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Volume 11, Issue 2

Registered as a periodical ISSN 1835-2731 (Print); 2208-004X (Online)

September 2017

THE A.I.P.R. NEWS

Correlation of Haunt Phenomena With Moon Phase

by Vladimir Dubaj

Inside this issue:

Correlation of Haunt Phenomena With Moon Phase by Vladimir Dubaj (pp. 1-2). Melbourne ghost-researcher Dr. Vladimir Dubaj analysed his collections of data to find an unexplained correlation between the Moon phases and paranormal experiences.

Some Comments on Quantum Mechanics and Psi by Colin Mitchell (p. 3). Many pundits of Quantum Mechanics (QM) make all sorts of claims about what QM theory says about psi and our physical world. Colin Mitchell sets the record straight.

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THE MOON has long been believed to hold some influence upon animal behavior. Pliny the Elder reasoned that the lunar force (now known as gravity) which pulls on the Earth's oceans may also exert similar effects on the water within the human body. This gravitational influence is now known to have minimal effect on human beings; the pull by the Moon on the human body is no more than that of a brick wall when one stands a meter away. However, another mechanism which I have not been aware of until recently is the Moon's perturbation of the Earth's magnetic field.

As an active researcher of ghost (and haunting) activity, I was aware of the possibility of lunar influence on behavior via a "direct" Moon-behaviour interaction. This influence could be exerted not by gravity but by psychology of expectation. However, I had never seriously considered the possibility of lunar influences on ghost activity. I had not come across any literature suggesting such lunar effects, nor was I aware of any causal link. Despite this, I was vigilant of possible psychogenic effects by individuals that provided me with reports of ghost activity. It is known that those with beliefs in the paranormal can also hold beliefs on the influence of the Moon

on behavior.¹ Such beliefs can contribute to cognitive biases that could lead to increased false reports during certain phases of the Moon. However, during my research, I have not come across anyone who consciously linked their experiences with the Moon phase.

Between 20-30% of the population is likely to experience, at some point in their lives, anomalous events commonly termed as ghost or haunting activity.² These experiences may occur across any sensory modality, ranging

from visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory.³ This is in addition to non-sensory processes such as feelings of a sensed presence and irrational fear, as well as witnessing direct interaction with the physical environment such as doors opening and objects moving seemingly of their own accord.

The Moon-ghost interaction first became evident to me whilst I was analyzing a database of eye-witness statements pertaining to ghost and haunting activity. We had collated 20 years of data consisting of hundreds of reports. I decided to run an analysis between Moon phase and frequency of reports. I had done this merely as a formality, expecting to find no relationship and put the idea to rest. However, the correlation came out to be highly significant. After brief contemplation, the most logical interpretation was a psychogenic one. Individuals' attitudes and predispositions could have been influenced when observing the Moon phase, consciously or otherwise, leaving raised expectation and imagination to do the rest.

Despite its large size, however, the dataset could not clarify whether the effect was psychogenic or something more. The individuals in question were outdoors during both day or night, thus potentially being exposed to cues of Moon phase. The finding did, however, prompt me to review my own personal dataset for similar patterns. Although my dataset was much smaller in number, it had the advantage of being acquired under more controlled conditions. The possibility of psychological influences of the Moon were much less likely.

"I was aware of the possibility of lunar influence on behavior via a "direct" Moon-behaviour interaction"

I compiled 51 cases spanning several years. These comprised of two primary sources. The first consisted of investigations conducted by my group (22 cases). The field investigations were tightly controlled and the investigators were skeptical of lunar influences. Furthermore, the only evidence accepted during investigations was that wit-

At My Desk

The article by Colin Mitchell in this issue (p. 3), concerns misunderstandings in Quantum Mechanics (QM). Colin's article got me thinking about 'complementarity' because I touched on that topic back in 2006 (see *The Survival of Human Consciousness*, McFarland). The usual example in QM is that sub-atomic particles are often observed to behave like waves, and other times they are observed to behave like particles. In the closing chapter of that book, I suggested that survival-like evidence might be explained in two different ways, but both discourses might refer to the same fundamental reality. The dominant (and oldest) argument is, simply, that there really is an afterlife. The alternative argument is that afterlife communications (e.g., from mediumship) are really examples of super-psi (a.k.a. living-agent psi)? But how would they be two aspects of the same thing—they seem fundamentally opposed and mutually exclusive? Worse still, a schism emerges because complementarity means neither concept holds full explanatory power—each loses its autonomy. Maybe there is no gain without a loss (yes, another paradox). We might have to get used to complementarities—after all, we accepted electromagnetism. Perhaps the merger will result in the (not new) idea of a 'psychic reservoir', which seems to have fallen out of favour. For some parapsychologists, the notion of two different realms; two different dimensions (one for the living; one for the disincarnate) is still preferable, but think about this: Has the concept of the 'universe' been fully explored? In an age when we are being bombarded with 'multiverses' from all sides, Jung's borrowed alchemical term *Unus Mundus* (a unified reality where all things originate and merge) seems comforting. Perhaps there's more than a psychological reason for that.

* * *

Got something to say about parapsychology or the paranormal? Submit your contribution to:

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—Lance Storm

Correlation of Haunt Phenomena with Moon Phase (V. Dubaj)

nessed by two or more investigators, or captured by our equipment. The second source consisted of a series of ghost/haunting phenomena reported by research participants and logged at the time of occurrence via SMS (29 cases). These SMS reports were followed up by personal communication to determine possible causes and influences. None of the individuals suggested the possibility of lunar influence.

Of the entire pool of 51 cases, 16 did not contain any unusual occurrences. These consisted of non-eventful field investigations. The remaining 35 cases contained unexplained occurrences spanning auditory, tactile and visual phenomena as well as direct influence of physical objects. Cases were grouped into four categories of Moon phase: 0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100% visibility, and a frequency distribution was generated. Eventful data (those containing unusual occurrences) were found to be significantly skewed towards both New-Moon and Full-Moon periods. Non-eventful data showed no such pattern.

Although this was a smaller sample, the same pattern was observed here as for the much larger dataset that brought the lunar relationship to my attention in the first place. This finding supported my belief that the Moon is linked in some way to the likelihood of experiencing ghost/haunting activity. Furthermore, the second data set suggested that there is more to ghost activity than wayward imagination.

One possible candidate mechanism for the Moon's influence on the Earth is via modulation of the Earth's magnetosphere. Shaped by the solar wind, the magnetosphere is confined to about 10 Earth radii on the day side of the Earth, but extends well beyond the orbit of the Moon at 60 Earth radii. The lunar effects upon the Earth's geomagnetic activity has been shown by two mechanisms: (1) Physical interference with either the solar wind or the Earth's magnetosphere during New- and Full-Moon periods, respectively,^{4,5,6} and (2) Gravitational forcing of the lower atmosphere; compressing and expanding the ionosphere.^{7,8} Both of these

mechanisms have the effect of perturbing magnetic field activity which can be detected at ground level.

There is evidence that weak magnetic fields may be able to affect the human brain, particularly when the field is complex (more than a simple sinusoid). Professor Michael Persinger has published numerous research papers providing evidence of magnetically induced changes in epileptiform activity.^{9,10} One avenue of his research has shown that temporal lobe activity in a subset of the normative population displays seizure-like activity, which does not manifest any physical symptoms. This group of individuals are more sensitive to magnetic field variations near their heads, being more likely to experience feelings of a sensed-presence. Persinger also found an association between this non-seizure epileptiform-like activity and hallucinations.¹¹

There is also evidence of significant variations in clustering of seizures around Moon phases,^{12,13,14} with seizures of the non-epileptic type being highest around the Full-Moon quarter.¹⁵ All these findings taken together lend support to the idea that at least a portion of individuals within the normative population may be more susceptible to hallucinatory experiences when exposed to magnetic field variations.^{10,11,16}

So the possibility exists that the Moon plays a role in the probability of one experiencing ghost/haunting phenomena—namely via magnetic field perturbations affecting brain physiology. This could account for a proportion of sensory hallucinations which, by many, are assumed to be purely psychogenic. However, this mechanism is unlikely to explain instances of an apparition being observed by multiple witnesses, or cases where objects are physically moved of their own accord. Many insights are still waiting to be made. ♣

Notes:

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2. E. Haraldsson, "Alleged Encounters with

the Dead: The Importance of Violent Death in 337 New Cases" *Journal of Parapsychology* 73 (2009): 91-118.

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13. P. Polychronopoulos et al., "Lunar Phases and Seizure Occurrence: Just an Ancient Legend?" *Neurology* 66(9) (2006): 1442-1443.
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15. S. R. Benbadis et al., "The Influence of the Full Moon on Seizure Frequency: Myth or Reality?" *Epilepsy and Behavior* 5(4) (2004): 596-597.
16. M. A. Persinger & K. S. Saroka, "Comparable Proportions of Classes of Experiences and Intracerebral Consequences for Surgical Stimulation and External Application of Weak Magnetic Field Patterns: Implications for Converging Effects in Complex Partial Seizures" *Epilepsy and Behavior* 27(1) (2013): 220-224.

Some Comments on Quantum Mechanics and Psi by Colin Mitchell

I FIND MUCH that is written about Quantum Mechanics (QM) to be rather confusingly written and philosophically suspect. I assert that too many people are appropriating colourful language from QM and applying it too generally across the board to macroscopic objects where it simply does not apply. They over-generalise philosophical or metaphysical statements about QM phenomena, and try to make these apply to the macro world, not just the micro world. There is a natural assumption that since the macro-world is built from the micro world, the same micro-world rules should apply. But this fails to take into account that QM effects become lost in the multitude of interactions that make up the macro world—they only apply in their pure form in specific isolated systems on the micro level.

We have to use words to talk about things and there are different philosophical and metaphysical interpretations of QM, but I think some writers make a few too many philosophical assumptions of their own about the nature of the reality behind QM, and they are ultimately misleading in their interpretations.

Take the interpretation of Heisenberg's uncertainty relations which explain them in terms of measurement distortions. This interpretation explains that the measurement of the position of an electron by 'bouncing' a photon off it will at the same time alter the electron's momentum so that the momentum and position together can never be known precisely. But measurement distortions assumes that micro things actually do have certainty in their properties like hard little billiard balls in macro reality. Another interpretation is that there really is no certainty about either of the conjugate properties until one is measured. When one is measured this becomes certain, but the other one remains uncertain. This is the 'weirder' interpretation, but QM is weird from the macro viewpoint. So there is one way of explaining what is 'really' going on, but that is not the only one.

Then there's Russell Targ's and Hal Puthoff's statement that the laws of physics do not absolutely forbid the transmission of information from the future to the present. Targ and Puthoff's statement is quite correct—at least as far as general relativity is concerned—general relativity in itself does not rule out closed time-like loops with the future affecting the past. And there is speculation about the possibility of retro-causation in particle physics, although most physicists would remain sceptical. In QM there are experiments which seem to indicate that results in the present depend on decisions made in the future (although the interpretation of these would be hotly debated).

Targ and Puthoff are quite correct regarding entangled spatially separated events, but that only applies to certain specific events that have been entangled by the experimental set-up beforehand—it does not automatically apply to all events happening everywhere, only to those specific events. But there is nothing wrong with what Targ and Puthoff say in their book *Mind Reach*: "... parts of the universe apparently separated from each other can nonetheless act together as parts of a larger

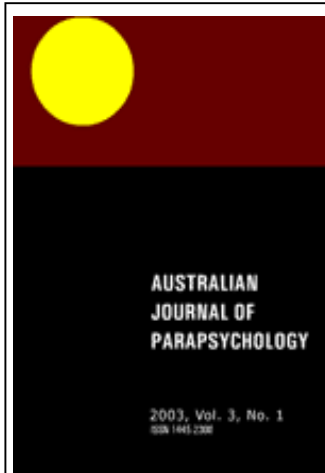
whole ...", as long as it is only seen as applying to certain very specific parts that have been deliberately entangled together, not everything automatically. It is wrong to see everything in the universe entangled in the same way.

Another common misconception is that QM shows that we create the universe by our observations. Practically no physicist or philosopher believes this today. It is true that one of the biggest mysteries in QM is how the collapse of the wavefunction comes about. Since it occurs when physicists make measurements with their apparatus it was said that the act of observation itself caused the result, which led to the idea that conscious observers create macro reality. But now it is generally believed that wavefunction collapse happens all the time ubiquitously either by all kinds of physical interactions or



Werner Heisenberg (c. 1933) [SOURCE: Wikimedia Commons]

spontaneously once certain conditions obtain, not only when humans interact with the world. So the macro world is there, regardless of the presence of conscious observers. The prevailing opinion is that it is not consciousness which collapses the wavefunction. Ψ



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

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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.

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- Out of body experiences
- Near-death experiences
- The human aura

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Quid Nunc by Hannah Jenkins

Accidental expert

OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS I seem to have become an accidental 'go to girl' for the reviewing of books on all matters regarding life and death. I guess it has come about because tomes on this topic tend to draw on philosophy as well as parapsychology and there aren't many people foolish enough to combine higher education degrees in both, being as they are two of the most unfunded and unpopular areas of academic enquiry. Go me!

It has been an interesting ride and provided me with literature I may otherwise not have taken the time to read due to its somewhat gloomy nature that makes one ponder upon one's mortality and how one should face the inevitable demise of, at least, our physical presence on the earth. (Dramatic effect fully intended!).

But tackling these big topics is what philosophy is for, so in the end I was happy enough to knuckle down to the task of finding out what it is that may just happen to us

all when we die.

It started way back in 2008 with *Suicide: What Really Happens in the Afterlife*—a 600-page+ epic filled with purported communications from people who have died in this tragic way.¹ It didn't really tell us anything more than what we already know, which is that people who commit suicide tend to leave unfinished business and often regret their decision.

There wasn't enough discussion about the nature of the communications or how to distinguish them from imagined conversations for my liking, and I ended up being unconvinced

the channelled conversation that made up the bulk of the book could be evidence for life after death.

The 'Yay' or 'Nay' arguments are stuck on the point as to whether or not living agent psi (LAP) is responsible for what appears to be otherwise communications from deceased people. It is so hard to rule out LAP that we aren't left with much to go on. And the current obsession with near-death experiences providing evidence we exist in the great beyond hasn't swung me into thinking more than our current medical understanding of what constitutes death is in need of revision, a terrifying thought when you consider how much rides on it.

My suspicions

are that, as with life, what happens when we are really and truly 'dead' may be determined substantially by the beliefs and attitude we take with us. Not exactly a reassuring thought, but at least one we can do something about.

Book reviews are available on my academia.edu.au page: <https://qjpp.academia.edu/HannahJenkins/Book-Reviews> Ψ

Notes:

1. H. Jenkins, "Review of 'Suicide: What Really Happens in the Afterlife?'," *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* 8(1) (2008): 89-93.
2. H. Jenkins, "Review of 'A Philosophical Critique of Empirical Arguments for Postmortem Survival'," *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 30(4) (2016): 596-599. 0892-3310/16



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Fast forward to my most recent review: Michael Sudduth's *A Philosophical Critique of Empirical Arguments for Postmortem Survival*.² A challenging analytical book jam-packed with tight sophisticated arguments.

The topic for this column occurred to me today as I strolled through the charming streets of Battery Point to my local post office where I picked up *Are You or Are You Not* (by Stan V. McDaniel), fresh in from America. I can't read it yet, as I've another book that I have to get to beforehand; *The Self Does Not Die* by Titus Rivas, Anny Dirven, and Rudolf H. Smit. Crumbs, I'd better get cracking... Both reviews will be published in the *Journal for Scientific Exploration*.

I can't say that all this enforced reading on what may or may not happen to us when we die has made me any more clued in about it.