



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH, INC.

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THE A.I.P.R. NEWS

The AIPR Mini-Convention 2015 by Wilhelm F. Martinez

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Conformity, Reactance and Paranormal Effects by Lance Storm (pp. 2-3). Dr. Storm gives a report on his latest study on the ancient Chinese system of divination, the *I Ching*, in which he investigates a possible paranormal component in that system.

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THE AIPR MINI-CON 2015 was held at the North Sydney Community Centre on November 28, 2015. The guest speakers at this event hailed from various backgrounds or disciplines—namely, research, teaching, and investigation. The topics that were covered by these individuals included the compatibility between parapsychology and ufology, spiritual emergency as a parapsychological phenomenon, multi-disciplinary approaches to out-of-body experiences, and local and global poltergeists.

The following review is from a layman's perspective, since this reviewer,

like many who attended this event, have a general level of interest in these topics that is not reinforced by prior education or experience in scientific research and related concepts. Despite this limitation, it is the reviewer's intention to provide a fair and impartial opinion of the convention and the performance of its guest speakers.

The first lecture was titled "Strange Brew: Are Parapsychology and Ufology Compatible", and was handled by noted ufologist and author, Mr. Bill Chalker. For starters, the fascination and interest level displayed by the author regarding the UFO phenomenon is clearly undisputed; he definitely knows what he is

talking about. It is when attempting to elucidate his ideas and concepts to the public that he comes up short. While not stating exactly that this speaker's spiel time was one big giant ramble, the vagueness of it, along with the assumption he may have had regarding the audience's level of knowledge, compromised what could have been a very interesting first session. Indeed his conclusion of a relationship between parapsychology and ufology, along with various other elements, was question-

ences in the context of a failed relationship she had in the past; the intensity of which led her to label her former partner as Jesus during the good times, and Satan when it went bad. Skeptical observers would have readily dismissed such claims by classifying them as examples of being in a delusory state, or having a mental illness. However, the fact that the material would have been relatable to quite a few people in the audience only serves to strengthen the message and the concept that Ms.

Harris intended to put out; she did not disappoint.

For most of the first part of the third lecture

given by Dr. Alex De Foe on Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE), Dr. De Foe provided a wealth of information and explanations that may have seemed like manna from heaven for some. While his talk could be followed fairly easily in parts, the generally flat, almost mechanical delivery of it made it less memorable to this reviewer and others.

In contrast, the second part of the lecture by Dr. George van Doorn on "OBEs in the Lab" was most fascinating. The video presentation was helpful in assisting the audience to understand the concept, as well as the implications and applications of the experiments that have been

"Tony Healy and Paul Cropper . . . dealt with strange and frightening cases of poltergeist phenomena"

able, and, to this reviewer at least, unsatisfying.

Presented by Ms. Kylie Harris, the second lecture, titled "Spiritual Emergency as a Parapsychological Phenomenon", covered everything the printed program of the event said it would. Having seen Ms. Harris present at the 2014 convention, this reviewer thinks she is a very good speaker, who is engaging, amusing, and highly intelligent.

The subject matter was further augmented by the provision of her own personal experiences which, while not being pleasant in reality, was told in a candid, hilarious and memorable manner. She imparted psychic experi-

Conformity, Reactance, and Paranormal Effects (*cont'd*) by Lance Storm

scorers of paranormal belief), with believers proving to be somewhat better Q-Sort scorers than indecisives. Also, we found a significantly high psychokinetic effect on the RNG from believers.

In Part 2 of our study,⁴ we reported the results of a so-called reactance treatment on the same participants—we hypothesized that the treatment would compromise the performance of nonbelievers in psi who try to *disprove* the psi hypothesis by performing poorly on psi tasks. According to Reactance Theory, an individual's freedom, if threatened by coercion (a reactance treatment), may result in reactance, which is a motivational state aimed at restoring the threatened freedom. The reactance-treated individual (especially if high reactance is a character trait) feels he or she can restore this lost freedom by doing exactly the opposite of what is asked of him or her. To get a reactance effect, you only have to try to force on a person an opinion related to the task they're about to do—for example, we presented the following text to participants:

"I am utterly convinced that ESP exists . . . I know I have persuaded you about this. I know you agree with my opinion. In fact, you're really forced to agree because university students can't have differing opinions on this issue."

Readers can see that those last sentences might get on some people's nerves—that's reactance, and it can affect task outcomes, even causing 'boomerang' effects. But of course we needed to gauge just how much effect (if any) reactance was having on psi, and as I said before, it was supposed to adversely affect psi.

As it turned out, reactance lowered Q-Sort scores to a marginally significant degree, but strangely, the reactance treatment seemed to bolster (not inhibit) psi scoring for

indecisives—a reversal of effect. Confused?

I began to think that indecisives (not being sure of themselves) might be more conformist than believers and skeptics, so they respond favourably to a reactance treatment, when they would otherwise perform poorly without it. (Conformity is defined as going along with the crowd, and believing what you're told.)

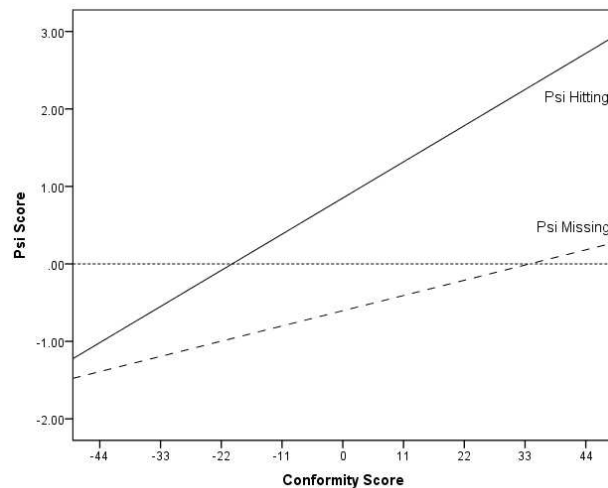
To find out, I ran a study supported by the Cardigan Fund, that looked at how paranormal belief, conformity, and *trait* reactance, might work together. And of course I wanted to know how these all related to psi.

I found out that believers were the most conformist, whereas indecisives and non-believers tended to be non-conformists. But, I still had some more tests to do.

Ultimately, I discovered two things—if the participant had

undergone the reactance treatment then, (a) conformity predicted psi (i.e., high conformity score => high psi score), and (b) trait reactance 'moderated' the relationship between paranormal belief and psi performance (i.e., belief influenced psi, but *trait* reactance changed how strong that effect was).

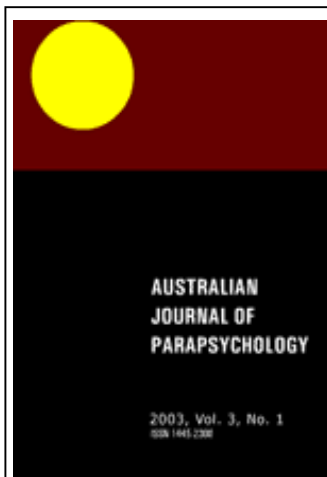
These effects are illustrated in



Notes:

1. L. Storm "Jung, Synchronicity, and the Australian APRU," *THE AIPR NEWS* 1 (2007): 1-2.
2. C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), para. 846-847.
3. L. Storm and A. J. Rock, "An investigation of the *I Ching* using the Q-Sort method and an RNG-PK design: I. Four possible psi predictors," *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* 14 (2014a): 29-67.
4. L. Storm and A. J. Rock, "An investigation of the *I Ching* using the Q-Sort Method and an RNG-PK design: II. The effect of reactance on psi," *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* 14 (2014b): 163-190.

the figure above. You can see things get a little complicated: to get an above-zero psi score, a participant generally had to have above-average psi belief with *high* trait reactance, or



The *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* features research articles on ESP (extra-sensory perception), PK (psychokinesis), and the after-life.

Subscribe Now! (see page 4)

The Australian Institute of Parapsychological Research is a non-profit community association. Based in Sydney but with a worldwide membership base, it was established in 1977. The aims of the organisation are:

- To collect, assess and disseminate factual information about claims of psychic (paranormal) phenomena.
- To support and encourage parapsychology (the scientific study of paranormal phenomena).
- To undertake or promote activities (e.g., fundraising, social activities, etc.) in support of the above.

Looking for information on the paranormal? The AIPR has fact sheets on:

- Psychic and mystical experiences of the aborigines
- Psychic and psycho-spiritual development
- Healing
- Mystical experiences
- Apparitions, ghosts and hauntings
- Out of body experiences
- Near-death experiences
- The human aura

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Quid Nunc by Hannah Jenkins

THE OTHER DAY, I was delighted to add to my collection of quotes by famous people indicating an interest in psi. For those of you who want to play along at home the rules are:

- 1) The quote should be by a person you would not necessarily expect to have an interest in psi research;
- 2) They should have some clout in an unrelated area of expertise.

I stumbled across this new one due to my new-found interest in the life of Ian Fleming. It turns out that, as well as being an accomplished thriller writer who I am sure needs no introduction, he was also a prolific journalist with the *Sunday Times* for a substantial part of his career.

I discovered a natty compilation of his articles for that newspaper compiled together under the title 'Thrilling Cities'.¹ It contains the articles he wrote for the *Sunday Times* after they sent him on

a world tour to report back on places and people with the eye of the thriller writer for which he was fast becoming famous.

I highly recommend this excellent collection of brilliantly written pieces that capture the world at the moment when World War II was still a vivid memory, but one that was fast blurring into the new era of the 1960s, with intercontinental flights still a novelty and privilege to be savoured and dutifully reported on.

Amongst the places he covers is Tokyo, a place he visited with some trepidation, but which was to provide him with fodder for future James Bond novels and amusing anecdotes as he negotiated such a challengingly different culture.

It was while he was in Tokyo that he wrote about his experiences seeing a fortune-teller prefaced with the quote that now graces my collection: "I am not particularly



Goldeneye, in Jamaica, where Fleming wrote all the Bond novels
[SOURCE: Wikimedia Commons]

Ian Fleming's life, through biographies and a compilation of his letters, it became apparent to me how much of the real world he put into the Bond books. And although the plots remained spurious, many of the details he used, particularly regarding cars, trains, and guns, were researched to the highest degree. Apparently there was also some boffin waiting to pounce on him, so he took great pains to get as many details correct as he could, and he

didn't hesitate to ask experts for their help. I am wondering if at any stage he approached any of the psi researchers of his era.

Whatever you think about the legacy, it is clear that fiction has a powerful effect on public perception. Of course I'd never deign to place myself in the company of the likes of Ian Fleming, but reading about his efforts to become a writer has inspired me to take some time to write a story based around the adventures of Jinks Jenks, a psi researcher making her way in the world. Of course, in this fictionalised place there is funding for her research, the skeptics are defeated and shown up to be fools, psi works perfectly first go, and she and her trusty side kick Rod Volkov always catch the baddies. It should be coming soon to an Amazon store near you! Meanwhile you can get a taste of it here:

References to telepathy pepper some of Fleming's fictional works, but he never took it to any great level. What a shame! More so that he didn't combine it with his interest in treasure hunting. Now, that would have been something! Imagine if the creator of James Bond had also developed a psi-based treasure hunting protocol. He didn't have much success using metal detectors, so perhaps he should have.

Such frivolous speculations aside, while reading about

interested in having my fortune told, but I am rather intrigued by fortune-telling and all matters connected with extra-sensory perception."²

The content of the fortune-telling experience was nothing to write home about. He provides an entertaining account of it, and how few predictions proved correct (including, alas, that he would live until he was 80; in fact, he died young at 56 from a heart attack). But the point to me is that here was a widely read writer acknowledging quite openly his interest in ESP without the fuss that would likely ensue if someone of Fleming's status did that today.

www.qipp.com.au/jj.html Ψ

- Notes:
1. I. Fleming, *Thrilling Cities*, (London: Vintage Books, 1963/2009).
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

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