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Current Research and Insights

**Past-Life Memories in
Near-Death Experiences**

UFOs, Psychical Research, and Religion

Interview with Garret Moddel

Wonder in Science

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Why EdgeScience? Because, contrary to public perception, scientific knowledge is still full of unknowns. What remains to be discovered—what we don't know—very likely dwarfs what we do know. And what we think we know may not be entirely correct or fully understood. Anomalies, which researchers tend to sweep under the rug, should be actively pursued as clues to potential breakthroughs and new directions in science.

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The Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE) is a professional organization of scientists and scholars who study unusual and unexplained phenomena. The primary goal of the Society is to provide a professional forum for presentations, criticism, and debate concerning topics which are for various reasons ignored or studied inadequately within mainstream science. A secondary goal is to promote improved understanding of those factors that unnecessarily limit the scope of scientific inquiry, such as sociological constraints, restrictive world views, hidden theoretical assumptions, and the temptation to convert prevailing theory into prevailing dogma. Topics under investigation cover a wide spectrum. At one end are apparent anomalies in well established disciplines. At the other, we find paradoxical phenomena that belong to no established discipline and therefore may offer the greatest potential for scientific advancement and the expansion of human knowledge. The SSE was founded in 1982 and has approximately 800 members in 45 countries worldwide. The Society also publishes the peer-reviewed *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, and holds annual meetings in the U.S. and biennial meetings in Europe. Associate and student memberships are available to the public. To join the Society, or for more information, visit the website at scientificexploration.org.

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Editor's Note: *The subjects we deal with in EdgeScience are often difficult to illustrate without using cliché images. So this time we have decided to use some abstract art that, in our view at least, reflect the subjects at hand. The interior images this issue are courtesy Phillip Wang who used a Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) to create images of artwork that don't actually exist. These images appeared on the site This Artwork Does Not Exist: thisartworkdoesnotexist.com. For more information, see "You can be the first (and) only person to see these works of art," by Popkin, Boing Boing, May 8, 2021.*

Vlad P. Glăveanu

Wonder in Science

It is hardly surprising that scientific work is eminently creative. Using the “traditional,” product-based definition of creativity,¹ the theories and findings of science demonstrate both novelty and originality, on the one hand, and a certain degree of effectiveness in solving problems (even when these problems are primarily conceptual), on the other. However, scientific work itself cannot be reduced to its outcomes, for as creative and valuable as these are. In order to fully understand what makes science creative—and, I would argue, what makes science science—we need to delve deeper into the nature of the creative process of scientists. From the start, we are faced with the realization that there is no single way of being creative in science (and any other domain of human activity for this matter),² just as the products of scientists show a high level of variety both between and within disciplines. However, where there is variability there are also patterns, and here I will argue that, maybe surprisingly for some, the kernel of creative science takes us back to the mundane phenomenon of wonder and the universal, human experience of wondering.

A simple route to argue for this position reminds us of Socrates and his well-known argument that philosophy is born in wonder.³ Since science finds its earliest roots in philosophical pondering, then, by extension, it is born in wonder as well. Or we can notice that, in the accounts of scientists themselves, there is a clear sense that scientific discovery often takes “flight from wonder.”⁴ But there is also a deeper way to argue for the centrality of wondering in scientific work and this concerns the nature of wonder itself.

While used in daily life as largely synonymous with thinking, wondering reflects a special mode of thought and, beyond this, a special mode of being in the world. The dictionary definition of the term leads us to concepts that are already commonly associated with science such as doubt, questioning, curiosity, and knowledge. But, at the same time, it includes references that are more reminiscent of the arts, for instance admiration, amazement, beauty, and being in awe. In this sense, beyond its connection to philosophy, wonder is one of the phenomena that reveals the multiple intersections between art and science and can help us challenge further their separation.⁵ In fact, wonder as a phenomenon reflects well the very idea of the union of opposites or of seeming opposites. For a long time, it has been acknowledged that wonder is based on the dynamic integration of “wondering at,” or the surprise felt when experiencing the unfamiliar, and “wondering about,” or the active exploration of the unfamiliar and the unknown.⁶ These two directions of wondering are clearly represented in scientific work that usually starts from a practical challenge, lack of knowledge, or unique question (what scientists wonder at) and moves towards the systematic exploration of possibilities associated with it (the wondering about part). What looking at scientific creativity through the lenses of wonder shows us,



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however, is that these are not distinct stages of a longer process but can and do take place simultaneously. These are the unique moments in which scientists are struck by the discrepancy between two theories, two empirical realities or, most often, the gap between theory and reality, and are actively envisioning multiple possible explanations for this disconnect. They do not know or understand something, and yet, the prospect of gaining valid knowledge is unclear; what is clear is an intuition that something, yet unknown, will emerge.

And this is where we can make a clear distinction between curiosity and wonder, similar to how other scholars thought about them across history.⁷ In simple terms, curiosity is a transient state, prompted by the discovery of an unusual event, aimed at understanding it better, and, in doing so, at passing from a state of not knowing to one of knowing, as fast as possible. This is why curiosity can be “satisfied” whenever we (think we) have the answer to our question; it can certainly be reignited later on, but its path will always go from the unfamiliar to the familiar. Wonder tends to follow a different trajectory, opposite in fact: from the familiar to the unfamiliar. This is because it helps us question what we believe we already know, challenge the taken-for-granted, and, ultimately, rediscover reality in a completely different light. In this way, the process of wonder doesn’t necessarily have to end in knowledge but in new questions.

So one can immediately see how wondering would be the natural state of mind for a philosopher and maybe for an artist as well—but for a scientist? Aren’t scientists driven more by

curiosity and its rather linear path from question to answer? There is certainly an important place for curiosity in science, including in the development of creative scientific research, but this doesn't exclude the fact that some of the deepest and most motivating explorations scientists engage in are based on enduring forms of wonder rather than fleeing moments of curiosity. The history of science is full of examples of scientists who had overarching, consuming types of questions that led them to problematize much of what we, collectively, think we know about ourselves and about the world (for a detailed analysis of such a project, see Gruber's *Darwin on Man*⁸). And, beyond revolutionary scientific discoveries, the mundane practice of science does oftentimes connect scientists back to the "big questions," questions that, by definition, don't have simple or even single answers.

And this is how a focus on wonder in scientific work can truly transform our understanding of science and help us appreciate its creative nature and its potential. The study of wonder, since its early days, has been about knowledge, especially its lack. Socrates famously declared that all he knows is that he doesn't know anything, a statement that might pass as intellectual humility but, in fact, goes much deeper than that. It captures the workings of wonder which invite us to uniquely turn "not knowing" into a productive, valuable state, one that shouldn't always and rapidly be surpassed through the acquisition of knowledge.⁹ In

fact, wonder helps scientists dwell longer into the unknown, to use a Heideggerian phrase, stops them from quickly closing down the process of reflection and from assuming that absolute answers are easily within one's grasp. The creative process thrives, across domains, whenever we enter a mindset like the one described here,¹⁰ when we are able to understand the problem at hand from multiple perspectives at once and place these perspectives in dialogue with each other.

Wonder opens up new spaces of possibility for the thinking of a scientist, and, while it might not be sustained for long periods of time, at least continuously, it is the ever-present companion of those projects that transform the world and the scientist through their relationship. Teaching science, then, should not be reduced to teaching "what is" the case but constantly inviting questions about "what could be," "what might have been," and even "what could never be." The linear path from hypothesis to research finding might be disrupted by what if, as if, and what else thinking, but it is also radically transformed by it. In the end, cultivating wonder in science education is one of the safest ways to develop young minds that will continue to marvel at the world and explore it, resisting easy conclusions and enduring the frustration of uncertainty.¹¹ This way, we help

develop science that starts from wondrous not knowing rather than the incessant quest for absolute knowledge—and this is no small wonder, after all!

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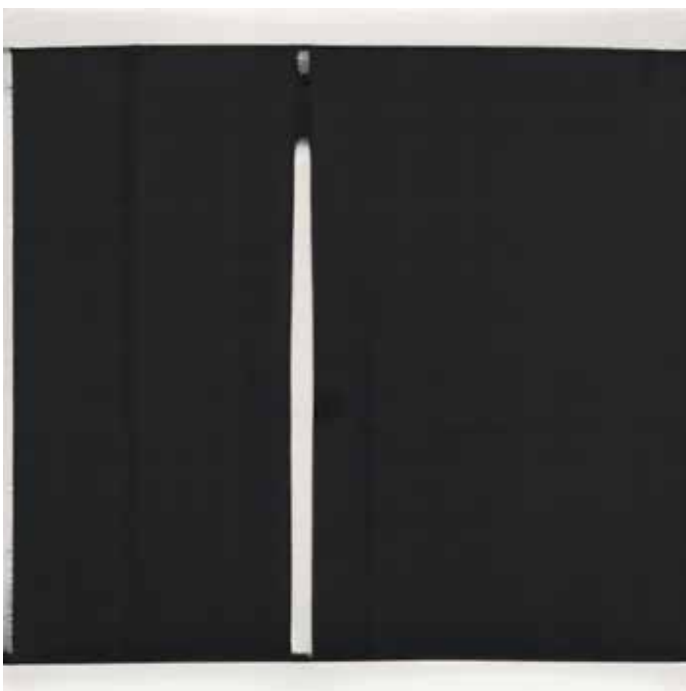


Phillip Wang

Bruce Greyson

Claims of Past-Life Memories in Near-Death Experiences

For the past half century, the Division of Perceptual Studies (DOPS) at the University of Virginia has been investigating phenomena that challenge mainstream scientific paradigms regarding the nature of the mind/brain relationship. Researchers at DOPS have focused on studying phenomena related to consciousness functioning beyond the confines of the physical body, and phenomena that suggest continuation of consciousness after physical death, through objective documentation and rigorous analysis of empirical data. Among the human experiences studied at DOPS are young children's claimed memories of past lives and accounts of near-death experiences. Both of these phenomena have been controversial topics in academia, as they challenge contemporary models of the mind-brain relationship and may be open to multiple interpretations. Some scholars are willing to accept one of these phenomena but not the other, but are the two linked in some way? Both bear on the question of postmortem survival of consciousness. Can data from the two phenomena complement each other and form a bridge to a new understanding of mind and brain and of the survival question?



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Research into Claims of Past-Life Memories

Reincarnation is a central idea in many Asian religions, and a national survey by the Pew Research Center found that a third of all Americans—even a third of Mainline Protestants and a third of Roman Catholics—believe that we may at some point after death return to live another life here on Earth.¹ But is there any objective evidence that we can live more than one life? Researchers at DOPS and at other universities around the globe have studied more than two thousand cases of very young children—before they were of school age—who claimed to recall details of a past life.² In about half of those cases, they've been able to identify the person the child claimed to have been in that past life. And in many cases, the child's memories match specific details of the claimed past life.

Ian Stevenson, the psychiatrist who pioneered this research starting in the 1960s, limited his investigation to very young children, generally between the ages of 2 and 5, before they had learned to read, in order to avoid claimed past-life memories that were likely to be contaminated by things the child may have read or seen. He also limited his studies to memories that came to the children spontaneously. He particularly avoided memories recovered in hypnotic past-life regression because of the increased suggestibility of people when they're hypnotized. The purported past lives recalled under hypnosis may be extremely plausible and convincing to the person having the experience. But experiments have shown how easily suggestions given by a hypnotist can influence the features of the purported past life to conform to these suggestions.³ It's not that information acquired under hypnosis can't ever be right, but rather that it's not reliable enough to be trusted as scientific evidence.

The young children that Ian Stevenson and other researchers have investigated not only have memories of a past life, but often show behaviors, such as phobias or preferences, that are unusual within the context of their own family and can't be explained by any current life events. These unexplained behaviors are usually consistent with the child's statements about a previous life. For example, a young child who remembers a life that ended in drowning may show an unnatural fear of water, or a young child in a Hindu family who remembers a life as a devout Muslim may refuse to eat food not prepared according to Islamic law. Some of these children have birthmarks and birth defects that correspond to wounds or other marks on the deceased person whose life the child claims to remember.⁴ In many cases of this type, autopsy reports have confirmed these correspondences.

Problematic Features of Past-Life Memories

I think these cases are too strong to be written off as fantasy and wish fulfillment, but I'm not sure that our current ideas about reincarnation are the best explanation for them—and neither was Ian Stevenson. All this evidence may be taken as supporting a belief in reincarnation. There are, however, some cases in the University of Virginia collection that suggest that the matter is not straightforward. For example, in a few cases, we have two or more children who recall the same past life.

Anthropologist Antonia Mills described several cases of this type among the Gitksan tribe in British Columbia.⁵ Susan Albert died of a stroke in her late 70s, but before she died, she said she wanted to come back as her granddaughter's child. Within three months, that granddaughter gave birth to a baby girl, Rhonda Mead. The baby was physically and behaviorally precocious, and when she was 15 months old, she was taken to visit relatives in a town 750 miles away. When she saw her uncle sitting in an easy chair, she tried to push him out of it, yelling, "That's my chair!" and according to her mother, "She just screamed bloody murder if anybody sat in her chair." She also insisted on sitting in one particular chair at the dinner table, claiming it was hers, although she was so small she could barely see over the edge of the table while sitting on it. She also identified pieces of jewelry and other objects of Susan Albert's as hers, and mentioned by name her great-grandmother's dog, who had died before she was born. Furthermore, she had an oddly shaped scar on her right arm that resembled a tattoo her great-grandmother had on that arm, and she expressed likes and dislikes that were the same as Susan Albert's.

Around the same time of Rhonda's birth, two other baby girls, Sheila and Susan Richards, were born to the extended family, both of whom also claimed to have been Susan Albert in their past life.

Antonia Mills has investigated other cases of multiple children who claim to remember the same person among several of the Pacific Northwest tribes, and Ian Stevenson has noted such cases among the Inuit in Alaska and among the Igbo in Nigeria.⁶

In other cases, a child will remember the past lives of two people who lived at the same time. And in some cases, the person whose life the child remembers died after the child was born. Such cases raise questions about how to interpret the children's knowledge of someone else's life. Because of these inconsistencies, Ian Stevenson, who initiated this line of research, never claimed that these cases were proof of reincarnation. Instead, he referred to them as "cases suggestive of reincarnation" and "cases of the reincarnation type."⁷

Contribution of Near-Death Research to the Study of Claimed Past-Life Memories

The typical claims of children who recall past lives are challenging enough to our understanding of mind and brain, but these problematic cases introduce additional complications in their interpretation. Given that near-death experiences also bear on



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the mind-brain relationship and on the question of survival, can the findings from near-death research contribute anything to our understanding of reincarnation?

Near-death experiences (NDEs) are intensely vivid and often life-transforming experiences, many of which occur under extreme physiological conditions such as trauma, ceasing of brain activity, deep general anesthesia, or cardiac arrest, in which no awareness or sensory experiences of any kind should be possible, according to the prevailing views in neuroscience. Researchers at DOPS have focused particularly on NDEs that may bear on the question of whether the mind can function outside the physical body, and on whether we may survive bodily death. For example, some experiencers report seeing events going on at some distant location, such as another room of the hospital; or an experiencer might meet a deceased loved one who then communicates verifiable information the experiencer had not known. In other NDEs, the experiencer's mental functioning seems to be enhanced despite physiological evidence that the brain is impaired.

Can the data from NDEs give us new insight into reincarnation? Researchers have reported anecdotally that near-death experiencers became more open to the idea of reincarnation after their NDEs.⁸ Amber Wells, an undergraduate student of psychologist and near-death researcher Kenneth Ring, carried out a survey comparing near-death experiencers and non-experiencers who were interested in NDEs.⁹ She found that belief in reincarnation was equally strong in the experiencers and in the comparison group of non-experiencers.

Among more than 200 near-death experiencers who have participated in the research at DOPS, one third said they believe that after death we will be recycled and reincarnated or reborn in the physical world. And another third think that reincarnation is "possible." That's the same percent of belief in reincarnation that the Pew Research Center found among the

American population as a whole. However, some near-death experiencers relate their belief to specific events in their NDEs.

How do young children's descriptions of past-life memories correspond to descriptions of NDEs? Medical student Poonam Sharma and child psychiatrist Jim Tucker examined cases of Asian children who claimed to remember not only a past life, but also the period between the past life and this one.¹⁰ They found striking similarities between what these children say about the environment between lives and what Asian near-death experiencers say about the world of the NDE. That would seem to support the belief that these past-life memories may be real memories of another incarnation.

In addition to that corroborating evidence, there are some NDEs that include apparent memories of past lives.

Past-Life Memories Occurring Within Near-Death Experiences

After struggling with lymphoma for four years, Anita Moorjani fell into a coma.¹¹ Her husband rushed her to hospital, where her oncologist ordered a full-body scan. They found lemon-sized tumors throughout her body, and her vital organs seemed to have shut down. Her brain and lungs were filled with fluid, and liquid oozed from lesions on her skin. The doctors told her husband she would not make it through the night. But although she had no use of her physical senses, Anita would later tell me that she was more acutely aware of all that was going on around her than she'd ever been in her normal physical state:

I was drifting in and out of consciousness during this time and could feel my spirit actually leaving my body. I saw and heard conversations between my husband and the doctors taking place outside my room, about 40 feet away down a hallway. I was later able to verify this conversation to my shocked husband. Then I actually "crossed over" to another dimension, where I was engulfed in a total feeling of love. I also experienced extreme clarity of why I had the cancer, why I had come into this life in the first place, what role everyone in my family played in my life in the grand scheme of things, and generally how life works. . . .

I know I was drifting in and out between the two worlds, but every time I drifted into the "other side," I was shown more and more scenes. There was one which showed how my life had touched all the people in it; it was sort of like a tapestry and showed how I affected everyone's lives around me. There was another which showed my brother on a plane, having heard the news I was dying, coming to see me. This was verified to me as, when I started to come round, my brother was there, having just got off a plane. I then saw a glimpse of my brother and me and somehow seemed to understand it was a previous life, where I was much older than he and was like a mother to him. In this life, he is older than I. I saw in that life

"These past-life memories that occur during NDEs would seem to support a belief in reincarnation . . ."

I was very protective towards him. This life I was now perceiving with my brother seemed to take place in an underdeveloped rural setting, in a time and location I couldn't identify. We were living in a sparsely furnished mud hut, and I looked after him while our parents went out to work in the fields. I suddenly became aware he was on the plane to come and see me, and felt, "I can't do this to him, can't let him come and see me dead." Then I also saw how my husband's purpose was linked to mine, and how we decided to come and experience this life together. . . .

I was made to understand that, as tests had been taken for my organ functions and the results were not out yet, that if I chose life, the results would show that my organs were functioning normally. If I chose death, the result would show organ failure as the cause of death, due to cancer. I made my choice, and as I started to wake up in a very confused state, as I could not at that time tell which side of the veil I was on, the doctors came rushing into the room with big smiles on their faces, saying to my family, "Good news: we got the results and her organs are functioning; we can't believe it! Her body really did seem like it had shut down!"

For Anita Moorjani, the life review in her NDE was not limited to *this* lifetime, but included images and insights from a past life.

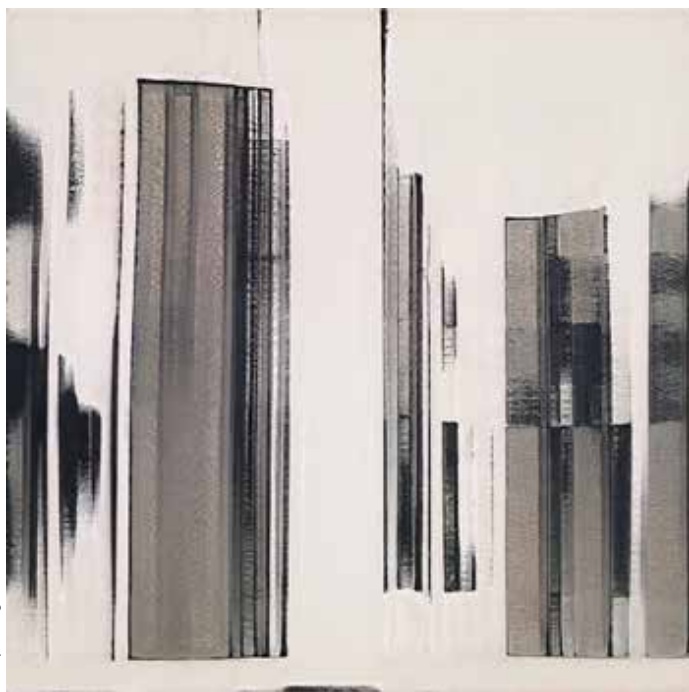
Veridical Past-Life Memories Occurring Within Near-Death Experiences

The flashes of a past life in Anita Moorjani's life review included no specific details that could be corroborated by objective investigation. That was not the case, however, with David Moquin's NDE, when he was hospitalized with double pneumonia at age 48. He described for me these visions as he was in and out of coma for several days:

During that time, I experienced at least two events that felt like past lifetimes. The one that has haunted me for the past 24 years was that of burning to death in an airplane crash. I kept seeing myself on fire and trying to reach a field just past a line of trees and

a barbed-wire-type fence. I crashed, hit my head, and tried to crawl out as I was engulfed in fire and couldn't breathe.

Many years later a psychic told me that in my last lifetime I died landing a fighter plane on an odd single digit day in November 1944. I was born December 21, 1944. My daughter, hearing the recording of the reading, googled and found that Captain Fryer was the only pilot that died on an odd single digit day that November, and that he died trying to land his burning P-51 Mustang. My favorite plane has always been the P-51. The model sits on my desk. My daughter asked me questions and I seemed to know the names of my wing commander, squadron commander, mother, and father.



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Unlike Anita Moorjani's apparent memories of a past life, David Moquin's included verifiable details that were subsequently corroborated as true for a particular person who died a month before David was born. Are David Moquin's memories from his NDE—and those of young children that seem to be accurate accounts of the life of someone from the past—compelling evidence that we live more than once?

Toward a More Nuanced Understanding Purported Past-Life Memories

These past-life memories that occur during NDEs would seem to support a belief in reincarnation and strengthen our confidence in the claims of young children to recall past lives. However, there are some findings from near-death research

that suggest an understanding of claimed past-life memories is not straightforward.

In an apparent contradiction to the idea of reincarnation, many near-death experiencers report meeting deceased loved ones in some seemingly otherworldly environment in their NDEs. How is it possible for deceased people both to continue existing in some otherworldly realm after death, and also to be reborn into a new Earthly life? Is it possible that different people have different afterlife scenarios, some being reincarnated and others remaining in an otherworldly realm? It is possible that one person can have several different afterlife scenarios? If we take seriously the claim of many near-death experiencers that time as we know it doesn't exist in the other world,¹² then is it possible both to continue in some otherworldly realm *and* to be reborn on Earth?

We get a hint of this kind of ambiguity in Anita Moorjani's account of her NDE. She told me that her experience gave her a more nuanced understanding of reincarnation than her traditional Hindu background suggested:

Time felt different in that realm, too, and I felt all moments at once. I was aware of everything that pertained to me—past present, and future—simultaneously. I became conscious of what seemed to be simultaneous lives playing out. As I was experiencing the sensations associated with being a protective older sister, ensuring that there was enough for us to eat and we were safe from any undesirable external elements, it didn't feel like a past life. Even though the scene appeared historical, in that realm, it still felt as though it were happening here and now.

Before my NDE, probably because of my culture, I use to think that the purpose of life was... to evolve beyond the reincarnation cycle of birth and death... But after my NDE, I feel differently. This is primarily because the concept of reincarnation in its conventional form of a progression of lifetimes, running sequentially one after the other, wasn't supported by my NDE. I realized that time doesn't move in a linear fashion unless we're using the filter of our bodies and minds. Once we're no longer limited by our earthly senses, every moment exists simultaneously. I've come to think that the concept of reincarnation is really just an interpretation, a way for our intellect to make sense of all existence happening at once...

In the NDE state, I was aware of my brother on a plane coming to see me and of conversations the doctors were having outside my room and down the hall. I understood many aspects of my future life, as they would be panning out. This showed me that time, space, and solid matter don't always exist as we normally think of them. During my NDE, I felt that I could focus on any point in time that I needed to access...

It's as though our earthly minds convert what happens around us into a sequence; but in actuality, when we're not expressing through our bodies, everything occurs simultaneously, whether past, present, or future.

Although being able to perceive all points of time simultaneously lent to the atmosphere a clarity in that realm, recalling it and writing about it creates confusion. The sequence isn't obvious when there's no linear time, making the retelling sound clumsy.

It seems as though our five senses limit us to focus on one point in time at any given moment, and we string these together to create an illusion of linear reality. . . . Because of this, I believe that when someone has a glimpse of what have previously been interpreted as "past lives," they're actually accessing parallel or simultaneous existences, because all time exists at once.

In this description by Anita Moorjani, as in many features of NDEs, we're faced with a phenomenon that near-death experiencers describe as crystal clear in their NDE, but that can't be described adequately with words, making it difficult to find agreement among experiencers as to how they describe that after-death state. So what do NDEs tell us about reincarnation? They contain tantalizing hints of an explanation, but little so far that can be considered scientific evidence. At this point it appears that the question of reincarnation is a matter for which NDEs provide few definitive answers, but rather suggest intriguing directions for further research

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ENDNOTES

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Gayle H Kimball

Garret Moddel on Experiments in Psi and New Energy Technologies

Garret Moddel was born in Dublin, Ireland, in February of 1954. His family moved to Southern California when he was four. Garret studied electrical engineering at Stanford University and applied physics at Harvard, and now teaches at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in the Department of Electrical, Computer & Energy Engineering. He was the president of the Society for Scientific Exploration from 2007 to 2010.

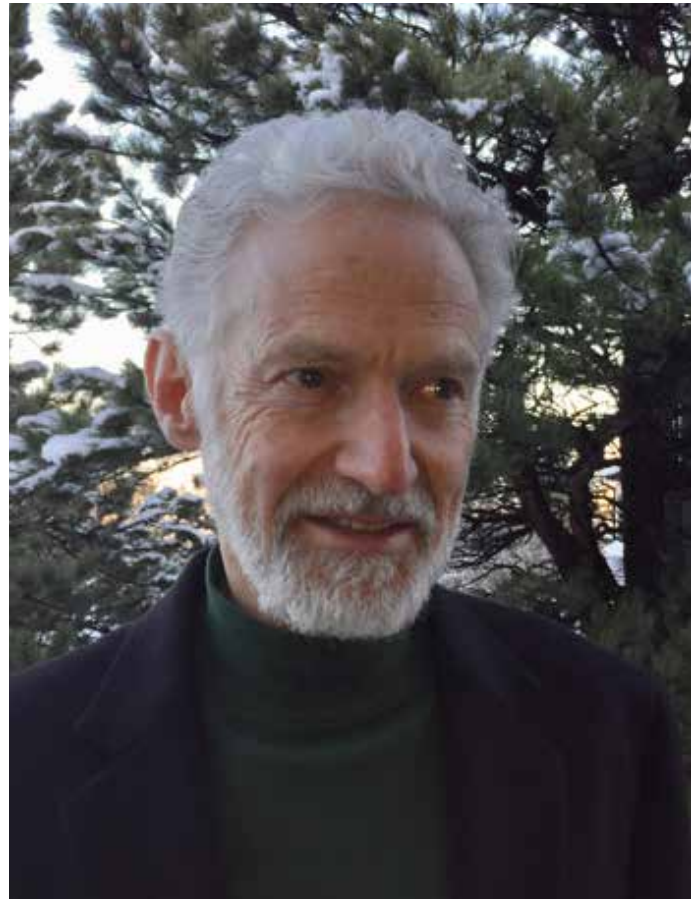
What led you to study engineering at Stanford?

When I was about five years old, I went to my brother's high school open house. I remember going into his physics classroom, where the instructor had a big Van de Graaff generator and he let me hold a lightbulb up to it. It glowed, which I thought was really fascinating. Later, when we moved on to other parts of the classroom, I went back and turned on the generator again. I've just always been curious and fascinated by how things work. When I went to college, I was interested in a number of different majors, but ended up in Electrical Engineering because that's the part of engineering where you're really involved in the process of how something works—if you look at semiconductor devices and technologies like that. That, to me, was an amalgam of basic science and applications. I suppose that I approach life as an adventure and try to use basic principles to invent something that works.

You have patents; you invent things.

Yes, I have patents in a number of different things. I've been working (originally in industry and then at the University of Colorado) in energy conversion devices such as solar cells, and other sorts of technologies that are a lot more exotic like trying to harvest zero-point energy. Surprisingly to even me, I have a patent on that, and four more in the pipeline. Recently, my lab has been working on an alternative technology to solar cells that harvests light as waves rather than as photons—it's a different way to go. It's still going to be a while before it's entirely practical. Most recently, my lab has gone back to harvesting zero-point energy, but in an entirely new way that actually works.

There's a lot of mystique about cold fusion, now called low-energy nuclear reactions. I've heard wild stories about



Mulu Moddel

the people who have invented them and then men in black suits take them away and destroy their invention. What is happening with this?

I am going to say something that probably a lot of people won't like. I've worked quite a bit with low-energy nuclear reactions, with Ph.D. students working on it; one who just recently earned her Ph.D. I worked with a local company that has probably carried out the most rigorous types of low-energy nuclear cold reaction experiments anywhere, looking at a lot of different technologies from a lot of different people and I don't think that it's been proven. I think it's due to the misinterpretation of measurements and overall problems with the experiments. For example, there are two main types of low-energy nuclear reactions. One type—the Pons-Fleischmann experiment—consists of heavy water, a type of water that's reactive in a nuclear way for harvesting energy, with palladium electrodes in water. Another

approach uses gas-based low-energy nuclear reaction, where deuterium gas is absorbed in palladium that presumably produces excess heat, which is the low-energy nuclear reaction. There are a lot of experiments on that, and in fact, when you infuse palladium with deuterium, it does produce excess heat. But it turns out that that excess heat is due to a chemical reaction.

I'm interested because this could change the whole planet. Right, it could if it worked. So, the deuterium takes the place of hydrogen in water in these cells and that turns out to be an exothermic reaction that produces heat. If you just look at it casually, you would think that you just had a nuclear reaction that produced that heat. However, if you look at it more closely, you'll find that it is in fact a chemical reaction that produced that heat and that you can reverse it. If you reverse it, instead of exothermic, it becomes endothermic and it cools down. Olga Dmitriyeva, my former PhD student, demonstrated this very rigorously; it just is not a nuclear reaction. We also took a look at some other types of cold fusion experiments, and in particular this company that I mentioned looked at it in more detail than my lab did. Over and over, they looked at it and got the same results as my lab did and found that it was in fact due to measurement errors. It turns out that measuring heat is not an easy thing to do; it's very easy to fool yourself.

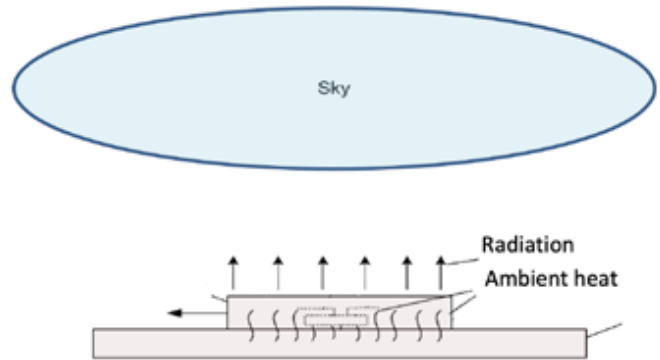
If you were in charge of a global low-cost high-ecological value energy system, would it be solar?

Recently I got a patent for a technology to harvest radiant energy at night. The big problem with solar cells is that the sun doesn't shine at night. Solar cells are very good, very efficient, and quite low cost. The big problem now is energy storage. If you could generate energy at night, as well as in the day, that would solve the storage problem. And now, as it turns out, there is a way to do that. The sun radiates onto the earth at about a kilowatt per square meter, which is used by solar cells. The earth in turn radiates heat at roughly 300 watts per square meter. If you could convert that to electricity, then you'd really have a nice technology.

The problem is, to really convert heat into electricity, you not only need a hot source, but a cold sink as well. It's the difference in temperature between the hot source and the cold sink that ultimately determines how efficient a conversion technology is. If the earth is the hot source, then what is the cold sink going to be? Everything around us is the temperature of the earth, but deep space is cold. If you can absorb from the earth and radiate into deep space, then you have the technology that could generate electricity at night. My patent describes a method for doing that. It is not going to be a very efficient technology, at least not initially, but it's a feasible way to generate electricity at night. I would love to see something like this develop.

You were on sabbatical when you were exposed to a psi library that got you interested in psi. Tell us how that evolved.

This was around 2000. I accidentally came across a physicist's library and was blown away to discover there was a science of



Concept for producing electricity by radiating thermal energy from Earth into space.

psychic phenomenon. Before that, I just assumed that this concept was due to fuzzy thinking and soft minds. As I learned about it, it was absolutely fascinating. I had to get into this and try to understand it. Part of that fascination is that we really don't understand it but it impacts so much of our lives in so many ways.

The key word that underlines all of the psi work is consciousness. How would you define it?

With great difficulty. It really does depend upon the discipline that you're in as to how you would define it. I'd like to narrow it to discuss conscious interaction because it's something that's pervasive and affects everything. I've come to that conclusion kicking and screaming. Other people were far more advanced in that conclusion for many years. I thought for a long time that we could understand these psychic phenomena based purely upon physical models, but I've come to the conclusion that really there is a fundamental nature of consciousness in this universe and that maybe at some point we'll be able to understand it in physics terms, but not with the models that we have now.

You've said that to understand consciousness we must include psi phenomena.

With non-locality (as when two photons are entangled, after they're separated and the spin of one is constrained, the other one instantaneously responds), it's very tempting to say there's some kind of quantum information field. My understanding is that you cannot say that. Yes, it's very tempting to use quantum physics models to explain psi phenomena but really, we just don't know. Quantum mechanics does have interactions at a distance, and so does psi. Quantum does involve effects due to not just the past, but also the future and the present and so does psi. It's very tempting to say that one is due to the other. If we had lived at the time of Franz Mesmer (1734 to 1815), when magnetism was being developed, we'd say, "Magnetic fields give interactions at a distance and magnetic fields are mysterious and invisible. So maybe, it's animal magnetism that is the underlying physics that makes this work." In every generation, there is a fashionable new concept that we try to

“I’ve been trying to think of a way to get rid of any living beings to design an experiment that involves just machines to demonstrate psi.”

apply to whatever is unknown. Right now, we’re doing that with quantum mechanics and psi phenomena. Maybe there’s a connection, maybe there’s not.

What’s an experiment that demonstrated to you that it does exist?

Lots of them! Dean Radin had a number of experiments in which people looked at a screen on which an image that was either disturbing or calming was shown to them. They showed an emotional reaction in advance to the disturbing images as measured by various sorts of instruments. The cleanest experiment that I really like is one that was initially done by James Spottiswoode and Ed May, in which they took their poor subjects and put a horn against them that blasted at a random time, at a time determined by an electronic random number generator (RNG). They found that the subject who was exposed to a randomly timed horn had a surge, as you might expect, in their galvanic skin response. This is a very sensitive measure of the emotional state that went haywire after the horn went off. The fascinating part is that the response began about two seconds prior to the horn going off. It was a very nice, clean experiment.

Another principle that applies from quantum mechanics to psi is the observer effect. People are becoming more aware that it’s very hard to separate the intention and belief of the experimenter even if they’re not in the room.

Right, according to quantum mechanics, a particular quantum wave function is in a superposition of all possible states. It can collapse into one final state after it’s observed. It becomes particle-like after it collapses. The thought experiment explaining this idea is Schrödinger’s cat, in which the cat is in an indeterminate state until it’s observed. There are different perspectives on what observation means. Most physicists think that observation means simply that is registered by a detector or anything else. John von Neumann and Eugene Wigner had a different view. They questioned how one can separate the detector from the experiment that it’s detecting because it’s all part of a

system. You can make a bigger system which is detecting what the detector detects, so that the bigger system won’t have made an observation until it detects the detector. You can keep on going, and ask, “Where does this expansion of detection stop?” They said that it only stops at consciousness and it’s the conscious observer doing the observation that is necessary to actually collapse the wave function to a well-defined state. This is a minority view in physics, and there are some quantum models that I like which don’t even need an observer at all. I’m not sure that we actually need an observer, or an observer effect. Other theories that explain quantum phenomena, such as stochastic electrodynamics, and other quantum mechanics interpretations, such as John Cramer’s Transactional Interpretation, don’t require any sort of an observer. On the other hand, the observer effect model has been applied successfully to various physics and psi experiments. One of the first people to do this was Helmut Schmidt. He did a wonderful set of experiments in which he showed that only after something was observed, did it go into a well-defined state. In fact, he could affect what state it went into even days after the process occurred by observing the history.

Why would a businessperson care about psi research?

There are actually a number of businesses that use psi advisors of one sort or another. In some cases, it’s something like astrology. In other cases, there are various sorts of remote viewing (RV) and other techniques applied to making business decisions. I think this extends a lot farther, to human interactions in a work environment. It extends to following our hunches. Taking this out of the realm of urban legend and putting it onto a firm scientific foundation will allow people with various disciplines to say, “I actually have observed these effects; they are useful and I will continue to work with them.”

In terms of applied psi, you and your students did some work with Associate Remote Viewing to predict the stock market. You did it with symbols, which the viewer didn’t even know what they meant. Seven out of seven times, you got it right.

This was taught to us by Paul Smith, who’s one of the Stargate trained remote viewers. He used a technique that was originally suggested by Stephan Schwartz called associative remote viewing (ARV). Let’s say that you are tasking people to do some remote viewing and draw pictures of an image. When you task that in your mind, you associate two images with a future event. For example, a picture of an orange might be associated with the Dow Jones Industrial Average going up tomorrow while a picture of a pencil might be associated with it going down.

You don’t say anything to the people whom you’re tasking, other than asking them to draw a picture of what you will show them at the end of the next day. The judges take a look at the images and ask if they’re more orange-like or more pencil-like. That’s actually a fairly easy judgment to make because the two options are so distinct. In this class, based upon whether the majority saw it was a pencil or an orange (we actually used a variety of other images), we decided that the stock market was either going to go up or down the following day and we

invested accordingly using options trading. Then, at the end of the day, we sold, and based upon whether the market did go up or did go down, we showed the people the image associated with the actual outcome to close the loop.

We did this seven times, and seven times out of seven, we got it right, and made a fair bit of money. The problem is that as with most psi phenomenon, there's beginners' luck. It works for a while and then there's a decline effect. Whether that decline effect is psychological or something deeper, I don't know. A number of people have tried to find techniques to avoid it, with very little success. You can beat the odds, you can do better than 50/50, but you can't get anywhere close to 100%.

You also wanted to see if you could have that kind of effect without any human beings, by having an RNG connected to a computer.

For years, I've been trying to think of a way to get rid of any living beings to design an experiment that involves just machines to demonstrate psi. Finally, I thought of a way to do it. Essentially, it would be an inanimate replica of that Spottiswoode and May experiment. A controller RNG that could shut off a subject RNG while it was spewing out random bits, which would be recorded by a computer—zeroes and ones. The question was: Could the subject RNG anticipate its own demise by putting out a non-random set of numbers before it was shut off? A graduate student in my lab, James Zhu, worked hard on this to develop the software, and Adam Curry, who at the time worked at Psyleron (the company that makes the Mind Lamp), built the physical apparatus for this. Finally, we set it up in my lab. James and I were so excited; we were tickled to finally be able to do this. We ran a few hundred runs, and low and behold, about one second before the subject RNG

was to be shut off, it started producing more zeroes than ones. We did this again and again and ended up with a few thousand samples in which the odds against chance of its being a random effect were millions to one.

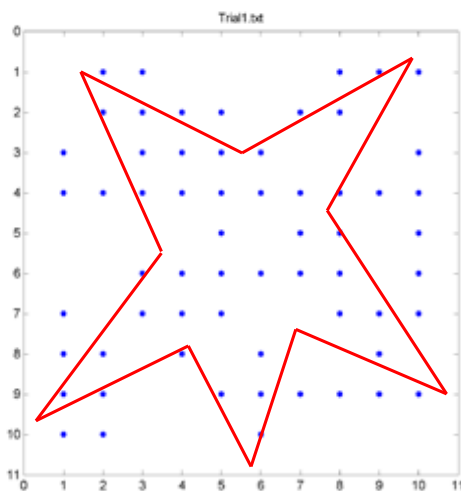
We were terribly excited because we finally had a way to get rid of these sentient sacks of saltwater and were able to just use the electronic RNGs. Then, we went about testing different bit rates and changed the scheme a little bit. It didn't work the way that it did when we originally did it. After about two weeks, we went back and replicated the original experiment with the same software and hardware and got no effect whatsoever. At that point I realized that this was not the machine producing a pre-cognitive effect—it was us, our intention. We had imbued the machine with our intention. It finally dawned on me: Garret, stop trying to create such effect with just machines. There's something about consciousness that's a lot more profound here. I don't want to go to the spiritual realm, but I'm sort of being nudged that way by our experiments.

What about your experiment where the Zener cards were drawn by a human remote viewer and a machine?

In a RV experiment a tasker asks an RVer to draw an image of something that they will observe later or it's associated with a number or a name or something the tasker gives the viewer. Or just what's inside of an envelope. A student of mine at the time, Erik Maddocks, set up an experiment that I'd been wanting to do for a long time. We had an envelope which contained one of five Zener cards. We know the Zener cards from having watched *Ghostbusters*: a wiggly line, circle, cross, square, and star. The tasker tasked the RVer to draw what was in this envelope. The viewer didn't even know that it was Zener cards.

Unbeknownst to the RVer, in the room we also had an

RNG that was spewing out bits which were being recorded by the computer. Then, after the remote viewing was done, Erik had a program that took those bits and created a raster scan image based upon them. Ones consisted of black dots and zeroes consisted of spaces. We had a series of dots creating an image based on the output of the computer, fed by this electronic RNG. Then, the judges examined the image to determine which of the five Zener cards the RVer had drawn. They had two different images to judge—one was what was drawn by a person and another one drawn by the computer. It turned out that in both cases, the RVer was able to get a statistically significant result in getting the right image. But actually the computer-drawn images were more accurate than what the RVer had drawn. We call it "machine-mediated remote viewing," where you get the machine to draw the remote images. This was an initial set of trial experiments. I would love to repeat it and refine this. It would be good to improve this by having the computer do grayscale



These dots were produced by the raster scanned image from a machine-mediated remote viewing session. The judges' decided that the dots represented a star.

Judges Score

Star	Square	Circle	Wavy Lines	Cross
5	3	2	4	1



and various sorts of image enhancement. We just did a very simple grid.

What about psibotics?

That has a lot of implications for health and other applications. How does it work? The basic idea behind psibotics is to use psi, i.e., your intention, to program a machine that has some sort of a random process in it and thereby use that machine to provide a desirable function. We've already described two psibotic machines—the one where we had two RNGs, one of which shut off another, which was used to predict the future. That is a psibotic machine because we were using our intention to get the second RNG to respond to the first RNG. If we had set it up to look at what was going to happen a few seconds hence, we would have been able to predict the near-term future using that machine. The other psibotic machine was when we used an electronic RNG with remote viewing, where the machine mediated the remote viewing by the electronic RNG through the image rather than having a human do it. Those are two examples of psibotic systems.

I proposed this whole notion of psibotics because it would be wonderful if we could actually use this. I'm not the first one to do this; other people have used little robots controlled by electronic RNGs to perform various functions. The question is, can we do this reliably enough to provide some useful function due to the two big problems with psi experiments—the decline effect and the experimenter effect. That is, things tend to decline in time although they may build back up. Also, it's very hard to know who's controlling what, because everything has an influence on the machine. What can we do, both psychologically and physically, to our systems to enable them to work in a more reliable fashion? I don't know the answer. I've got a few ideas, but we really need to work them out.

What's interesting to me is that Dean Radin's research, your research, and others have effect sizes that are thousands of times beyond chance, yet they're still dismissed. So, is it human nature that we oppose a new paradigm, or is it something about psi that makes people so reactive?

Certainly it is human nature to not want to change our minds once we get a particular worldview. I taught a course called "Science Court," in which students chose one of two sides of an argument to debate. We used courtroom procedures, along with a judge, jury, cross-examination, and so on, to look at issues that were scientific questions of public interest.

It turned out that the science court was a failure, in the sense that the people who were better at arguing won, rather than the side that was more correct. I tried changing this by having people change sides partway through the argument and using some sort of mediation technique to get a consensus. I found that once somebody had argued for a particular side, they would not let go of their original opinion. Everything else that they observed and saw was formed around confirmation bias. It's really hard to get people to change their minds. We, in the last few hundred years, are living in a materialistic era in which we believe that everything that is, is material and that

anything that is nonmaterial, such as consciousness, is just soft thinking. It's very hard to get away from that.

In support of people who are skeptical about these experiments and these results—we don't have a good model to support it. There are a lot of ideas about consciousness being fundamental in a multidimensional universe with entanglement of objects over large distances and times, but none of them are useful at this point. We need clear and precise models that can be tested. According to Karl Popper, if a theory can't be tested and falsified if incorrect then it has no value. If we had a good model that we could verify, it would be easier for people to jump in and say, "Yes, I accept this." But, as it is right now, self-respecting mainstream scientists, and psychologists in particular, refuse to accept psi publicly—privately, they may. Something has got to happen differently for people to shift their view. Maybe somebody starts a company and makes a lot of money using psi phenomenon—that tends to shift people's view. I'd like to see us develop models that make a lot of sense and apply those models for psi phenomena.

Do you find that you have more synchronicity and intuitive flashes because you're thinking about these kinds of things?

Before I uncovered the literature on psi phenomena, I thought that this was all rubbish. Since I've come to read about it and perform experiments, yes, I am seeing these effects around me fairly often. I think that once one becomes sensitive to it, it's no longer an abstract phenomenon but an everyday real thing.

What's an example?

I was taking a hike with my brother in Ireland, and in the middle of hiking up a mountain in the Burren, he said, "Garret, call home." I asked him why, and he said, "I don't know, just call home." So, I called home, and found that my department chair and several other people had desperately been trying to reach me, as there was a new institute being set up and they wanted to know whether I would be the director. They had tried everything and didn't know how to reach me. The wife of the Chair had actually broken into my house to try to find some phone numbers where I could be reached. My brother has never said something like that before that, or after that. What was that due to? I don't know.

Excerpt adapted with permission from The Mysteries of Reality: Dialogues with Visionary Scientists by Gayle Kimball, published by Iff Books, 2021.

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Michael Grosso

The New Story: UFOs, Psychical Research, and Religion



Phillip Wang

We hear it from many nowadays: the need for a “new story.” The need, it seems, is for a more inclusive picture of what there is and what it means to be a human being. The newness of the new story takes full account of the importance and the varieties of extraordinary human experience. It is a worldview, a paradigm renewed, driven by an expanded idea of mind and consciousness.

Here are *some* of the motifs that seem to have a place in the new story. (This is, I confess, a mere sketch.) The stress is on phenomena that challenge the old story: accounts of UFO phenomena; of paranormal, mystical, and visionary experiences; and of new conceptions and facts from quantum mechanics, animal psychology, and cosmology. In the new story, as it may be seen, the chief character (and seeming upstart) is mind-and-consciousness; and this, in opposition to the old story, whose chief agent and narrative star is mindless, measurable matter.

A second point about the new story: it’s shrouded in mystery. This induces in us a certain mood of humility. To focus on mind and consciousness is to focus on mystery, the most obvious and most universal mystery. But now, in honor of our ignorance, we may ask: Why is there something rather than nothing? What science tells us is that the universe (along with

time and space) popped into existence 13.8 billion years ago, to the consternation of Einstein and others who had assumed a steady-state universe, not one apparently exploding out of nothing and looking suspiciously like some kind of creation. (No surprise that Pope Pius XII hailed the new scientific discovery with glee.)

So the new story is flanked by mysteries. But there are also progressive elements and new meanings to engage with, not just puzzlement and gasps of wonder. At least two novel features mark the new story that wants to be told: one, a decided leap upward in mental and physical capacity; and two, an enlarged perception of a real but unknown intelligence that seems to originate from outside our physical world. Its operations are not just visible in space but sometimes reportedly they interact with us.

Our Superpowers

Grant Morrison, author of *Supergods*, writes: “In a secular, scientific, rational culture lacking in any convincing spiritual leadership, superhero stories speak loudly and boldly to our greatest fears, deepest longings, and highest aspirations.” Superman, the 1938 comic creation of Jerry Siegel and Joseph Shuster, is a superhero and Christlike savior of everyday people, “who” promptly became famous around the world—a really good guy with super powers. Superman and all the superheroes that followed, from Batman to Wonder Woman, have for decades been sheer magic for audiences, but most of all, for those in the business of making super money. (But not for Siegel and Shuster who sold the rights of their Superman creation for \$130 and died in relative obscurity.)

Morrison’s book is brilliantly written but in the end I am left with a wistful curiosity about superpowers. The issue of real superpowers is never quite raised; there is no entry in the index for “superpower.” This is a recurrent problem I keep noticing, an eagerness to flirt with the fantastic without the spirit to confront the real McCoy.

Another example is Serinity Young’s thoughtful study: *Women Who Fly: Goddesses, Witches, Mystics, and Other Airborne Females*. The book is about power and sexuality but never seriously broaches the issue of actual levitation. St. Teresa, whom she deploys, was a fairly frequent flier (though a tyro compared to the irrepressible mystic, Joseph of Copertino). In the new story, we want to know if any of these women did in fact fly.

Kenneth Woodward's *The Book of Miracles* is an account of the "meaning" of miracle stories in the great religions. But Woodward states he's not going to address the reality status of miracles. The entire question is safely tucked away in parentheses. I open at random to a page titled "Jesus Stills a Storm" where a passage is cited (Mark 4:35-41) describing Jesus in a boat with his disciples about to be "swamped" by a sudden windstorm. Jesus says to the sea: "Peace! Be still!" "Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm." We are told by Woodward that the sea is a symbol of chaos and that the message of this miracle story is "that Jesus does what only God can do." My reaction is a bored shrug. I would like to know if Jesus did in fact paranormally influence the weather; in fact, there are credible reports of weather control in modern times by, for example, Black Elk, Padre Pio, and Sai Baba. If Jesus did not perform all the paranormal deeds the Gospels allege he performed, I doubt he would have attracted the followers he did. The question of the possibility of real miracles should at least be open for discussion, especially in light of the existing literature. When it comes to persuasive power, a miracle is always more effective than a moral precept. The sight of some portion of reality transmogrified is a powerfully convincing argument

Accounts of extraordinary phenomena in ancient documents, in modern comics and entertainment venues—images of super-humanity—charm the imagination. But the empirical reality of real super-ordinary phenomena have been marginalized and pushed into the shadows. The new story will be formed out of information that has been ignored, distorted, and largely crushed out of contemporary culture.

The drift of it is to move beyond physicalist reductionism toward a form of creative idealism. So we are on the lookout for reports of the higher powers of the mind. One step in this direction is to combine into one discipline the explorations of ufology and psychical research. The ur document for this is a book by the psychologist Kenneth Ring, *The Omega Project: Near-Death Experiences, UFO Encounters, and Mind at Large*.

Before I describe the content of Ring's book, I want to mention another of his contributions, also "new story" worthy—*Mindsight: Near-Death and Out-of-Body Experiences in the Blind*, a book studying cases of congenitally blind people who had near-death experiences. These were people who never saw the light of day before, but during their near-death epiphany beheld the light and color of the world for the first time in their lives. Something to wonder at! And so theoretically provocative. Another motif to be woven into the new story.

In *The Omega Project*, Ring reveals that people who had near-death encounters and people who had unidentified aerial encounters shared an "encounter prone personality," the result of childhood traumas that made them prone to creative dissociation. There were other close similarities; for example, psychophysical changes after the encounter and, above all, profound changes of beliefs and values. The drift of these shared phenomenologies suggested to Ring the presence of a goal-oriented evolutionary process that Teilhard de Chardin called the Omega Point. That is a rather startling idea. The new story is not just about a growing awareness of the universal mind

but it also becomes agitprop for teleology—specifically, for the completion of human evolution. Needless to say, we're a long way from the Omega Point.

The similarity between NDEs and UFO contact is understood. In both, the individual's consciousness is torn from absorption in everyday life. But the wound is also an opening, allowing the influx from the subliminal treasure-trove. Ring offers a precious hint as to why some folk are more receptive to those high-powered near-death inspirations and UFO encounters that transform lives. Being wounded, shocked, riven, may, in the end, enable access to more exotic spiritual influences. The point seems to be: be glad when life dumps on you; it may be a setup for great times ahead.

At the heart of this new story is the idea of Mind at Large (phrase borrowed from A. Huxley)—the notion that our seemingly individual and isolated minds are in fact grounded in a greater, deeper one mind. Individuals and traditions keep discovering and rediscovering the great mind, naming, engaging and disengaging from it. The present world, bewitched by science and technology, seems at a low point of living contact with the Mind at Large. The new story is full of rebirth pangs, the sounds of breaking up and breaking through, the strange music of the paradox that near death is near life's renewal.

An Unknown Intelligence

Ring's effort to bring NDEs and UFOs into comparative study bore fruit belatedly with the publication in 2018 of a massive, 800-page tome titled *Beyond UFOs: The Science of Consciousness and Contact with Non-Human Intelligence*, a product of the Edgar Mitchell Foundation for Research into Extraterrestrial and Extraordinary Experience (FREE), edited by Rey Hernandez, experiencer and lawyer by profession; Jon



Phillip Wang

“The revelation, now finally coming to light after decades of torturous secrecy, is that we are in contact with unearthly intelligence and super-technical power. But what, who, and why nobody knows.”

Klimo, consciousness scholar; and Rudy Schild, astrophysicist. What is extraordinary about this book is the abundance of reports from all walks of life of all manner of strange life-changing encounters with *agents of unknown origins*. And all this proliferation of strangeness had been piling up in the first two decades of the fateful 21st century. Meandering among the metaphysical wilds of this book, I had to fight off waves of ontological vertigo.

The reports form a bridge between ufology and psychical research. The massive collection includes accounts of near-death experiences (NDEs) alien visitations, galactic tours, angels, great dreams, visions, meeting dead relatives on spaceships, out-of-body states, abductions, and mystical raptures. These are all viewed as using alternate modalities of perception, all avenues to extraordinary modes of consciousness and being. The NDE often awakens and signals the acquisition of healing and other extended mental powers. The new story and the new science will surely double down on research into our extraordinary healing potential, beginning with studies of the placebo effect and the healing miracles of saints, mystics, yogis, and shamans.

In many cases, people having near-death experiences become receptive to extraterrestrial and ultradimensional contact; a connection we might predict in light of Ring’s comparative study. The FREE researchers are focused on delving into the mysteries of consciousness and bringing in experiencers of all types, academics, scientists, and folks without much formal education. All this seems to be a sign of the widespread pouring out of strange experiences that upset our assumptions about ordinary reality. People everywhere are having experiences whose main effect is to break open the ontological boxes they’re normally locked down in.

Soon after receiving *Beyond UFOs* I received a phone call from the book’s editor, Rey Hernandez. It turned out to be a highly animated exchange. Rey is a lawyer, then living in Florida, and he told me that before his first experience he had zero interest in anything to do with UFOs or the paranormal. That experience altered his sense of reality. In short, one day a totally unknown light-energy entity entered Rey’s home through locked doors and caused his wife and gravely ill dog to vanish before his eyes. When they returned after a short time, the dying dog was healed and lived on for several years. There is a veterinarian’s testimony documenting the dog’s illness and sudden healing. His wife believed the entity was an angel. Needless to say, the experience blew Rey’s lawyer-logical mind. He felt driven to study such extraordinary phenomena, and formed a friendship with Dr. Edgar Mitchell, the Apollo 14 astronaut who had similar interests. His focus was on the various altered modalities of consciousness that make us privy to the wider universe of human potential. His research produced *Beyond UFOs*, to be followed shortly by new volumes on theory and experience that cover the whole spectrum of extraordinary experiences being reported today. I can’t imagine a closer kind of encounter with an otherworld event than to witness your wife and your dying dog vanish before your eyes—and when they return, the dog is healed. By my definition, that’s a bona fide miracle.

The new story features agents of intelligence with strange powers to penetrate matter (enter your house), make people disappear, and perform miraculous healing, unless we wish to believe that a sane, down-to-earth lawyer went crazy and paid his vet to lie and pretend his dog was healed. The truth is that Rey Hernandez’s story is one among countless inexplicable reports of high strangeness.

Encounters with strange aerial phenomena have been known to vast numbers of people (including myself), for many decades, if not all history; the truth is finally coming out directly from government agencies. An article in *The New York Times* appeared on December 17, 2017, that confirmed that the Pentagon had secretly been studying UFOs: “A 2009 Pentagon briefing summary of the program [Advance Aerospace Threat Identification Program] prepared by its director at the time asserted that ‘what was considered science fiction is now science fact.’” Articles on the subject have appeared in the *New Yorker* and other mainstream publications, and on the CBS newsmagazine *60 Minutes*, where Luis Elizondo, the former director of the secret Pentagon program, stated: “Imagine a technology that can do 6-to-700 g-forces, that can fly at 13,000 miles an hour, that can evade radar and that can fly through air and water and possibly space. And oh, by the way, has no obvious signs of propulsion, no wings, no control surfaces and yet still can defy the natural effects of Earth’s gravity. That’s precisely what we’re seeing.” The emotional tonality of the *60 Minutes* segment was more anxious than amazed; more paranoid about possible danger than thrilled by a great scientific challenge. And perhaps most shocking, the officials gave a clear impression that the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena were showing up everywhere and every day.

Another book just published, *Making Contact*, edited by Alan Steinfeld, speaks with force to the need for a new story. The subtitle is timely: *Preparing for the New Realities of Extraterrestrial Existence*. This is a book on UFOs, as was *Beyond UFOs*, at a time when we know we are at last talking about a reality that seems quite beyond us as to what, why, and how any of it is happening. Alan Steinfeld's introduction would awaken us to something truly epochal. Finally, the U. S. government (since around 2017) seems to admit of the reality of an unknown, supertechnical intelligence in our midst. The book's roster of authors, including Whitley Strieber and John Mack, are all seasoned explorers of a zone of being whose reality status is being affirmed by public officials, a reality whose nature and origin, whether deep within or beyond us, remains unclear.

The revelation, now finally coming to light after decades of torturous secrecy, is that we are in contact with unearthly intelligence and super-technical power. But what, who, and why nobody knows. Each essay in the book contributes to making this momentous claim about the presence of alien otherness and higher forms of power in our world. George Noory, host of *Coast to Coast AM*, begins with a statement about his years of listening to UFO stories, and Alan Steinfeld's excellent introduction provides a detailed account of the latest disclosures from the U.S. government as when *The New York Times* reported that the astrophysics consultant to the Pentagon's AATIP program, Eric W. Davis, gave a series of classified briefings to members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Intelligence Committees, and the Defense Department about "crashed retrievals of unexplained off-world vehicles not made on this earth."

I can't resist at this point quoting John Mack, the late Harvard psychiatrist who was nearly crucified for concluding, after years of investigating experiencers, that an

unknown force and intelligence is present and active in our world: "I must admit to being a bit perverse for, as a psychiatrist, I believe that anything that can be a big blow to the human ego can only be a good thing in terms of our collective development. Such shocks can perhaps help us to grow as a species." Grant Cameron's chapter, titled "The Theory of WOW," hits the same theme, explaining that all the strange encounters, so varied and unpredictable, have one overall purpose, to wake us up, to prepare us, to dilate our personalities.

Steinfeld shows how the mainstream and government are opening up to a truth known by millions: the reality of unidentified intelligences on our planet. The perspectives on the phenomenon are understood to be multiple. Two big assertions may be gleaned from this book; the reports of the unidentified and the physically inexplicable intrusion into our space are true. But who they are, where they are from, and why they are here is unknown. We are faced with a very unusual challenge: forming a relationship to the unknown that will be, we of course hope, to our advantage. With official affirmation from the U.S. government, we have entered a new epoch of human history. A highly advanced but thoroughly obscure and evasive intelligence is in our midst, and we are being told by Steinfeld and company in *Making Contact*, it is something we had better prepare for.

Psi Phenomena

The new story, as I see it emerging, would incorporate the data of psychical research. There are many ways this might be done, theoretically and practically. I'll mention three categories of psi phenomena and try to imagine how they would transform our mode of being in the world. Call it an exercise in active imagination.

Consider, for example, telepathy. Frederic W. H. Myers, the British poet, classicist, philologist, and a founder of the Society for Psychical Research, linked telepathy to the power of love, and to what we call empathy, the ability to enter into the subjectivity of the other—and not just humans. Imagine for a moment the human species newly endowed with a more robust and reliable faculty of telepathy and empathy. That additional factor alone would, in my opinion, be a major step toward the revival of nature and the joys of civilization. In any concept of a new higher education, this would figure as a major concern, the higher education of social intelligence. What we're imagining is a time when paranormal telepathy evolves into normal empathy.

Now consider a comparable increase of another extraordinary human potential: psychokinesis, PK, (aka telekinesis). The data demonstrates various ways that our mental powers can be physically expressed. One set of capacities would gravely impact the transportation industries, supposing at one point we learn to levitate, bilocate, and teleport ourselves around. In a more radical vein, imagine the impact on the health industries if our amazing healing potentials were fully awakened, activated, and diffused through the whole population. In a more evolved society, every individual would be the chief custodian of her/his own health.



One more example will serve to illustrate. Again, we have the data to justify this futuristic meditation. How would human beings react to the discovery that, quite apart from religion, science has made the case for the reality of postmortem consciousness? In other words, when our bodies die, our inner, subjective, interior selves, not made of material cloth to begin with, survives, continues, according to reports, even flourishes as never before. This, were it a truth laid bare for all to see, would make a dramatic difference living the new story.

The New Human Species

All the changes that would arise from evolving the powers we already possess we could describe as our potential evolutionary future, realizing the gifts we have in germ to grow to full completion. This then we might describe as a model of a new human species.

Many UFO contactees and abductees have messages about the need to get on with human evolution. The higher beings, we're told, are here to speed up the process. They are concerned about our future, especially after we began exploding atomic bombs (see Robert Hastings, *UFOs and Nukes*). So this is part of the needed new story: an agent, in whatever way possible, to move us toward collective transformation. We need to avoid nuclear suicide and climate apocalypse. And the message seems to be: evolve or die! So the question becomes: How do we free up our latent psychospiritual potentials?

Recall that Alfred Russel Wallace co-discovered the basic principles of modern evolution with Charles Darwin. But in contrast to Darwin, Wallace studied and experimented with mediumship and was converted to a spiritualist philosophy of consciousness, entirely due to his own empirical observations. (He tried to get Darwin interested, but failed.) He gives an account of his research, reasoning, and devastating criticisms of the irrational incredulity of fellow scientists who refuse to face facts that contradict their most beloved beliefs. Wallace is emphatic about facts, and describes how he once couldn't bear the term "spirits" but that "facts" forced him to embrace the term (which in Greek just means *wind*). His book, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism* (1878), lays out evidence and arguments for his case with the verve and clarity of a master scientist. This leads to my concluding comment on what the new story will feature: It will be informed by a powerful blend of science, religion, and art.

One can imagine how paranormal evolution of the personality could bring about improvements in our general mode of being on Earth. Suppose, for example, our telepathic sensibilities were enhanced, which would entail an expansion of empathic capacity; surely, a change with much practical potential. (Given the paucity of the stuff in a world of raging hatreds.) It would improve human relations, as well as our relations with other sentient beings, and with the living earth we are all nestled in. Empathy for the Earth! An essential item of the New Story.

Finally, we can imagine that our mystical sense begins to unfold and we know joy, love, and freedom as part of the

fabric of everyday life. For purely empirical reasons, I believe the extraordinary is possible; the seed of creative evolution is alive in us all. I can imagine this leap of spirit happening in two ways: one by means of a new higher education, designed to liberate our extraordinary potentials. The other, more grim possibility is that it happens spontaneously, as we descend into a long global near-death experience, which in the end sparks the greatest renaissance of all history.

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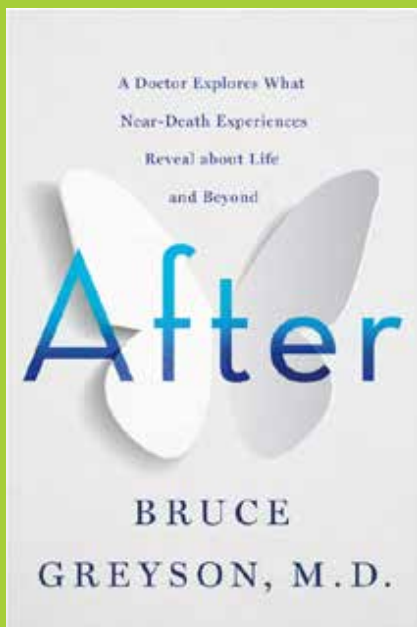
Frank Pasciuti

Grosso's focus is on the science of extraordinary human experience and the creative implications of altered states of consciousness. See his blog: consciousnessunbound.blogspot.com. He is also a painter who works at the interface of art and the paranormal. See his art site: paintingthepsyche.com.

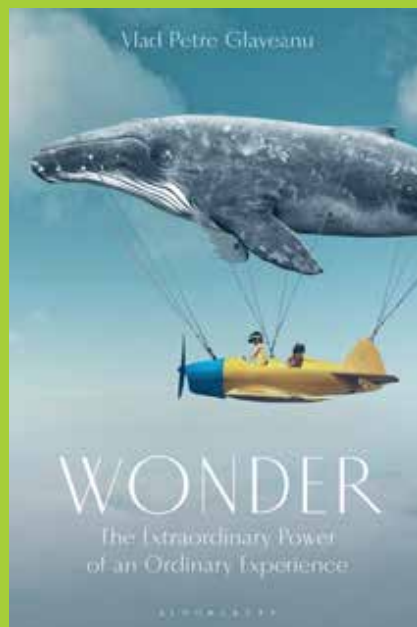
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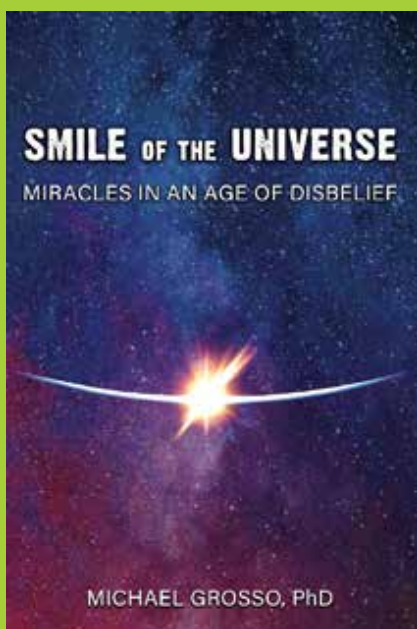
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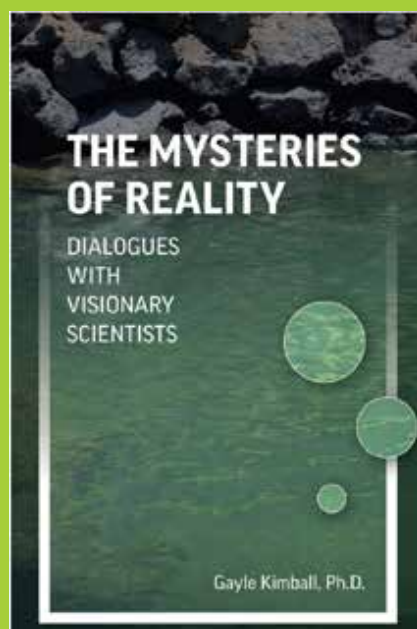
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