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MEANINGFULNESS IN THE *I CHING* USING A Q-SORT RNG METHOD

By Lance Storm

ABSTRACT

There may be a psi component to the *I Ching*, an ancient Chinese system of divination (Storm, 2008). An individual accesses the system by throwing three coins six times to generate one of 64 'hexagrams' with an associated reading (i.e., forecast) about the user. In the study by Storm and Thalbourne (1998–1999), participants pre-selected 16 of 64 descriptor-pairs that corresponded to how they felt, and then generated the hexagram reading. If the reading corresponded to one of the 16 descriptor-pairs, the outcome was regarded as a 'hit'. The Q-sort method (requiring preferential ranking of all 64 descriptor-pairs) was then adopted (i) to find evidence of psi indicated by above-chance mean Q-sort scores; (ii) to test psi using a random number generator (RNG); and (iii) to test the *meaningfulness* in the *I Ching* readings. In the present study, each participant ranked a genuine reading and a decoy reading. The study also tested the sheep–goat effect where 'sheep' are shown to score higher than 'goats' on paranormal belief measures and often score higher on tests of psi. The mean Q-sort score for the whole sample was –0.07 (where MCE = 0.00); an improvement on –0.28 reported by Storm and Rock (2014). The mean Q-sort score for sheep was higher than for goats' (not significantly), as Storm and Rock (2014) also found. The difference between the mean number of yang lines for sheep (3.06) was also higher than that for goats (2.67), and marginally significant (Storm and Rock (2014) did not find a significant difference). *Meaningfulness* of the hexagram reading correlated significantly with *relevance* of the reading, suggesting that sometimes participants' primary values and their specific concerns may have been equally represented in the readings, or sometimes participants could not make a distinction. A Barnum effect seemed evident but was not disproportionately attributable to sheep. *Post hoc* analysis showed that mid-range scorers on paranormal belief measures (i.e., 'indecisives') scored worse than goats on all three psi measures, while sheep still yielded higher mean scores than both groups. These effects replicate those found by Storm and Rock (2014). If this three-way effect is pervasive across psi studies, the two-group method (sheep and goats only), formed by conventional methods such as median split, produces misleading evidence of the psi capacities of both.

Introduction

The *I Ching* is an ancient Chinese system of divination, consisting of a book of 64 hexagrams (six-line symbols) and their corresponding readings that supposedly enlighten in practical and philosophical ways, and even provide

forecasts of future events in response to questions posed by the user. The *I Ching* then, as the so-called '*Book of Changes*', was both didactic and oracular. The 64 hexagrams symbolize human, social, and cosmic 'situations'. The major principle of the *I Ching*, which instils it with a meaningful structure, is the binary or yin/yang philosophy. The two elements of the yin/yang binary system are represented as 'broken' and 'unbroken' lines. These lines are generated by a random process of throwing three coins six times, recording the six outcomes, and converting them to lines.

Early research with the *I Ching* (e.g., Rubin & Honorton, 1971, 1972; Thalbourne et al., 1992–1993; Thalbourne, 1994) suggests there might be an anomalous component underlying the *I Ching*. In modern times, a commonly used method involves the user throwing three coins six times to generate a 'hexagram' with an associated reading (i.e., forecast) about the user. The psi component is implied in the fact that readings are generated by a random method, yet many a user reports that the reading accurately describes their situation and/or answers their questions.

Storm and Thalbourne (1998–1999) introduced an extra step to the *I Ching* coin-throwing method, requiring the use of the so-called Hexagram Descriptor Form, comprised of 64 descriptor-pairs (e.g., 'Strong, Vital'). Participants pre-selected 16 descriptor-pairs that corresponded to their feelings and then generated the hexagram reading. It was hypothesized that affective and cognitive states (feelings/thoughts) are states of mind that propagate questions—even those that are not verbally expressed. If a hexagram corresponded to one of the 16 descriptor-pairs, the outcome was regarded as a 'hit' (given the four-choice situation, where $k = 4$, MCE = 25%). The study produced a 32% hit rate ($p = 0.070$). A follow-up study (Storm & Thalbourne, 2001) yielded a 35% hit rate ($p = 0.017$).

Further studies (e.g., Storm, 2002, 2006a) yielded hit rates at chance, but in all studies to date, psi-missing has never been reported. Storm's (2008) review of six *I Ching* studies suggests that hexagram outcomes can be determined in advance to a very slight degree since the cumulative hexagram hit rate for the six studies is a near-significant 27% (where MCE = 25%).

The Q-sort method

Storm and Rock (2014) argued that the Q-sort method (Stainton Rogers, 1995) may yield stronger effects. They adapted the more sensitive Q-sort procedure used by Roe et al. (2014), requiring a sorting and arranging of 64 hexagram synopses across a triangular grid, scoring from least preferred (–7) to most preferred (+7) in accordance with participants' cognitive/emotional states (see Figure 1). Roe et al. (2014) reasoned that "the accuracy of any selected hexagram can be coded in terms of its actual position in the distribution" (p. 4). Graphically and statistically, an ostensible psi effect in a sample is indicated by a significant shift from a mean score of zero to some higher (positive) mean

							36							
						43	35	28						
					49	42	34	27	21					
				54	48	41	33	26	20	15				
			58	53	47	40	32	25	19	14	10			
		61	57	52	46	39	31	24	18	13	9	6		
	63	60	56	51	45	38	30	23	17	12	8	5	3	
64	62	59	55	50	44	37	29	22	16	11	7	4	2	1
–7	–6	–5	–4	–3	–2	–1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7

Least like me Most like me

Figure 1. Q-sort distribution for 64 alternatives.

score. In two randomization methods (pseudo and 'true'), Roe et al. (2014) reported positive mean shifts in the hypothesized direction, but these were small (0.36 and 0.50; MCE = 0.00) and non-significant. One drawback of the Roe et al. (2014) study was that the sample size (N = 33) was too small, and therefore the study did not have sufficient statistical power for the small effects to reach significance.

Storm and Rock (2014) used the original descriptor-pairs instead of lengthy synopses, and they replaced the coin throwing with a random number generator (RNG), which served a two-fold function—it tested psi in the form of an RNG score, and it could also be repeatedly used to generate six lines (either yin (broken) or yang (unbroken)) and therefore an outcome hexagram, which by its number could be checked against its corresponding descriptor-pair in the Q-sort grid (for details, see the section below 'Psychokinesis and the random number generator'). The Q-sort score thus replaces the direct hit/miss outcome but, as Roe et al. (2014) showed, rank score works as a kind of psi performance measure because, ideally, participants are required to generate a hexagram located as close to +7 as possible. For their full sample, Storm and Rock (2014) found a non-significant negative mean Q-sort score (–0.28), but sheep (0.30) did score higher than goats (0.07), as hypothesized, although not significantly higher (for definitions of sheep and goats, see the next section). Sheep did produce a significantly high mean RNG score (3.45), whereas goats (0.64) did not, and the mean number of yang lines was higher for sheep (3.15, MCE = 3.00)—though not significantly high, it was higher than goats' mean number of yang lines (3.04). (NB: The number of yang lines as a psi measure is given by the request not to hurry the RNG process, where only sheep are expected to comply but not goats. Operationally, the effect of 'not hurrying' is measured by setting

the RNG Aim switch to slow down the random process—for details, see the 'Procedure' section.)

Paranormal belief and the sheep–goat effect

Schmeidler (1943, 1945) categorized participants in paranormal experiments as either those who think that extrasensory perception (ESP) is possible under a given experimental condition (sheep), or those who rejected this possibility (goats). Nowadays the definition more generally regards sheep as those who also "believe that ESP exists as a genuine phenomenon" outside the laboratory setting (Thalbourne, 2003, p. 114), thus excluding goats from this belief. Based on pivotal studies (Lawrence, 1993; Palmer, 1971, 1977; Schmeidler & McConnell, 1973), paranormal belief tends to be a predictor of psi outcomes, with sheep producing psi hitting, and goats producing psi missing. For example, Lawrence's (1993) meta-analysis of 73 studies (totalling 685,000 trials by 4,500 participants) dating back to 1947 demonstrated an accumulative sheep–goat effect that is highly significant, though not strong. Nevertheless, sheep tend to score better than goats. The sheep–goat effect has since been adequately demonstrated in datasets since 1993 up to 2015 (see the meta-analysis by Storm & Tressoldi, 2017). Though these two meta-analyses cover the forced-choice paradigm only, no comprehensive studies have looked at the sheep–goat effect for other psi domains such as free-response and psychokinesis (PK) studies.

These days, sheep–goat effects extend and apply to psi in general (therefore including PK), and we note that in six out of seven studies, Storm (2008) reported paranormal belief to be a significant predictor of *I Ching* effects that can be taken as PK (see Storm & Thalbourne, 2001). Notably, Houran and Lange (2012) investigated combinations of paranormal belief (high-scoring vs. low-scoring as measured on Tobacyk's (1988) Revised Paranormal Belief Scale) and transliminality (high-scoring vs. low-scoring) in the context of an *I Ching* task.[1] The authors reported a statistically significant hexagram hit rate of 45% for the overall sample (MCE = 25%). As hypothesized, the high/high group produced the highest hit rate. In a follow-up study, Lange and Houran (2013) again hypothesized that experimenters ("those who facilitated the *I Ching* task"; p. 13) and participants ("those who completed the *I Ching* task"; p. 13) scoring high on both paranormal belief and transliminality (i.e., high-participant/high-experimenter) would produce a higher hexagram hit rate than their low-scoring participant/experimenter counterparts (i.e., low-participant/high-experimenter, high-participant/low-experimenter, and low-participant/low-experimenter). The "first hexagram" hit rate for both the overall sample

1. Transliminality is defined as the "hypothesized tendency for psychological material to cross thresholds into or out of consciousness" (Thalbourne & Houran, 2000, p. 853). It is also the susceptibility to, and awareness of, this material, which includes "imagery, ideation, and affect—these phenomena being generated by subliminal, supraliminal, and/or external input" (Thalbourne et al., 1997, p. 327).

and the high/high group was statistically significant, but was at chance level for the other three groups.

In the present study, paranormal belief is measured on the Australian Sheep–Goat Scale (ASGS; Thalbourne, 1995), a paranormal scale containing items about beliefs and experiences related to ESP, PK, and life after death. It is hypothesized that scores on the ASGS will predict psi effects.

Meaningfulness

From the inception of the *I Ching* studies, given the deeply personal way in which targets were selected, *meaningfulness* of the readings was thought to be an under-riding issue in the *I Ching* process, but it was not fully investigated. The idea derives from Jung (1952/1985) that meaningfulness is instrumental in synchronicity (an acausal connecting principle); hence, the term 'meaningful coincidence', which Jung thought described the outcome of the *I Ching* process. In two studies (Storm, 2008; Storm & Rock, 2014), significant sheep–goat differences were found on 'meaningfulness' (determined from participants' ratings of generated *I Ching* readings).

Specifically, Storm (2008) tested perceptions of meaningfulness of hexagram readings (these were rated on a scale of '0% meaningful' to '100% meaningful'). He found significant differences between (i) believers (77.24%) and non-believers (53.26%), and (ii) 'hitters' (participants who correctly pre-selected the outcome hexagram; meaningfulness score = 72.53%) and 'missers' (participants who failed to pre-select the outcome hexagram; meaningfulness score = 64.70%). Also, the believer/non-believer difference on hitting was significant (30.1% vs. 19.4%, respectively, where MCE = 25%). In the redesigned (Q sort) study, Storm and Rock (2014) again found meaningfulness score differences—it was significantly higher for sheep (77.30%) compared to goats (57.54%), and significantly higher for 'hitters' (89.20%) compared to 'missers' (66.32%).

Commenting only on the Storm (2008) study, Palmer (2016) pointed out that the hitting/missing meaningfulness difference is "most likely an artifact" (p. 194) given that some participants (hitters) could tie their outcome readings to one of their 16 pre-selected (i.e., meaningfully selected) descriptor pairs and therefore possibly rate the readings high on meaningfulness, while all other participants could possibly rate their readings low. This claim may be unreasonable. First, whether or not *some* participants might refer back to their pre-selections (assuming the parallel even dawned on them), nothing will stop *all* participants reviewing their genuine mental (psychological) states as they read, so the content has every chance of resonating meaningfully, and with integrity in either case. Second, "participants were not told whether their hexagram was a hit or not" (Storm, 2008, p. 112). This fact adds emphasis to my previous point. Third, the sheep/goat × hitting/missing interaction effect was not significant, so it is unlikely that (i) getting a hit resulted in disproportionately high meaningfulness ratings given by some hitters who were

sheep, or (ii) getting a miss resulted in disproportionately low meaningfulness ratings given by some missers who were goats. Since sheep scored significantly more hits than goats, either of these two, (i) or (ii), would only have been a likely scenario *if there was a significant interaction effect*. I note too that the Q-sort method introduces a few complications that effectively eliminate the problem Palmer (2016) raises, which is probably why he did not critique Storm and Rock (2014). Apart from participants only being able to guess what a rank score means in terms of being a 'hit' *per se* (i.e., an unambiguous match), the Q-sort design is 16 times less likely to reward the participant with a direct hit (i.e., +7) by chance where MCE $\approx$ 0.016 (see Storm & Rock, 2014, p. 47), whereas there is a 16/64 (MCE = 0.250) chance of a hit in Storm's (2008) study.

Subjective validation, however, may still be an issue in these findings, especially when *I Ching* readings 'stand alone' and cannot be scrutinized objectively—relatively objective measures of meaningfulness would be crucial in this type of study. Ironically, the more general (non-specific) a reading is, the less pertinent it is, and yet the generality of the statements is more likely to be seen as pertinent and accurate portrayal of the individual concerned. That is, people rate general readings quite highly in terms of accuracy because they accept them uncritically (Forer, 1949; Merrens & Richards, 1970). Known also as the 'Barnum effect', this effect is defined as a type of subjective validation based on statements that are generally regarded as true but are overly generalized and therefore not incisive or uniquely pertinent. In point of fact, the Forer effect is a specific example of the Barnum effect whereby an individual is given a personality assessment or description that seems uniquely tailored to them but is actually very general. While there is evidence for the Barnum effect, paranormal belief is not a correlate (e.g., French et al., 1998; Standing & Keays, 1987; Tobacyk et al., 1988). In other words, we cannot assume that sheep are more likely to rate bogus readings higher on meaningfulness than goats.

There do seem to be exceptions however. Rubin and Honorton (1971, 1972) dealt with subjective validation by assessing *relevance*, and gave participants two authentic *I Ching* readings (one, the genuine or 'bona fide' reading; the other, a decoy as control). Each was rated on personal relevance (the difference between the two ratings being the dependent variable). Sheep scored significantly higher than goats (i.e., sheep saw greater relevance in their readings). Using the same measure, Thalbourne et al. (1992–1993) found mean difference scores were significantly above chance for those who believed in the efficacy of the *I Ching* (a kind of sheep–goat measure) compared with those who disbelieved, so that the sheep–goat effect was effectively replicated (on the sheep–goat effect, see Lawrence, 1994; Storm & Tressoldi, 2017).

Storm and Rock (2014) regarded the Barnum effect as unlikely in their study. If there is evidence of it, does it come from sheep over-rating their readings, or goats under-rating their readings? Even though ratings of meaningfulness of the readings significantly split the sample into believers (sheep) and sceptics

(goats), did sheep rate their readings too high and so were more vulnerable than goats to subjective validation, or were goats highly resistant to responding favourably to anything that smacks of meaningfulness? One can ask the same question of Rubin and Honorton (1971, 1972) and Thalbourne et al. (1992–1993). Also, Storm and Rock (2014) found that Q-sort hitters (scores of +1 to +7) scored significantly higher than Q-sort missers (scores of –1 to –7) on meaningfulness. That difference implies that the meaningfulness ratings of the readings are genuinely and objectively determined directly from the corresponding descriptor-pairs being placed in high (> 0.00) positions in the Q-sort grid.

In keeping with these findings, Merrens and Richards (1970) noted earlier that *generalized* interpretations seem more preferable than *actual* interpretations in terms of "perceived accuracy and specificity" (p. 693). But they also maintained that the "presentation of more specific information allows the possibility that discrepancies may occur … [such that] statements that are characteristic of the individual, especially if seen as critical, are discounted by focusing on exceptions" (p. 693). In the present study, the meaningfulness, relevance, and criticality of readings will be investigated using visual analogue scales (VASs). These investigations are exploratory.

In common language usage, there is a difference between *meaningfulness* (to do with values) and *relevance* (to do with specific concerns), but experimentally there may be a great deal of overlap, and if these two variables prove to be highly correlated in the present study, it may be possible to create a single factor using principal components analysis (PCA), and this hypothesized factor could be investigated (see '*Post hoc* analysis' below).

Psychokinesis and the random number generator

RNGs came into common use in parapsychology in the 1970s (Schmidt, 1970, 1973). They are essentially electronic coin-flippers, the digital outputs of which are produced by radioactive decay or random 'noise' from an electronic circuit. In parapsychology, the usual aim in, say, a test of PK is for a participant to influence the RNG to produce a non-random (biased) outcome that deviates significantly from the MCE. The RNG process is regarded as a type of micro-PK because the process is quantum mechanical or electronic. Three meta-analyses (Bösch et al., 2006; Radin & Nelson, 1989, 2003) have shown that psi studies using RNGs have generally yielded significant psi effects. Specifically, from a combined database of 380 studies, Bösch et al. (2006) found a significant but very small overall effect size (see also Cardeña, 2018; Storm, 2006b).

When Storm and Thalbourne (2001) looked at coin-throwing outcomes to see if the *I Ching* task involved PK, they did not find a PK bias in their data, but the crude coin-throwing task, being a macro-PK task (like dice throwing or metal bending), may be insensitive to subtle micro-PK effects. To better facilitate the detection of PK, and therefore establish whether the *I Ching* might also

involve PK, a more sensitive (micro-PK) RNG task was used in the present study (see also Storm & Rock, 2014). RNG outputs are not only *quantitative* in the form of digital scores but they can also be regarded as *qualitative*—positive or negative—representing either yang (unbroken) lines or yin (broken) lines, respectively. Thus, six lines generated on an RNG from the positive or negative signs can be used to form an *I Ching* hexagram. In fact, the production of yin and yang lines can be set up as two independent goals, with scoring differences determinable from participants' responses to specific instructions about how to behave and respond during the RNG-PK task. We expect psi scoring to vary with RNG outcomes and paranormal belief (for details, see the 'Procedure' section).

In summary, two variables stand out as plausible correlates of psi in the *I Ching* task: (i) *paranormal belief*, and (ii) *meaningfulness* of hexagram readings. Regarding (i), the *I Ching* findings lend some support to the sheep–goat effect (see Storm & Rock, 2014), whereby sheep and goats tend to psi-hit and psi-miss, respectively (see Lawrence, 1993; Storm & Tressoldi, 2017). Regarding (ii), the meaningfulness scale is a subjective measure, so it is not clear whether hexagram-hitters (predominantly sheep) are more vulnerable to the Barnum effect than hexagram-missers (predominantly goats) who tend to deny statements even when true of them. Hence, it would further our knowledge about meaningfulness perception by having participants rate two readings (an authentic reading and a decoy reading, the latter of which would serve as a suitable control reading). Furthermore, ratings of readings in terms of *relevance* and *criticality* might help to qualify the nature of *meaningfulness* and what it means to participants.

Method

There are three main aims in this proposed study: (1) confirm whether psi effects are readily detected in the *I Ching* setting (as Q-sort scores, RNG scores, and number of yang lines); (2) test whether paranormal belief is psi-conducive (sheep–goat effect); (3) determine the degree to which meaningfulness of *I Ching* readings is attributable to the Barnum effect.

Participants

The sample (N = 100) mainly comprised first-year psychology students from the University of Adelaide, South Australia, plus a number of students who signed up via a ballot box on campus. First-year psychology students participated for course credit. The study was approved by the School of Psychology Human Ethics Subcommittee, University of Adelaide (Approval Code Number 23/96). Participants were 'unselected' with the aim of recruiting an approximately even number of sheep and goats. Mean age was 24 years (SD = 10 years). Sixty-five percent of the sample were females (n = 65; males: n = 35, 35%).

Measures

Pages were presented on-screen (Information, Consent, Demographics), plus the following four scales:

- *Australian Sheep–Goat Scale (ASGS*) (Lange & Thalbourne, 2002). Measures belief and alleged experience of paranormal phenomena. Each item scores: 0 points = false, 1 point = uncertain, or 2 points = true. The raw range is 0 to 36; the raw mean is 18. A high score indicates belief, whereas a low score indicates absence of belief (or non-belief). The ASGS raw data are then top-down purified (Rasch scaled), resulting in the RASGS version, to eliminate age and gender bias (Lange & Thalbourne, 2002). NB: A higher Rasch-scaled score = greater trait level of belief; a lower Rasch-scaled score = lower trait level of belief (the lowest possible score does not indicate 'no belief'). The RASGS also has *interval-level* properties. The RASGS uses only 16 items (the two afterlife items are removed). This procedure alters the scoring range and mean (standardized mean = 25, *SD* = 5). RASGS scores range from 8.13 to 43.39. Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient ranges between 0.91 and 0.95 (Billows & Storm, 2015; Storm & Thalbourne, 2005).
- *Meaningfulness VAS*. Two VASs—one for each of two readings (authentic and decoy). Score range: 0 (not very meaningful) to 100 (very meaningful).
- *Relevance VAS*. Two VASs—one for each of two readings (authentic and decoy). Score range: 0 (completely lacking in relevance) to 100 (extremely striking feeling of relevance).
- *Criticality VAS*. Two VASs—one for each of two readings (authentic and decoy). Score range: 0 (extremely complimentary of me) to 100 (extremely uncomplimentary of me).

Apparatus

- Desk-top computer and program with pages for the measures, including an Information page, Consent page, Demographics page, *I Ching* (Q-sort) grid, RNG task score (six boxes; one for each RNG number, scores recorded from bottom to top)—"Your task is to generate a Hexagram which matches a corresponding descriptor-pair located as far to the right of the grid as possible (preferably +7 as that score is for the highest ranking descriptor-pair)."
- Two hexagram readings (one genuine; one decoy), with the three VASs at the bottom of each reading.
- RNG (Schmidt, 1970, 1973) with a circular array of green lights on the face side and a red LED score display in the centre which shows Speed Mode, Run Length, Aim, and Score. The RNG is set to N (normal) mode for a "true random walk"; Run Length = 25 steps; Speed Mode

S = 8 (i.e., high speed; speed 8 is used to keep the task reasonably short in duration); Aim = Left (i.e., aim is to slow down light motion). For technical details, see Appendix A.

Procedure

After the introductory pages, the ASGS measure was completed, participants were presented with the Q-sort grid page (see Appendix B; NB: The numbers are not the actual hexagram numbers as descriptor-pairs were randomized for every participant), containing 64 empty cells stacked like an inverted pyramid, and they were instructed to arrange meaningfully the 64 numbered descriptor-pairs on the grid in order of relevance to how they felt. The most preferred descriptor (represented by a number) was placed in the +7 cell, the second and third most preferred were placed in the two +6 cells, and so on until all 64 cells were occupied by descriptor-pair numbers.

Under supervision (by L.S.), participants were then instructed to use the RNG to generate numbers that *ideally* build the hexagram corresponding to a descriptor-pair located as far to the right as possible on the Q-sort grid (preferably +7). Hexagram outcomes were determined by a + or – sign of the RNG number: positive = yang (unbroken lines) and negative = yin (broken lines). In the presence of L.S., participants entered the numbers into the computer, which automatically converted them to hexagram lines, and finally a hexagram. On-screen instructions asked participants to take their time and not hurry during this task, so that more yang lines might be generated. The effect would be stronger in sheep as they tend to be more compliant to experimenter instructions than goats (for details see 'The RNG-PK task' under 'Data analyses'.)

Two hexagram readings were then presented on-screen to the participant in random order (one reading was genuine, from Wing's (1982) book, and the other consisted of a bogus series of Barnum statements presented with the same hexagram number and title, *as if* it was from a different *I Ching* source; all participants received this same control reading). The bogus reading was generated by ChatGPT, which was fed (and asked to embellish) Forer's (1949) original personality sketch (for both readings, see Appendix C). This step differs from the protocol adopted by Thalbourne et al. (1992–1993) as they generated a control reading by reversing the hexagram lines and offered that reading to participants.[2] Thalbourne et al. argued that the two readings would not be "thematically similar to each other causing them to be awarded similar ratings" (p. 14). Actually, they did not think the artificially constructed pairs would be "dissimilar" either, when in fact it is arguably the case that

2. This step also differs from the protocol run by Rubin and Honorton (1971, 1972) who merely presented a randomly selected second reading from the same set of 64 readings from which was drawn the genuine reading.

such pairs are often opposite in their intent (e.g., #1 and #2 are diametrically opposed, as are #11 and #12); a participant would not have to be particularly astute to spot the discrepancy, which may introduce a rating bias. In the present study, the participant read and rated both readings (genuine and control) for meaningfulness, relevance, and criticality. Generic results for the sample were emailed to all participants (individual scores are available on request by participants).

Data analyses

Computer data was downloaded for statistical analysis from the web server maintained by IT Governance (University of Adelaide). The IBM SPSS (Version 29.0.1.0) statistical package was used for all statistical analyses.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are proposed (H1 and H2 are confirmatory; H3, H4, and H5 are exploratory; tests to be used are given at the end of each hypothesis):

H1 For the whole sample, the three forms of psi scoring are greater than MCE: (i) mean Q-sort score ($P_{MCE} = 0.00$; one-sample t-test);[3] (ii) sample RNG score (z-score formula, where $z = \text{ScoreSum}/\sqrt{[\text{StepSum}]}$);[4] and (iii) mean number of yang lines ($P_{MCE} = 3.00$; one-sample t-test).[5]

H2 The sheep score is higher than the goats score on (i) mean Q-sort score, (i) mean RNG score, and (ii) mean number of yang lines (MANOVA).

H3 The relationship between the meaningfulness difference scores and relevance difference scores is positive,[6] and the relationship between the meaningfulness difference scores and criticality difference scores is negative (Pearson's r).

H4 There are positive relationships between the meaningfulness difference scores and (i) Q-sort scores, (ii) RNG scores, and (iii) number of yang lines (Pearson's r).

3. The mean Q-sort score is an average of all the Q-sort scores, ranging from –7 to +7 with a mean (average expected score) of zero (i.e., MCE = 0.00). One merely compares via a t-test the expected value against the observed value.

4. There is no probability of a hit that can be determined directly from the RNG score, which is a count; a raw score—i.e., there is no baseline because the scoring has no upper limit in either direction (+ or –). So there is no MCE. That is why it has to be standardized for the sample or group to gauge overall performance. The RNG score for the sample or group is the z score calculated using the formula: $z = \text{ScoreSum}/\sqrt{[\text{StepSum}]}$. The RNG presents numerical data in its display window. Every participant gets six 'spins', and each spin delivers a numerical value; the six values are added to yield an individual RNG score. All participants' scores are totalled to yield the ScoreSum for the sample. The StepSum is the product of three numbers—i.e., number of participants × number of steps or trials × number of runs (e.g., 100 × 25 × 6). By finding the square root of the StepSum, and dividing it into the ScoreSum, one standardizes the RNG score for the sample or group.

5. The number of yang lines is derived from the count of positive RNG scores. It may be possible to create a single variable 'RNG/yang factor score' using PCA, as was done by Storm (2016).

6. If *meaningfulness* and *relevance* prove to be highly correlated, it may be possible to create a single factor using PCA.

H5 The meaningfulness difference scores differ between (i) Q-sort hitters (scores of +1 to +7) and Q-sort missers (scores of –1 to –7), and (ii) sheep and goats (two-way ANOVA). Two main effects (factor A and factor B) are expected, and a possible interaction effect between the two factors regarding scores on the dependent variable as sheep and goats may respond differently to meaningfulness.

All tests are one-sided except where stated otherwise. Critical alpha (α) = 0.05.

Results

All demographic and questionnaire data were used, with no missing cases as participants could not skip demographic questions or questionnaire items. The program records the time taken to complete each questionnaire or stage of the study. No cases warranted deletion for completing questionnaires or the Q-sort task in too short a time (the 'fastest' time taken for the Q-sort task—the most difficult and time-consuming task—was about 5 minutes, which was deemed reasonable).

Descriptive statistics

Q-sort scores

All participants completed the Q-sort task (N = 100). The initial mean Q-sort score was –0.13 (SD = 3.39), where the theoretical mean is 0.00. The distribution is normal with no outliers (skew = 0.16, SE = 0.221). Scores ranged from –7 to +7, which is the theoretical range since all 64 descriptor-pairs have to be placed in the Q-sort grid. Inspection of the distribution of hexagram outcomes showed that 16 hexagrams had not been generated, and many were generated more than once, the most common hexagram (generated five times) being #44: 'Temptation' (as 'Tempted, Seduced' as the corresponding descriptor-pair). One participant's generated hexagram scored +7. Four participants scored +6, and four participants scored +5. A chi-square (χ^2) test indicated a flat distribution of selections, $\chi^2(47, N = 100) = 29.60$, $p = 0.978$ (two-tailed).

The RNG-PK task

There was a total of 15,000 trials (i.e., 100 participants × 25 trials × 6 runs). The mean RNG score was –1.12 (SD = 13.85). The sum of all RNG scores = –112, which is to say there was a very large number of negative RNG scores across the sample, possibly due to the incorrect setting of the Aim switch (explained below). For the sample:

$$Z = -112/\sqrt{[100 \times 6 \times 25]} = -112/\sqrt{15000} = -112/122.47 = -0.91, p = 0.181$$

Storm and Rock (2014) used the 'Left' setting of the Aim switch to see if participants could respond psychokinetically to the instruction "TAKE YOUR TIME AND DO NOT HURRY" (p. 40). Participants did not know it was a PK task. Successful slowing down of the random process would theoretically

yield positive RNG scores and therefore more yang (unbroken) lines (since the two outcomes are related). Borrowing from Storm and Rock (2014), it was hypothesized that sheep would yield a higher mean RNG score and more yang lines than goats—this outcome would be facilitated by psi. Storm and Rock (2014) reported a sheep–goat effect, with sheep scoring a significantly high RNG score (3.45) compared with the non-significant score for goats (0.64). Sheep also produced more yang lines than goats (though not significantly). In the present study, unbeknownst to L.S., the Aim switch was knocked out of its 'Left' position to the 'Right' position at some time during testing (and until the end of testing), so the sheep–goat hypothesis could not be reliably tested on RNG outcomes (H2). Consequently, sheep might score more negative RNG numbers (and therefore fewer yang lines) whenever they successfully slowed down the random process. As will be seen, and despite the circumstances, the results are not altogether unfavourable to the aims of his study.

Meaningfulness, relevance, and criticality

Table 1 lists the mean scores and *SD*s for the three scales for genuine readings and the control reading. The control reading was rated significantly higher for all three scales, suggesting greater approval for bogus readings: 69% of participants rated the bogus reading higher on meaningfulness than the genuine reading (14% tied, and 17% rated the genuine reading higher than the bogus reading). The percentage was fairly evenly split between sheep (33%) and goats (36%). (See the 'Discussion' for further comments.)

TABLE 1.

*Descriptive statistics: Meaningfulness, relevance, and criticality scores (*N = *100)*

Scale	Genuine reading		Control readings		*t*	*p***
	Mean (min./max.)*	*SD*	Mean (min./max.)*	*SD*		
Meaningfulness	60.59 (0, 100)	24.28	76.13 (12, 100)	20.89	–7.08	<0.001
Relevance	61.24 (10, 100)	24.67	78.52 (10, 100)	19.94	–6.71	<0.001
Criticality	48.58 (0, 100)	24.29	56.11 (0, 100)	27.79	–2.95	0.004

Note: *df* = 99.
*For all three scales, theoretical min. = 0.00, theoretical max. = 100.
**Two-tailed.

Rasch-scaled Australian Sheep–Goat Scale (RASGS)

The mean score for the raw-score version of the ASGS was 15.32 (*SD* = 9.90). The distribution of scores was normal (skew = 0.08, *SE* = 0.24). The mean score for the Rasch-scaled version (i.e., RASGS) was 22.92 (*SD* = 7.84). Rasch-scaled

scores and raw ASGS scores were highly correlated: $r(98) = 0.98$, $p < 0.001$. However, a box plot revealed that one case with a high RASGS score of 43.39 was an outlier because it fell above the normal range of values based on the interquartile range. This case was removed. The revised mean RASGS = 22.71 (*SD* = 7.60). Reliability of the RASGS was high: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.95$.

The median score (24.32) was used as the cut-off point to demarcate sheep from goats, with goats scoring below 24.32 ($n = 48$), and sheep scoring at or above 24.32 ($n = 51$). Goats' mean RASGS score = 16.61 (*SD* = 5.37) and sheep mean RASGS score = 28.45 (*SD* = 4.12). The difference is significant, $t(88.11) = 12.35$, $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed).

Of two demographic variables, age and sex, only sex correlated significantly with RASGS, $r(97) = 0.21$, $p = 0.042$ (two-tailed). The result suggests a tendency for females to score higher than males on paranormal belief/experience. In fact, females had a significantly higher mean RASGS score (23.86) than males (20.61), $t(97) = 2.06$, $p = 0.042$ (two-tailed). Given the mean and median scores, males tend to be goats, and females tend to be sheep though they do not quite reach the median score.

Planned analyses

H1. For the whole sample, the three forms of psi scoring are greater than the MCE: (i) mean Q-sort score; (ii) sample RNG score; and (iii) mean number of yang lines.

(i) Given the removal of one outlier, the mean Q-sort score for the whole sample is revised to –0.07 (*SD* = 3.35), which is below zero and therefore not in the direction hypothesized. The deviation from zero was not significant, $t(98) = -0.21$, $p = 0.834$ (two-tailed). The hypothesis is not supported.

(ii) Mean RNG score = –1.23 (*SD* = 13.88); $z = -123/\sqrt{[99 \times 6 \times 25]} = -123/\sqrt{14850} = -123/121.86 = -1.01$, $p = 0.165$ (effect size (*ES*) = 0.10). The mean RNG score was expected to be positive, so the hypothesis is not supported.

(iii) Mean number of yang lines is 2.87 (*SD* = 1.34), which is not above the MCE. The deviation was not significant, $t(98) = -0.98$, $p = 0.331$ (two-tailed). It is noted that the RNG scores and number of yang lines are highly correlated, $r(97) = 0.86$, $p < 0.001$ (see '*Post hoc* analysis' for further consideration of this correlation).

H2. The sheep score is higher than the goats score on (i) mean Q-sort score, (ii) mean RNG score, and (iii) mean number of yang lines.

(i) Mean Q-sort scores: sheep ($n = 51$) mean Q-sort score –0.04 (*SD* = 3.22); goats ($n = 48$) mean Q-sort score –0.10 (*SD* = 3.52).

(ii) Mean RNG scores: sheep, 0.35 (*SD* = 14.34); goats, –2.92 (*SD* = 13.32).

(iii) Mean number of yang lines: sheep, 3.06 (*SD* = 1.36); Goats, 2.67 (*SD* = 1.29).

Sheep scored better than goats in all three cases. A MANOVA test showed only a marginally significant difference on yang lines, $F(1, 97) = 2.15$, $p = 0.073$ (one-tailed). Nevertheless, the results were in the direction hypothesized. However, see '*Post hoc* analysis' below.

H3. The relationship between the meaningfulness difference scores and relevance difference scores is positive, and the relationship between the meaningfulness difference scores and criticality difference scores is negative.

The meaningfulness difference scores correlated significantly and positively with the relevance difference scores, as expected, $r(98) = 0.78$, $p < 0.001$. Also, scores on the actual meaningfulness and relevance scales (genuine readings) correlated significantly with each other, $r(98) = 0.83$, $p < 0.001$. Though *meaningfulness* and *relevance* are not quite the same thing, participants perhaps felt otherwise, or they did differentiate the content and tended to regard them as equally important. See the 'Discussion' section for further comments. It was deemed a worthwhile exercise to attempt the creation of a merged variable using PCA to see if this single factor would be useful in other analyses (see '*Post hoc* analysis' below).

The correlation between the meaningfulness difference scores and criticality difference scores *was* negative, as hypothesized, but not significant, $r(98) = -0.04$, $p = 0.335$. However, it was noted that the correlation between relevance difference scores and criticality difference scores was also negative and approached significance, $r(98) = -0.14$, $p = 0.080$. This result suggests that genuine readings tended to be thought of as relevant providing they were complimentary (not critical). Again, see the 'Discussion' section for further comments.

H4. There are positive relationships between the meaningfulness difference scores and (i) Q-sort scores, (iii) RNG scores, and (iv) number of yang lines.

(i) The meaningfulness difference scores correlated negatively with the Q-sort scores (i.e., not in the direction hypothesized), though not significantly, $r(98) = -0.05$, $p = 0.299$. The hypothesis was not supported.

(ii) The meaningfulness difference scores correlated negatively with the mean RNG score (i.e., not in the direction hypothesized), though not significantly, $r(98) = -0.13$, $p = 0.092$. The hypothesis was not supported.

(iii) The meaningfulness difference scores correlated negatively with the mean number of yang lines (i.e., not in the direction hypothesized), though not significantly, $r(98) = -0.09$, $p = 0.182$. The hypothesis was not supported.

H5. The meaningfulness difference scores differ between (i) Q-sort hitters (scores of +1 to +7) and Q-sort missers (scores of –1 to –7), and (ii) sheep and goats.

(i) Hitters produced a larger mean meaningfulness difference score compared to missers (–17.29 vs. –15.30), but not significantly, $F(1, 85) = 0.21$, $p = 0.649$ (two-tailed). The hypothesis was not supported.

(ii) Sheep produced a smaller mean meaningfulness difference score compared to goats (–15.36 vs. –17.09), $F(1, 85) = 0.07$, $p = 0.789$ (one-tailed). The hypothesis was not supported.

(iii) There was a significant interaction effect, $F(1, 85) = 3.97$ $p = 0.05$ (two-tailed). As shown in Figure 2, the interaction effect indicates that sheep who placed their descriptor-pairs on the negative side of the Q-sort grid (–1 to –7) tended to rate their corresponding genuine readings as more meaningful than those placed on the positive side. Goats did the opposite: those who placed their descriptor-pairs on the positive side of the Q-sort grid (+1 to +7) happened to find their corresponding genuine readings more meaningful than those placed on the negative side.

These findings seem counterintuitive. However, we must also investigate raw meaningfulness ratings as our dependent variable. These scores can still be regarded as valid in their own right despite the possible Barnum effect, so it would be wise to re-test a revised H5—specifically, we might propose that meaningfulness raw scores differ between (i) Q-sort hitters and Q-sort missers, and (ii) sheep and goats.

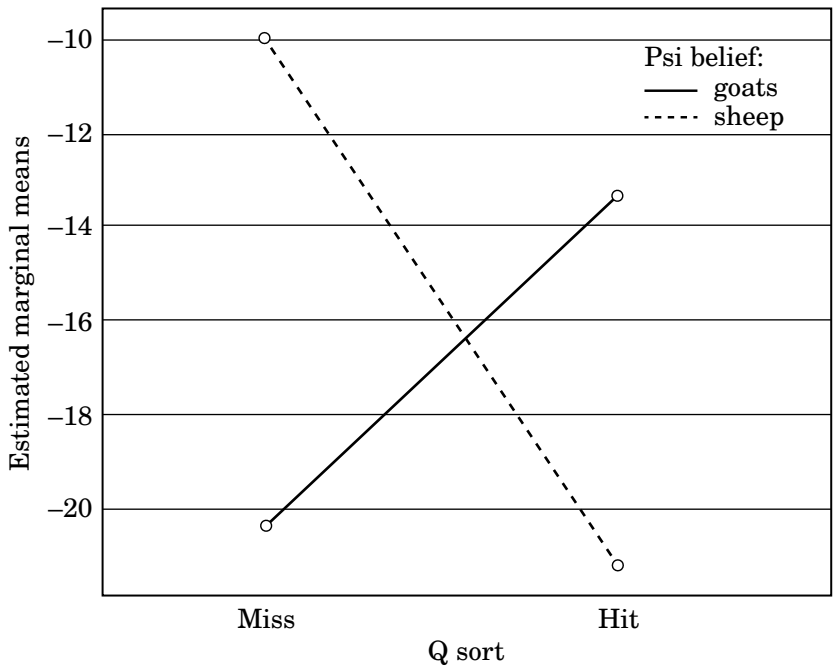

Figure 2. The interaction effect shows that sheep who placed their descriptor-pairs in the 'hit zone' of the Q-sort grid (ratings of +1 to +7) tended to rate their readings as less meaningful than sheep who placed their descriptor-pairs in the 'miss zone'. For goats, the trend was the opposite.

(i) Hitters produced a slightly smaller mean meaningfulness raw score compared to missers (58.29 vs. 60.00), but not significantly, $F(1, 85) = 0.14$, $p = 0.714$ (two-tailed). The hypothesis was not supported.
(ii) Sheep produced a larger mean meaningfulness raw score compared to goats (65.30 vs. 53.22), $F(1, 85) = 5.25$, $p = 0.024$ (one-tailed). The hypothesis was supported.
(iii) The interaction effect was not significant, $F(1, 85) = 0.99$ $p = 0.321$ (two-tailed). The hypothesis was not supported.

In conclusion, if we consider only the raw meaningfulness scores, a sheep–goat effect is now demonstrated, and it is perhaps no surprise that sheep rate their readings higher on meaningfulness than goats. This time, there was no significant interaction. These differences are discussed further in the 'Discussion' section.

Post hoc analyses

We can investigate the sheep–goat effect from a perspective usually ignored in parapsychology and instead recognize not two types of participant in psi experimentation (i.e., sheep and goats) but three types, resulting from what Lawrence (1993) calls a "three way split" (p. 76). He refers to so-called "conflicts" (p. 76; also called "agnostics", "undecideds", and 'indecisives'). These individuals would be mid-range scorers on the RASGS. There is evidence from past studies (Bevan, 1947; Casper, 1951; Nash & Nash, 1967) that indecisives "score higher than sheep on the average" (Lawrence, 1993, p. 76). Lawrence makes it clear that creating two extreme-scoring types of sheep and goats means psi effects in both groups are likely to be more extreme, but he also says "it is better just to ignore the [indecisives'] data" when "looking for a sheep–goat effect" (p. 76). However, it is argued here that, contrary to Lawrence's claim, statistical evidence may be found indicating that indecisives exhibit their own unique performances on the psi tests. Such patterns were shown by Storm and Rock (2014), but they did not find any evidence for indecisives scoring "higher than sheep on the average", as Lawrence had supposed.

Using the same grouping values used by Storm and Rock (2014, p. 46), RASGS scores were split into three groups—sheep, goats, and indecisives. The scoring trends on Q-sort, RNG scores, and yang lines changed when H2 was revised to include indecisives, and the hypothesis was re-tested (see Table 2).

H2 (revised): Sheep score higher than goats and indecisives on (i) mean Q-sort score, (ii) mean RNG score, and (iii) mean number of yang lines.

We see that sheep scored better than goats and indecisives in all three cases. The results of a MANOVA test are as below.

(i) Mean Q-sort scores: there was no significant difference, $F(2, 96) = 0.09$, $p = 0.918$ (two-tailed).

TABLE 2.

Mean scores: Psi performance of sheep, goats, and indecisives

Variable	Goats (*SD*) (n = 24)	Indecisives (*SD*) (n = 35)	Sheep (*SD*) (n = 40)
Q sort	–0.17 (3.66)	–0.20 (3.14)	0.10 (3.42)
RNG count	1.25 (11.43)	–6.74 (13.35)	2.10 (14.46)
Yang lines	2.96 (1.27)	2.43 (1.27)	3.20 (1.36)

(ii) Mean RNG scores: there was a significant difference, $F(2, 96) = 4.61$, $p = 0.012$ (two-tailed). Sheep scored significantly higher than indecisives (mean difference = 8.84, $p = 0.015$), and goats scored marginally significantly higher than indecisives (mean difference = 7.99, $p = 0.068$).

(iii) Mean number of yang lines: there was a significant difference, $F(2, 96) = 3.33$, $p = 0.040$ (two-tailed). Sheep scored significantly higher than indecisives (mean difference = 0.77, $p = 0.033$).

In two out of the three tests, the results supported the revised H2.

As shown above, the meaningfulness/relevance scales are highly correlated, $r(98) = 0.83$, $p < 0.001$. Also, the meaningfulness-difference scale and relevance-difference scale correlated highly, $r(98) = 0.78$, $p < 0.001$. PCA was used to reduce (a) meaningfulness and relevance to a single dimension, and (b) meaningfulness-difference and relevance-difference to single factors: 'impact' and 'impact-difference', respectively. Choice of the word 'impact' is based on the notion that the hexagram reading mattered to the participant, or mirrored their views (i.e., it was meaningful), *and* it directly reflected the participant's current situation (i.e., it was relevant).

Also, as the previous analysis shows (see H1), the RNG score/yang lines correlation was strong and significant, $r(98) = 0.86$, $p < 0.001$. Storm (2016) observed the same highly significant correlation, and accordingly created a single factor called 'RNG/yang factor score' using PCA. This procedure is advised because it eliminates having to test the homogeneity of regression assumption, and maximizes the degrees of freedom. It also avoids unnecessary duplicate testing, especially when a lack of orthogonality (lack of independence of variables) is suspected, so a new variable 'RNG/YANG' was created in this study (it is the same measure as the RNG/yang factor score in Storm, 2016).

These changes mean three new hypotheses can be proposed and tested:

H6 Sheep score higher than goats and indecisives on RNG/YANG scores.

H7 There are positive relationships between impact scores and (i) Q-sort scores, and (ii) RNG/YANG scores.

H8 Impact and impact-difference scores differ between (i) Q-sort hitters and Q-sort missers, and (ii) sheep, goats, and indecisives.

The following results pertain:

- For H6, sheep–goat-indecisive performances were tested on the RNG/YANG variables. RNG/YANG has a mean of 0.00 (SD = 1.00). For sheep, the RNG/YANG score was 0.25 (SD = 1.03), goats scored 0.12 (SD = 0.89), and indecisives scored –0.39 (SD = 0.94), $F(2, 96) = 4.22$, p = 0.017 (two-tailed). Sheep scored significantly higher than indecisives (mean difference = 0.63, p = 0.016). Albeit a hybrid variable, RNG/YANG combines the positive (yang) outcome with the quantitative RNG score. While the results from testing H2 only hint at a possible sheep–goat effect, it is not until indecisives are isolated that we see where the real differences are.
- Tests on H7 and H8 fared poorly—neither of the two impact measures correlated with Q-sort or RNG/YANG. Also, hitters and missers did not differ on either of the two impact measures; the same applies to sheep, goats, and indecisives on the two impact measures.

Discussion

The aims of the present study align with those of only a few other investigators (e.g., Rubin & Honorton, 1971, 1972; Thalbourne, 1994; Thalbourne et al., 1992–1993). Since then, a series of studies produced mixed results, starting with two of my own co-authored studies that yielded significant hit rates of 32% and 35% where MCE = 25% (Storm & Thalbourne, 1998–1999, 2001). This method required participants to designate 16 out 64 descriptor-pairs that resonated with them in terms of immediate or recent feelings ("lately or right now"). It was thought that posing questions of some import (as is usual when using the *I Ching*) tend to be couched in terms of one's cognitions and emotions, and do not necessarily need to be verbalized. These two studies were followed up by four more studies that produced non-significant (though not below chance) hit rates. Overall, the aggregate hit rate using the original method stands at a marginally significant 27%.

A few other experimenters have also tested the *I Ching* using an alternative method. Roe et al. (2014) used a Q-sort method (described in the 'Introduction' section), which yielded positive Q-sort scores in two out of three instances; 0.36 and 0.50 (where MCE = 0.00). A modified design by Storm and Rock (2014) did not do so well, yielding a smaller (negative) Q-sort score for the whole sample of –0.28, although sheep scored slightly better than goats (0.30 vs. 0.07), with a third 'believer' group ('indecisives') explaining the overall negative sample score since they produced a significant –0.92. Storm and Rock's sheep score (0.30) is on par with Roe et al.'s lower score for their whole sample (0.36). Since an RNG was used, Storm and Rock (2014) also tested psi in two other ways: the mean RNG score (sheep 3.45, which was significant; goats 0.64; indecisives –1.31), and the mean number of yang lines (sheep 3.15, goats 3.04, indecisives 2.87). I will return to the problem with indecisives shortly.

In the present study, results were generally not in the hypothesized directions and were non-significant, with few findings of some import: the mean Q-sort score was an improvement (–0.07) on the score reported by Storm and Rock (2014); and the mean Q-sort score for sheep was higher than for goats (not significantly), as Storm and Rock also found. The difference between the mean number of yang lines for sheep (3.06) was also higher than for goats (2.67), and marginally significant (Storm and Rock (2014) did not find a significant difference). Nevertheless, in real terms, Storm and Rock's (2014) RNG scores and number of yang lines for sheep and goats were all higher than the corresponding scores reported in the present study, but it must be recalled that they reported for sheep and goats, *and indecisives* (see next paragraph). The failure in these instances might have been due to the accidental RNG setting on the Aim switch ('Right' instead of 'Left') which penalized compliant behaviour rather than rewarding it (for details, see 'Descriptive statistics' above). Although it was therefore difficult to demonstrate sheep–goat effects with only suggestive evidence available, performances by sheep and goats for both RNG scores and number of yang lines were favourable, being in the hypothesized directions (H2).

The situation changed even more favourably when the data was evaluated from the perspective of three believer groups; sheep, goats, and indecisives (see '*Post hoc* analyses') as Storm and Rock (2014) had done. Sheep now: scored positively on the mean Q-sort score (goats and indecisives did not; see Table 2); performed significantly better than indecisives, and marginally better than goats, on RNG scores; and performed significantly better than indecisives on the number of yang lines. It does appear that the situation changes when the third group, indecisives, are given their due. Storm and Rock (2014) commented on this 'trichotomy':

> It is very likely that so many failures to find significant sheep–goat effects may be due to ambiguous psi performances from indecisives, which may even account for the general weakness of sheep–goat effects when they are significant (see Lawrence, 1993; Palmer, 1971, 1977; Schmeidler & McConnell, 1973). The implication here is that the sheep–goat effect may not always (or ever) be purely 'linear' *per se* …, suggesting that more dynamic nonlinear relationships prevail [in psi studies]. (p. 54)

Of course, a reason why indecisives perform so badly should be posited, and I would suggest it is due to their hesitancy (i.e., their psi-agnosticism)—they simply do not know what to think, or how to respond, and so they err on the side of extreme caution. In the case of sheep and goats, they already seem entrenched in their beliefs, so they perform fairly consistently (they are either compliant or they are non-compliant). The sample has a very young mean age (many only 18 years old), and many a student participant not only did not know what ESP was (and had to ask), but they could not figure out what RNG outcomes had to do with their mental states or with their Q-sort grid selections. The agnostic's lack of a strong stance, their indecision, and even their ambivalence may have

led to a lack of focus, disengagement, or less effort, potentially resulting in worse performances, even than goats. Of goats it must be said too that there is possibly an iota of belief in psi working against them, or why else would psi be investigated in a university laboratory at post-doctoral level?

A theoretical point seems justified at this point: though Storm and Rock (2014) suggested the psi effects, if any, originate in the *I Ching* user, Jung compared the *I Ching* process to synchronicity. He argued that meaningfulness and the other (psi-like) events happen together (i.e., they correlate) as part of a broader, connected, holistic effect; a number of events all happening together, synchronistically, with no likely means of showing a causal connection. Nevertheless, the process must at the very least start with the participant as *facilitator*, without the participant necessarily trying to 'start' (cause) anything—he/she merely enters (or tries to enter) into the 'arrangement' and thereby becomes aware of it. Either that or they put up some kind of resistance, and there seems to be evidence for that in both studies. Storm and Rock (2014) were quite open about their aims, as is the first author once again in the present study, which can be seen as an endeavour to simulate synchronicity in the laboratory. A synchronistic situation is identified if both a representation of each participant's *inner* mental states (hence, the use of the Q-sort grid) and an *outer* event of similar meaning (the *I Ching* hexagram with an associated reading) are instigated. That is also why meaningfulness figured so highly in this study.

Further comments on the Q-sort and RNG tasks

Storm and Rock (2014) noted that Q sorting may have required some effort from participants to slot all 64 descriptor-pairs meaningfully or preferentially into the Q-sort grid, basing their rankings on their feelings, but there was no evidence in their study (or the present study) that the task was beyond the participants or that they rushed (disrespected) the process. Similarly, in regard to the RNG task, occasional feedback from participants suggesting that the Schmidt machine, with its flickering lights working effectively as an electronic coin-flipper, gave some interest and amusement to participants, which is a favourable condition and surely better than the tiresome and/or repetitive procedures still in use in 21st-century parapsychology that can lead to consequent performance declines within studies (for early examples, see Rhine, 1934).

Further analysis (*post hoc*) in the present study, and the planned analyses by Storm and Rock (2014), has shed light on the problem regarding the *negative* (though non-significant) mean Q-sort scores for the two samples (H1 above, and H1 in Storm and Rock, 2014, p. 47). The results suggest that paranormal belief has everything to do with psi outcomes (including Q-sort scores); the statistical evidence shows that differential psi effects occur across the believer groups (sheep, goats, and indecisives) but remain undifferentiated in a heterogeneous sample.

Since the Q-sort, RNG scores, and number of yang lines reported in the present study for sheep, goats, and indecisives are largely on a par with those reported in Storm and Rock (2014), it is likely that the incorrect Aim setting caused no major upset to the general goals of the study (for comments on this problem, see the section 'The RNG-PK Task').

Meaningfulness and psi

It was found that *meaningfulness* and *relevance* were closely related. Significant correlations were found between the meaningfulness/relevance *difference* scores and meaningfulness/relevance *raw* scores (H3). These findings suggest that sometimes participants' primary values and their specific concerns were equally represented in the readings, or sometimes participants could not make a distinction. The criticality difference scores, however, were not related to the meaningfulness difference scores, but the criticality/relevance difference scores were marginally significant. It was stated above that this result might *suggest* that genuine readings tended to be thought of as relevant provided they were complimentary (i.e., not critical). One of the aims of the *I Ching*, however, is not to flatter the user but to point out that changes may be afoot, or are needed, regardless of how distasteful, undesirable, or even offensive that may seem.

No psi effects were related to the meaningfulness difference scores (H4). These results are similar to those reported by Storm and Rock (2014). They found non-significant correlations between their meaningfulness measure and the three psi measures (Q-sort scores, RNG scores, and yang lines). However, the correlation between meaningfulness and RASGS was significant, as was the difference in meaningfulness between Q-sort hitters and Q-sort missers. In the present study, the belief finding was looked at another way, but nevertheless a significant meaningfulness raw score difference between sheep and goats was found (H5(ii)). The issue then becomes a matter of deciding whether sheep over-rate the meaningfulness of their readings, or goats under-rate them.

These outcomes relate to the Barnum effect, which was suggested in the present study, given that 69% of participants rated the bogus reading higher on meaningfulness than the genuine reading (this percentage is evenly split between sheep and goats). Given the possible Barnum effect, a majority of participants seemed not able to detect the double-messaging conveyed throughout the bogus reading, along with the fact that those and other statements, while vague or general, nevertheless seem personally meaningful or accurate. For example, "While you have some personality weaknesses, you are generally able to compensate for them. Disciplined and self-controlled outside, you tend to be worrisome and insecure inside" (see Appendix C). Such statements are not only fairly true of everyone in society, but any time a participant might dispute a claim it is countered by a subsequent statement that is opposite in meaning, which softens the blow.

Storm and Rock (2014) also raised this issue of the Barnum effect. The sheep in their study rated their "readings more meaningful than goats and indecisives" (p. 51). And, as pointed out in the Introduction to this paper, they noted that Q-sort hitters scored significantly higher than Q-sort missers on meaningfulness. This result means that readings that corresponded to descriptor-pairs in the hit zone (+1 to +7) were rated higher than readings that corresponded to descriptor-pairs in the miss zone (–1 to –7). This effect undermines the Barnum effect because we can expect more meaningfulness to be assigned to descriptor-pairs in the hit zone. In the present study, sheep rated their genuine readings significantly higher than goats, which was thought not surprising, but we must still reconcile ourselves with the strong Barnum effect, and the fact that there was no significant difference in ratings between Q-sort hitters and Q-sort missers (tested in two ways; see H5 and H8). Nevertheless, the sceptical position that the effect might be disproportionately attributable to sheep is not statistically supported in the present study (see the section 'Meaningfulness, relevance, and criticality').

Conclusion

Is there any social value (i.e., any inherent cultural worth) in the *I Ching*? There may be different ways to answer that question, but if it has merit then evidence beyond anecdote should be statistically detectable in the form of assertions of meaningfulness in the *I Ching* readings. There were three key findings. First, the *meaningfulness* of the hexagram readings correlated highly and significantly with the *relevance* of the readings, suggesting that sometimes participants' primary values and their specific concerns were equally represented in the readings, or sometimes participants could not make a distinction. Second, there was a significant difference between sheep and goats in raw meaningfulness ratings. Third, a Barnum effect was evident, with 69% of the sample preferring the decoy reading, but this was not disproportionately attributable to sheep.

In the present study, there were three psi measures tested in a scenario that looked for a psi component in the *I Ching* process: Q-sort score, RNG score, and number of yang lines. To a minor degree, psi-believers (sheep) produced the strongest effects, but these effects were particularly cogent when the sample was divided into three belief groups based on RASGS scores. The so-called 'indecisive' person (mid-scorer or psi-agnostic) tended to perform the most poorly (in fact, worse than goats), a counterintuitive finding already observed in the original study by Storm and Rock (2014). Past research in this area has been clearly overlooked. If this three-way effect is pervasive across psi studies, the two-group method (sheep and goats only), formed by conventional methods such as median split, produces misleading evidence of the psi capacities of both. Further research on this specific psi-belief 'trichotomy' is warranted.

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APPENDIX A
TECHNICAL DETAILS ABOUT THE RANDOM NUMBER GENERATOR (RNG)

EXCERPT TAKEN FROM THALBOURNE (2006, P. 310):

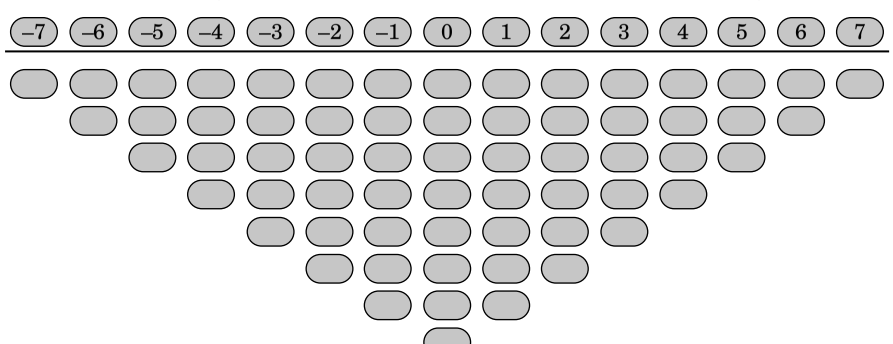
> The Random Number Generator was purpose-built by Helmut Schmidt. In dimensions, it is 25 cm wide, 30 cm tall, and 7.5 cm deep, and was thus readily portable. On the face side it has 12 green lamps in a circular array and a red LED score-display in the center. The machine allows a variety of choices and modes … The resulting "heads" and "tails" have the following effect: a "head" advances the light one step in the clockwise direction; and a "tail" lets the light stay in place; thus, a random stop–go motion of the light is seen, with pauses of variable duration. The binary decisions result from a combination of a noise-based random source (a) and a quasi-random algorithm (b).
>
> The noise-based random generator (a) starts from a noise diode whose signal is amplified, converted to a rectangular wave and fed into a two-stage binary counter. When a random bit is requested, a gate first interrupts the square-wave stream and then the status of the second stage of the binary counter is sampled to determine the binary random decision. In one million initially generated bits no significant bias was detected.
>
> A multiplicative algorithm (b), used also in previous experiments, derives from one 19-bit number $R(n)$ the next one via $R(n + 1) = M \times R(n)$ modulo(P), with M = 242293, P = [2.sup.19] – 1 = 524287. Only the lowest bit is used. This bit sequence repeats only after $P - 1$ = 524286 steps. Whenever the power is turned off, the current value of $R(n)$ is internally stored so that the full sequence is used before it starts again.
>
> The two bits, from (a) and (b), are combined via the XOR operation [exclusive OR—i.e., 0,0 = 0; 0,1 = 1; 1,0 = 1; 1,1 = 0] to give the final bit that is used for the experiment. Thus the final bits would not show a bias even if the noise generator (a) should malfunction (even though this might not leave a fair chance for psi to enter) … Regarding the display, the 12 lights are consecutively illuminated in clockwise order.

APPENDIX B
I CHING GRID

The Q-sort distribution for the 64 hexagram descriptor-pairs responded to in accordance with the prompt: "How I feel lately, or right now?" is shown on the next page. Numbers are not the actual hexagram numbers. The RNG is then used to generate an *I Ching* hexagram and an associated reading, which is rated for meaningfulness.

1 Reduced, Impoverished	17 Advantaged,Beneficient	33 Wise, Hospitable	49 Innocent, Truthful
2 Obligated, Dependent	18 Sociable, Cooperative	34 Renewed, Optimistic	50 Modest, Inhibited
3 Community-oriented	19 Developed, Awakened	35 Behaviour-oriented, Self-aware	51 Gentle, Influential
4 Nurturant, Reappraising	20 Shocked, Aware	36 Subordinate, Disadvantaged	52 United, Organized
5 Prosperous, Fruitful	21 Balanced, Prospective	37 Stressed, Challenged	53 Attractive, Liked
6 Fragmented, Ego-aware	22 Troubled, Disorganised	38 Joyous, Generous	54 Restrained, Disappointed
7 Negligent, Habituated	23 Changeable, Transformed	39 Insightful, Unbiased	55 Mobile, Seeking
8 Hindered, Provoked	24 Adaptable, Helpful	40 Contemplative, Cautious	56 Endangered, Unlucky
9 Steadfast, Matured	25 Gracious, Idealistic	41 Opposed, Contradicted	57 Retroactive, Concerned
10 Liberated, Delivered	26 Expectant, Apprehensive	42 Limited, Thrifty	58 Advanced, Fortunate
11 Crest-fallen, Disabled	27 Progressed, Open	43 Creative, Motivated	59 Hopeful, Reserved
12 Unselfish, Caring	28 Abundant, Accomplished	44 Enthusiastic, Harmonious	60 Censored, Compromised
13 Rejuvenated, Generous	29 Spiritual, Fulfilled	45 Receptive, Accepting	61 Tempted, Seduced
14 Conscientious, Conservative	30 Inexperienced, Uneducated	46 Meditative, Peaceful	62 Oppressed, Exhausted
15 Stagnant, Unassisted	31 Obstructed, Threatened	47 Empowered, Tested	63 Conflicted, Tense
16 Supreme, Successful	32 Strong, Vital	48 Resolute, Intentional	64 Loyal, Dedicated

LEAST how I feel lately, or right now . . . . . MOST how I feel lately, or right now



APPENDIX C
UNIVERSALLY VALID PERSONALITY SKETCH

FORER'S (1949, P. 120) UNIVERSALLY VALID PERSONALITY SKETCH

You have a great need for other people to like and admire you, yet you have a tendency to be critical of yourself. You have a great deal of unused capacity which you have not turned to your advantage. While you have some personality weaknesses, you are generally able to compensate for them. Disciplined and self-controlled outside, you tend to be worrisome and insecure inside.

At times you have serious doubts as to whether you have made the right decision or done the right thing. You prefer a certain amount of change and variety and become dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. You pride yourself as an independent thinker and do not accept others' statements without satisfactory proof. You have found it unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others.

At times you are extraverted, affable, sociable, while at other times you are introverted, wary, reserved. Some of your aspirations tend to be pretty unrealistic. Security is one of your major goals in life.

CHATGPT (https://chatgpt.com) EMBELLISHMENT OF FORER'S (1949, P. 120) UNIVERSALLY VALID PERSONALITY SKETCH

In the dance of existence, you often yearn for admiration from surrounding souls, craving their fond regard, yet within, dwells a critic ever watchful, measuring your reflection. You have a great deal of unused capacity which you have not turned to your advantage. These unseen reservoirs of potential lay untapped and must be embraced and woven into the tapestry of your destiny.

While you have some personality weaknesses, you are generally able to compensate for them. Disciplined and self-controlled outside, you tend to be worrisome and insecure inside. But note however that a disciplined facade adorns others too, veiling their inner worry and insecurity like a fortress built upon doubt and the winds of uncertainty.

On occasion, the path you are on bears the weight of much pondering causing you to question the rightness of your choices and deeds undertaken. You prefer a certain amount of change and variety and become dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. You pride yourself as an independent thinker and do not accept other's statements without satisfactory proof. You have found it unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others, for you know that a cautious approach has its own rewards.

Note that the pendulum of life inevitably swings back and forth and new opportunities are on the horizon if you cannot see them now. However, knowing that change is around the corner is no excuse not to plan and act now for you do tend to vacillate when you could easily seize the day. Your best chance of doing that is in those moments of extroverted radiance where you warmly embrace the world, so be mindful of those other times when you retreat into a self-imposed introversion, where you practice a kind of cautious reserve that shields your vulnerable core.

Amidst all your desires and pursuits, security is one of your major goals in life, understandably—the quest for security is a natural drive, a foundational goal amidst life's pursuits.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FOLKLORE OF WALES: GHOSTS

By Delyth Badder & Mark Norman. University of Wales Press. 2023. 256 pp. £14.99. ISBN 9781915279507

Writing or talking about ghosts is not easy. Say the word, and people immediately think of visual or auditory manifestations of dead human beings. But it is not as simple as that. In his immensely detailed discussion of 'ghosts', for example, first published in English in 1605 by Pierre Le Loyer begins with a chapter outlining the differences between "specters, visions, phantoms, angels, demons, and souls which show themselves visibly to human beings". Badder and Norman include a glossary of Welsh terms which range across a great variety of non-human entities who make an appearance, one way or another, in the rich tapestry of Welsh folklore from the Middle Ages to the mid-20th century. Their title *Ghosts*, therefore, needs to be understood in the broadest possible sense. Thus, we find that their chapters include not only spirits and/or voices of dead humans, but also those of whole funeral processions or shapeshifters or spectral animals in the form of dogs, turkeys, donkeys, or horses.

The book is divided into ten chapters. The first covers these broader aspects of the title, after which the reader is introduced in succession to: ghosts with some kind of mission; ghosts which appear in or have associations with the different parts of the Welsh landscape; ghosts in animal form; ghosts of dead clergy or with some religious connection such as the sound of choirs or appearances at a church gate; poltergeists; white ladies; spirits closely connected with water; spirits appearing in unusual forms; and, finally, omens of approaching or recent death. The reader is introduced to all these via the Welsh language, which is first quoted *in extenso*, followed by an English translation. The effect of this is to provide, at the very least, a pertinent reminder that Wales is not England and has its own history, heritage, and distinctive experience of the preternatural, and the English-language reader is thus encouraged to experience, even if in limited fashion, that difference and heritage via a wealth of evidential material, much of which has not been translated before and is therefore a valuable enrichment of the subject matter. While the great majority of the accounts cited here date from the 18th and 19th centuries, this book does offer one or two from

the 20th century—phantom funerals in the 1960s (pp. 211–212), a white lady in 1977 (p. 135), and even a ghoul in 2006 (p. 24). Earlier records are, inevitably of course, very few and far between. (A re-telling of a well-worn anecdote from Pliny the Elder, while pertinent to one of the themes under discussion, is, however, intrusive and stands out like a sore thumb.)

Encounters with the non-physical have to be experienced by human beings via a physicality in some form, either through the senses, or through mental apprehension of some sort, and these experiences must be transmitted to others via speech or writing. An essential sequence of questions, therefore, in assessing the quality of such narratives, involves asking *a quo*, *unde*, and *cur*? (Who is recounting the episode? From where is he or she deriving the information? Why is he or she telling someone else?): Badder and Norman are careful to take these questions into account. They offer many insights. Much of the collection of stories, made during the 18th and 19th centuries, was done by clergymen, educated middle-class folklorists and antiquarians, and others, few if any of whom would have had much or any experience of the common practice of working-class and rural folk gathering to tell and listen to accounts, personal, current, or traditional, of preternatural encounters. These clergymen and folklorists also tended to bring with them: (a) a misunderstanding, innate or wilful, of what they were being told; (b) an attitude of *de haut en bas* towards their informants, based on an acute awareness of class and educational difference; (c) a frequent seeming lack of awareness of the differences between regions and districts in Wales, which had their effect on the tellers' accounts; (d) in the case of the clergy, a possible bias against what they regarded as the ignorance and superstition of the lower classes—that is, the majority of the Welsh people themselves; and/or (e) in the case of non-Welsh speakers, often English gentry, an inevitable distortion of the original account because of the recipients' ignorance of both the Welsh language and Welsh working-class culture.

Badder and Norman make all these points in their introductory chapter, and also make further important and pertinent observations, for example: (a) the loss of Mediaeval religious iconography deprived people of images which could help stimulate and inspire their visual and auditory reaction to perceived preternatural events, or suggest explanations of them, so throwing people back on their own, culturally limited resources (p.16); and (b) the contraction of Welsh during the 18th and 19th centuries from being the language of the whole population to its being spoken by barely half the people—a loss exacerbated by the immigration of non-Welsh speakers into rural areas, and deliberate official attempts to eradicate Welsh and Welsh culture altogether (p.44). (Several of these points have also been made by Suggett, 2008, pp. 145–146). As the Welsh language retreated, of course, there was an accompanying loss of nuance in the records and, indeed, of a proper understanding and appreciation of the

'Welshness' of some accounts. (Badder and Norman give an extended example of this on pp. 11–13.)

This 'Welshness' appears in various guises. Wales, for example, seems to be particularly full of reports of spectral animals such as dogs and sheep and shape-shifting entities. Badder and Norman devote separate chapters (4 and 9) to recording many accounts of these, along with possible explanations for some of them, frequently offered by the original accounts themselves. A dark, unlit flight of stairs leading off an old church classroom, for example, was known as "the hole of the Black Dog" (i.e. Satan), but the name could simply have been invented by older children to frighten younger ones (p. 79). A ghost in the form of a large noisy bird in a tree, lamenting (apparently in human tongue) that it had ever cut down certain trees in a particular area with its axe may have been concocted to deter people from doing this in future (p. 168). *Ignes fatui* (p. 63), forgery of an account (p. 139), sleep paralysis (p. 159), a marketing ploy (p. 180), and simple tricksters (p. 182) are other examples.

Reading accounts of interaction between preternatural forms and living human beings naturally raises the question of why such interactions take place. But the further question, 'Can they be explained?', seems to be prompted by a fear of uncovering the possible existence of non-physical forms or states of being. 'Can they be explained?', in fact, seems to mean, 'Can they be explained away?' One common reason for the apparent return of the spirits of the dead to the world of the living is that they died with some kind of business left unfinished—a debt unpaid, a murder to be revealed and avenged, the hiding place of treasure to be uncovered, a message to be passed on, or the building of a church in one place rather than in another to be prevented. The dead may simply be angry, of course, or as wicked or spiteful as they were in life, which raises a further question about the apparent continuation of living humans' emotional states, benevolent or malignant, into the afterworld: not only why is this presumed to happen, but also how? There is also an apparent pointlessness to the unfinished business the ghost wants resolved, as in one case in which a couple was disturbed for several years before satisfying their ghost's wish simply to have a knife in a box thrown into a river (pp. 45–46). Malevolence from entities other than dead humans is well illustrated by Chapter 6, which is devoted to poltergeists and the associated phenomenon of lithobolia. A common 'explanation' of these disturbances suggests the presence of a young post-pubertal female among the poltergeist's targets, but Badder and Norman point out that in many of the Welsh cases, at least, there is no such involvement of a child at all (p. 127).

One of the valuable contributions of such collections of folklore accounts is to challenge some of the assumptions made by the original and later recorders—that the informants were ignorant or superstitious or plain stupid. Badder and Norman have therefore performed a very useful task and have performed it very well. Each chapter is illustrated by Katie Marland. Illustrating such a subject

matter presents problems. Finding or creating pictures that will not be mere clichés is not easy, and Marland has offered the reader distinctive versions of each chapter's subject matter that do not fall into that trap but, at the same time, do not distract from the subject. The extensive bibliography uncovers a wealth of Welsh-language sources as a starting point for which further researchers will be extremely grateful. All in all, therefore, this is a book which can and should appeal not only to historians working in similar fields but also to the general reader, who will be thoroughly informed about an area and country hitherto unwarrantedly too much neglected.

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ENTRE MÉDICOS Y MÉDIUMS: SABERES, TENSIONES Y LÍMITES EN EL ESPIRITISMO ARGENTINO (1880–1959) [AMONGST PHYSICIANS AND MEDIUMS: WAYS OF KNOWING, TENSIONS, AND LIMITS IN ARGENTINIAN SPIRITISM (1880–1959)]

By Alejandro Parra. Biblos. 2024. 267 pp. £14.92. ISBN 9789878142623

Prof. Alejandro Parra is an Argentinian psychologist best known, in Latin America, for his lectures, courses, and popular books and articles on several themes related to parapsychology. He presided over the Instituto de Psicología Paranormal [Institute of Paranormal Psychology] in Buenos Aires for a number of years. Several of his articles can be found on the website maintained by the institute. Some of these are early drafts of chapters of the volume under review, which was originally presented as a dissertation for an MA degree (Parra, 2024). Parra has been a keen collector of literary materials pertaining to the history and practice of parapsychology in Argentina and other Latin American countries for several years. His coverage of this history has benefited from a huge amount of first- and second-hand sources. The main protagonists in the present book are two groups: 1) the enthusiasts and 'experimentalists' who adhered to the message of spiritualism in the French rendering of Hippolyte-Léon Denizard Rivail (1804–1869), best known as Alan Kardec; and 2) the professionals, official psychologists, and psychiatrists who championed the orthodox views about mental health and methods to diagnose and treat psychopathologies.

The two groups sustained not so much a quarrel as a complex sort of competition of a social, cultural, and 'epistemic' nature, which lasted for eight

decades. The official psychologists and psychiatrists (that is, the 'scientific party'), but also a number of philosophers and members of the clergy, brought into question the fundamental practices and beliefs of the Kardecians, arguing that they were a menace not only for the mental health of isolated individuals but for society at large. In spite of the title of the book, mediumship was not the only 'paranormal phenomenon' that was normally attacked. For example, hypnotism and its effects were also subject to heated debates. Parra illustrates these situations by describing several cases and suggests that the essential issue under debate was whether the whole movement of Spiritism could be validated as a scientific body of knowledge, in which case it could legitimately be added to university curriculums.

Assuming the point of view of a social–cultural historian, Parra offers a comprehensive, critical account of the overall and peculiar characters in this debate. His goal is not to narrate a long-lasting confrontation in a dramatic fashion but rather to grasp the conditions and factors which gave rise to that confrontation. This needs to be considered in any scientific attempt to explain the whole process. To guide his analysis, Parra has relied on concepts and theoretical tools borrowed from sociology, 'frontier' and 'limit' being the most important. *Frontier*, in a technical sense, expresses a sort of conceptual demarcation at the social, psychological, cultural, and structural levels, which aids to account for the specific manners in which each group in a competition (such as the one considered in this monograph) struggles to protect its identity, defend its own objectivity, satisfy a need for autonomy, and legitimate a body of knowledge or a tendency to constantly replicate experiences of a certain type.

At the social level, each group wanted to influence the public consciousness in order to gain, or enhance, its acceptance and prestige. Many professionals openly defended a view of Spiritism as a cause of psychopathologies. They contended that, if the belief in, for example, the practical, transcendental benefits of mediumship and animal magnetism could compromise people's mental sanity, then it was a moral and intellectual responsibility to demand the intervention of official authorities, and even the head of state, to either regulate such practices and doctrinal teachings or suppress them. The Spiritists made rejoinders and continued to propagate what they learned from the progressive revelations of their spirit guides or leaders in matters philosophical, ethical, and political. Just as in Brazil, Mexico, and other Latin American countries, from the 1870s to the 1920s (at least), they managed to grow as a unified movement controlled by central and regional organizations—however, there was always room for internal disagreements—using methods of proselytism and indoctrination as the circumstances demanded.

All this belligerence was not absolute, as Parra well explains. The idea that one of the parties aimed for a complete victory could not have been an intelligible social–cultural goal from the perspective of a modern historian–psychologist. As the balance of power, so to speak, fluctuated, these groups

knew that what mattered was to be resilient and, after a win or a loss to always attempt to move forward again, acting strategically and making alliances with other social movements (socialism, feminism, etc.) that strove for the same: social recognition and tolerance. The analysis of such alliances is sociologically interesting, to grasp the cultural role played by certain symbolic resources—for example, cultural traditions—in the rearrangement of social, institutional differences (of class, gender, race, etc.) within a society, towards the unification of ideals or compound purposes to reach a definite goal in a given historical situation.

To appreciate the extent to which Parra succeeds in giving a sociological–historical comprehension of the turbulent *coexistence* of two groups of people defending and promoting diverse forms of seeing the spiritual or mental dimension of a human being, as well as having different views on ethics, politics, and other aspects of society life, it is recommended to read the five chapters in strict sequence.

Then it becomes clear that the coexistence was possible (and tolerable) as long as each group felt that its limits and integrity were safe. With this in view, says Parra, it is easier to assess the accomplishments and failures of Argentinian Spiritism, considering the cultural mixtures that infiltrated it and its predilection for a stance of Christian Charity and aspiration to be known as a legitimate, socially committed religious–scientific movement.

Chapter 5 is especially interesting. It deals with the rise of parapsychology in Latin America and its troubled relations with Kardecian Spiritism, and then its effects on the theory and practice of psychology in Argentina. Spiritism was founded on a positivist creed imbued with a blend of Christian ethics and antique doctrines from the Far East. Parapsychology, in contrast, was an emerging science eager to gain legitimacy, and relied on experimental methods and the continuous test of epistemological principles or rules. The qualitative and comparative analysis of their respective developments in the context of cultural changes, rhetoric, and social dynamics, permits us to comprehend, writes Parra, "how science is defined at different times … [as] a tool to identify the strategies of these actors in their historical moments", and also to understand "how they used the concept of science to reach their objectives, even if those strategies were 'correct' according to the standards of modernity" (p. 250). As for the unwanted, sometimes forced adaptations and transformations which Spiritism endured as the local context changed in the final decade of the 19th century and afterwards, Parra reflects on how

> … an identity which initially aspired to become a positive science and rejected the qualification of 'religion', ended up turning itself into a cult because of the inner pressures which sanctioned its status, regulating the limits and influences in relation to the State, the medical sciences and the Church, all of which considered Spiritism as an agent of sanitary and religious disturbance (pp. 249–250).

This book may not be an easy read for people who, although familiar with the subject matter (at least in a general way), are not used to the academic vocabulary and theoretical apparatus of certain social sciences. However, I do not believe that the lexical novelties are too many or so hard that a glossary of terms should have been included. There are some stylistic difficulties, which mainly arise due to the ample recourse to formulaic phraseology: sometimes that can be so repetitive as to interfere with an otherwise clearer exposition. That said, this is an aspect of composition which is frequently found in books that were originally meant to be read and approved, first of all, by members of a university faculty. This will surely be attended to when the time comes for a second edition, an event which will hopefully occur.

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THE OTHERS WITHIN US: INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS, POROUS MIND, AND SPIRIT POSSESSION

By Robert Falconer. Great Mystery Press. 2023. 502 pp. £23.80. ISBN 9798987858806

Are we alone in our universe? This book invites us to question it. Perhaps the idea of having a mind in a body, an identity for everything and for life, is actually a myth, the myth of what the psychiatrist Daniel J. Siegel calls the 'solo-self'.

The author, Robert Falconer, has had a life studded with serious traumas and presents this very honestly. He introduces himself as a multi-trained therapist who has become an expert in Internal Family Systems (IFS), a therapeutic tool, through a process nourished by intense attendance at the Esalen Institute. The creator of IFS, Richard Schwartz, has written a preface to the book.

IFS theorizes that there are many sub-personalities (parts) within us, a sort of slightly chaotic family with which we need to harmonize in order to solve many problems. To put it another way: we have all heard of 'multiple personalities', people who claim to be inhabited by many 'selves' that sometimes take control. In a pathological context, this is now called 'dissociative identity disorder' (formerly 'multiple personality disorder'). According to IFS, we are all multiple but our level of fragmentation can be more or less pronounced.

What if some parts are not really 'us'—not really 'human' for that matter. This is where Falconer expects us not to follow: 'Westerners' shy away from the very idea that entities could interfere with our ordinary lives. Possession is out of fashion. However, Falconer takes an original stance: he approaches

possession with a kind of secular argument, proving wrong all those who dismiss it too easily.

The question of possession is present in every culture and religion. If you step outside the Western-centric vision, there is no escaping it. Even within our own culture, pockets of culture exist that maintain a lively interest in the subject, such as spiritualism, Swedenborgianism, neo-Pentecostalism, and so on. Possession was also of interest to people such as Frederic Myers, William James, and Carl Gustav Jung. Falconer makes numerous references to them, but also cites more recent literature. He is particularly fond of Tanya Luhrmann and her concept of 'spiritual presence experiences', which unfortunately sounds like a label trivializing this experience. Falconer claims not to have observed any real paranormal phenomena himself—the possessions he has observed were all incomplete (p. 189).

Myers is summoned, in particular thanks to the clinical psychologist Isabel Clarke, who qualifies the 'transliminal' (found in Michael Thalbourne's transliminality scale) as a domain that contains everything Myers placed in the subliminal and superliminal. Where our ordinary consciousness is no longer in control, the psyche goes on living: 'automatic' acts, parallel psychic processes, liberated intelligence, access to intuitions, …

James is present in several respects: for his psychology of religious experience, but also for his pragmatism, a 'radicalized' version of which (p. 405) justifies making room for possession because Falconer thinks that it has become prevalent in the world and in the therapeutic field.

As for Jung, he was the theorist of the 'autonomous complexes', which are the psychological basis that legitimizes the generalized theory of possession that Falconer presents. Pushing his thinking beyond his empirical and clinical observations, Jung seems to have given extra-psychic and extra-human qualities to these complexes that do not dissolve. Jung himself appears to have been invaded by entities and tried to sublimate them intellectually and artistically (Jung, 1916, 2009).

In spite of all the references, this book is not a theoretical essay. Nothing could be further from the truth. Chapters with references drawn from all over the place alternate with totally clinical chapters. Many cases are presented in the form of very long dialogues, obviously recorded sessions, within a clinical research framework that is rather poorly identified. These exchanges are readable but remain difficult to grasp in this play-like format.

To ironically sum up the type of therapy promoted by Falconer, here is the central outline:

1. A person comes for counselling because of personal problems.
2. The therapist gets them to admit that they have an entity.
3. The therapist intervenes to remove the entity.
4. The problems are resolved.

In the absence of evidence-based practice, we find ourselves faced with many cases where the diversions via possession become the ideal therapeutic lever. Why not? Anything that enables a person to take a 'step aside' and look at their problems from a new angle—and particularly one where the remedy is within reach—is at the very heart of psychotherapy (Blanchet, 2016). Exorcism in the Joseph Gassner style is almost rehabilitated, without the Christian trappings. Exorcism must once again become a basic element of healing practices, far from being the preserve of religious priests (Sluhovsky, 2007, quoted on p. 236).

The therapists presented have a whole toolbox for negotiating with the entity and convincing it to stop doing harm, including Ericksonian hypnosis and strategic brief intervention. Very often, the plan is to make the entity lose its power over the individual by showing that its power only comes from the fear that you are willing to give it. The entity is then treated with great compassion and love, finally detaches itself, and the therapists try to make sure that it leaves nothing behind. The patients seem to have prepared themselves at length to accept this view of things, as can be seen from the way they have absorbed the specific vocabulary deployed in this method.

Throughout the text, there is sometimes an alternation between fairly sophisticated concepts and fairly naïve representations. In discerning these entities, the 'parts' of the individual are distinguished from the 'unattached burdens' (the acronym UB is used to soberly label these 'others within us') on the sole basis of their malevolent intentions (pp. 91–92). The UBs are the 'problem of evil'. The 'parts' help, as best they can, to adapt the individual to the difficulties of life, while the UBs do everything they can to harm him or her, to divert him or her from life.

This can be contrasted with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical model. Freud integrated the notions of the life drive and the death drive as two processes inherent in psychic functioning; we are left to wonder what justifies treating as foreign the self-sabotaging impulses implemented by the individual. By referring to them in this way, we are totally simplifying the therapeutic scheme: just get rid of this illegal immigration and all the local problems will be solved. Get out! Catharsis is the high point of all the cases presented.

The biggest difficulty for the reader is that the UBs are no longer problematized in a constructivist way: *they are real*. For example, the book warns against the infiltration of UB following general anaesthesia (p. 103), as in many folklores, without taking any precautions about the anti-medical fear engendered here. At best, Falconer acknowledges that different authors and cultures have given UBs a variety of names, but believes that we are always dealing with the same 'critters' (p. 32), 'non-humans' (p. 25), endowed with 'free will' (p. 100). Schwartz says in the introduction that these would be emotions and beliefs personified by the mind, crystallized in the form of "human-like beings", "inner tribes", even a "God in himself" (p. XIX).

As I read, I kept asking myself: Is this how we would have metapsychology and psychotherapy if we had followed Myers rather than Freud? After all, Falconer discusses those embryonic personalities and subtle entities that the English psychical researcher was always talking about. We also find here the concept of 'Self' as a great organizer, above the fray, like Myers's Subliminal Self or Jung's Self. It alone would have the memory of the whole, the capacity to overcome all internal weaknesses and ensure continuity of existence—a red thread in the teeming multiplicity that inhabits us. Myersian psychotherapy (if a clinical school had been deduced from his work) would emphasize the multiplicity of the psyche, its plasticity and porosity. This is exactly what is happening here. These conceptions correspond to an extremely dynamic way of thinking about the potential for therapeutic change, even in the face of the worst traumas. Falconer relates that he owes his conversion to a patient (Mary) who was lost to psychiatric medicine and was completely rehabilitated when her UBs gave her a break. In the same vein, the whole 'hearing voices' movement is linked to this fight for a psychiatric alternative (pp. 174-177).

Falconer is aware that, while summarizing his ten years of study, he is also giving the stick to be beaten with. He is already a long way down the road, but everything he reads seems to point in the same direction, whatever the field. He even plays with automatic writing and now has eleven volumes of dialogue (p. 316). However, is getting people to accept not only the reality but also the therapeutic value of generalized possession a lost cause in the 21st century? Falconer knows that his work could be considered a marginal offshoot of the IFS (p. 404). It is a therapy that requires a change in the worldview of both therapist and patient, but is this not, in fact, true for any effective therapeutic symbiosis?

Overall, the book is certainly thought-provoking. Falconer is well informed and tries, against all odds, to heal his fellow man by mobilizing knowledge that is rarely used for this purpose. However, the book is probably rather poorly constructed, as we are led from one author to another, then into long clinical demonstrations that are briefly analysed. Although, perhaps this reflects the internal chaos of interacting parts, with a distant common thread that justifies their being grouped together under the same cover.

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PREMONITIONS OF THE TITANIC DISASTER: AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY OMENS AND FOREWARNINGS OF THE 1912 SINKING

By Terry Keefe. Matador. 2021. 396 pp. £9.50. ISBN 9781800462342

The White Star cruise liner RMS *Titanic*—twin-sister ship to HMHS *Olympic*, and also sister ship to RMS *Britannic*—sank on 15 April 1912 at 2:20 a.m. Since the tragic event, and above all other ships that foundered, the *Titanic* has been captured in our hearts. Time and time again, films and fiction have romanticized the tragic events.

Fascination regarding premonitions of the sinking of the *Titanic* arguably began with a novel by Morgan Robertson (1898) entitled *Futility*. The story boasts the world's biggest cruise liner called the *Titan*, which crosses the Atlantic Ocean, isn't carrying enough lifeboats to accommodate all the passengers, and hits an iceberg and sinks. *Titan* was one of the many names people favoured for large and impressive ships, to emphasize size and prestige, but also notably in this case being two letters short of *Titan-ic*. Following the sinking of the *Titanic* fourteen years later, many questioned whether Robertson had foreseen the sinking.

The sceptical position would suggest that any story of the biggest cruise liner, being fictional, would increase the current size of known shipbuilding, which engineering and industry was always catching up with; everything was getting bigger and more luxurious each time. Crossing the ice fields in the Atlantic was a constant problem. And lifeboats for safety and accommodation of all passengers in the event of sinking was also faced with the aesthetic impact on the ship—'But does it make it look ugly?' This, added to the ignorant idea that such large ships are impossible to sink. Visual appeal over safety was indeed a well-known critical error on the *Titanic*. Robertson could simply have written the next steps, which were well known to be happening, and the inevitable dangers, rather than predicting the doom of the *Titanic*.

With this background in mind, this present book review, focusing on the writings of Terry Keefe, concerns a great wealth of information regarding the premonitions of the sinking of the *Titanic*. Entitled *Premonitions of the Titanic Disaster*, it carries with it a cover subtitle of 'An exploration of the extraordinary omens and forewarnings of the 1912 sinking', and it does just that. Keefe taught and researched French literature and philosophy at the University of Leicester, and later became a professor of French at Lancaster University. Since 2009, he has given talks on cruise liners and sea mysteries, and especially on the *Titanic*. It appears that this book is his first writing on psychical research, with all his other publications typically relating to philosophy and French language and literature.

The book is an analysis of commentaries about the *Titanic* premonitions. These include Ian Stevenson's (1960, 1965) assessments of premonitions of

the disaster, published in the *Journal of the American SPR*, and the books by Rustie Brown (1981), Martin Gardner (1986), George Behe (1988), and Bertrand Méheust (2006).

Much like Behe (1988), Keefe sets out by explaining to the reader how the book is to be broken down and his own system of identifying throughout the book the other authors and cases they assessed. The initials and numbering system certainly make it easier for the academic and keen researcher to keep track of the cases and the location that Keefe is referring to. The first two chapters give focus to literature on the premonitions and then premonitions of the death of spiritualist, W. T. Stead, who as many know, died upon the *Titanic* voyage. Word quickly spread among his followers that he had foreseen his own death, with one literary piece of his mentioning death by drowning. Keefe explains that some imagination is needed to believe that Stead actually foresaw his own death. Chapters 3 to 6 discuss Stevenson through to Méheust, with chapter 7 on results and methods used in assessing such cases. This follows with a conclusion, useful appendices and an index.

Having thoroughly read Behe (1988), I was doubtful of there being a further assessment more detailed than that. Keefe has surprised me in analysing the previous assessments, his book effectively being an assessment of assessments. It is a hefty paperback, detailing well the intricacies of the previous works and casting a sceptical eye on the ontological roots of the alleged premonitions of death and disaster. His opinion on the matter is summed up in the chapter on results and methods, where he sees all five authors as at least helping to better understand the issues such assessments raise:

> When one tries to arrive at an overall assessment of the results of our five authors' work and the methods they use, a number of major features come to light: considerable omissions; discrepancies in the outcome of their inquiries; the relative timidity of their commitment to belief in precognition; unresolved issues of methodology; their failure to make significant inroads into the classification of premonitions. None of these factors encourage belief in a paranormal element in 'premonitions', but neither do they—individually or collectively—in themselves invalidate such a belief. What they certainly do is to indicate that the examination of alleged *Titanic* premonitions is an incomplete, ongoing process. (pp. 360–361)

I was aware of other works I assumed Keefe had at least referenced, as I do find his book very thorough on the literature sourced. However, there was no reference to Tymn's (2012) discussions on the *Titanic*, or to a significant chapter by Foster (2004) regarding W. T. Stead, ships, and the supernatural. The most surprising exclusion from Keefe's work—indeed my favourite book, besides Behe's (1988) work—is edited and compiled by a former vice-president of the *Titanic* Historical Society. William H. Tantum produced a very useful early work on the premonitions of the *Titanic*; however, without the dust cover to the book, it simply reads as *The Wreck of the Titan by Morgan Robertson* and many—including Keefe—may miss the wonderful inclusions of this book and would be

forgiven for doing so. With the dust cover, the book's full intended title is given as *The 'Doomed' Unsinkable Ship: The Wreck of the Titan* (Tantum, 1974), and lists Tantum's status in the *Titanic* Historical Society, and as editor, and that Stevenson's papers are reproduced following the reprinting of Robertson's work, are clear. That said, the book would add little to *Premonitions of the Titanic Disaster* beyond what insight Tantum's foreword could provide, as Keefe has identified and included Stevenson's work anyway. Additionally, *Fate* magazine over time has published on the premonitions of the *Titanic* (e.g., Behe, 1990) and more recently on anomalous experiences regarding the animals aboard the ship (Clark, 2020).

Overall, Keefe's work is an extremely useful text. It is hard to find fault, as he is working from material already well established in the domain of premonitions of the *Titanic*. The new insight is his own commentary and critical views. As mentioned, he suggests we are at the beginning of a thorough systematic assessment of the recorded premonitions rather than having exhausted them. Perhaps this is a doctoral thesis in the making for the budding parapsychology student? I did try to read the book as a general read and took it everywhere with me, but then kept forever picking it up and putting it down. It did feel to be more an academic approach in the writing style, given it is a book about assessing cases, than crafted for the lay public. It could work for both, but I personally felt I had to read it as an academic to appreciate it, more than as a casual read. Being a member of the *Titanic* Historical Society myself, I do hope such work as Professor Keefe's sparks some new interest to formally assess and analyse the cases of such alleged premonitions on record of the *Titanic* disaster.

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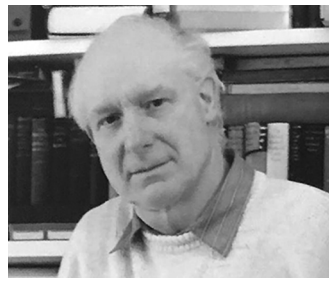
OBITUARIES

ALAN O. GAULD
1932–2024



REMEMBERING ALAN GAULD

Alan was of Scottish descent, but his life and career were spent in England. He went to school in London, went through the National Service, and then read history and psychology at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, graduating in 1956. This was followed by a year as a graduate student at Harvard University, attending courses on the history of psychology, comparative anatomy, and biological and physiological psychology. He returned to Cambridge in 1957 as a research student, becoming a research fellow of Emmanuel College the following year.

In 1962, he became a lecturer and subsequently a reader in psychology at the University of Nottingham, where he taught mainly biological psychology and neuropsychology. He later offered third-year options in parapsychology or hypnotism and also gave courses on the philosophy of psychology. He stayed in Nottingham, and in 1966 married Sheila; they had two sons and together created a home where one always felt welcome.

Alan was interested in psychical research from childhood, having learned from his mother about the investigations conducted by the famous Harry Price. At Cambridge he joined the Cambridge University Society for Psychical Research (CUSPR) in the 1950s, and soon after joined the Society for Psychical Research. Still at Cambridge, he became involved in experiments and investigations of reported cases. His friendship and collaboration on many cases with the late Tony Cornell dated from those days.

In 1962 Alan joined the SPR Council; he served on a number of committees and was the SPR's President from 1989 to 1992. He had personal contacts with leading figures of psychical research, and fortunately his correspondence is preserved in the SPR Archive in Cambridge. He received the Parapsychological Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Parapsychological Research in 1996, and the SPR's Myers Memorial Medal in 2001.

As those who knew him can testify, his interests were wide-ranging and not limited to parapsychology. In an interview with Carlos Alvarado (2016), Alan said, "For as long as I can remember I have been (perhaps unduly) fascinated by all sorts—too many sorts!—of mysteries, not utterly insoluble metaphysical mysteries, but mysteries, be they historical, criminal, cryptozoological, astronomical, cosmological, palaeontological, archaeological, or whatever, on which it seems at least possible that further factual evidence or factual considerations may throw new light. That is just my turn of mind." This wide-ranging intellectual curiosity was accompanied by a pursuit of relevant detail and context, followed by penetrating and comprehensive analysis, and this quality of all his writing is what makes his books classics and a lasting source of knowledge. Fortunately for parapsychology, that was the subject which he mainly pursued and wrote about. This includes his highly regarded contribution to mainstream psychology *A History of Hypnotism* (Gauld, 1992), a 732-page long study of the history of mesmerism, hypnotism, and multiple personality disorder. The *Times Educational Supplement* described it as "one of the most important source books, and one of the most enjoyable reads, on this fascinating subject". That comment applies to all of Alan's writing: it always offers immaculate scholarship in a style that makes complex analyses an 'easy read', without intellectual compromise but with wonderfully dry humorous asides.

This quality can be seen in the groundbreaking study of poltergeists, *Poltergeists* (Gauld & Cornell, 1979), which Alan wrote with Tony Cornell where, in his own words, he was "the first to apply cluster analysis to a large collection of cases of hauntings and poltergeists". Based on 500 cases, from the 16th century to the present day, it is a landmark publication that includes historical research and accounts of personally conducted investigations, as well as an innovative analytical approach.

His fascination with history meant that he tracked down, sorted, and made use of the papers and correspondence of the founders of the SPR, Frederic Myers and Edmund Gurney. His *The Founders of Psychical Research* (1968), a monumental study of the rise of Spiritualism in America and England and the work of the SPR, involved searching through volumes of the Society's publications, its archives, memoirs and collections of documents in libraries on two continents.

One of his main interests was physical and mental mediumship, influenced by sittings with a number of private circles. Records held by one of these circles, researched by Alan in great detail, resulted in an important paper on 'drop-in' communicators (deceased individuals unknown to anyone present providing information at sittings) (Gauld, 1971). His *Mediumship and Survival: A Century of Investigations* came out in 1982, on the 100th anniversary of our Society. That overview of the field still remains the main reliable source for general knowledge of mediumship, mediums, drop-in communicators, possession, apparitions of

the dead, the role of memory, and the never-ending discussion of super-ESP, now known as the Living Agent Psi, the idea that survival evidence can be explained by clairvoyance and telepathy among the living.

In his interview with Carlos Alvarado in 2016, when asked about his current projects, Alan said "At the moment I am trying to pick up the threads of a project I was working on a few years ago but had to suspend in favour of other things. It involves looking into some early investigations of mental mediumship." Some of the most important characters, themes, and ideas in *Mediumship and Survival* are developed in what was to be Alan's last book, *The Heyday of Mental Mediumship, 1880s-1930s: Investigators, Mediums and Communicators* (2022).

I witnessed the creation of this book over many years. As his research progressed, Alan would deposit his drafts and notes with me as a kind of insurance. By 2016 (I can date it by the file dates), the material was sitting there, just needing a final chapter and, fortunately, Alan did write it before health problems overtook him.

That book is unashamedly qualitative; it provides the personal context that can be much more revealing than bare factual data. Such an approach offers unique insights, that can only be revealed by examining the continuous flow of interweaving relationships and all the highs and lows of mediumship: the brilliant 'hits', the glaring errors, the blatant fishing, and also the naturalness and quickness of exchanges appropriate to the communicators, or the underexamined question of controls and their distinctive personalities. Etzel Cardeña (2023) titled his review of this book 'The Definitive Account of Early Mediumship', and described it as a masterwork, which it truly is.

I met Alan soon after I joined the SPR in 1982. In those days the SPR had a geographical address book of members, and I was delighted to learn that there was another member living in the same village (I then had no idea who Alan was). I phoned, went around for a coffee, and from then on went on to establish a friendship with both Alan and Sheila that lasted the rest of our lives. The way he let me into his life was typical of his attitude to people: always relaxed, interested although never enthusiastic; always happy to talk about psychical research to ordinary people, he was a very reassuring, comfortable, unflappable presence when it came to going on investigations. I accompanied him on a number of occasions and, although they usually turned out to be exceedingly boring, I admired the way he put sometimes frightened and worried people at ease without actually saying very much. Later on, travelling with him to SPR Council meetings in London, sometimes with a detour to the Natural History Museum to visit his beloved dinosaurs, was always fun, as were our regular get-togethers at home over a gin and tonic, and birthdays celebrated together, as Alan and my late husband shared the same birthday. Later years were not so much fun, but some pleasures never faded; calling on Alan you would often find him with a book about dinosaurs or trilobites or his beloved Sherlock Holmes stories, and happy to chat about the cases he investigated. Some of the last

things we spoke about were the unusual cases he regretted not having pursued and written up. They came from local sources, from people who attended his talks to various organizations or who wrote to him. One of them, which happened before the First World War, involved a boy of 12 looking for potential targets for his spring pistol in the kitchen of his home, a large Victorian house backing into a cave. While aiming at the kitchen clock he suddenly became aware of movement to his side and saw a transparent, smoky figure coming towards him across the room from the pantry, which backed into the cave. He froze—but so did the figure. He rushed to tell his parents, who made light of it. However, some years later they admitted that they had lost a number of housemaids who got frightened by the same figure.

It is a pity this story was never followed up, but fortunately Alan wrote up many of the others. I am grateful to have known him, grateful for his influence on my life and, like many of us, grateful for his wonderful and long-lasting contribution to psychical research.

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MEMORIES OF ALAN GAULD

I first met Alan shortly after I went up to Cambridge as an undergraduate in 1968. I immediately joined the Cambridge University Society for Psychical Research (CUSPR), and Alan—as a close friend of the President Tony Cornell—was a frequent visitor to Cambridge and invited speaker. So both Alan and Tony became my mentors in the subject, and friends. He also enjoyed his visits to the Cambridge University Library, his passion for books persisting throughout his life. I organized the SPR conferences for many years and Alan always made it clear that he would only attend if the venue was close to a good bookshop!

In 1969, I won a book prize for my performance in the undergraduate Tripos exam and chose Alan's classic work *The Founders of Psychical Research*

(Gauld,1968) as my prize. This had just been published, and prompted my fascination in the history of psychical research. I was especially intrigued by the long connection of the subject with Trinity, since this was my own college. Indeed, when I later became a fellow, I wrote about this connection on the occasion of the SPR centenary conference, this being hosted by Trinity (Carr, 1982).

One of the Trinity fellows in my undergraduate days was the famous philosopher and former SPR President C. D. Broad. Although I was a great admirer of his writings, I regret that I never spoke to him before his death in 1971. However, a few years later, Alan was investigating some mediumistic communications that allegedly came from Broad and asked me to investigate whether he had ever worn spats. Although I forget Alan's final assessment of the case, it turned out that he probably did, so this might be regarded as my first collaboration with Alan.

CUSPR evenings in Tony Cornell's basement at 22 Victoria Street were always replete with enthralling accounts of his psychical investigations, especially those involving mediums and hauntings. Many of these also involved Alan and were later recounted in their famous book *Poltergeists* (1979). I also recall watching the film of their amazing house-shaking experiment (Cornell & Gauld, 1961), testing Guy Lambert's hypothesis that poltergeist effects may result from geophysical influences, such as underground streams. They came to a negative conclusion, but the positive outcome was their survival of the collapse of the house!

I had the pleasure of joining Alan and Tony on several investigations. In particular, the three of us visited the Enfield poltergeist house in 1977. We weren't so impressed at the time, and both Tony and Alan were later critical of the case. However, we only spent one evening there, and later—when the case had become very famous—I formed a more positive opinion. One of my recollections of the evening is having to choose between hosting a party with my girlfriend or staying overnight in Enfield. I chose the latter because Alan advised me that poltergeist cases are much rarer than parties, but I doubt my girlfriend agreed! After 40 years I'm still not certain what to conclude about Enfield, but one reason I tend to believe in poltergeists is that both Alan and Tony spent their lifetimes investigating them and came to conclude that some of them are genuine.

Later Tony and Alan, together with Howard Wilkinson, Alan's colleague at Nottingham University, developed instrumentation for monitoring physical phenomena. This was called the SPIDER (Spontaneous Psychophysical Incident Data Recorder); it was controlled by a small Spectrum computer and was activated by any sudden changes in visual, auditory, thermal, or electromagnetic activity. As far as I'm aware, it never detected any poltergeist effects, but it was pioneering at the time.

In 1974, I was invited to join the SPR Council, who had heard about my enthusiasm for the subject and were probably keen to attract 'young blood'. I still like to think of myself in that way, although this is clearly delusional since I'm now 75. On the other hand, this is perhaps relatively young, since many Council members (including Alan) continue to serve into their 90s. Nevertheless, it is sobering to reflect that all my fellow Council members in 1974—and also Eleanor O'Keeffe, who was secretary at that time—have now passed on. Alan was the last of them, so his death somehow marks the end of an era.

I served on several Council committees with Alan—in particular the Research Activities Committee, the Research Grants Committee (which he chaired for a while), and the Conference Committee. But perhaps more significant was our involvement in the Perrott–Warrick fund. This is administered by Trinity College, Cambridge, and is the main source of support for psychical and survival research in the UK. I succeeded Donald West as Secretary of this committee in 1995, and Alan's extensive knowledge of the field and critical insights played a crucial role in our appointments.

What always impressed me about Alan was his scholarly meticulousness—not only as a psychologist and psychical researcher but also as a historian. Indeed, he was one of several academics whom I befriended in my Cambridge days—others being Ian Stevenson, John Beloff, and Donald West—whose intellectual integrity and scholastic excellence made such a deep impression on me and convinced me of the importance of the subject. Alan had a wonderful mind and I always sought his feedback whenever writing on the subject. For example, when I wrote up my 2002 Presidential Address as a *Proceedings* in 2008, I recall Alan sending me many pages of helpful and constructive comments. His own written contributions to the subject are described in the accompanying obituaries.

Since both Tony and Alan have now departed this world, I cannot help wondering whether they have found the answer to the question which so fascinated them during their lifetimes: Is there survival of consciousness after death? By a sad coincidence, Peter Fenwick, another person fascinated by this question, died just a few weeks before Alan, and my obituary of him appeared in the last issue. Peter was more convinced of survival than Alan, so I like to imagine him telling Alan with a twinkle in his eye "I told you so."

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REMINISCENCES OF ALAN GAULD

I only knew Alan personally for about thirty-five years, but I had previously read his incredibly informative books *Mediumship and Survival*, *The Founders of Psychical Research*, and *Poltergeists*—the latter written in collaboration with his friend and colleague Tony Cornell. Alan's first direct input into my life was his participation in a series of Ganzfeld experiments I conducted in the 1990s, followed by the grilling he gave me as the external examiner for my first PhD. His comments were particularly beneficial for my further study, and he was instrumental, together with Donald West, in my later appointment as the archivist within the SPR—Alan was particularly enthusiastic about the books, manuscripts, and other historical items within the archive, which he also donated himself.

I made regular visits to Alan and his wife Sheila's lovely house in Nottinghamshire, sometimes together with Zofia Weaver and the SPR librarian Karen Patel. The discussions revealed Alan's extensive knowledge about a range of subjects beyond what most people associated with him. Of course, there was psychology and parapsychology, but his knowledge of psychical research embraced his attendance at séances, haunted locations, and conversations with mediums, some of which were recorded and are now kept in the SPR audio-visual archive. He was knowledgeable about 'classical' music and notably palaeontology—a pet hobby of mine. An invite to his Golden Wedding Anniversary party revealed the high esteem in which he was held by numerous friends, colleagues, and family members who attended the joyful celebration.

I'm sure that other writers will mention his academic successes, so I shall avoid possible repetitions here, but he divulged many interesting facts about his education and career in the entry for the *Psi Encyclopaedia*. Our prolonged conversations and emails during the period of this project revealed further insights into his personality which may not have always been apparent. I refer to his wry sense of humour, based on a profound knowledge of how people's minds operate and how to deal with them. It is not surprising that he was on such friendly terms with Tony Cornell, who shared many serious and humour-filled experiences with him. Alan tried hard to maintain this outlook even during the unhappy time he spent in the care home, where we joked about the relative benefits of the triceratops versus the velociraptor!

One little-known event that we often joked about concerned sitting next to each other in a very long-winded Council meeting at Marloes Road many years ago, where we swapped handwritten notes bewailing the procrastination. Alan suggested a stiff drink would go down well, so I excused myself from the meeting; rushed out to the nearest off-license; and returned with a miniature bottle of a suitable substance which we surreptitiously sipped from—purely for medicinal purposes of course! (I must add that this is not the usual practice at SPR Council meetings.)

Alan's positive influence on the world of psychical research will live on for many, many years to come. His relatively brief appearances on documentaries and in the media underlie his opposition to sensationalism and self-aggrandizement; however, this did not disguise his wisdom in the fields he embraced. Let us hope that the future produces such gentlemen of knowledge, integrity, and erudition as Alan possessed in abundance.

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REMINISCENCES OF ALAN GAULD

In 1994, Dr Alan Gauld was awarded a higher doctorate—a Doctor of Letters (DLitt)—by the University of Nottingham, based on his extensive writings in psychical research and the history of hypnotism. On one of our many afternoon tea meetings, I commented on the graduation photo on his bookshelf and he said, "Oh yes, that was quite a day, the university gave me a lot of fuss, photographs, and they couldn't do enough for me." Although there have been a number of prestigious SPR members throughout history who held higher doctorates (DLitt, DSc, LLD, above the PhD, MD, EdD, DD, etc.), Alan is perhaps one of few, if not the only person, to have received this award on the basis of work in psychical research and parapsychology.

I first met Dr Gauld in 2009, very briefly, at the SPR's conference held at the University of Nottingham. I'd been reading his book *Mediumship and Survival*, so I knew of Alan, but didn't know what he looked like. As we returned to a large lecture theatre for the next talks of the day, Prof. Chris Roe was in deep conversation with Dr Gauld high up at the back of the theatre and called me over to introduce us. It was a brief 'hello' and handshake. I felt the academic superiority, respectfully, and went and took my seat.

However, from 2010 onwards, I got to know Alan informally and enjoyed almost bi-annual afternoon lunches with him alongside Dr Matthew Colborn. Alan's wife Sheila would often make tea and sandwiches, while 'the boys played with the books' as she often said. We'd retire to the living room and speak of various figures throughout history and the latest developments in the field; Alan was often keen to know how the student population was going from undergraduate interest in parapsychology to doctoral research. Alan also would turn to me now and then for reference tracking, particularly of scarce articles on Frederic Myers, which he knew I had in my own collection. I would take photocopies to his house, along with a box of chocolate biscuits that would make Alan's eyes light up. He would wave his fingers over the open boxes, scanning for the next biscuit and exclaiming over his favourites, and then we would go back to serious talk on psychical research . I can always picture him sitting far back into the sofa, very relaxed, like on a psychiatrist's couch, and he'd talk of books I'd never read, and reminisce.

Some of the final contributions from Dr Gauld, soon to surface, are his assistance on literature sourced for a paper intended for the JSPR on 'crisis apparitions'. I also recorded an interview with Alan, in his home, about his experiences of the late parapsychologist D. Scott Rogo, for a forthcoming biography on his life and tragic death. He had had extensive correspondence with Rogo, particularly when editor of the *JSPR*.

When Alan had to move to a care home I made frequent trips to see him. He still wanted books, and I brought them to him, including the latest SPR journals and magazines, which Alan slowly and carefully studied under his light and magnifying glass. He would also reminisce about the dinosaur that lived in Melvyn Willin's garden, and his own childhood visits to the Natural History Museum to see the diplodocus. He also quite often spoke fondly of his father, and how he got him interested in the writing of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the adventures of Sherlock Holmes. He said his initial interest in psychical research was awakened by newspaper cuttings on ghosts and mediumship that his parents would set aside for him.

I'm glad we became friends, and that he ended up turning to me for literature and data—I finally felt I'd 'made it' to be accepted by one of the 'top dogs' in parapsychology. I was always in complete admiration of Alan, even to the very end when conversation just turned to comfort in company, a helping hand, and a familiar face.

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CHARLES THEODORE TART
1937–2025

Tart with his doctoral student Etzel Cardeña, circa 1987.

IN MEMORIAM: CHARLES THEODORE TART. THE HUMMINGBIRD TAKES OFF[1]

A giant in many fields, Charles Tart has passed away. The subtitle of this *in memoriam* refers to an homage I wrote earlier comparing him to a hummingbird which rapidly pollinates many fields that had remained mostly barren since the times of William James and F. W. H. Myers (Cardeña, 2023). James was the peerless phrase-maker and philosophical thinker of states of consciousness. Tart supplemented him by being the experimentalist and systematizer of states of consciousness. He also made major contributions to other areas including parapsychology, the integration of reflective practices in everyday life, transpersonal psychology, and, centrally to him, the integration of spiritual beliefs with science, seeking to avoid dogmas from both sides.

To start at the beginning, Charles Theodore Tart (he only used the initial of his middle name) was born on April 29, 1937 in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, but grew up in New Jersey. In his Introduction to an important series of interviews with him (Tart, in press), he talks of his Lutheran upbringing and the unconditional love he received from his religious grandmother, who died when he was eight. From an early age he had a great interest in chemistry and electricity, maintaining a lab in his family's basement. He also had a strong practical side (he obtained a radiotelephone license), which he would use later to devise machines to test his learning theory of psi phenomena (Tart, 1976).

He started his university studies majoring in electrical engineering at the foremost institution for it, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he was influenced by lectures on parapsychology and cofounded the

1. This obituary is partly based on: Cardeña, E., "Charles Tart: A noetic pilgrim's progress". Foreword. in J. Mishlove (Ed.) (in press), *A science of the soul: Seventy years of exploring consciousness and parapsychology. Conversations with Charles T. Tart*. White Crow. Republished, with authorization from Cardeña, E. (in press). In memoriam: Charles Theodore Tart (April 29, 1937–March 5, 2025): The hummingbird takes off. *Journal of Anomalous Experience and Cognition*, *5*(1).

MIT Psychic Research Society. He transferred to Duke University, where he was mentored by J. B. Rhine, the most influential parapsychologist of the mid-20th century, and got his doctorate in psychology in 1963 at the University of North Carolina. He worked as a postdoc in the Stanford University laboratory of Ernest Hilgard, one of history's foremost learning and hypnosis researchers (e.g., Tart & Hilgard, 1966). I suspect (and heard some comments from him about it) that the more straight-laced Hilgard, found some of Tart's interests far-fetched, a reaction that Tart surely got throughout his career.

He became a professor at the University of California, Davis, where he taught for almost three decades. I can attest that he was a very popular teacher because I was his TA and last doctoral student there. His course on Altered States of Consciousness was always enrolled to capacity and students liked that he did not put on airs and called things as he saw them. One example is when in what is still the best video on parapsychology, *The Case of ESP* (Edwards, 1983), he stated that the fact that many scientists believe there is no scientific evidence for psi phenomena just shows that they are ignorant of the subject.

The photo I have chosen for this obituary shows him donning a Haitian hat I brought from field work. I chose it because it shows him smiling and playing, something characteristic of him. Here is one instance I recall. My studies at UC Davis were sponsored by Mexican official agencies, and when I would bring him letters from them in Spanish (which I would translate), asking him to report on my progress, he would fake that he could read them in Spanish and use the five or so words he knew, laughing all the way. Tart also taught in other institutions, foremost at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, and was a seeker of different ways of enhancing human potentials, becoming a black belt in Aikido.

He did not initiate research teams at UC Davis (I suspect his shyness for that), but he supervised a foremost researcher in hypnosis, Helen Crawford, and me, enrichening my education by alerting me to various possibilities, including an extraordinary Summer Research Institute at the Foundation for the Research on the Nature of Man (renamed the Rhine Research Center in 1995), when it was still a professional and high-calibre institution.

Tart took early retirement from UC Davis, but continued teaching at the Institute of Noetic Sciences and writing books on practical uses of meditation and related practices, and trying to reconcile the conflict he saw between science and spirituality. Preceded by his beloved wife of decades, Judy, he passed away on March 5, 2025. He is survived by his daughter Lucinda and his son David.

There are many areas to which he is a foundational author, of which I will highlight three.

Altered states of consciousness

The period of the 1960s and 1970s brings to mind iconic events, among them Woodstock, Esalen, The Beatles, meditation, and even an academic book, Charles Tart's *Altered States of Consciousness* (1969). It was an anthology of articles

on altered states in general, with specific chapters on the hypnagogic state, dreaming, hypnosis, psychedelic drug effects, and related psychophysiology. Anybody interested in the potential expansion of consciousness now had an authoritative tome to initiate an academic or personal search, and academic careers (mine included) were wholly or partly launched under its influence. While that one is his most influential book, I think that his masterwork is a conceptual scaffolding of the study of states of consciousness from a systems approach (Tart, 1975a), which should be consulted far more often than it is nowadays. Besides those books, Tart proposed state-specific sciences in a paper published in the august journal *Science* (Tart, 1972), and initiated or further developed the study of many altered states or related procedures, among them out-of-body experiences (Tart, 1998), marijuana intoxication (Tart, 1971), and hypnosis (Tart, 1970).

Transpersonal psychology and parapsychology

Transpersonal psychology is a perspective that emphasizes alterations of consciousness and spiritual concerns. Expectably, Tart was one of its founders through his landmark anthology *Transpersonal Psychologies* (Tart, 1975b) and various empirical studies. In a celebratory piece, Cunningham (2023) discusses what he considers to be the most important contributions by Tart to transpersonal psychology: developing a psychology of mind and spirit, undergirded by a critical view of mainstream reductive materialist psychology and its implications; adopting an empirical, non-dogmatic approach to religions as spiritual psychologies; creating state-specific sciences of extraordinary human experience; reinforcing the scientific bases for parapsychology; and developing a psychology to assist human growth.

Tart was also a major contributor to parapsychology through the empirical investigation of extraordinary claims related to alterations of consciousness such as out-of-body experiences (e.g., Tart, 1998). He also collaborated with Russell Targ and Harold Puthoff on developing *remote viewing* and publishing a symposium under the auspices of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) (Tart et al., 1979), and he employed learning theory, particularly immediate feedback, to stabilize and even strengthen psi effects in controlled studies (Tart, 1976).

In addition to his experimental ingenuity (e.g., he tested the consensual replicability of perceptions of auras with the help of a doorway, see Tart & Palmer, 1979), he was very successful at publishing parapsychological and other 'fringe' work in mainstream fora, including *Science*, the University of Chicago Press, and the IEEE. He was not intimidated by the bulwarks of mainstream science and worked to systematize and normalize 'fringe fields'. A justified normalization of such fields unfortunately happens too rarely, partly because of the bias against them but also by the fact that, as Tart recommended in a letter he sent to me when I expressed my interest to get a PhD with him, a researcher needs to first

establish one's competence and reputation in a mainstream area before trying to expand its limits. Even then, one should expect and be able to withstand unfair personal and professional persecution from dogmatic critics (see Cardeña, 2015, for various examples).

Charles Tart died on March 5, 2025. *In memoriams* of great scholars and good people are unavoidably exercises in frustration, as the writer soon realizes how insufficient one's skills are when trying to convey their qualities and uniqueness. This one is no exception. I will just close by saying that, besides his extraordinary talents, courage, and ingenuity, I will miss not seeing Charley smile again.

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CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor:

Does psi perform any useful function?

As a member of the SPR and occasional contributor, I try to keep up with psi research and debate. At present, this seems to focus on experimental evidence for psi phenomena (e.g., Broderick & Goertzel, 2015; Cardeña, 2018; Vernon, 2021) or constructing a theory of psi (e.g., Daw & Roe, 2024). A question that seems to be overlooked is whether psi performs any useful function. Psi experiences in everyday life, as in telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition, known collectively as 'extrasensory perception' (ESP), could be an invaluable resource as they provide information not available to the senses. For example, if ESP information was automatically activated when someone was in desperate need of help, and if that, in turn, enabled those receiving the information to act on it, then ESP could serve a useful purpose. However, in everyday life this rarely seems to happen.

Accounts of involuntarily received ESP are characterized by unexpected and seemingly random information about present or future events, usually involving other people, which supervene on the continuity of everyday experiencing. Unfortunately, as ESP is not interactional, when danger is involved no warning or help can be given to those involved. In only a minority of reported cases does the unexpected ESP information enable the experiencer to act to prevent a potential disaster, such as a mother rescuing their child, or the cancellation of a plan to board a doomed flight. Instead, in the great majority of reported cases, the ESP information is that a disaster has occurred, is occurring, or will occur, and there is nothing the unhappy ESP recipient can do about it (Feather & Schmicker, 2005).

Furthermore, only a minority of people seem to receive ESP information, thereby limiting its potential usefulness. Surveys show only around 20–25% of the general population report one or more ESP experiences. Twins seem to have more ESP experiences, with the incidence between non-identical twins being 30–35%, between pairs of identical twins 40–45%, and amongst identical twins who share an amniotic sac almost until birth ('late splitters') of 50–60% (Playfair, 2012). But, as with the general public, there is no reciprocal ESP communication.

Tens of thousands of catastrophic events happen every day which should surely be the catalyst for precognitive warnings, yet those who will be involved wake up planning for a normal day with no precognition that they will be injured, taken ill, or die before the day is out. If involuntary ESP was the only manifestation of psi it would seem reasonable to conclude that it rarely serves any useful function.

However, this is not the whole story. There is clear evidence that ESP can be voluntarily invoked as an active agent and have a positive benefit. People can train to become psi practitioners. For example, psychics, or 'intuitives' (often a preferred term), report that they have learned to voluntarily transition from their everyday, sensory-dependent, state of mind into a 'psi' state where they are able to access the mind of a particular client seeking help. This necessary transitioning is described in detail by four intuitives (Mayer, 2007). It seems that mediums also transition into a 'psi' state of mind before commencing a séance with sitters who are hoping the medium can telepathically contact the minds of their dead relatives or friends. For the sitters this can be a profound experience that brings much emotional comfort and relief. Clairvoyance, as in map dowsing, has been used to find lost people and objects (Mayer, 2007).

Besides the use of receptive ESP, voluntary psi also includes the ability to interact with matter as in psychokinesis (PK). Healers involved in different approaches to psi healing depending on their belief system (e.g., spiritual healing, Reiki healing, energy healing, or therapeutic touch) report voluntarily transitioning into a psi state of mind before commencing a healing session. While in the psi healing mindset, they often describe feeling a sensation of 'healing energy' flowing from their hands into their healee. In turn, healees often say they feel as if a warm 'healing energy' is passing into them, and experience considerable mental and symptom relief during and after the session (Buxton-King, 2017). Part of this relief is probably due to the positive placebo effect (Meissner, 2011), but numerous non-placebo studies involving seeds, plants, cells, and animal tissues have demonstrated positive changes in enzymic activity resulting in increased multiplication rates of normal cells, increased rate of plant growth, increased rate of tissue healing, and reduced rates of cancer cell multiplication, increased rates of cancer cell death, and even complete cancer cure in mice (see Charman, 2021, 2023; Edwards, 2017; Jain, 2021).

There is also evidence that object psychokinesis can be voluntarily invoked—i.e., displacement, tilting, or elevation of even heavy objects popularly known as 'table turning'. This has been repeatedly observed and confirmed experimentally (Batcheldor, 1966; Brookes-Smith, 1973; Brookes-Smith & Hunt, 1970; Charman, 2008; Owen & Sparrow, 1976). These experiments have shown that object psychokinesis is most likely to occur when group participants are in a state of unquestioning acceptance that it will happen, implying they have transitioned from a normally sceptical everyday mindset into positive psi mind activation. Like psi healing, it seems that object psychokinesis is a mental

skill that can be taught. If so, this has the potential to be extremely useful when an object needs to be moved, or retrieved, but is beyond physical grasp.

These observations suggest a number of areas for fruitful research and debate. For example, why some people seem more able to access and/or channel psi than others, the extent to which the ability to access and apply different types of psi may be taught and developed, ways in which psi may be harnessed for positive benefit, and how psi could be better integrated into everyday life.

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To the Editor:

S. J. Davey: New information about a pioneering parapsychologist

This letter contextualizes the influential work of psychical researcher S. J. Davey, and presents previously little-known information about his life and character.

In the late 1800s, British medium William Eglinton regularly held séances in which the deceased appeared to write messages on school slates (for an account of Eglinton's life and phenomena, see Farmer, 1886). These demonstrations of alleged physical mediumship were enthusiastically endorsed by many sitters and eventually caught the attention of psychical investigators. Eleanor Sidgwick was unimpressed, arguing that the testimony supporting Eglinton's slate writing was unreliable and that he was essentially performing conjuring tricks (Sidgwick, 1886). Magician Angelo Lewis (who had published several well-respected books on conjuring under the pen name Professor Hoffmann) was invited to contribute to the debate, and subsequently attended several Eglinton séances and reviewed the testimony from other sitters. In a lengthy article, Lewis (1886) presented practical guidelines on how best to observe physical mediumship and stated that some of the testimony suggested that Eglington wasn't always using tricks to produce his phenomena. Lewis also described how two other well-known conjurors, Edwin Sachs (who wrote a seminal book on sleight of hand) and George Herschell (a Harley Street doctor and one of the original members of The Magic Circle), both attended Eglinton's séances and thought that some of the phenomena were caused by "some unknown force" (page 374).

S. J. Davey (1887a) first became interested in Spiritualism after experiencing the apparition of a deceased friend at the foot of his bed. Davey then joined the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) and arranged to have several sittings with Eglinton. In 1884, he contributed to the debate about the controversial medium by submitting glowing accounts of these séances to both the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* (*JSPR*) and the Spiritualist magazine, *Light*. However, over time, Davey became more sceptical, partly because he learned about the tricks used to fake slate-writing and partly because of two episodes in which his friends fooled him into thinking that he had experienced genuine paranormal phenomena. Richard Hodgson (1886) then published a lengthy paper in the *JSPR* critiquing the reliability of testimony relating to Eglinton's demonstrations, including noting several discrepancies in the two accounts written by Davey. By then, Davey had realized that his reports were inaccurate, with Hodgson noting that Davey had asked for "it to be understood that he now regards the reports as of no value whatever for the purpose of proving that the slate-writing phenomena which occurred were produced by other than ordinary human agency" (page 431).

In 1887, Davey conducted a now classic experiment to evaluate the reliability of reports for séance phenomena. Adopting the pseudonym David Clifford, he invited small groups to attend his fake séances and to then provide a written account of their experiences (Davey, 1887a; Hodgson & Davey, 1887). Many of the witnesses believed that they were attending a genuine séance, and the resulting reports frequently omitted or distorted key information. Although all the reports are fascinating, the two submitted by conjurers are especially interesting and frequently overlooked. First, 'a well-known professional conjurer, whose programme includes several exposés of alleged spiritualistic frauds' (Davey, 1887a, p.412) attended a Davey séance and later signed a statement saying that he didn't know how trickery could be used to produce the observed phenomena. Unfortunately, the identity of this performer remains a mystery because he asked to be anonymous after being informed that the séances were faked. Second, magician George Herschell (who had previously also endorsed Eglinton), also attended a Davey séance and later noted: "I confess that I cannot imagine any possible method" (Davey, 1887b, page 153). The accounts by both conjurers are a tribute to Davey's skill and demonstrate how a background in mainstream magic didn't prevent observers being deceived by fake paranormal phenomena.

The publication of Davey's studies elicited a steady stream of articles and letters into the *JSPR*, including one in which Alfred Russel Wallace argued that Davey may have produced the phenomena using his genuine paranormal abilities (Wallace, 1891). The *JSPR* reported that S. J. Davey had died from typhoid fever on 8 December 1890, aged just 27 years (Anon., 1891). Soon after Davey's death, Hodgson (1892) published an article revealing the methods that Davey had employed in his fake séances.

Hodgson and Davey's remarkable studies are now seen as the first systematic work into the reliability of eyewitness testimony (e.g., Pankrantz, 2008; Tompkins, 2019) and have acted as the catalyst for future work in the area (e.g., Besterman, 1932; Wiseman et al., 1995, 1999, 2003).

Several books and articles contain images of, and biographical information about, almost all the researchers who played a key role in this important episode in the history of psychical research (e.g., Eleanor Sidgwick, Alfred Russel Wallace, Richard Hodgson, and Angelo Lewis). However, very little is known about S. J. Davey. In his 1887 article, Davey provided some information about how he became interested in the field, but his life and appearance are otherwise shrouded in mystery.

Curious, I searched both the parapsychological literature and a large database dedicated to the history of magic for more information about S. J. Davey. Neither yielded any additional information. However, I eventually found references to him in both the 1871 and 1881 Censuses for England, Wales, and Scotland. These revealed that his full name was Samuel John Davey, and he was born in Bayswater (Middlesex) in 1864. Aged 7, his occupation was listed as a scholar, and ten years later he was working as a jeweller's clerk.

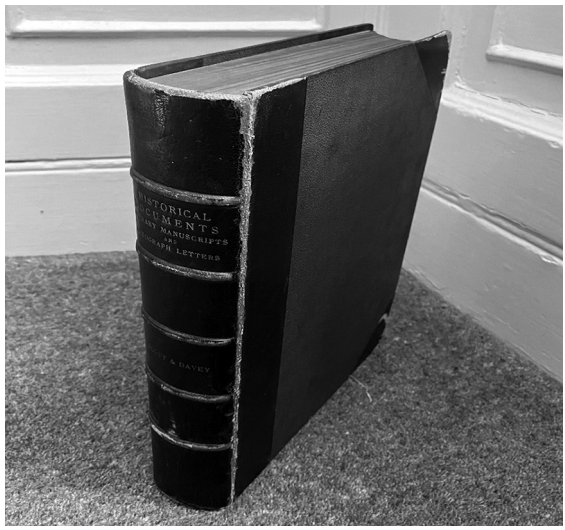

Figure 1. A copy of A Guide to the Collector of Historical Documents, Literary Manuscripts, and Autograph Letters, etc.

In both documents, S. J. Davey's family consists of his father (Samuel Davey, 1834–1905), his mother (Martha Clements, 1852–1893), and sister (Frances Davey, 1867–1932). They lived in Bromley (Kent) and appeared to have enjoyed a middle-class existence supported by two servants. In both documents, S. J. Davey's father, Samuel Davey, is listed as a 'wholesale jeweller'. Notices of S. J. Davey's death showed that he died in Croydon and was buried in the graveyard at St John the Evangelist in Shirley.

Further searches showed that S. J. Davey's father was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and published two books (Davey, 1879; Scott & Davey, 1891). The later book, co-authored with the Reverend Dr Scott, proved especially illuminating. Entitled *A Guide to the Collector of Historical Documents, Literary Manuscripts, and Autograph Letters, etc.*, it is a reference text for autograph collectors wishing to identify the genuine signatures of well-known individuals (Figure 1). Writing and publishing the book would have been a considerable undertaking given that runs to over 400 pages, and includes lengthy Appendices containing facsimiles of many letters by royalty, politicians, and writers.

The authors note that the book was compiled with the help of the second author's recently deceased son, Samuel John Davey. As well as dedicating the book to Samuel, some editions contain an *in memoriam* account of his life, reprinted from the December 1890 edition of *The Archivist* ("the only periodical of this country devoted to the subject of autographs and historical documents"). This one-page biographical sketch noted that S. J. Davey possessed "literary and artistic tastes", enjoyed studying every detail of a document, and was

Figure 2. A woodcut of Samuel John Davey. 1864–1890.

skilled at detecting evidence of fakery. As well as outlining his experiments in the séance room, the sketch describes S. J. Davey as enterprising, generous, pleasing, amiable, bright, and intelligent. Unfortunately, it noted that he also suffered from an "extreme delicacy of bodily frame" and had intended to travel to warmer European climates during the British winter, but developed a fever just a few days before heading off. Perhaps most striking of all, the book contained a wonderfully detailed woodcut of S. J. Davey (reproduced in Figure 2). This illustration showed a thoughtful young man wearing round spectacles and a formal suit, and, rather appropriately given the topic of the book, his signature.

Over 130 years ago, S. J. Davey carried out a pioneering and informative study that continues to inspire and inform present-day psychical researchers and psychologists. Despite this, surprisingly little was known about his tragically short life. Now, we have more information about his character, some details about his career, and, perhaps most importantly of all, can put a face to the name.

Samuel John Davey timeline

1864: Born to Samuel Davey and Martha Clements in Bayswater (Middlesex).

1881: Living in Bromley (Kent) and working as a jeweller's clerk.

1884: Attends Eglinton séances and publishes positive reports in the *JSPR* and *Light*.
1886: Questions the veracity of Eglinton, and Hodgson critiques his testimony.
1886: Conducts pioneering experiments into the reliability of testimony for séance phenomena.
1887: Publishes his studies in both the *JSPR* and the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*.
1890: Dies from typhoid fever in Croydon (London).

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