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**EXPERIMENTER
EFFECTS** **ISSUE**

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From the Editor's Desk

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| by ETZEL CARDEÑA,
CERCAP, Lund University

Very warm congratulations to Caroline Watt for becoming the second Koestler Chair of Parapsychology at the University of Edinburgh (the first one was Bob Morris, honored in *Mindfield*, 7(3)). Here are some lines from Caroline's blog, with her permission (for the complete entry go to <https://koestlerunit.wordpress.com/2016/08/08/becoming-edinburghs-second-koestler-chair-of-parapsychology/>):

"The Koestler Chair of Parapsychology was established at the University of Edinburgh's Department of Psychology in 1985. However parapsychology has ac-

tually been studied at Edinburgh University since the appointment in 1962 of the late Dr John Beloff as a lecturer in the Department of Psychology... John Beloff was a friend of the noted writer Arthur Koestler... and Koestler appointed Beloff as executor. Koestler and his wife Cynthia died in a double suicide in 1983, and bequeathed their estate to establish a Chair of Parapsychology at a British University... to further scientific research into "...the capacity attributed to some individuals to interact with their environment by means other than the recognised sensory and motor channels."... Beloff went on to play an important role in bringing the Koestler Bequest to Edinburgh.

The first Koestler Professor was... Robert L. Morris. Bob came to Edinburgh to take up his position in late 1985. Bob was instrumental in the growth of the KPU, recruiting additional staff (one of whom was me), overseeing over 100 undergraduate student projects, and supervising more than 30 postgraduate students. Many of these postgraduate students went on to research and teach parapsychology at other universities... My

own connection with Bob Morris began shortly after I graduated with a psychology degree from the University of St Andrews in 1984. There had been a lot of press attention over Bob's appointment, and I wrote a speculative letter to him, wishing him success, expressing my curiosity about parapsychology, and saying that I'd love to help out at the Koestler Chair if needed... I successfully applied for a research assistant job with Bob, and in June 1986 became one of the founding members of the Koestler Parapsychology Unit. Yep, I've been here for 30 years. During that time, I studied part-time for a PhD (awarded 1993), brought up two sons, conducted and published many experiments (broadly speaking, looking at areas of overlap between psychology and parapsychology), wrote two books (the latest of which – *Parapsychology: A Beginner's Guide* – came out earlier this year), and got involved in supervising student projects and teaching parapsychology to undergraduate psychology students."

Our sister organization, the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) has been developing its webpage

Our sister organization, the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) has been developing its webpage and expanding its activities.

and expanding its activities. Recently it made public its on-line encyclopedia, which should help counterbalance the slanted and oftentimes ignorant entries on parapsychology in Wikipedia, some of them the product of self-anointed “guerrilla skeptics,” a group of typically dogmatic and uninformed laypeople. The main url for the SPR page is <http://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/>, but can also be reached through www.psi-encyclopedia.org. There is a Twitter account @psiencyclopedia.

The encyclopedia includes a number of general and more specific entries, including those on *Altered States of Consciousness and Psi*, *Mediumship and Possession*, and an expanded version of *Eminent People Interested in Psi* that I first published in *Mindfield* (<http://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/articles/eminent-people-interested-psi>). Check the latter out and let me know if you think I missed anybody.

Another fantastic resource is the series of interviews by Jeffrey

Mishlove in his series *New Thinking Allowed*, which follows his series of some years ago *Thinking Allowed*. His interviewees include many parapsychology figures. Here is the introduction to the series <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFk448YbGITLnzplK-7jwNcw>.

Mindfield has received:

Barušs, Imants, & Mossbridge, Julia (2017). *Transcendent mind: Rethinking the science of consciousness*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. The authors, researchers on consciousness and on presentiment respectively, propose that the received reductive materialist model is inadequate to explain various psi and other phenomena they discuss in their chapters, including: Shared Mind, Rethinking Time, and Direct Mental Influence. They propose instead that mental capacities transcend the usually proposed brain attributes.

Hunter, Jack (2016) (Ed.). *Damned facts: Fortean essays on religion, folklore and the paranormal*. Paphos, Cyprus: Aporetic Press. This is collection of papers revisiting the naturally occurring odd phenomena (e.g., frogs falling from the sky, spontaneous human combustion) that Charles Fort col-

lected from various newspapers. It includes contributions from some authors on parapsychology including Jeff Kripal, Wellington Zangari, Fatima Regina Machado, and the editor.

This issue of *Mindfield* starts with a thorough discussion by the PA President, Chris Roe, of potential psychological and parapsychological experimenter effects. To the variables he mentions I would add that besides their behavior, demographic characteristics of experimenters such as their sex can have an impact on studies, and not only on humans, as shown recently by a study in which the mere smell of males (rodents and humans, but not females) increased baseline stress ratings (Sorge et al., 2014; for an old review of related research on the effect of experimenters' characteristics on participants see Silverman, 1974). The denial of the effect of experimenter's characteristics on participants' responses follows an oversimplistic research model that fails to consider that interactions are embedded within a network of complex variables, many if not most of which are not measured, plus an uncertain amount of randomness, found not only in psychology but in the living sciences (Lewontin, 1994). Acknowledgment of this fact can go a long way to explain failures

to replicate studies, perhaps as much as the currently fashionable “questionable research practices” (Barrett, 2015). We are far from developing a useful research model that takes into consideration a systemic view (cf. Cardeña, 2015), but adding experimenter characteristics and behaviors is a step in the right direction.

Renaud Evrard chronicles the joint 59th PA and 35th SSE convention, besides providing his PA Secretary's Report, which includes news of the winners of various PA awards (congratulations to them!). The following two contributions are of particular historical interest. Carlos Alvarado, our historian *extraordinaire*, gives us the first part of a bibliography on the history of parapsychology, which should be obligatory reading for anyone interested in the field. How many times have I encountered that what I thought was a lucid way of considering an issue in the field, or a novel research question, had been proposed decades ago but been ignored by our shared historical (and often also cultural) ignorance. Michael Tremmel, Student Rep and recent award winner, gives a more circumscribed historical account of the concept and uses of the concept of *psionic* and *psionics*, coined originally in science/fiction literature. This column brought a smile to my face because when I was a teen

my father (Jaime Cardeña, a psychoanalyst who was interested in both parapsychology and s/f) organized a group to informally study psi phenomena, which he called *psiónica*. More generally, there are fascinating connections between some of the great figures of s/f and parapsychology, which Jeff Kripal (2011), more comprehensively and sympathetically, and Parkinson (2015) have described. And Gerd Hövelmann, this time assisted by Maurice van Luitjelaar, contributes one of his very useful bibliographies of articles relevant to parapsychology published in journals of other fields. Enjoy!

The results of the PA election are in: Wim Kramer was elected as Vice President (Edwin May and Renaud Evrard also ran), Christine Simmonds-Moore, Renaud Evrard, Edwin May, and Peter Mulacz were elected as Directors (Sally Ann Drucker, Glenn Hitchman, and Everton Maraldi also ran), and Chris Cody was elected as Student Representative (Michael Tremmel also ran). Our gratitude to all!

And to add to the methodological and substantial contributions of parapsychology to mainstream psychology, the BBC has a recent column discussing Tony Cornell as a pio-

neer in the study of inattentional blindness, see <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20161024-the-strange-tale-of-an-x-rated-haunting>

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Experimenter as Participant: What Can We learn from the Experimenter Effect?

In the last issue of *Mindfield* I noted that even where an effect is real and robust we should still expect variations in the effect sizes captured in any particular study as a consequence of sampling error, and that the likelihood of replicating an earlier finding is dependent not on the capricious nature of psi (and whether we have performed the correct propitiatory rites to the Fates), but more soberly on the prevailing effect size and the power of the current study. I illustrated that the pattern of outcomes we see from ganzfeld replications are a reasonable fit with this form of stochastic replication (and the recent meta-analysis of “feeling the future” studies also gives outcomes that are a remarkable approximation of statistical expectation — see the funnel plot on p. 10 of Bem, Tressoldi, Rabeyron, & Duggan, 2016). However, it is also true that some of the variance in outcomes can be attributed to other sources; in par-

ticular, we frequently see that some researchers or laboratories seem to consistently get positive results while others consistently score at or below chance.

This differential performance is known as the experimenter effect, and has been recognised as an important characteristic of parapsychological findings. Smith (2003a, p. 70), for example, asks “why do some investigators seem to be consistently unable to obtain evidence for psi, whilst others continue to obtain psi effects in their experiments? What is it about these apparently ‘successful’ experimenters that distinguish them from ‘unsuccessful’ experimenters? ... [T]hese questions lie at the heart of the issue of replication in parapsychology”. Palmer and Millar (2015) similarly assert “The identity of the principal investigator (PI) ... is the best predictor we have of the outcome of a psi experiment” (p. 293). And Palmer (1986, pp. 220–221) has earlier



by CHRIS ROE,
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claimed, “the experimenter effect is the most important challenge facing modern parapsychology. It may be that we will not be able to make too much progress in other areas of the field until the puzzle of the experimenter effect is solved”. In this article I would like to look at the experimenter effect

more closely to see what we can learn from its occurrence.

Examples from Parapsychology

Perhaps the most striking early demonstration of an experimenter effect in parapsychology was reported by West and Fisk (1953). The collaborators had had contrasting fortunes in previous research, with Fisk having reported a number of successful studies while West had only produced chance outcomes. They collaborated on a forced choice ESP experiment in which 20 participants were asked to predict the times shown on a series of cards that bore a simple clock face showing a hand pointing to one of the numbers 1-12. Half of the packs were prepared by West and half by Fisk. Participants performed in line with their experimenter's previous track record, with West's scoring at chance and Fisk's significantly above chance. Importantly for our later consideration of explanations for the experimenter effect, the researchers had very little contact with participants in this postal study. Intriguingly, when Fisk did all the mailing in a second study but produced only half the target sets while the others were prepared by West using exactly the same random number table, participants still showed differential performance, scoring above chance for targets that Fisk had

Perhaps the most striking early demonstration of an experimenter effect in parapsychology was reported by West and Fisk (1953).

prepared but with null scores for those produced by West.

Being psi conducive is not necessarily all-or-nothing. Sometimes researchers can find that certain approaches or populations consistently give rise to null results despite their ability to produce above chance scoring in other circumstances. Gaither Pratt, for example, had reported high ESP scores in studies that involved participants who were of a similar age or disposition to himself (e.g., Pratt, 1973), but when he collaborated with Margaret Price on a study involving children in which Pratt tested the girls and Price the boys, the former scored close to chance (deviation +81 after nearly 54,000 trials) whereas the latter scored above chance (+609 in just over 29,000 trials). In a second series, both tested equal numbers of girls and boys, with each acting as the other's research assistant, so that they could monitor the procedure and ensure that it stayed uniform. Now the difference between girls' and boys' scores was negligible,

but Price's participants again had significantly high ESP scores, and Pratt's did not. Schmeidler (1997, p. 85) attributes this to differences in their nature: Pratt was "a quiet, careful, methodical young man," while Price was "a charming, friendly, outgoing young woman" who also was experienced at running experiments with schoolchildren; indeed, their paper describes Price's attempts to encourage Pratt to engage the participants in conversation and have them "open up," and notes the positive effects this had on their scoring.

The most salient recent test of experimenter effects in parapsychology is a collaboration between proponent Marilyn Schlitz, who had a track record of producing psi effects (e.g., Braud & Schlitz, 1991), and Richard Wiseman, a skeptic who had a track record of failing to produce them (e.g. Wiseman & Greening, 2002). They had both previously conducted experiments looking at staring detection, with Schlitz again reporting evidence of psi (Schlitz & LaBerge, 1994) and Wiseman again reporting no evidence of it (Wiseman & Smith, 1994). Interestingly they agreed to conduct a joint study in which they would both use the same experimental set-up and draw participants from the same pool to see whether they could replicate their differential performance. The basic design of their staring detection studies involved either Wiseman or Schlitz acting as the influencer

The first experiment (Wiseman & Schlitz, 1998) was conducted at Wiseman's Hertfordshire laboratory and involved 16 participants each. Conditions were identical except for the identity of the experimenter/starer.

("starer"), observing the participant ("staree") intermittently via cctv. During staring trials they would attend to the starees with the intention of physiologically arousing them, while during no stare trials they would look elsewhere and focus their attention on something else. The sequence of stare and no stare trials was randomly determined by the experimental program. Meanwhile the starees simply relaxed as much as possible while their electrodermal activity (EDA) was continuously monitored. A remote staring effect would be evidenced by a significant difference in EDA between the stare and no stare periods.

The first experiment (Wiseman & Schlitz, 1998) was conducted at Wiseman's Hertfordshire laboratory and involved 16 participants each. Conditions were identical except for the identity of the experimenter/starer. The EDA of Schlitz's par-

ticipants was significantly higher in stare than in no-stare trials, as predicted, whereas the EDA of Wiseman's participants showed no effect, thus confirming their earlier, independent, findings. A second joint project (Wiseman & Schlitz, 1999) took place at Schlitz's laboratory at the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) and again both experimenters employed the same procedures, equipment, and participant pool ($N = 35$ for each experimenter). Schlitz's participants again showed a small but statistically significant effect, whereas Wiseman's did not; however, in this case Schlitz's participants were significantly *less* activated during the stare than nonstare periods, contrary to study one. In a third study, the roles of experimenter and starer were separated in a 2x2 design so that some participants were met and briefed by the person who would act as their starer but others were briefed by one researcher while the other acted as their starer. At the time of the briefing session the researchers did not know which would be the starer. The study was again run at IONS and the 100 participants were staff members or local volunteers. The mean effect was somewhat larger when Schlitz was greeter rather than Wiseman, and when Wiseman was starer rather than Schlitz, but none of the effects deviated meaningfully from chance. This is a shame given that the study promised to tease apart two important roles, but with no ev-

idence of psi there was no possibility to explore experimenter effects. The authors noted that they both experienced a diminished motivation and interest in the experiment, but this could not be evidenced (for example as a decline effect), and the disappearance of the effect could equally be attributed to methodological refinements.

Space does not permit me to give details of other examples of experimenter effects in parapsychology, but to illustrate the ubiquitous nature of this phenomenon, I should like to note that Bem (2012) has accounted for the Ritchie, Wiseman, and French failures to replicate his anomalous anticipation effects by commenting, "I believe that some major variables determining the success or failure of replications are likely to be the experimenters' expectations about, and attitudes toward, the experimental hypothesis" (p. 353), and Millar (in Palmer & Millar, 2015) attributes the failure of the large European replication of the PEAR laboratory's micro psychokinesis work to experimenter effects.

Accounting for the Experimenter Effect

So if the case is made that the experimenter can affect the outcome of a parapsychology experiment, how is that brought about? Smith (2003a) offers four categories of explanation: experimenter fraud,

experimenter error, experimenter-participant interaction, and experimenter psi. I have considered experimenter fraud in a previous *Mindfield* article and do not regard it as a sufficiently pervasive factor to account for the effect. Although unwitting recording errors are more likely to be consistent with expectation, the variety of circumstances under which experimenter effects have been identified (e.g., in data that are automatically recorded, such as in staring detection) suggests that it is not a primary explanation. (Schmeidler [1997, p. 83] considered both of these explanations “frivolous.”)

Instead I will focus on the two explanations that Palmer and Millar (2015) identify: the experimenter psi hypothesis and the experimenter behaviour hypothesis. The first of these proposes that the outcome from a parapsychology experiment reflects action of the experimenter’s own psi; the second that it reflects the experimenter’s ability to set a positive expectation for the trial and to put participants sufficiently at ease to express their own psi abilities. Schmeidler (1997) refers to such experimenters as psi *conducive* and psi *permissive* respectively, a distinction that I think is very helpful.

I will consider the psi conducive experimenter first, since explanations in terms of experimenter psi are given more emphasis by Palmer and Millar (2015) in their recent overview — the section in their

chapter devoted to behavioural causes amounts to 1 1/2 pages while experimenter psi is given three times that much space. The grounds for proposing the experimenter psi hypothesis seem primarily to derive from a perception that psi may be boundless and goal-oriented, and in such circumstances we should acknowledge that the person whose needs are most likely to be satisfied by the statistical outcome of an experiment will probably be the experimenter rather than the participant (particularly where the latter has little connection with the study and its outcomes once debriefing has been completed). Indeed, some experimental data — such as from the Fisk and West study described earlier — are admittedly difficult to explain except in terms of experimenter psi, given that there is virtually no contact between experimenter and participant to enable the right ambiance to be set for participants to exhibit their own psi.

In support of this interpretation, Smith (2003b) surveyed active experimental parapsychologists and among 40 responses found that psi conduciveness correlated with beliefs about one’s own ESP and PK abilities (although of course this could be circular, with experimental success boosting one’s conviction of personal ability). Millar (in Palmer & Millar, 2015) characterises psi conducive experimenters as virtuosos and estimates that although there might be as few as half a dozen such

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persons who are research active in parapsychology at any one time, they “dominate parapsychology,” which seems plausible to me — there would probably be good agreement in the community as to the names of the likely candidates among the current crop of researchers. But while this might account for impressive initial programmes of study from particular laboratories (e.g., Bem, 2011; Bem & Honorton, 1997; Radin, 1997), it struggles to account for subsequent successful replication attempts involving a wide range of other laboratories (e.g., Bem et al., 2016; Storm, Tressoldi, & Di Risio, 2010; Mossbridge, Tressoldi, Utts, Ives, Radin, & Jonas, 2014). Most intriguingly, it is difficult to see how experimenter effects could be responsible for evidence of psi that derives from studies that were conducted for non-parapsychological purposes by researchers with no interest in capturing psi (see Bierman, 2000).

Of course, it could be argued that since we do not know the limits of psi then it is theoretically possible for the original experimenters — unconsciously, in a goal-directed, need-based fashion — to affect the outcome of ostensibly independent replications. And here's the rub. Allowing such an unbounded mechanism for the psi conducive experimenter effect amounts, I think, to an unfalsifiable hypothesis. Although this does not in itself negate the hypothesis, it would severely constrain our capacity to make systematic progress in testing it or studying the phenomena that are affected by it. It seems to me sensible to see how far we can go in explaining experimenter effects in terms of social and cognitive factors before we start to invoke such inscrutable and potentially omnipotent mechanisms.

Conventional Experimenter Effects

We need to consider, then, what kinds of experimenter effect are possible by more conventional psychosocial means so as to assess whether any or all of the effects we find in parapsychology might be explained in these ways. The classic work on experimenter effects by Robert Rosenthal and colleagues (see Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2009) illustrates that powerful changes in study outcome can

be achieved by manipulating experimenter characteristics such as expectancy and interactive style. Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) study of the Pygmalion effect, for example, illustrates how expectancy can become self-fulfilling. All the children at an elementary school completed a nonverbal test of intelligence. Teachers were told that the assessment could detect those children who were about to undergo a cognitive blooming, showing rapid improvement, with approximately 20% of the children being identified as "bloomers." In fact, these were randomly chosen from each of the 18 classes across 6 grade levels. At the end of the school year, some 8 months later, all the children were administered an IQ test and it was found that those labelled as bloomers had improved 4 IQ points relative to their classmates (2 points on verbal, and a whopping 7 points on reasoning). Pygmalion effects have subsequently been demonstrated not just in classrooms but in courtrooms, nursing homes, management settings, and even swimming pools (Rosenthal, 1994, p. 178).

Effects are not restricted to human participants, who might be sensitised to verbal and nonverbal signals from a person with authority over them. Animals can also be subject to experimenter effects, as illustrated in studies purporting to investigate maze learning in rats (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2009,

pp. 423-439). Participants were told that interbreeding of rats that had done well when learning a maze would produce successive generations of rats that would do considerably better than unselected rats; similarly, rats bred from poor performers would produce offspring that were worse than average. Each of 12 students was assigned 5 rats, all of which were either from the Maze-Bright or Maze-Dull strain. Actually, the rats were randomly grouped, with the proviso that groups were matched for mean age, since maturation could affect performance. Each rat was run in the maze 10 times a day for 5 days, with the experimenter recording whether each trial was a success or failure. Performance of the Maze-Bright rats was significantly better than for Maze-Dull on days 1, 4, and 5, as well as overall. Maze-Bright rats conformed more closely to the expected 'learning curve' across the 5 days, while Maze-Dull rats showed some early improvement that subsided. This suggests that the differential effect was quite immediate rather than having to be built up more subtly through regular contact. On 20% of all trials the rats failed by making no movement at all, with 17 of these involving Bright rats and 43 Dull. If these trials are excluded as a possible confound, Bright rats were still significantly quicker than Dull ones on successful trials. Although experi-

Since these quite striking early results, interpersonal expectancy effects have been confirmed in a wide range of studies.

menter/participant interactions with their animals were not formally monitored, the experimenter group included two confederates of the researchers who were able to give feedback on research practices. They did not observe any incorrect entries or data fudging, but did see some instances of experimenters prompting the rats to move by prodding them, though this occurred slightly more often with Dull rats than Bright ones (3 versus 2 occasions) so that was not a contributor to group differences. More importantly, experimenters working with Bright rats handled them more often and more gently, and this could have been a mechanism that led to behavioural differences when maze running.

Since these quite striking early results, interpersonal expectancy effects have been confirmed in a wide range of studies. Rosenthal (1994, p. 176) refers to 464 studies with an overall d of .63 ($r = .30$) that demonstrates the effect in a variety of contexts, including studies of reaction time,

interpretation of inkblots, animal learning, person perception, and skill learning. Harris and Rosenthal (1985) provide a meta-analysis of 135 studies that focus on 16 behaviours hypothesised to mediate the effect, including warm interpersonal climate, experimenter expectancy, focused attention, and feedback (Harris & Rosenthal, 1985; Rosenthal, 1994).

Psi Permissive Experimenter Qualities

It is interesting to note that similar factors have been highlighted by parapsychologists interested in experimenter effects. Schmeidler and Maher (1981) video recorded researchers as they gave talks and answered questions at an academic conference. Independent judges viewed footage of five “psi-conductive” and five “psi-inhibitory” researchers matched for relative age and physical features, and rated them along a number of dimensions. Psi-conductive experimenters were rated as more flexible, enthusiastic, friendly, likeable, and warm and less tense, irritable, and cold. Of course, it is possible that the way that researchers present themselves at a parapsychological conference is affected by the success or otherwise of the research they are describing, and their sense of how they might be perceived by their peers, but it is encouraging

that dimensions that seem likely to put participants at ease and enable them to behave openly and naturalistically are the ones that predict success at a psi task.

Some researchers have attempted to manipulate these factors. For example, Honorton, Ramsay, and Cabibbo (1975) had two experimenters who interacted either in a positive manner (friendly, casual, supportive) during the time taken to establish rapport with the participant, or in a negative manner (abrupt, formal, and unfriendly) while they went quickly into the task. The positive treatment gave significantly higher scores than the negative one. However, when Schneider, Binder, and Walach (2000) manipulated the experimenter’s interactional style analogous to warmth (personal versus neutral), they found no difference between the conditions. Similarly, Parker (1975) manipulated expectancy among six experimenters (student data collectors) so that they were presented as strong believers or strong disbelievers. Although overall scoring was null, there was a significant difference in performance between the experimenter groups, even though they, in fact, were testing the same sender-receiver pairs. In practice it is very difficult to manipulate interpersonal style without coming off as inauthentic. A preferred method is to appoint a number of experimenters who might vary

naturally on interpersonal dimensions. Watt and Ramakers (2003) found that participants working with genuine believer-experimenters on a remote facilitation of attention task scored significantly better than those working with disbeliever-experimenters (who performed at chance levels).

A further difficulty with such studies is in ensuring that the intended manipulation (e.g., of participant belief or warmth) has the expected impact on the participant. Schmeidler (1997) has noted that in practice this can vary from case to case depending on the preferences of the participant — what puts one person at ease may set another person on edge. For example, intimacy and closeness may establish rapport with some participants but be seen as intrusive and cloying by others. This can be addressed by having experimenters interact as they ordinarily would and then asking participants to retrospectively rate the interaction. I have been involved in studies of ganzfeld ESP and of PK that adopted this method, with participants completing questionnaires after the interaction but before the psi task (with the assurance that their responses will be scored by an independent judge and the experimenter would never have access to them). In one study (Sherwood, Roe, Holt, & Wilson, 2005) we found that ganzfeld success was associated with more relaxed, more optimistic, and more

confident senders and experimenters and more confident receivers. When looking at a PK task (Roe, Davey, & Stevens, 2006) we found performance was associated with positive mood, positivity toward the task, and relaxation, but especially experimenter confidence of success. This strongly suggests to me that we can be sensitive to aspects of the interaction that have a direct bearing on the participants' ability to demonstrate psi.

In this context, it is worth reflecting on Caroline Watt's valuable insight into the intentions and interactive style of psi permissive and psi inhibitory experimenters Schlitz and Wiseman (Watt, Wiseman, & Schlitz, 1998). Watt conducted interviews after two of the studies described earlier had been completed, to see if they could identify differences in their research practice that might have contributed to the differences in outcome. From these it is clear that Schlitz had a preparatory ritual that focused her on the trial and the participant, and set a clear intention for the session. On greeting the participant she sought to personalise the interaction and develop rapport, as well as normalise the phenomenon and set expectation of success based on previous experiences and research findings. She reflects (p. 23), "I would try to give [participants] every reason to feel optimistic that this particular thing we're doing together could actually produce something."

It is worth reflecting on Caroline Watt's valuable insight into the intentions and interactive style of psi permissive and psi inhibitory experimenters Schlitz and Wiseman.

During debriefing she would provide closure regarding the experience by discussing and interpreting the data. In contrast, Wiseman described how his preparation was restricted to practical matters such as ensuring equipment and materials were organised. His briefing of participants was more "matter of fact," and although he did not declare his scepticism it seems likely it would have been recognised, "sometimes I'd say, 'I know this sounds like quite a weird experiment, but let's try it'. If the participant was sceptical I'd say, 'Well, let's give it a go.'" Indeed, Wiseman suspected that his scepticism would be apparent to participants, "there are probably big differences in that initial chat with them, just in terms of how much they walked away thinking that yes indeed this was a procedure that was going to work" (p. 23). (Smith [2003a, p. 75] notes that Schlitz's participants reported stronger belief in psi and speculates that the

Wiseman-Schlitz effect may have been due to the communication of experimenters' expectations to the participants.) Wiseman would give a clear explanation of what the study entailed but did not attempt to develop rapport, "for the most part, no, there's not a great deal of other chat. I would describe it as more businesslike, but not unfriendly" (p. 21) and this did not extend to acknowledging any spontaneous experiences as a means of setting positive intention, "if some of them started to talk through their experiences with me, I found that quite difficult to relate to because I'm quite sceptical about these things. You don't want to be confrontational with people and so you end up nodding and going 'oh, that's interesting. Anyway, back to the experiment'" (p 21). From these descriptions it seems obvious who we would expect to be psi permissive and who psi inhibitory.

Conclusion

In this article I have tried to show that replication in parapsychology might be less exact than in the natural sciences because of the wide range of interpersonal factors that can affect performance. These have been bundled together under the heading of *experimenter effects* to show how subtly the demeanour and expectations of the experimenter can shape the outcome of the study. Understanding these relations might make more pre-

I have tried to show that replication in parapsychology might be less exact than in the natural sciences because of the wide range of interpersonal factors that can affect performance.

dictable the occurrence of the phenomena we wish to study. It hinges, in my view, on acknowledging that the social sciences are not like the natural sciences in that the researcher cannot remain separate from the system that he or she is studying, such that the practice of research is as much an art that involves refining one's awareness of how to enable participants to fulfill their potential as it is a mastery of particular techniques or methods.

Of course, many in the social sciences are willing to reject this rather messy (and potentially idiosyncratic) understanding of the experimenter-participant dyad, preferring instead a simpler model in which participants think and do only what is required of them by the experimental manipulation. Despite initial keen interest in Rosenthal's work and the accumulation of a persuasive evidence base for the occurrence of experimenter effects, the topic is barely covered

in mainstream psychology texts today. As Tart (2016, p. 54) observes, "the topic pretty much disappeared from the psychology literature. Not that the issue had been dealt with and the problem could now be dismissed as solved, people just stopped writing about it — my guess was that such a threat to the necessary objectivity of psychological studies was just too threatening and nobody wanted to think about it. ... it had only been a hundred years since they let us out of the philosophy department and we were afraid our claims to be scientists would prove unfounded and they would send us back to the philosophy department — understandable human behaviour, poor science." Quite.

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Using Science to Promote Worldviews?

A Review of the 2016 59th PA and 35th SSE Convention

I am not in the best place to review a convention I helped organize, along with Roger Nelson and Chantal Toporow, but I will try to stay as subjective as usual. I welcomed the first joint convention with the Society for Scientific Exploration, but I feared the heterogeneity, because of our distinctive areas of interest and review process. This heterogeneity, however, raises new questions about our field. This convention was held in Boulder, Colorado during five days. It was like the Olympics games: 40 regular talks, 8 special talks, 1 panel discussion, 1 film, 20 posters in two sessions, and a one-day workshop on psi dreaming.

Day 1

The starting lecture, an invited address by Larry Dossey, surprised me a lot. Using mainly quotations from various people (from Jung to Woody Allen), he argued that the

concept of “soul” is not obsolete, as parapsychological data are evidence that we are all immortal, right now. Experiments were just mentioned in passing, as supportive of strong philosophical views. For me it was more like a sermon about the moral advantages of the immortality belief, or “parapsychology as the religion of love.”

The rest of the morning was more familiar to me. Arnaud Delorme, on behalf of an international group of 10 researchers, discussed experimenter effects and psi replication. All 32 experimenters completed questionnaires to measure the correlations between their expectancies and the 512 participants’ performances. Nothing significant appeared, except in post-hoc analysis (it sounds really familiar, doesn’t it?). Three interesting things about this study: 1) they used one of Daryl Bem’s experimental task (retro-priming), which seems to have become the



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new standard in parapsychology; 2) they pre-registered the study through the KPU, another gold standard to move forward in the proof-oriented controversy; 3) they showed the feasibility of a multi-laboratory collaboration to address the replication problem in parapsychology.

Session 2 was all about experimental parapsychology. Bruno

Silva and Gabrielle Poeschl tried to show the impact of Bem's 2011 paper on scientific literature, with $N = 162$ papers, covering four zones: replication issues, Bayesian analysis, quantum theories, and experimental parapsychology. It went far beyond the microcosm of parapsychology and became part of a change in psychological research as a whole.

Julia Mossbridge was also inspired by Bem, as she transformed the "slow-thinking" task of anomalous facilitation of recall into a "fast-thinking" task. Her online exploratory study obtained barely significant results, but some effects appeared in the difference between men and women. She discussed other projects she had, including a smartphone app testing presentiment. Her conclusion was that presentiment may be more the own prediction by the participant of his/her future responses than his/her prediction of general future events. The same conclusion as Dunne in 1927?

Göran Brusewitz and his colleagues pursued their small-size studies of twin psi abilities. This time, they measured attachment using an original task, in which one twin received a quite surprising stimulation (hand put in the ice, exploding balloon, etc.) and physiological variables of the other were recorded. They got promising results but a lack of variance in twins' attachment.

Jacob Jolij and Dick Bierman,

from the University of Groningen, developed a new paradigm based on a mainstream one. In a classical task of stimulus detection, they observed an anticipated response to the stimulus, and identified it through the classification of the data of one EEG marker.

In the afternoon, we traveled into another world. The SSE's Dinsdale Award was given to Jeff Meldrum for his study of Sasquatch and other wild men! Meldrum was able to give a nice scientific framework to his research. First, he destroyed some false ideas about homo species. Then he presented some recent data about the not-so-old coexistence of several homo species. Why contemporary testimonies of such a coexistence are not taken seriously? The evidence he collected were mainly footprints, some which coincide with observation reports. This type of evidence was merged with videos that can be found on the Internet... All in all, a pleasant talk that opened unexpected perspectives.

After a talk on a medical anomaly (antibacterial clays), Jennifer Lyke offered a psychological study on DMT (a psychedelic compound) entities, through the analysis of 149 reports collected on Erowid.org. She found no pattern between the type of entity and its interaction with the DMT user.

The session 4 on "Mediumship and Séance phenomena" was

introduced by my talk about NDEs. NDEs are associated to the perception of imminent death, even if no real threat is occurring. Then part of the mental state of the NDE helps develop life-saving rescue actions, through acute perceptions and acrobatic performances. This model was based on old cases and questionnaire studies, before Moody promoted the standard view of NDE as a passive reaction to imminent death. The reception of my provocative talk was quite harsh, as NDE are, for some people, evidence of something else than a psychophysiological adaptive response.

Other talks in this session dealt with the illusion of spoon bending, with a weird talk by physicist Willem van den Berg who had difficulties admitting he was tricked by a professional conjurer; a discussion of spiritually transformative experiences of claimant mediums by the transpersonal researcher William G. Everist, who failed to convince (at least me) about the differential diagnosis between psychopathological and "spiritual" experiences; and Julie Beischel's interesting survey on secular American mediums, which attempts to build a realistic and holistic picture of who they are, through multiples socio-demographic and personality scales.

We were also entitled to the premiere of the documentary "Third Eye Spies" on US military remote viewing program, focused

on Russell Targ. We were able to make suggestions to the filmmaker, as the documentary had some obvious flaws, in particular its length. But it was very nice to watch a man both so funny and so touching caught in such an unlikely story.

Day 2

In his PA Award Address, Dean Radin described several years of PK experiments asking questions of the quantum world. With high-tech technologies and high-level meditators, he has published several papers in mainstream journals showing a recurrent effect. He even claimed to rule out experimenter effects with a session where they obtained inverted results due to an error in the protocol design.

York Dobyns adapted one of Bem's task to test retrocausality through an automatic loop, i.e. a self-canceling signal that generates a statistical paradox.

Physicist Hartmut Grote described a complex experiment testing the Correlation-Matrix-Method developed in Germany by Walter von Lucadou. Using 6 psychological scales and 5 physical variables, he developed a very rigorous pre-planned analysis of the data. He obtained non-significant results but had the honesty to report strange "trickster" results with the control data. He also showed how errors in pre-

After the lunch, Chris Roe gave his PA Outstanding Contribution Award talk, about Dream ESP Research. In front of Stanley Krippner, he recalled the development of this research paradigm, from the Maimonides dream laboratory to home experiments.

vious statistical analyses had overestimated the significance of previous CMM results.

Roger Nelson presented the results of the Global consciousness project, trying to challenge some of the divergent interpretations by Peter Bancel, who explained the results by a goal-oriented experimenter effect. A follow-up discussion showed that the disagreement has not ended.

After the break, Alejandro Parra described macro-PK experiments and showed a video in which a table rocked while the medium always had contact with it. A lot of physical records attempted to make this "levitation" more convincing, showing for instance that the weight of the subject was correlated with the weight of the table.

Then we had some papers on clinical and experiential approaches. Margaret Moga presented a survey of exceptional experiences of healers, which are validated as steps in their paranormal training. Ingo Lambrecht explained, in a charismatic talk, his hard shamanic training, practice of clinical parapsychology in a conventional hospital, anthropological study of the sacred house used for healing by Maoris, and the discernment of spiritual experiences from the psychotic continuum. Quite a success! Parra came back at the end of this session for a correlational study of mediumistic experiences. With 348 participants, he found support for 5 of his 6 predictors: extraversion, schizotypy, vividness of visual imagery, transliminality, and boundary thinness.

After the lunch, Chris Roe gave his PA Outstanding Contribution Award talk, about Dream ESP Research. In front of Stanley Krippner, he recalled the development of this research paradigm, from the Maimonides dream laboratory to home experiments. Northampton University contributed a lot to this line of research, which has cumulative positive results. It seems more efficient than other experimental paradigms without selected participants.

There were two more sessions that evening. The first was on physics theory by SSE speakers. They covered huge theories (physics of information, many worlds'

interpretation, quantum mechanics, Bohm's implicate order) to provide a framework to paranormal phenomena.

The last session was about "Things that go bump in the night", again by SSE speakers. Thomas Goodey and René Verreault were enthusiastic about the forthcoming American total solar eclipse in August 2016. It is an opportunity for a massive testing of a recurrently reported physical anomaly: the altered functioning of some specific instruments in a way incompatible with Einsteinian physics. Ross Davis spoke about cataloguing all UFO observations around the world. Ufology seems to need this database to strengthen its scientific opportunities, but such a database needs a huge collective effort and does not by itself improve the quality of the collect of testimonies. Finally, Joseph Buchman told his funny story of a young retired academic who launched himself in politics, with the original promise to fully disclose governmental data about UFOs. A political and popular forum was organized around that, and he is currently working on the analysis on what the experts testified there.

Day 3

The day begun with Chris Roe's PA Presidential Address on the lessons he learned through his 25-years journey in the field.

He began at 14, with a popular science magazine. After studying natural sciences, he came to Edinburgh during the time of Shapin and Bloor's famous renewal of philosophy of sciences. He progressively developed all the skills he needed: training in experimental psychology and conjuring, discussing with skeptics, analyzing experimenter effects... Recently, he added to his bow qualitative methods, transpersonal psychology, and discussion with experienced and practitioners.

Stanley Krippner gave a talk about some paranormal dreams a woman had. The contents of the dreams gave precise information about the traumatic war memories of her lover.

Then Caroline Watt presented her work with James E. Kennedy on the founding of the KPU registry for experimental parapsychology. She framed it as another major methodological improvement for science as a whole coming from the parapsychology side. This registry will facilitate registration-based prospective meta-analysis to replace retrospective meta-analyses.. They applied it on Ganzfeld ESP studies and calculated that we need 869 trials to have the statistical power for a 30% hit rate (only 134 trials if we select artists as participants). Advantages and limits of this process were discussed.

After the break, we had a session on "anomalous neurosci-

ences" with two highlights. First, Morris Freedman and his team tested psi with brain-damaged patients, to assess the theory of psi inhibition by the frontal lobes. After 1000 trials and 1000 control trials, they obtained significant results with some of their 6 patients. It is nice to see the "filter theory" put to the test. The other highlight was Samuel Sandweiss and his team still working on the xenoglossy that occurred in 1983. They video- and audio-recorded several messages from a woman patient, and after years of analysis by specialists, they were able to translate them. One message used 5 different languages in 3 minutes: Ancient Vedic, classical Sanskrit, Hindi, Tibetan, and English. This religious message was coherent and seems to have been "miraculously" inspired by Sai Baba, on whom Sandweiss was also working. There is a website to see the documentary on that case, but a scientific paper has not yet been published.

Another talk in this session deserved to be mentioned: Herb Mertz did a "longitudinal single-subject REG project." He tried to influence his Psyleron 3 hours a day during 11 years, for a total of 10,000 hours! Remembering Haakon Forwald's PK study, this attempt was less interesting on an objective perspective than on a subjective one. After six months of failure, Mertz began to anticipate the effects and found "units of

meaning” in the data deviations, enough to call his study “structural psychology”.

After lunch, Gerhard A. Mayer spoke on “reflexive anomalistics.” I am pleased to see further ideas on how sociology can help improve the field. This epistemology urges anomalistic researchers to look at what they are doing, and take a step back on all these controversies. They should address interactions with the paranormal in general, even the non-scientific ones, and realize they are dealing with a “complex entanglement of subjective, intersubjective and objective evidence”.

We had had a session entitled “Nature and Nurture in Parapsychology.” Bradley Bartholomew spoke about “psi activity in the DNA” following high-level speculation about how we may modify our own DNA through psi. Support for this hypothesis came from rumors of Russian research using lasers on eggs, to the recent interest of Nobel laureate Luc Montagnier for “water memory.” Anthropologist James McClenon used the “gene hunting strategy” to reach the first steps of a localization of the genes of anomalous experiences. He developed a correlation mapping, loosely mixing items from various questionnaires, and screening the best candidates of whom, in a second step, ask for a genogram. The session was ended by Nancy Zingrone’s talk about education in parapsychology. She

compared the different education opportunities in the field and the obstacles.

That day ended with the presidential reception and the J.B. Rhine lecture by Ian Wickramasekera II, from Naropa University, about “The Secrets of the Heart: Empathy & Anomalous/Transpersonal Experiences.” He first paid a tribute to Stanley Krippner, who gave him the advice he gives to young people who ask him: if you want to help parapsychology, first train yourself in another discipline then came back when you are established. So did Wickramasekera with his mainstream studies of empathy and compassion through experimental and clinical hypnosis

Day 4

William Bengston gave the SSE Presidential talk on pragmatic applications of healing. Bengston is known for his successful experiments on healing. But failing to generate young patrons’ interest, he started looking for practical applications: to capture and reproduce the healing without the healer. This “reverse engineering” approach attempted to keep the “healing information” in a storage space like... cotton. He described several experiments, with mixed results.

Dean Radin took over in an equally comical and serious manner at once. Radin built an isolated room full of various sensors

and video cameras. Unfortunately, he detected no difference between charged and uncharged objects. This does not invalidate the whole research program, since Radin hypothesized that we may be dealing with an empty signal only carrier of information that echoes the Bengston’s “resonant bonding”.

Two other talks dealt with technical interfaces. Mark Boccuzzi tried to implement “deep machine learning” in psi research. First, he used a software to model in 3D

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From this perspective, psi technologies are impossible, as it is the “psi” which is guiding people, not the reverse.

data from a field RNG experiment. Then, he used another software of deep machine learning to read the 3D data. For instance, the software found more “triangles” when Boccuzzi’s group focused on “hating the Psyleron” than when they tried to “love” it.

Takeshi Shimizu and his team from Meiji University, reported their studies of field RNG and videos. They used a mathematical tool (discrete wavelet transform with Haar filter) to test the reliability of the correlations, but it appears that the RNG fields, during movies in a cinema, were not reliable enough to conclude anything.

This morning full of promise of psi technologization took a 180-degree turn, with the Panel discussion on the Trickster theory I helped organize. The discussion showed some enthusiasm for this neglected model. George Hansen described basic aspects of his model: there are binary oppositions and, in the areas between them, the liminal space.

This space has special properties: ambiguity, non-rationality, and superposition of the categories. The whole paranormal fits inside it, including angels, UFOs, and werewolves. Liminal states have interesting characteristics like marginality and anti-structure, giving a frame to understand what happens in anomalistic research. James E. Kennedy followed with examples from his personal life and huge experience of scientific research, both in and outside the field. Beloff’s idea that the elusiveness of psi is an active one made him think about non-living persons’ influence on psi experiments and paranormal experiences. A surprising belief for one of the harshest critics of experimental parapsychology!

From this perspective, psi technologies are impossible, as it is the “psi” which is guiding people, not the reverse. Jeffrey Kripal added his view from the history of religions, where parapsychology appears as a heresy. The demonologization of parapsychology helps to reject it, in a similar process that “hate speech” skeptics use when labeling it as a “pseudo-science”. Kripal then developed complex ideas about the unity of mystical experiences, the two forms of the sacred, and the place of the Trickster. The Trickster theory is a fecund model that draws from humanities, but I would like to see more empirical approaches of it in the future.

I missed two SSE talks in the afternoon, one on traumatic brain injury as a reversible disease and the other on a healing method for autism, and I missed Annalisa Ventola’s talk on the PA and the AAAS (published in the last issue of *Mindfield*), and a psi-dreaming workshop. The last talk I attended was Dean Radin’s “A Disturbance in the Force: Exploring Collective Consciousness at Burning Man”. During this US alternative event, Dean and his team have tried to collect RNG field data and test “collective consciousness” interferences. But, every year since 2012, they have faced technical difficulties due to the desert conditions, and in the end their data are very difficult to interpret.

My conclusion is that the presence of SSE reinforces the enthusiasm and creativity sides of research. Parapsychologists look more phlegmatic relative to their findings, but this is truer of European than American parapsychologists. The impression that parapsychology is a “butterfly science” – following Roe’s word – was obvious, with such a diversity of topics, methods, and underlying worldviews. The scientific method allows us to test all ideas, even the craziest, but it does not seem to help regulate the proliferation of new beliefs when others decline. The field will remain alive and versatile as long it does not ossify around one worldview.

Secretary's Report

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The Board chose the following awards to be presented at the 2016 Convention:

Outstanding Career Award – not given

Outstanding Contribution Award – Alejandro Parra

Charles Honorton Integrative Contributions Award – not given

Schmeidler Outstanding Student Award – Michael Tremmel

Bruno A. Silva was awarded the **Robert L. Morris Student Travel Fund grant**.

Following the recommendation of the Book Awards Committee, the Board voted to honor at the 2016 Convention the following recently published books for outstanding merit:

Varieties of Anomalous Experiences, 2nd edition, edited by Etzel Cardeña, Steven Jay Lynn, and Stanley Krippner

Ojos invisibles, edited by Alejandro Parra

Extrasensory Perception, edited by Edwin May and Sonali Marwaha

Prometheus and Atlas, by Jason R. Jorjani

Athens was selected as the place for the 2017 PA Annual Convention, with Nikolaos Koumartzis as Arrangements Chair. A Greek-English day is proposed for July 20, and a 3-day conference running July 21-23 2017.

The Board approved Executive Director Annalisa Ventola's request to appoint Erika Pratte as a voluntary staff member to respond to enquiries from the public that involve exceptional experiences.

The Board agreed to create a Mediawatch page on which members could post details of outrageous statements about parapsychology featured in the media, inviting the membership and the Board to respond.

The Board decided to accept an invitation from the AAAS to invite PA members to test their online platform for scientific communication and collaboration called Trellis (<https://www.trelliscience.com>).

The History of Parapsychology

A Brief Bibliography (part 1)

Many individuals involved in parapsychology today are not well read on the history of their field. Some are newcomers while others are not interested in historical studies but in conducting research on the phenomena and speculating about their importance. Nonetheless there are many benefits that current workers may obtain from the old literature. This includes a better understanding of the reason for and development of theories, methodologies, and controversies, the social factors that have influenced the field, and the persons involved in its development, including researchers, facilitators, mediums and psychics. In

addition, the past literature of the field (somewhat different from its history), is particularly useful to develop hypothesis for research, not to mention putting current results in the context of previous findings and ideas.

Because this literature is not generally within the purview of parapsychologists, I would like to present here some reading suggestions to help current workers in the field find information about the work of previous generations. These consist of various secondary sources that will be of help to locate the important primary literature of the field. Due to my interests in the field I will focus on information sources about developments between the late 19th century and the 1930s.

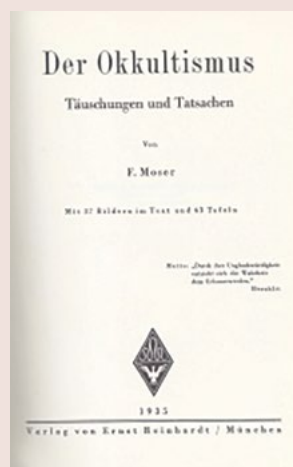
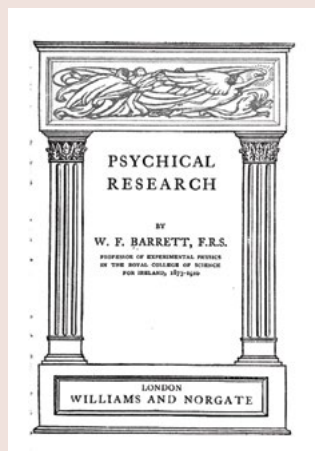


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Overviews

A good way to start is to check some of the old overviews of psychical research, which summarize much about research findings, theories, and controversies. Some examples are William Barrett's *Psychical Research* (1911), Hereward Carrington's *The Story of Psychic Science* (1930), A.C. Holms,

The Facts of Psychic Science and Philosophy Collated and Discussed (1925/1969), Frank Podmore's *Studies in Psychical Research* (1897), Charles Richet's *Traité de Métapsychique* (1922; and the English translation of the second edition, Richet, 1923), Emilio Servadio's *La Ricerca Psichica* (1930) and René Sudre's *Introduction à la Métapsychique Humaine* (1926) and a later revised edition, *Treatise on Parapsychology* (1960).



An informative reference source is Fanny Moser's treatise *Der okkultismus: Täuschungen und Tatsachen* (1935). The book opens

with discussions about positive and negative views about psychic phenomena, and some early investigations (e.g., the work of the London Dialectical Society, William Crookes, Cesare Lombroso, and the Society for Psychical Research). It also has a section about deception and facts in which Moser has chapters about the subconscious mind, sleep and dreams, and other psychological topics. Furthermore, this work has chapters about telepathy, clairvoyance, physical mediumship, and animal magnetism.

Also useful are review articles, and book chapters. Examples of old ones are found in encyclopedias, among them those authored by Lang (1911) and Sidgwick (1902). More recent ones include several of my papers. In addition to a general overview up to the work of J. B. Rhine (Zingrone & Alvarado, 2015), I have published about more specific topics such as ESP displacement (Alvarado, 1989), psychological ideas about out-of-body experiences (Alvarado, 2009), mind-body speculations about psychic phenomena (Alvarado, 2012), and the influence of mediumship on psychiatry and psychology (Alvarado, Machado, Zangari, & Zingrone, 2007). Many others have published articles about such varied topics as ESP and psychoanalysis (Evrard & Rabeyron, 2012), parapsychology in Iceland (Gissurarson & Haraldsson, 2001), randomization in

ESP tests (Hacking, 1988), table turning (Nisbet, 1973), experimental parapsychology (Rogo, 1988), statistics and ESP experiments (Stokes, 2002), psychical research in psychology congresses (Taves, 2014), and terminology (Zingrone & Alvarado, 1987).

Classics

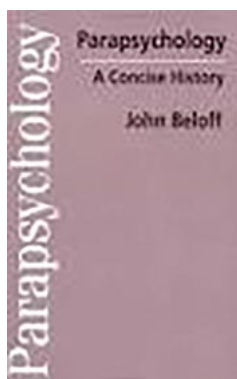
There are also many classic works that are highly recommended. Some are:

Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism (Crookes, 1874), *Phantasms of the Living* (Gurney, Myers & Podmore, 1886), *Animismus und Spiritismus* (Aksakov, 1890), *From India to the Planet Mars* (Flournoy, 1900), *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (Myers, 1903), *Psicologia e "Spiritismo"* (Morselli, 1908), *From the Unconscious to the Conscious* (Geley, 1919/1920), *Phenomena of Materialisation* (Schrenck-Notzing, 1920), *La Télépathie* (Warcollier, 1921), *Supernormal Aspects of Man* (Osty, 1922/1924), *Clairvoyance and Materialization* (Geley, 1924/1927), *Extra-sensory Perception* (Rhine, 1934), and *Extrasensory Perception After Sixty Years* (Pratt et al., 1940).

Histories

There are a few general historical overviews of parapsychology. In English a short but useful work is John Beloff's

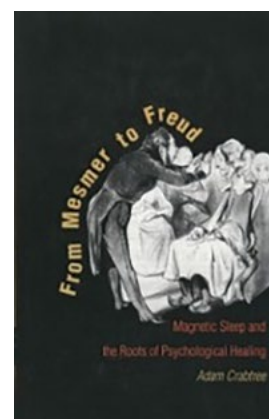
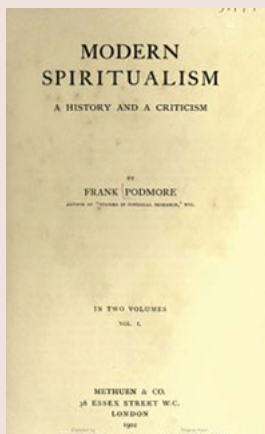
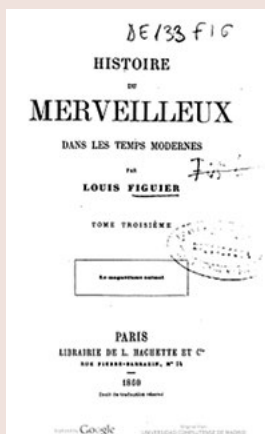
Parapsychology: A Concise History (1993). After a prologue discussing pre-18th century developments and ideas, Beloff has chapters about mesmerism, Spiritualism, psychical research, the work of J. B. Rhine, and recent developments.



There are a few interesting sources unique for their coverage of pre-Nineteenth-Century practices and beliefs. Regarding antiquity see William H. Howitt's *The History of the Supernatural in All Ages and Nations and in All Churches, Christian and Pagan, Demonstrating a Universal Faith* (1863) and Cesar Baudi di Vesme's *Storia dello Spiritismo* (1896-1897; see also Inglis, 1992). Two other books cover in detail developments up to the 19th-century. One of them is Louis Figuier's four volume *Histoire du Merveilleux dans des Temps Modernes* (1860). Figuier covers possession phenomena (vol. 1), the divining rod and Protestant prophecy (vol. 2), mesmerism (vol. 3), and Spiritism and Spiritualism (vol. 4). The other is Frank Podmore's *Modern Spiritism: A History and a Criticism* (1902). This two-volume work has four sections that, not counting an introduction and a conclusion, have 36 chapters emphasizing mesmerism and Spiritualism. This includes sections entitled: The Pedigree of Spiritualism (e.g., Possession and Witchcraft, Mesmer and his Disciplines), Early American Spiritualism (e.g., The Physical Phenomena, Trance Writing and Speaking), Spiritualism in England (e.g., Table Turning and Table-Talking, Spirit Photographs), and Problems of Mediumship (e.g., Some Foreign Investigations, Daniel Dunglas Home).

There were many phenomena reported in the mesmeric literature, such as transposition of the senses, clairvoyance, healing, and perceptions of the magnetic fluid. Eric J. Dingwall's anthology *Abnormal Hypnotic Phenomena* (1967-1968) was devoted to 19th century examples of these occurrences in various countries. Two other sources are also recommended, Alan Gauld's *A History of Hypnotism* (1992) and Adam Crabtree's *From Mesmer to Freud: Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological Healing* (1993). This book has 17 chapters organized in the following sections: Magnetic Sleep (e.g., Puységur and the Discovery of Magnetic Sleep), Magnetic Medicine (e.g., Animal Magnetism and Hypnotism), The Magnetic Psyche (e.g., Animal Magnetism and Psychical Research), and Psychological Healing (e.g., Frederic Myers: Exploring the Second Self).

Other works include general histories, among which are the two volumes authored by Brian Inglis (1984, 1992), and the works



of Blum (2006), Castellan (1955), Dèttore (1976), Fantoni (1974), Gutierrez and Maillard (2004) and Tischner (1960).

In addition, some works have focused on specific countries. Great Britain is discussed by Alan Gauld in his classic *The Founders of Psychical Research* (1968), which covers the founding and early work of the Society for Psychical Research, including the contributions of Edmund Gurney and Frederic W.H. Myers. A more general overview of Spiritualism in the UK is Janet Oppenheim's *The Other World* (1985). Various other authors cover countries such as Italy (Biondi, 1988), France (Lachapelle 2011), the United States (Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980, with emphasis on the work of J. B. Rhine and colleagues), Argentina (Parra, 1990), and Germany (Wolffram 2009).

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History of Psionics

| by MICHAEL TREMMEL,
University of Giessen

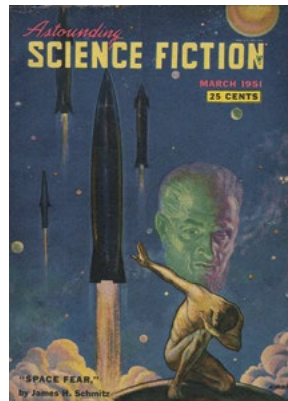
A very brief history of what? ... Psionics?? Is this yet another neologism parapsychology is so bloated with?

Well, don't blame me, I didn't invent it.

Origins and Meaning of the Term

As you may very well know, Bertold P. Wiesner and Robert H. Thouless introduced the term *psi* to parapsychology (Thouless, 1942). Meanwhile, only a few years later, presumably Jack Williamson introduced the adjective *psionic* (1951a) and the noun *psionics* (1951b) into science fiction literature by using them in his short story series that came to be known under the name *Quarantine* series (see <http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/pe.cgi?19773>).

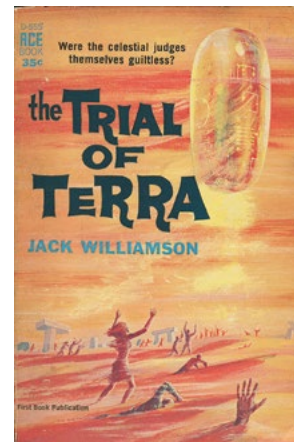
Did Williamson derive *psionic* from parapsychology's *psi* concept? We do not know for sure, regardless, it is clear that he had definitely heard of parapsychology (1951c, p. 96).



Cover of *Astounding Science Fiction*, 47(1) (1951), edited by John W. Campbell, including the story in which Jack Williamson presumably coined *psionic*; artwork by Paul Orban

Prior to this publication, psychic abilities had already been an emerging theme in science fiction. Denoting them with a technically sounding term made them even more acceptable and contributed to a boom of the theme in

the 1950s. *Psionic(s)* became a fashionable word in this genre, not the least because John W. Campbell (1956a, 1956b, 1956c), editor of the magazine *Astounding Science Fiction*, promoted its usage heavily. For example, science fiction writer Philip K. Dick used it in many of his novels, especially in those published in the 1960s (e.g., in Dick, 1963, 1969).



Cover of *The Trial of Terra* (1962), authored by Jack Williamson, comprising a compilation of his *Quarantine* series; artwork by Ed Emshwiller

The term continued to spread. In the 1970s, psionics took hold of the fantasy genre. As early as in its original edition, the renowned tabletop role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons* featured psionic abilities alongside magical ones (Gygax & Blume, 1976). Today, psionics has become a well-known meme of Western popular culture, at the latest since Blizzard Entertainment released the real-time strategy game *StarCraft* in 1998, in which a number of gameplay units possess psionic powers. The title has become a franchise and, despite its age, still remains one of the most popular and profitable games of its genre. Consequently, *psionic(s)* has found its way into contemporary dictionaries (Psionic, 2010; Psionics, 2014).

So psionics is a concept of pop culture. But is the term of any value to parapsychology? Does its meaning differ in any way from the meaning of psi?

As a matter of fact, I would advise against adding the term to parapsychology's vocabulary, considering its questionable origins. Nevertheless, there is indeed no harm in being aware of the meaning it carries and the contexts in which it has been used.

Science fiction writers often did not bother to explain what exactly psionics is or how it is supposed to function. In such cases, *psionic* usually was used more or less synonymously with *psychic*. However, over time, psionics became associated with psychic energy

as well as gadgets functioning by means of such energy (see, e.g., White & Krippner, 1977).

Already Williamson (1951c) had the characters of his stories use psionic devices and remarked, "The geometry of psionic energy-particles wasn't simple, not even for conditioned minds..." (p. 73). Campbell theorized about "psionic forces" (1956b) and took the idea of psionic devices seriously (1956a). He (1956c) described his building and testing of the "Hieronymous [*sic*] machine," a patented device that is supposed to amplify and output "eloptic radiation," which, according to Campbell, has a tangible quality. Understandably, his claim was met with skepticism (Gardner, 1957, pp. 346–348).

This interpretation of psionics has continued to establish itself. In *Dungeons & Dragons*, magical energy emerges from the outside and is channeled by spellcasters, whereas individuals practicing psionics utilize psionic energy as part of their own mental energy (Collins, 1983). In *StarCraft*, High Templars of the alien race Protoss, for example, can use their psychic potential to cast energy storms, so-called *psionic storms* or short *psi storms*; Zealots, assault units of the same race, are able to manifest psionic energy blades; and Terran Ghosts, human espionage agents, can use their psionic energies, with the aid of a portable device, to cloak themselves.

Psionic energy, psionic devices ... This rather sounds like a good story for one of those fancy new

open access journals on anthropology and extraordinary experiences. Why publish it in Mindfield? Is there any connection to parapsychology?

Let me get to why this may be relevant to parapsychology...

Traces of Psionics in Parapsychology

Psionics is almost absent from the relevant parapsychological literature. Jeffrey Mishlove (1986) focused on the topic in a conference presentation. He interpreted psionics as the application of psi for practical matters, such as in the business world or in police work, as opposed to theoretical psi research. Devices or some kind of energy were not his subject. Other publications confine themselves to briefly mentioning psionic abilities when relating parapsychology to science fiction (Roney-Dougal, 1983), "psionic machines" (Tart, 1971–1972, p. 13), or "psionic medicine" (Schouten, 1992–1993, p. 36, 1993, p. 388, 1997, p. 127).

There is a book on psionic medicine, which contains numerous metaphysical speculations and limited empirical considerations, including chapters on extrasensory perception, homeopathy, and "medical dowsing" (Reyner, Laurence, & Upton, 1974). Additionally, there has been a journal *Psionic Medicine*, plus two short-lived journals;

Alright, apparently, psionics is not really a topic in parapsychology. So why should we care?

Psychotronic and the *Journal of the United States Psychotronics Association*.

The parapsychological literature mentions the term *psychotronics* slightly more frequently than *psionics*. These two terms are not only lexically related but also seem to overlap in meaning, as psychotronics is, according to Zdeněk Rejdák (1974), “the theory of interactions over distance, interactions bound by an energetic form as yet not understood. This form of energy is a property of living matter, and the interactions manifest themselves between ‘subjects’, between subjects and ‘objects’ (including living objects)” (p. 285, see also Kernbach, 2016; Ostrander & Schroeder, 1970; Servadio, 1977; White & Krippler, 1977, Appendix 1). Conversely, it is telling that Rudolph P. Guzik (1974) used the term *psionic* in the same special issue in which Rejdák and others focused on psychotronics.

Then again, in other publications, some others have re-

ferred to *psychotronics* without emphasizing an energetic or instrumental aspect or mentioning psionics, and psychotronics appears to share a lot of vocabulary and some authors with parapsychology (Hövelmann, 2014). In general, psychotronics has mainly been an undertaking of researchers from the former Soviet Union. The term is also mentioned in *Psychic Discoveries behind the Iron Curtain* (Ostrander & Schroeder, 1970).

Alright, apparently, psionics is not really a topic in parapsychology. So why should we care?

Because there is not only this main plot about psionics in popular culture but also a subplot about psionics in a subculture that runs in parallel to the main plot. And this is of course where it becomes interesting for parapsychologists.

Psionics as a Label for Certain Techniques Practiced in a Subculture

This form of subculture is determined by the use of certain techniques, the so-called *psiball* and *psiwheel* presumably being the most prominent. These two techniques originate not in science fiction or fantasy literature but in theosophy as well as academic literature, way before Williamson introduced the term *psionic*. Referencing Ostrand-

er and Schroeder (1970), *The Psionic Generator Pattern Book* describes how to build and use pyramid shapes, made out of paper, to allegedly harness some kind of energy for the purpose of renewing animate and inanimate objects (Boyle, 1975). It also describes several devices, “psionic generators,” that are built by suspending a paper cone or some other shape by a thread so that it can revolve freely. Such a device is supposed to be set in motion by gazing at it, that is, psychokinetically, by an energy emitted from the eyes. A glass cover can be used to prevent air currents from interfering.

This is basically the description of a psiwheel, save that a psiwheel is typically not suspended by a thread but placed upon a freestanding pin. The book references Paul Joire and Charles Russ as inventors of precursors to such a device. These are a “sthenometer” (Joire, 1916) and an instrument without precise designation (Russ, 1921), both published in the academic literature.

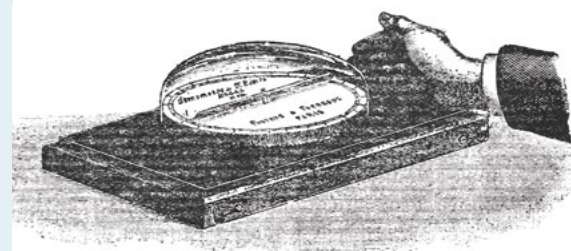
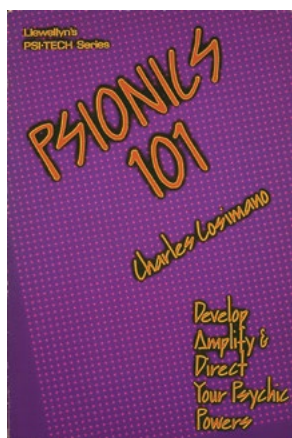


Illustration of a sthenometer from *Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena* (1916, p. 417), authored by Paul Joire

The book *Psionics 101* includes chapters on gadgets as well (Cosimano, 1987). A chapter on meditation describes how to concentrate psychic energy into a ball or more generally a “thought-form,” by means of visualization. This is basically the description of a psiball. The term *thought-form* originates in theosophy and predates the term *psionic(s)* (see, e.g., Besant, 1895).



Cover of *Psionics 101* (1987), authored by Charles W. Cosimano

In the 1990s, these two techniques spread through the internet and an online community known as *online energy community* (OEC) was formed, though it is probably more sensible to speak of several communities of this kind. One of the earliest online primers that featured a psiball was the *Practical Psychic Web Book* by Jenny L. Gable (1997b) alias Skywind, later called *Playful Psychic* (Skywind, 1999). We meet psionics again in

the introductory section, in which she defines “psychic projections/psychic ionics /psionics” as “any psychic method of influencing the psychical world...” (Gable, 1997c, para. “Definitions”).

Her primer later was hosted on presumably the most frequently visited website on this topic, PsiPog.net (2001), short for “Psychic Students In Pursuit Of Guidance,” created by Sean M. Connelly alias Peebrain. PsiPog identified itself with the “underground” Robert A. Monroe (1971, Chapter 2) wrote about, a subculture practicing occult techniques. Among the techniques featured on PsiPog are the psiball and the psi-wheel (Connelly, 2004). The term *psionic(s)* appears only rarely on Gable’s website and more frequently on PsiPog.



Screenshot of PsiPog.net today, reflecting a classic design of the website

These two websites and similar ones have provided articles on certain other techniques as well. Of course, accounts of demonstrations of these techniques cannot be considered proof of psi. Instead, they might serve process-oriented research. Over

Over time, a comprehensive vocabulary has developed, reflecting the fact that these communities did some theory building on their own. This includes terms such as construct programming (i.e., manipulation of complex psiballs), psychic shielding, as well as receptive and projective empathy. Remarkably, a change in meaning has gradually occurred.

time, a comprehensive vocabulary has developed, reflecting the fact that these communities did some theory building on their own. This includes terms such as *construct programming* (i.e., manipulation of complex psiballs), *psychic shielding*, as well as *receptive* and *projective empathy* (i.e., telepathic em-

Without notice by parapsychologists, they might have put together some important pieces of the psi puzzle, because they did so playfully and cared less about proof beyond question than about the involved processes. Effectively, they might have figured out how psi can be trained.

pathy) (Connelly, 2004; Gable, 1997d). Remarkably, a change in meaning has gradually occurred. *Psi* in this context is not a collective noun for ESP and psychokinesis, which are in need of an explanation, but here it denotes an energy or substance that is supposed to explain how ESP and psychokinesis function (Connelly, 2004).

Any New Age book has an elaborate vocabulary. Speculating is easy, doing serious science not so much. Why would the vocabulary of these communities be noteworthy?

It is true that these communities have even adopted some terms from fictional and New Age literature, and they may have adopted some techniques from New Age literature, however that does not tell us why they choose these terms and techniques and not others or whether the techniques they choose are effective. The use of pyramid shapes and similar gadgets, for example, are not among the essential techniques, with the exception of the psiwheel. On her own admission, Gable (1997a) was psychic to a notable degree, recognized already at a very young age. Provided this is true, she arguably could teach other people not only from books but also from her own experience.

Overall, advantageous conditions were in place when the techniques and terminology developed in the OEC. First, the purpose of the generic members was not to become famous or make money but rather to teach and learn from and with each other, and this has taken place in Internet Relay Chat channels, on message boards, or in person. Second, they took a highly pragmatic approach with only a minimal metaphysical framework, usually trying everything while simultaneously doubting everything. Third, doing this on the internet has allowed people from all over the world to participate. If psychic abilities are a rare gift, this platform might have provided the opportunity for people who were gifted or motivated enough

to become so to connect on an unprecedented scale. Of course, not everyone involved must have necessarily been talented.

The active part of PsiPog closed down in 2007 and the boom period of the OEC seems to have passed. In 2014, I purchased the domain by auction. Nevertheless, a few other websites on these techniques still remain, and Gable's website as well as PsiPog can still be accessed via the Internet Archive (see the reference section). Come to think about it: These online communities might have done what parapsychology has been too insular to do. Without notice by parapsychologists, they might have put together some important pieces of the psi puzzle, because they did so playfully and cared less about proof beyond question than about the involved processes. Effectively, they might have figured out how psi can be trained.

This is nonsense. We all know psi cannot be trained, it is elusive!

Well, never mind. And thanks for reading.

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Relevant

Articles Relevant to Parapsychology in Journals of Various Fields (XXII)

This is the twenty-second part of the regular bibliographic *Mindfield* column. As the previous installments, it traces and documents references to publications of parapsychological relevance in the periodical literature of various fields. The 90 selected references below bring the total to exactly 1,370 fairly recent articles in a variety of mostly peer-reviewed periodicals from the scientific mainstream. At the same time, they reflect what I am inclined to interpret as the slowly increasing recognition, if not acceptance, of parapsychologically relevant themes in the literatures of more than a few “ortho-scientific” fields of knowledge.

Substantial parts of this bibliographic column this time were collected and prepared by my Dutch colleague Maurice van Luijtelaaar. Therefore, I invited him to co-compile the present column. Useful input and suggestions also were received, as so often, from Renaud Evrard from France. Hints to other pertinent recent articles are always welcome. Please send

them to the first author at hoev-elmann.communication@kmpx.de. In view of the above-average number of listed sources, this introductory note is kept duly short.

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