerging fusion field of paranthropology and the media that have grown up around it, Graham seeks to draw a line at "drug induced" experiences and at the study of beliefs. I take issue with both of these desired demarcations, and with the reasoning behind them. The reasons stated for objecting to the so-called drug induced experiences are that, a) they currently already receive plenty of scientific (rather than ethnographic, presumably) attention and so this clearly places them within the remit of parapsychology, because they are chemically induced, and (also for the beliefs), b) if they can be so induced (or explained) "this deprives the phenomena themselves recognition of possessing an independent existence" (Graham, 2011, p.21).

In regard to the latter matter, while I share Graham's concern for approaches that preemptively dismiss phenomena and prevent them from potentially being understood as they actually appear to be, i.e. as paranormal, I think his objection is unfounded in this case. Just because an experience has been chemically induced does not suddenly prevent it from being paranormal in effect, and to think so is to fall into the illogical trap which neurotheologians have dug for themselves: that is, that assuming that just because an experience can be shown to be mediated by a brain process it cannot belong to a transcendent reality. This is pure technophrenological nonsense, driven by a growing fetishisation of garish brain scan imagery (e.g., see Weisberg et al, 2008). As the great novelist and psychedelic explorer Aldous Huxley once said in relation to mescaline and mystical experience, substance use is merely the occasion not the cause of the theophany. Indeed, mistaking any brain process as the ultimate cause of any phenomenon of consciousness (i.e., any experience) is going beyond the evidence that brain activity merely correlates with consciousness – and to think that there is a causal link

is actually tantamount to magical thinking, somewhat ironically you might say.

Chemically manipulated experiences needn't mean that the experience is any less paranormal. If you drink the Amazonian psychedelic beverage, ayahuasca, and see a vision of your father several thousand miles away and see that he has just died, and then this then turns out to be true when you call home afterwards, then you may have had a chemically mediated psi experience (see Luke, 2010). Just because we know something about the neurochemical processes involved does not mean that the experience was potentially any less psychic, if that is indeed what it was – we have to rule out coincidence, inference, sensory leakage, etc. of course. Certainly we don't know enough about neurobiology currently to explain how psi might work in such cases, and indeed we probably never will because the neurobiological level of explanation is probably not where the explanation ultimately lies. Nevertheless, beginning to understand the neurobiology involved in psychic experiences may help us better understand the brain processes involved, which can help our understanding of ostensibly paranormal processes, which can help us understand something about reality, but I for one do not assume the neurobiology to be any more than just a part of the process.

We might also consider that all embodied experience (though not necessarily disembodied experience), paranormal or otherwise, has some neurobiological processes involved, and this neurobiology certainly involves neurochemical changes. Furthermore, many paranormal experiences seem to be mediated by altered states of consciousness, and many of these alterations, if not all, are also mediated by changes in neurochemistry. For instance, consider trance dancing or shamanic over breathing, the ratio of carbon dioxide and oxygen in the blood changes and is coincident with an alteration in consciousness, a phenomenon demonstrated superbly with an inhalation of carbogen (30% CO₂ & 70% O₂; Meduna, 1950), which does in a few seconds what a couple of hours

of holotropic breath-work will do – wild abreaction. When we consider Bourguignon's (1973) classic study of 488 societies in which it was found that 90% exhibited institutionalised forms of altered states, and with the majority of these utilizing trance for spirit "possession," it is clear that altered states are fundamental to paranthropology, and so too the study of chemically induced (or, better, chemically *mediated*) states is inseparable from it.

It really is unimportant that only a few of Bourguignon's societies used psychoactive substances to get there, pretty much any technique of consciousness alteration, be it drumming, dreaming, dancing, diet *or* drugs, is going to have corresponding neurochemical changes *mediating* the experience. The fact that we call such substances "drugs" is also somewhat of a misnomer because, aside from this making air a drug, this implies they are considered either as illegal toxins or as allopathic medicines, but in reality the indigenous people that use them treat them as sacramentals. I suspect it is some "Western" prejudice towards the notion of "drugs" under these legal and medical guises that is partly responsible for the desire to reject them from the purview of study within paranthropology.

Regarding beliefs, I again agree with Graham that merely considering the paranormal as a belief, as anthropology and psychology in the past have both been guilty of doing, is an extremely limited epistemological path. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to understand that beliefs, like chemicals, are also involved in paranormal experiences and probably have an important role to play, not least, perhaps, in facilitating such experiences, be they genuine or not. One might think of the astonishing work of Kenneth Batcheldor (1966) manipulating beliefs to accomplish clearly visible and ostensibly paranormal effects. Merely limiting our explanations to belief alone is clearly myopic, but we should fairly consider all factors lest we throw out the baby with the bathwater. What is required is epistemological pluralism, not censorship, and indeed Roger Wescott (1977) was pretty much in favour of multidisciplinary and multi-method approaches to "paranthropology" when he came up with the term.

Finally, one thing I totally agree on with Fabian Graham is the importance of the experience-centered hands-on methodology of paranthropology. This needn't be the only means of data collection, and it need not be for all researchers, but I have

wholeheartedly endorsed this approach in my latest presidential address to the Parapsychological Association (Luke, in press). This might seem a brash encouragement where psychoactive substances are concerned, but indeed this is where the experiential approach becomes so important, because, as Benny Shanon (2003) reminds us, we wouldn't trust a musicologist who has never heard music. Play on.

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**Seriously Strange Conference
University of Bath, UK: 10th 11th
September 2011.**

An Overview by Robert Moore.

The **Seriously Strange** conference (held between 10th and 11th September 2011 at the University of Bath) was staged to mark the 30th anniversary of ASSAP, a body formally established in 1981. While the lectures mainly focused on PSI research and apparitional phenomena, there were also a few presentations on crop-circles, cryptozoology and UFOs. Combined, these talks provided an informative (and informed) overview of “the paranormal” and ASSAP’s role in promoting a deeper understanding of anomalous events.

The conference was opened by **Rev. Lionel Fanthorpe**, ASSAP’s dynamic and enduring president. **Dr. Hugh Pincott** then paid tribute to the late Hilary Evans, who died on the 27th July 2011; a talk part eulogy, part overview of his paranormal and Ufological work. Hilary was one of ASSAP’s founding members and established the group’s cross-anomaly study remit; an approach once seemingly radical and revolutionary but now, in 2011, considered mainstream. Dr. Pincott’s presentation was followed by **Val Hope**, who discussed the origins of ASSAP from its founding to the present day. **Robert Moore** then provided a brief overview of the Rendlesham Forest Case, and introduced ASSAP’s intention to attempt a detailed study of this very complex December 1980 UFO incident.

Chris Jensen Romer (*Why Everything we Think we Know About Ghosts May be Wrong*, etc) thereafter provided an overview of ghost and apparition research, along with some informative graphs and statistics that brought common misconceptions into question; i.e. that apparitional events mostly involve observations of dead people, always occur at night and are

associated with old buildings. He also highlighted apparent instances of sentient behaviour exhibited by ghosts, which he feels cast doubt on various commonly held theories of ghosts as psychic “recordings.” Jensen Romer argued that a greater awareness of these apparitional truisms will assist future research efforts.

Trystan Swale in *Crop Circles: Doug and Dave at Twenty* discussed the crop circle phenomenon from a sceptical perspective, citing evidence supporting his contention that there are no historical examples of this phenomenon. Swale ascribes these creations purely to hoaxing; the concept being initiated by Doug Wood and Dave Bower, and subsequently spread by the mass media.

John Frasier in *Ghost Hunting – A New Science or Just a Waste of Time?* discussed the usefulness of various frequently employed ghost hunting tools - ranging from EMF-metres and dowsing rods down to the humble planchette - in apparitional study fieldwork. While not totally dismissing these approaches, Frasier cast doubt on their effectiveness to provide proof and resolution, leaving continuous documentation of “haunted” sites as the only worthwhile and attainable object of serious parapsychical research.



Lionel Fanthorpe opens the conference



Hugh Pincott on Hilary Evans

Jack Hunter's talk (*The Anthropology of Spirit Mediumship*) provided an anthropological overview of mediumistic phenomena and similar paranormal claims. He cited details relating to his own postgraduate research along with other case examples that suggest anthropology may be yet another social science useful in furthering the understanding of "paranormal" events.

The phenomenon of "*Telephone Calls From the Dead*" featured in **Cal Cooper's** presentation. Cooper gave a historical overview of this phenomenon; with a focus on the work of the late David Scott Rogo, conducted in the 1980's, combined with an overview and reassessment of his now iconic case studies. **Dr. Hannah Gilbert's** *Spirits in Society* relayed a sociological perspective on ghosts, focusing on the historical development of social and scientific attitudes to this phenomenon from classical times to the present day.

Paul Vella (in *Bigfoot/Sasquatch – Evidence!?!)* gave a detailed and illuminating talk on the American Bigfoot phenomenon. This was accompanied by various graphs and photographs, along with a

discussion of possible natural explanations for America's famous "Wild Man." Vella (who adopted an agnostic approach) also gave various reasons why the famous Patterson "ape man" film remains an open issue, despite recent claims that the movie was hoaxed. **Steve Parsons** then provided an overview of the infrasound theory of ghosts in *Infrasound and the Paranormal*; from the initial claims that this effect could induce apparitions to subsequent studies. This talk featured a detailed exposition of the author's own sophisticated and protracted instrumented work. Combined, they suggest that infrasound remains a productive area for parapsychological enquiry.

The origins and historical origins of "paranormal investigation" style television programmes were discussed then by **Dr. Ciaran O'Keeffe**. His talk emphasised his now famous involvement with the long-running and influential Living TV series "*Most Haunted*." O'Keeffe's talk demonstrated that the manner in which ghost hunting has been presented on television has made a significant impression on public perception relating to apparitional research.

While not formally a conference talk, The Gala Dinner (held on the evening of the 10th September) featured an informative discussion by the TV scriptwriter and producer Stephen Volk relating to the tortuous production history of the now infamous



Jack Hunter and Lionel Fanthorpe



Hannah Gilbert on Spirits in Society

BBC fictional “Ghostwatch” paranormal documentary, and the outraged reactions it produced. He also touched on “Afterlife,” his other notable paranormal television series, originally broadcast on ITV in 2005-2006.

The second day’s lectures were initiated by **Dr. Hugh Pincott**, via his presentation *Power to the People*. This talk emphasised the importance of attitude and historical trends; he also made an important observation that the nature of PSI and the claimed nature of “Magick” are directly comparable. **Ian Topham** then provided a quick update on ASSAP’s now iconic Project Albion study, whose aim is to provide a “Domesday Book” style overview of anomalies associated with the United Kingdom.

Dr. Paul Rogers’ talk *Belief in the Paranormal and the Misperception of Coincidences* discussed probability theory and its likely bearing on supposed paranormal claims. Rogers cited various studies indicating that believers in paranormal events have a tendency to underestimate statistical probability in comparison with more sceptical individuals.

David Taylor’s *Heads and Tales: The Strange Case of the Hexham Heads* presented a detailed and updated case study of the now infamous Hexham Heads affair; miniature carved stone heads (now lost) found in a Northumberland garden in 1972 and associated with bestial apparitions and misfortune by the various people curating them. **Ann Winsper’s** *The Effect of Paranormal Belief and Positive Schizotypy*, etc., focused on

Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) and PSI research studies and suggested that the greater exhibition of schizotypy among paranormal “believers” may represent not an inclination towards false matches but rather a greater ability to make connections and perceptions - thus representing a positive evolutionary adaptation.

Dr. Simon Sherwood’s *Black Dog Apparitions: Preliminary Analysis of a Case Collection* related (as its name infers) to the apparitional “Black Dog” phenomenon. His research is mainly derived from an ongoing internet-based research project indicating that these reports still occur both in England and elsewhere in the world (most notably in the Americas), rather than merely being a product of Early Modern folklore. This dramatic class of apparitional phenomena is associated with significant “otherworldly” aspects such as signs of intelligence, vocal effects and dramatic changes in size.

Alan Murdie provided an overview of the development of apparitional studies and theories in *Ghosts – Dreams, Reflections and Theories*, specifically in relation to their causation. He made a strong case for the contention that ghosts are incapable of being photographed. Murdie feels that (while some ghosts are genuine paranormal events) this camera shyness suggests a significant clue to their nature; namely that



Ann Winsper on EVP and Schizotypy

they represent some form of psychic place-centred hallucination.

The final Seriously Strange talk was *Mirage Men: The Abuses of Enchantment*, etc., by **Mark Pilkington**. This presentation explored various psychological warfare techniques employed by the military since the second world war. His research (as presented in his 2010 book *Mirage Men*) indicates that these various misinformation exercises may have implications for our interpretation of paranormal phenomena, most specifically UFO sighting claims, but also potentially some 20th/21st century era battlefield-associated apparitions.

The most significant event of this conference, however, was ASSAP's long-anticipated "Big Announcement," presented by Nicky Sewell. It was revealed that the association has successfully acquired governmental recognition as a professional body. This development builds on ASSAP's long-established standing as a registered charity. While full details are to be determined through on-going consultation, this new status will be utilised to further the interests of anomaly research and to set recognised standards within it.

To conclude, this writer was impressed by the intellectual, dispassionate and well-informed nature of all the Seriously Strange presentations. Writing as an individual mostly involved in UFO research he found the presentations gave an excellent grounding in various paranormal and anomaly associated topics.

Robert Moore

Additional Notes (from ASSAP)

Seriously Strange has been reviewed by the British Psychological Society on their website *The Psychologist*. The review can be viewed here:

<http://www.bps.org.uk/news/seriously-strange-conference-reviewed>

Grant Fund Appeal

During Seriously Strange ASSAP appealed for monthly research donors to help facilitate the work of budding psychical researchers, and raised nearly an additional £2000pa in monthly pledges. ASSAP prides itself that its grant funding is equally accessible to academics and non-academics alike, and has a dedicated Research Grant Panel to ensure the quality of research funded. Anyone interested in accessing or



Alan Murdie on Ghosts

donating can contact chairman@assap.ac.uk or can ring 0845 652 1548.

Professional Body Consultation

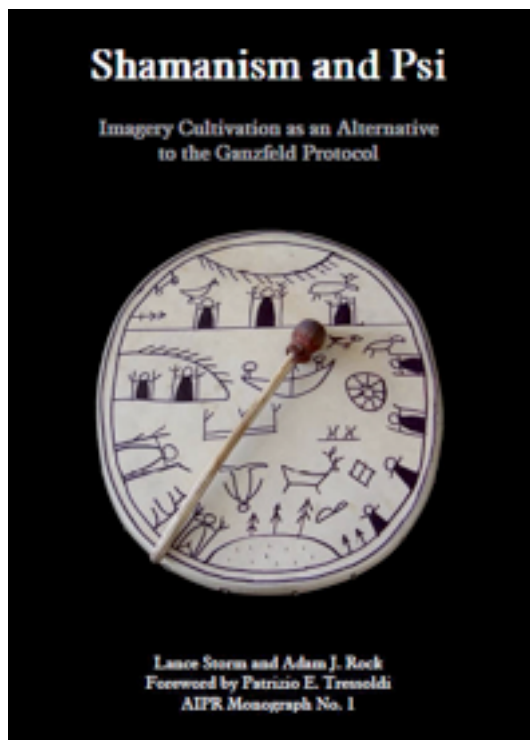
Perhaps the most surprising part of the weekend was the ASSAP 'big announcement' delivered at the end of day one. The announcement was that ASSAP was opening a consultation following its registration with the UK government's list of Professional Bodies. In this ASSAP needed to demonstrate that the 'investigation of anomalous phenomena' was *capable* being of being a professional activity, even when many practitioners are volunteers, and that ASSAP was operating as a *de facto* professional body for such investigators before registration.

The majority of delegates were very positive about the announcement and were keen to be involved in the consultation, which asked if ASSAP should be operating differently now following the registration. The most common view of delegates – which has been echoed since, during the consultation – is that strengthening ethics is the most important function for such a body. Although this change only impacts ASSAP, and those existing and new members who *choose* to participate in this, ideas are welcome from non-members as part of this consultation.

To take part visit assap.ac.uk/consultation
Anyone who is interested in ASSAP can join for £15pa by visiting assap.ac.uk/join

Dave Wood, ASSAP Chairman

Reviews & Overviews

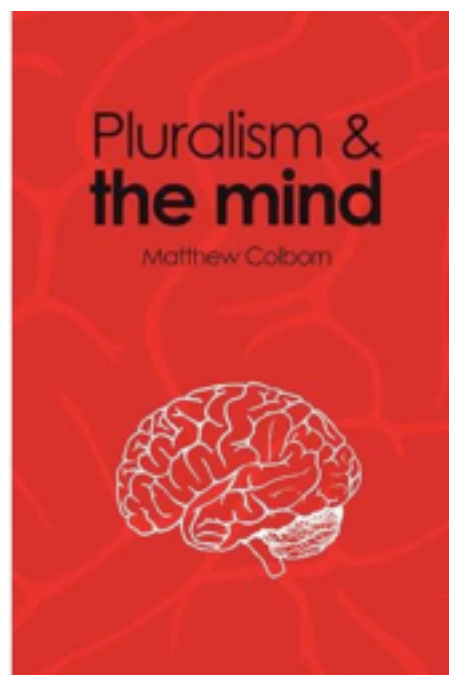


Shamanism and Psi: Imagery Cultivation as an Alternative to the Ganzfeld Protocol. Lance Storm and Adam, J. Rock (Eds.). (2011). Sydney: AIPR, Inc. ISBN: 9780987077202. AUD\$25.00.

Lance Storm and Adam Rock make many useful and important points in this first of the AIPR Monographs. They indicate several possible limitations in the usually accepted claims that the Ganzfeld procedure is truly psi-favorable; they point to the general absence of active cognitive approaches in psi retrieval studies (with the exception of remote viewing studies); they summarize briefly but well the major findings and issues in several areas usually considered psi-favorable (i.e., relaxation, dreams, hypnosis, meditation); they present issues in the 'noise-reduction' approach to psi retrieval, and they present a shamanic-like journeying protocol as a promising new method for enhancing psi retrieval. All these suggestions will prove useful to researchers engaged in studying psi in the laboratory. The authors also present the results of the first run of their new experimental protocol which tests some of the views presented in this monograph. **William Braud**, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto, CA, USA.

Colborn, M.L.C. (2011). Pluralism and the Mind: Consciousness, Worldviews and the Limits of Science. Exeter: Imprint Academic. ISBN: 9781845402211 £17.95

Pluralism and the Mind concerns the gap between experiential states and dominant accounts in cognitive science. 'Modern neuroscience' frequently seeks to reduce most features of consciousness to 'illusions,' a strategy which seems deeply unsatisfactory. There is also an insistence that theories of consciousness conform to a metaphysics of monistic physicalism and currently known physics and biology. A tonic to this is something like William James' philosophical pluralism. Since one's knowledge of the world is constantly evolving but never complete, it seems inappropriate to reduce the cosmos to one substance, essence or principle. The partiality of any single theory also strongly suggests a need for a variety of theoretical alternatives and traditions. Allied to this is a rejection of the reductionism that suggests that consciousness can either be ontologically or causally reduced to neural patterns. I suggest instead the radical exploration of a range of anti-materialist alternatives, starting with property pluralism. I question the right of reductive neuroscience to produce a one-size-fits-all theory of consciousness, emphasising the importance of a wide range of viewpoints on human nature. When different cultures and viewpoints interact, we often learn more than when dominant ideologies are allowed to stifle others. Cognitive imperialism needs to be resisted, and cognitive diversity celebrated. **Matthew Colborn**



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