

Methodologies for the Mysterious: UFOs and Consciousness

Charles F. Emmons, Ph.D.

OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this chapter is to present a sociology of science perspective on ways of studying experiences that allegedly involve UFOs and so-called “paranormal” (Hunter, 2012) aspects of consciousness (or “psi”), as well as overlaps between these two categories of anomalies. Both the experiences and the academic approaches directed toward studying these experiences have social/cultural context. Therefore, a holistic approach to studying UFOs and paranormal consciousness requires a multiple methodological strategy that considers both the difficulties in collecting data on anomalous experiences and the various theoretical frames used by groups and individuals to account for them. In short: what can we know about UFOs and psi, and how can we know it?

THE MYSTERIES:

The UFO (“Unidentified Flying Objects”) topic and that of paranormal consciousness share a number of features. First, they are arguably the two most significant mysteries confronting humans on earth. Second, they are sometimes experienced in similar ways, e.g. telepathically. Third, those who study them are commonly subject to ridicule in normal (mainstream) science.

As a sociologist I am aware of certain ironies here and barriers to research and understanding that are more social than rational. Progress in the study of these phenomena is more than just a technological challenge. As I pointed out two decades ago (Emmons, 1997: 13-26), there is no good scientific reason why ufology should have been considered a deviant science. The argument for ufology is even stronger today, with the discovery of planets beyond our solar system and the continual reporting of UAP (“Unidentified Aerial Phenomena”) with the latest

radar and photographic technology, reporting that has been baffling military experts and getting prominent astronomers to take notice. Moreover, it is premature to assume that UFOs would necessarily be extra-terrestrial, closing off investigation into other possible origins of such experiences.

The same applies to the study of paranormal consciousness, referred to in parapsychology as “psi”, which includes both ESP (extrasensory perception) and PK (psychokinesis). Serious studies have been accumulating in the areas of OBEs (out-of-body experiences) and NDEs (near-death experiences), lucid dreaming, ESP or remote viewing, apparitions, physical effects (psychokinesis and healing), spirit mediumship, and reincarnation (Emmons and Emmons, 2012). Even “normal” consciousness remains a mystery, since neuroscientists have not yet been able to locate a center of consciousness in the brain (“the hard problem”).

John Horgan (1996 and 2015) in his controversial but fascinating book *The End of Science* argued that research into such things as UFOs and anomalous consciousness represent “ironic science.” Either there can be no way to test assertions about these alleged phenomena, or efforts to do so would bring about severely diminishing returns. In other words, the research would be either impossible or too costly. Although I disagree with him in some ways, he certainly makes important points. He is clearly not saying that we have discovered everything to be known about the universe, just that from our human vantage point it is extremely difficult to make headway in solving these mysteries.

Perhaps the best argument against his view is to say that we cannot anticipate future scientific approaches that might provide breakthroughs. Astronomers estimate that more than half of the universe consists of dark energy and dark matter, about which we know nothing. Dark energy is a theoretical construct devised to represent the inexplicable expansion rate of the universe. Dark matter is a theoretical construct to represent the inexplicable tendency for our galaxy to hold together more than expected. Nevertheless, we can anticipate further research into these mysteries.

Ufology and parapsychology are in a similar position: providing evidence of anomalies, and positing potential explanations without actually demonstrating their validity. For example, there are highly evidential reports of objects in the sky that perform maneuvers like right-angle turns that seem physically impossible. This might be explained by the visitation of an advanced form of intelligence that can manipulate the physical world in ways about which we are yet ignorant, even though we have not been able to provide detailed evidence about that intelligence. In parapsychology there is strong evidence of mental telepathy and precognition. This might be explained by the nonlocality principle in quantum physics (objects connected in spite of separation by space and time), even though a detailed display of the mechanism eludes us.

DOING IRONIC SCIENCE: METHODOLOGIES FOR THE MYSTERIOUS

A Career in Ironic Science

In recent decades anthropology, and to a lesser extent sociology have become increasingly reflexive. This is partly related to a postmodern skepticism about the privileging of authoritative texts. It also has its roots in the sociology/anthropology of knowledge, progressing from Mannheim through Merton and toward more radical critiques of the myth of objectivity (Aronowitz, 1988). Therefore I need to reveal how some of my background has led to my approach to this subject.

Since 1971 I have taught sociology, but both my teaching and my research are highly interdisciplinary and multicultural, and are very much informed by anthropology. Most, but not all, of my research projects fall under the category of the sociology/anthropology of science and knowledge, with emphasis on the paranormal. *Chinese Ghosts and ESP: A Study of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences* (1982; *Chinese Ghosts Revisited*, 2017) was based on 1,500 telephone interviews, 2,000 questionnaires, and ethnographic interviews and observations in Hong Kong. *At the Threshold: UFOs, Science and the New Age* (1997) involved interviews with 91 UFO researchers and observations of UFO conferences. *Guided by Spirit: A Journey into the Mind of the Medium* (2003 and 2019), co-authored with Penelope Emmons, was based on ethnographic interviews with 40 mediums, observations of Spiritualist gatherings and circles, and an analysis of the biographies of 82 other spirit mediums. *Science and Spirit: Exploring the Limits of Consciousness* (2012), also co-authored with Penelope, included interviews with scientists and others about whether they thought there could be evidence for life after death or consciousness apart from the body.

Holistic Approach

Not surprisingly I have come to appreciate a holistic approach to all subjects of inquiry and to find narrow disciplinary definitions of problems to be an obstruction. I attribute this mostly to my anthropological training and to the ethos of cultural relativism. All approaches and levels of analysis are potentially interesting and worth exploring. In my study of UFO researchers, for example, I found that there tended to be a split between “nuts and bolts” and “New Age” researchers. The former concentrated on physical effects, such as landing traces or microwave burns, and the latter looked more for some kind of spiritual meaning in the contact with UFO occupants. I saw both approaches as interesting and worthwhile, but from a sociology of science and knowledge perspective, of course, the fact that such a difference in approach exists is in itself data.

In our research on consciousness (Emmons and Emmons, 2012), we discussed the fascination with quantum physics as a possible theoretical framework for understanding “paranormal” consciousness, but some parapsychologists and of course some physicists consider the application of quantum physics to such issues to be reductionist or invalid. I’d like to consider a quantum physics approach to the paranormal as both valid and invalid (joke).

Anthropology/Sociology of Science: The “Frame” Frame

It should not come as a great surprise that I concluded in our book *Science and Spirit* (2012) that the debate over whether there is (or could be) evidence for survival (life after death), or at least for consciousness beyond the living body, is more about how people and groups frame the evidence than it is about the evidence itself. What else would you expect from an anthropology/sociology of knowledge approach (my approach)? This is based largely on ideas from Erving Goffman’s *Frame Analysis* (1974).

For anybody who has ever become exasperated over the inability of other supposedly intelligent people to agree with them on matters of politics or religion, frame analysis is especially useful as an explanation. In other words, people (including us) are less rational than we might like to believe. Information that might seem not to fit personal world views or disciplinary paradigms (frames) tends to be ignored or reframed. This is apart from the question of whether any frame is actually better than another according to some independent standard (if there is such a thing).

Additionally, there are mysteries involved in the phenomena themselves that are under scrutiny (here, the phenomena of consciousness, paranormal or not, and UFO experiences). Indeed, the fact that consciousness is so difficult to define and to research makes the framing problem even more perplexing. See Kelly et al (2007) for a history of consciousness research.

The Consciousness Problem, and Why It’s Important

In the 1920s J.B. Watson, the founder of behavioral psychology, said that there can be no such thing as consciousness (Emmons and Emmons, 2012: 65). On the surface this claim seems preposterous. Presumably he was conscious himself when he said that, and he knew it. However, given his scientific “frame” that involved “objective” observation of (other) human beings in a laboratory setting, there was no way to collect evidence for consciousness. Therefore, in that frame it did not (or might as well not) exist. B.F. Skinner and other behaviorists relied only on external behavioral evidence and assumed that material brain functions created an illusion of consciousness that was merely an “epiphenomenon” of physical processes.

Rosenblum and Kuttner (2011: 221-222) point out, however, that there has been “an explosion of interest in consciousness” since the 1960s, either because of advances in brain imaging technology or for social reasons (like the pervasive impact of the new age consciousness movement). It would appear that now that we can see what lights up in people’s brains when they think certain thoughts or do certain things, we ought to be able to find consciousness in the brain. However, it turns out that we can’t (so far).

This is what David Chalmers (2007) called “the hard problem” (the subjective experience of consciousness) (Emmons and Emmons, 2012: 67-69). This leads to a variety of questions and speculations about “normal” (whatever that is) consciousness. Is consciousness just an illusion, a story we tell ourselves about who we are (the “self”) and why we do what we do? One suspicion is that our subconscious is really in charge of most of what we do, and that our conscious mind just handles executive decisions and works on our self-image.

Interestingly this view of consciousness and the self as a constructed façade or self-delusion fits right into a sociological frame. As Peter Berger (1963) wrote, “The first wisdom of sociology is this: things may not be what they seem.” Sociologists point out that even our self-concept is socially (and individually) constructed, followed by our partly unconscious presentation of self to others. This doesn’t make the social self any less real. All “real” things are constructed from something. It just points out that consciousness is not merely a physiological brain function and that there is a social component, a sort of social “epiphenomenon” as it were.

If the self as epiphenomenon seems to support behaviorism in an ironic way, still there is the problem of subjectivity. How do we perceive or experience this construct? This is where we encounter the debate about “qualia” (subjective qualitative experiences), like how to report scientifically on what it’s like to experience the color red, and about whether we could ever know if an artificially intelligent robot or realistic zombie were consciously self-aware (Emmons and Emmons, 2012: 68-69). People who seem to be communicating with “alien intelligences” may well wonder if the aliens are conscious like us, robotic artificial intelligence, or some high-tech impression of intelligence projected onto our brains.

Now we have it. If laboratory scientists (neuroscientists, physicists etc.) cannot even find “normal” consciousness in an “objective” fashion, how could they possibly observe “paranormal” consciousness that allegedly shifts its awareness beyond the body and beyond death? Here’s where an anthropological/sociological frame comes in handy.

We anthropologists and sociologists are famous for collecting not only behavioral observations but also subjective, experiential reports from human beings. Ethnographic interviews are data and should not be called merely “anecdotal evidence.” This does not mean that we consider all such data to be perfect matches with the physical world. It goes without saying that we are aware of methodological issues such as interviewer bias and social-desirability response (subjects telling the interviewer what they think she wants to hear).

However, given the fact that consciousness is so difficult (impossible?) to observe in an “objective” laboratory setting, this means that social and behavioral scientists should be essential members of any research team interested in investigating consciousness, paranormal or not. There still remains the fascinating issue of how to handle subjective reports, especially ones involving paranormal consciousness. More on this shortly.

There is still more to say about why the consciousness problem is important in general. This might appear to be so obvious that it hardly needs to be said. Remember, however, that behaviorists like Watson once said there could be no such thing as consciousness. As human beings (rather than as “objective” scientists) we are unlikely to see it that way (use that “frame”). In view of Greeley’s (1991) finding that “the paranormal is normal,” it is also human to be curious about paranormal consciousness beyond the living brain, including consciousness elsewhere in the universe. It may not bring us grant money, but we have a vested interest in the subject matter.

Multiple Methods for the Mysterious

Stereotypically a scientist wears a white coat and uses experimental methods in a laboratory. Science is much more than that of course, but lab science can be useful in studying paranormal consciousness. Partly in order to be taken seriously as a science, parapsychology has done lab research especially since J.B. Rhine (1940) and his psi research at Duke. Perhaps the best example of such research today is that of Dean Radin on precognition (2006) at IONS. Psychologist Darryl Bem (2011) has especially gotten the attention of the scientific mainstream with his similar recent lab studies of precognition at Cornell.

Of course, some psi phenomena seem unlikely to be amenable to experimental lab methods, partly because they are infrequent and spontaneous (Louisa Rhine, 1978), and partly because the lab setting is so artificial. Therefore, it is remarkable that Gary Schwartz (2002) was as successful as he was in testing spirit mediums in a lab setting with increasingly tightened protocols. One might expect the lab to “kill the phenomenon.”

Perhaps next closest to the lab science ideal would be the parapsychological method of case investigations in which allegedly haunted houses, for example, are tested with a battery of scientific instruments to detect electromagnetic fields, temperature changes, and physical effects on sound-recording devices (Emmons and Emmons, 2012: 109-112), in addition to collecting reports of events observed by experiencers of course. There are controversies associated with the case study method partly because groups calling themselves “paranormal investigators” or “ghost hunters” are sometimes accused of playing at science, trying to legitimate their activities by the use (or misuse) of technological devices. Also, some investigations incorporate the impressions of psychics in their data gathering, the appropriateness of which is debated within such groups themselves.

Next, we should consider behavioral and social scientific methods that are sometimes incorporated within the case method. For example, someone like William Roll (1972) investigating poltergeist cases would want to test the psychological profiles of persons living in the house to see who might be a poltergeist focus. There is also one line of research that looks for psychological correlates of beliefs and experiences (Brown, 1997; Ring, 1992; McClenon, 2002).

Anthropologists and to a lesser extent sociologists use the ethnographic methods of field observation and unstructured or semi structured interviewing. These are appropriate for virtually any type of cultural inquiry, including studies of anomalous experiences. Field observation with extensive participation by the researcher runs the risk of becoming labeled “going native” and becomes especially controversial when the researcher experiences paranormal or spiritual phenomena herself (Edith Turner, 1996).

Sociologists are especially likely to use survey research to assess levels of belief and experience in the general population (Emmons and Sobal, 1981a, 1981b). Surveys are not used very much to collect descriptions of experiences, but sometimes open-ended questions about experiences can be added to surveys (Emmons, 1982). This is a good way to gather uncommon experiences and to gauge their frequency in the population at the same time.

All of the research methods above have their advantages and disadvantages. When I teach sociological methods, I like to put it like this: what are the potential consequences of using this method, or of asking a question this way? I avoid framing the issue in terms of what are right and wrong methods. The beauty of using multiple methods is that seeing a research question from different angles helps to create a better overall understanding.

Sometimes multiple methodologies serve as a validity check. For example, when Penelope Emmons and I (2003, 2019) interviewed spirit mediums in Lily Dale, NY, we were often able to check what they said about their own work against our observations of their actual behavior in public message services.

Especially when dealing with allegedly paranormal phenomena, in which there are serious questions about the validity of the phenomena in general, beyond just the validity of individual claims, it is very helpful to have multiple methodologies. Just how multiple anthropological/sociological methods can be especially useful in studying mysterious phenomena (that many claim are not even susceptible to scientific inquiry) is the subject of the next section in which I provide examples from my own research.

Mysterious Examples

The first thing I have to say about my approach to studying mysterious consciousness is that I have never accepted the boundaries set up by normal science. By “normal science” I mean the social control system in mainstream science (Emmons, 1997: 103-116), not the ideal ethos in science that stresses open inquiry. There are tacit assumptions in normal science that you are probably not going to get grant money or academic tenure if you study the paranormal, or other things that are not currently approved of, like chaos theory in math and physics a few decades ago.

My motivation is to follow my curiosity wherever it leads. My first “paranormal” project was *Chinese Ghosts and ESP: A Study of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences* (1982 and 2017, *Chinese Ghosts Revisited*). I had the opportunity to live in Hong Kong for seven months on sabbatical and to conduct surveys, questionnaires, depth interviews, and even a couple of brief investigations of hauntings. Some of this research was “normal” in that I compared Gallup Poll data in the U.S. with my survey and questionnaire data in Hong Kong to test cross-culturally some sociological questions about the social correlates of paranormal beliefs.

However, I didn’t want to stop at that. I was also curious whether people in Chinese culture had experiences of ghosts and other psi phenomena in ways that fit Western experiences and parapsychological theory. Sociologists are not supposed to truth test people’s paranormal experiences or try to understand them in terms of psychic or spiritual perspectives. These things should be bracketed in order to avoid bridging the chasm between science and ... views that shall not be named. To me any inquiry based on evidence is science.

Well now, my results showed that in spite of certain cultural overlays, like ancestor worship elements, Chinese basically had the same kinds of apparitions (ghost experiences) that people do in the West, supporting an experiential source rather than a cultural source theory of paranormal/spiritual experiences (McClenon, 2002; Hufford, 1982). Nevertheless, how could I know that the experiences people reported to me were genuine, valid, not hoaxed? After all, I investigated very few of my 176 first-hand ghost reports in detail like a proper parapsychologist.

Pay attention now. Here's the real methodological contribution. Instead of spending all my time and money investigating a few cases in depth, I looked for patterns in the data. Fortunately, it has been my broad-based experience that very few people hoax paranormal claims, especially when you initiate the inquiry yourself as a researcher. Most people are reluctant to report anomalies including UFOs (Emmons, 1997: 87-94), mostly due to fear of ridicule. In the case of Hong Kong Chinese, they are afraid to talk about ghosts because they are so unlucky, even dangerous (they can kill you, seduce you, beat you at ma jong).

Consequently, even if there are a few outlier cases that are invalid due to hoax or misperception by the witness, the general patterns that emerge in a large number of cases should tell you something valid. In the case of my 176 ghost reports in Hong Kong the remarkable thing is that they contradicted cultural expectation. In only one or two cases was there a report of a physical effect from the ghost, such as being pushed by it (as one person claimed). By contrast, Chinese ghost stories, folklore, and rumor (as opposed to first-hand accounts), very commonly contain physical effects. Physical effects are standard or expected in the culture.

To generalize this point, in many (all?) studies of the paranormal, we cannot measure directly in any objective way the actual mechanism of the alleged phenomenon (like a causal force involved in psychokinesis, or the spirit involved in a spirit medium's communication, or how UFOs manage right-angle turns without decelerating). If we could it would presumably no longer be "paranormal". However, what we can do is collect reports (and in some cases observe the events ourselves) and see if they contain patterns that are consistent with some theory. The main parapsychological theory in the case of ghosts is that they are some kind of mental, nonphysical psi experience. Physical effects in hauntings are (usually) a separate phenomenon from the apparitions (ghosts). My Chinese cases support this theory.

There's more. My Chinese ghosts were also similar to ones reported in the West in other ways: containing abnormal features of perception, like missing parts of the body, typically less important parts, like the feet or legs; and feelings of cold. Probably most important is the significant number of evidential cases (29% in my study), i.e. including either paranormal information or collective apparitions (multiple-witness cases).

Think about the consequences of “looking for patterns in the data” instead of concentrating mightily on one or a few cases in depth. First of all, it gives an opportunity to generalize about an “ideal type” of experience, establishing general principles. The intensive case method in parapsychology is also useful, especially to help establish validity in a case. Perhaps the most important point, however, is that looking for one irrefutable case, let’s say a star spirit medium like Mrs. Leonard, or a UFO landing on the White House lawn, implies that the phenomenon is in principle not considered possible in normal science.

Looking for one spectacular case may help crack this barrier, but it may also be that no one case will ever change the paradigm for a scientific establishment that denies its possibility. In real-life cases of apparitions or spirit mediumship outside a controlled lab setting there is also a lingering possibility that there may be other uncontrolled factors, like clever fraud, that account for them in a “normal” way. Looking at a large number of cases, on the other hand, does not stand or fall on the validity of one particular case.

This applies in the case of UFO research (Emmons, 1997) as much as in parapsychology. Although depth analysis of single experiencer reports is useful, we should also proceed with looking for patterns in a large number of reports, going on the tentative assumption that they are mostly genuine, nonhoaxed experiences that can tell us something.

Before a closer look at UFOs, there is another strong methodological point to be made about Chinese Ghosts. It’s the obvious one that it was a cross-cultural study. The greatest value in anthropology is its multicultural perspective, challenging an ethnocentric view of the world. Especially in the case of paranormal phenomena, it is quite enlightening to discover that similar experiences appear in all cultures. This makes less convincing the argument that people who have anomalous experiences are just imagining things that their culture, including pop culture, presents to them. In other words, ghost experiences (apparitions) are very similar across societies in spite of big differences in cultural expectations about ghosts.

In *Chinese Ghosts* I focused on experiencers, but in *At the Threshold: UFOs, Science and the New Age* I focused on researchers. Why the difference in design? It was because I had become more interested in the anthropology/ sociology of science. Clearly a holistic view of the UFO phenomenon must include how knowledge claims about UFOs are treated by normal science, which has mostly involved denying not their possibility but the fact that aliens (or whatever they are) have actually been here.

This is a little bit different from Watson declaring that there can be no such thing as consciousness. However, given the large number of reliable UFO reports by reliable witnesses, it is almost as bizarre. Without a sociology/anthropology of science approach it is difficult to understand why surveys of scientists (including astronomers) find that most of them think that UFOs are worth studying or are real (Emmons, 1997: 44), and yet there is virtually no public grant money to study this taboo subject. The research for the 1997 book, including the literature review, helped clarify how the institution of normal science operates, something that every researcher into the paranormal needs to know about. It's more about social structures than it is about the psychology of individual researchers or their attitudes.

Although I did not set out to gather UFO experiences, my methodologies of attending UFO conferences and interviewing ufologists put me in contact with many experiencers. Some of these were people who knew I was doing the research and just wanted to tell me their stories (including academic colleagues), and sometimes my informants themselves (the UFO researchers) related their personal experiences.

One lesson here again is that a holistic approach to any subject makes a lot of sense. Even though my focus was on researchers, the complete social system includes also experiencers and their communities, the UFO research community, and the institutions of academe, government and media. I had to incorporate other methods beyond my ethnographic field methods to deal with these, including content analysis of communications-media treatments of the subject.

Another methodological lesson from my UFO study was the importance of experience. In fact, a central part of the UFO debate has to do with methodologies for interpreting the reports of UFO experiencers, especially alleged abductees (Emmons, 1997: 161-185). If their experiences are written off as invalid, hoaxed or "merely anecdotal," then we are missing out on the major source of insights into the UFO phenomenon. Need I repeat that this point applies to all research on paranormal/spiritual experiences? And even if we are dubious about many experiencer reports, what can we learn about the phenomenon by looking for patterns in the data? When they frequently contain specific details that have not been reported publically this is especially significant.

Experience is also important in another way. I discovered that having had their own apparent UFO experience was the main motivation that UFO experiencers had for daring to become a ufologist. 56% thought that they had had or might have had a UFO experience, and 16% said that they were or might have been abducted (Emmons, 1997: 50-51), figures much higher than for the general population.

By the time my wife Penelope and I wrote *Guide by Spirit: A Journey into the Mind of the Medium* (2003, 2019), we had both been having experiences with spirit mediumship, I for ten years, and she since age 3. It would have made an even better team if we could have collaborated with a strong skeptic to provide another take on the evidence. In the absence of that, we tried to provide several different take on the evidence. In the absence of that, we tried to provide several different frames on the subject (social/behavioral science, scientific debunking, parapsychological, and different varieties of spiritual) (Emmons and Emmons, 2003: 269-284).

In this study there are two major, related issues. First of all, when trying to figure out what spirit mediums are actually doing, why not ask them? What a concept. Most research on spirit mediums in the past has involved testing them to see if they have evidential information, whether they might be frauds, and whether what they are doing might be a form of ESP (telepathy, clairvoyance), superESP, or some other type of psi.

There is nothing wrong with this, except that it leaves out a phenomenological approach (in the sense of studying how people experience the phenomenon). There is a long history of medium-testing research from the time of the founding of the Society for Psychical Research in London in 1882, and for good reason because of the fraudulent element in American Spiritualism (which Spiritualist members of the SPR were interested in eliminating as well).

Gary Schwartz's (2002) laboratory studies of spirit mediums fall mostly but not entirely into this tradition of medium testing. In 2008 as I was about to give a talk to the Society for Scientific Exploration on "Objective and Phenomenological Methods in Consciousness Studies," I was happy to see that members of Schwartz's research team in Tucson had just published an article on phenomenological methods (Rock et al., 2008) in which spirit mediums were asked to reflect on their experiences. Now Julie Beischel (2019) is combining her neurologically based laboratory studies of spirit mediums at the Windbridge Research Center with some subjective methods as well.

To be sure our spirit medium interviewees may have been "presenting self" and putting a positive spin on their experiences for us. However, they also revealed very interesting things, such as how they often doubted that what they were doing was genuine and looked for "confirmations" from their clients that the information was accurate. In fact 80% of the mediums we interviewed said that confirmations were important to them (Emmons and Emmons, 2003: 260). This is not surprising considering how most of them had experienced a lot of negative, skeptical attitudes about mediumship from people in their communities. This is the United States, not China, where I found that people typically did not doubt that spirit mediumship could be done, just whether a particular medium was competent and bringing in the right spirit.

The methodology of interviewing mediums about how they experience and understand what they are doing depends on a frame that mediumship may be “valid”. We entertained that frame as if it were true, and then looked at the data mostly from that perspective. Testing mediums is based on the frame that it is very possibly not valid and looks at the data mainly from that perspective.

A second, related methodological issue has to do with whether researchers should examine their own experiences. According to the myth of objectivity, researchers should and can keep the object of their study at arm’s length. To jump into the phenomenon itself risks “going native” (the anthropological term for becoming completely swallowed up in a culture when doing participant observation) and losing one’s objectivity.

By contrast I claim that objectivity is an ideology to justify or legitimate the work of scientists who deny their own interests. In social science this presumes the ability to study “the other” without bias. Although there are surely degrees and variations of biases about one’s subjects in social science, it is unrealistic to expect researchers to have no attitudes, positive or negative, about subjects.

In *Guided by Spirit* Penelope was already a spirit medium, and I was going through a socialization process of becoming one. This is called “participatory science,” something like Dr. Jekyll taking the potion and becoming Mr. Hyde. Although I understand the dangers (effects) of becoming heavily involved in the phenomenon, I also think that I was able to learn many things as an apprentice spirit medium that I would not have understood nearly as well otherwise. One is the attendant psychological states involved in doing spirit mediumship. When an interviewee said, “It felt green,” I had a better idea what this synesthesia was like than I would have had without trying mediumship myself. I could also understand the self-doubts that mediums have when they stand up to do platform mediumship.

Both in *Guided by Spirit* (2003, 2019) and in our book *Science and Spirit* (2012), Penelope and I discuss our experiences with several different phenomena, including not just spirit mediumship but also ESP, synchronicities, and hauntings, for example. We have become part of our data. I realize that by the old standards of “objectivity” we have violated taboos by investigating the reality status of paranormal/spiritual phenomena (instead of just bracketing them as things that allegedly happen to other people), by taking seriously the subjective paranormal experiences of our informants, and by reflecting on apparently paranormal experiences we have had ourselves.

It seems to me that these experiential methodologies: participatory science, collecting phenomenological reports from interviewees, and looking for patterns in a large number of such cases, are useful additions to a holistic set of methodologies for the mysterious. Although I knew that there were other researchers who did some of the same things, it has been only in the last few years that I have come to realize that there is something of an “experience movement” going on in anthropology and (to a lesser extent) sociology and other disciplines, especially in the United Kingdom.

The Experience Movement

The first time this hit me was in 2011 when I was asked to give a keynote address to “Exploring the Extraordinary” in York, England. In 2008 I had interviewed scholars in the UK for our study *Science and Spirit*, including people like Hannah Gilbert and Madeleine Castro in the Anomalous Experiences Research Unit (AERU) in the graduate program in Sociology at the University of York.

By 2011 there I was about to give a keynote address, and I had decided to give a methodology talk for the first time in my life. It was about the importance of experience in research. In addition to the points about studying the experiences of spirit mediums and about UFO researchers having had their own experiences, as I mentioned above here, I also had a reference to James McClenon’s finding (1984: 162) that there was a much higher correlation in a survey of elite scientists between whether they had had their own paranormal experience and whether they accepted the existence of ESP, than between their familiarity with the actual research on ESP and whether they accepted ESP (Emmons and Emmons, 2012: 94). In other words, even scientists are more convinced by their own experience than by other people’s research, especially when it comes to the paranormal.

Before I got up to give my talk, the presenters before me all said things that fit right into my theme, as if it had been planned. I couldn’t believe it. Later I heard from a couple of presenters that they had gotten “all fired up” by my talk. I felt the same way about theirs. One example was Sara MacKian, whose book *Everyday Spirituality* (2012) discusses how academe has had so much trouble making sense of the New Age movement. Having researched the same subject myself from about 2004-2007 (see my documentary film “Roll Your Own Religion: New Spirituality in North America,” 2010), I saw that she also realized that the way to understand people’s new spirituality was to ask them about their own experiences and how they made sense of their own lives through their daily practices.

There appears to be a recent movement of 20-somethings and 30-somethings (and some of us older folks) in the UK (and elsewhere) in anthropology (and other disciplines) who are involved in a new anthropology (etc.) of experience in the study of paranormal and alternative spiritual phenomena. There is a lot of networking going on among participants in groups like “Exploring the Extraordinary” and in publications and events associated with the journal *Paranthropology*. And I can see that they have been inspired by a number of established anthropologists and others.

Without implying premature closure on these issues, I see an “experience movement” with the following interrelated themes: focusing on the experiences of research subjects, an experiential source theory that recognizes similarities in human experience, participatory science (researchers partaking in experiences), postulating a oneness in nature (the universe), and combining research methodologies and disciplines (sometimes called “consilience”). Here are some examples.

Edith Turner (1992, 1996, 2006) was a pioneer in the study of healing ritual, as she said, applying Victor Turner’s “anthropology of experience.” Her website at the University of Virginia saw this approach reflected in “narratology, humanistic anthropology, and the anthropology of consciousness.” She not only emphasized the experiences of her research subjects but also engaged in participatory science in the field, e.g. in Zambia (1992) and in North Alaska (1996).

Tanya Lührman, anthropologist at Stanford, has written about subjective, phenomenological studies (2006; Cassaniti and Lührman, 2012). Ann Taves, Religious Studies at UC Santa Barbara, talks about reclaiming religious experience as a central concept and using a multidisciplinary approach, including neuroscience, to examine how people attribute meaning to their experiences (2010).

Above I referred to Hufford (1982) and McClenon (2002) as proponents of experiential source theory. In a similar way Susan Greenwood discusses “magical consciousness” as a kind of expanded awareness that is one aspect of being human rather than something specific to the social-cultural system (2005, 2010).

I have pointed out that my research with spirit mediumship (Emmons and Emmons, 2003; Luke, 2012: 196) involved participatory science. Some people would probably say, “He was supposed to study spirit mediums, not become one.” I was however acting in the spirit of anthropologist Fiona Bowie’s (2012: 105) “cognitive, empathic engagement” in which “the ethnographer adopts the categories of his or her informants, and uses this knowledge to interpret the world by means of these categories.”

Another anthropologist who practices narrative anthropology and has engaged in participatory science is Paul Stoller (2004; Stoller and Olkes, 1987). He studied shamanistic healing in West Africa, partly as an apprentice, and applied what he learned to healing himself later on.

One consequence of encountering alternate beliefs and experiences of the mysterious has been a search for some kind of oneness in theory if not also in the universe. Jack Hunter (2012: 24-27), for example, is looking for a way of collapsing the so-called supernatural and the mechanistic into an overarching view, for example with quantum physics, but he also recognizes that “different cultures across the globe have developed perfectly workable systems for the interpretation and explanation of the paranormal as an integral aspect of reality.”

Jeffrey Kripal (Religious Studies, Rice U.) likes to see consciousness and the material universe as one and writes about bridging the sacred and the scientific. I am not surprised that he focused on Jacques Vallee in his discussion of UFOs (Kripal, 2010: 142-197), because Vallee has pointed out apparently imaginal or spiritual aspects of the UFO phenomenon that call into question whether it is entirely something material (cf. also Emmons, 1997: 94-95, 208-209). Thomas Bullard (2010), a folklorist, also wonders about the ontological status of alien abductions, showing similarities to fairy lore and shamanic traditions, but also saying that there seems to be more than just a social-psychological or imaginary explanation for such experiences.

If mysterious consciousness is not just spiritual and not just material, it would make sense to take a holistic, interdisciplinary approach. Social anthropologist Geoffrey Samuel’s (2006, 2012) studies of consciousness and the body in Tibetan Buddhism would fit such a crossdisciplinary perspective. So would Ann Taves’ (2010) work as mentioned above. Laberge (1985: 281) and Waggoner (2009: 16) advocate studying lucid dreams by correlating the feedback of the dreamers (which can happen when you are aware you are dreaming) with simultaneous neuroscientific lab observations (Emmons and Emmons, 2012: 87-88).

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS:

At Gettysburg College I tell my students that methods is the core of sociology. It makes it a science instead of just an exercise in social philosophy. However, sociological methods are also entwined with theory. What are the theoretical implications of “methodologies for the mysterious?”

If we agree that we need a holistic view of mysterious consciousness, then we need many levels of theory and an interdisciplinary approach. You might think that methods for the mysterious would connect us just to theories in parapsychology, quantum physics, and spirit cosmology. This won't do, however, because we still need to test for mundane explanations, including hoax, psychological misperception and delusion, social influence etc.

Moreover, I wouldn't like to leave out theories of the cultural context in which mysterious events allegedly occur. For example, I need to discuss ancestor worship and Chinese family, among other things, to contextualize Chinese ghost and spirit medium experiences.

All levels of analysis are still relevant. Penelope, who is not a social scientist exactly (a social worker, therapist, and medium), told me that we needed a section called "So What?" in *Guided by Spirit* (2003: 143-177). Right she was, and in that section we discussed what mediums think about the purposes of their work, including guidance, healing, spiritual development, serving spirit and society, practical magic, and entertainment. An anthropologist could frame those in terms of both social functions and social conflict (there are disagreements among mediums about whether some of these are appropriate, at least in a public setting).

If we focus on the mysterious aspects of paranormal consciousness, evidential aspects that seem not to be explained by normal theories (physical, psychological, and social), there is momentum for using some version of quantum physics as an explanation. The principle in quantum physics of nonlocality (things being mysteriously connected at a distance) sounds very appealing as a model for minds connected at a distance, for example, in telepathy or spirit mediumship. This is especially the case since parapsychologists have failed to find any type of extrasensory mechanism of communication (transfer of information through space-time) in ESP.

Stephen Braude, philosophy professor, is an example of someone who disagrees with this. He told me in an interview (Emmons and Emmons 2012: 157) that he considered the emphasis on quantum physics in parapsychology a misguided reductionist tendency to see everything in terms of physics and laboratory methodology based on excessive attachment to its prestige. At any rate, students of the paranormal are perplexed about how to apply quantum physics to consciousness.

Interestingly physicists in search of a theory of everything also have problems knowing how to incorporate consciousness in quantum theory. Quantum theory may imply that the physical universe needs consciousness as much as consciousness needs the physical universe (for a great explanation of this from a mostly normal-science perspective, cf. Rosenblum and Kuttner, 2011: 203-269).

At the same time physicists often object that parapsychologists are misapplying quantum physics. According to Rosenblum and Kuttner (2011: 252), “A touchstone test for misuse is the presentation of these ideas implying that they are derived from quantum physics rather than merely analogies suggested by it.” I should think that most paranthropologists and parapsychologists could live with that. In any case, we are largely in a position of looking for cases that are consistent with some kind of quantum theory of nonlocality, because we really can’t explain the mechanism for knowing information at a distance, as in remote viewing or spirit mediumship. What we are doing is testing for all conceivable mundane explanations, and things that pass through this filter are considered paranormal, or maybe normal if we can use the frame of quantum physics. This is the great appeal, converting the paranormal to normal by expanding our knowledge of physical laws.

Harkening back to our methods again, even if we can establish that a communication is “paranormal”, as in the case of spirit mediumship, how can we know whether the information is being shared nonlocally between a brain and another place (clairvoyance or remote viewing), as opposed to between a brain (living consciousness) and another consciousness (living or dead)? Here we get clues from the spirit medium, who may say, as Penelope does sometimes, that she is sure she is communicating with a spirit. We may be skeptical about her certainty, but such ethnographic data is worth considering.

I have a friend who is doing research on what life is like “on the other side,” based mainly on messages received by spirit mediums from departed spirits. I had considered a research design like that myself once, but I withered in the face of validity issues. Nevertheless, I am excited to see what he comes up with and if there are interesting “patterns in the data.”

And remember the idea of combining neuroscience with the reports of experiencers, such as having lucid dreamers reflect on their dreams while attached to brain monitoring devices in the lab. What if we did something similar with spirit mediums to see if their brains acted differently in correlation with whether the mediums thought they were getting information psychically (clairvoyantly or telepathically) instead of from a spirit? Research like this is in fact being done now at the Windbridge Research Center by Julie Beischel and others.

If communication with the dead is possible, then we might learn a lot from studies of channeling. See Hastings (1991) for a brilliant overview of the pitfalls and occasional gems resulting from this approach.

There have been other fascinating methodologies employed in the past based on the frame that communication with the spirit world is possible, such as the “cross-correspondences” (Emmons and Emmons, 2012: 127-128), in which dead parapsychologists supposedly did research from the other side by sending complex messages through a group of mediums, no one of whom could know the entire message. These last few suggestions are mysterious variations on the ethnographic interviewing method and are obviously open to debate.

Remembering that the anthropology/sociology of science is another important frame that helps understand the larger phenomenon of how society deals with the paranormal, let me present one instructive example that reveals the kind of thing paranthropologists and parapsychologists are up against. Rosenblum and Kuttner (2011: 254-255) state that they consider the existence of ESP to be unlikely. However, they refer to an article in the New York Times (Carey, 2011) with the title “Journal’s Paper on ESP Expected to Prompt Outrage.” The paper is “Feeling the Future: Experimental Evidence for Anomalous Retroactive Influences on Cognition and Affect” (Bem, 2011).

Rosenblum and Kuttner (2011: 254) acknowledge that Daryl Bem is “a distinguished psychologist and professor at Cornell University” and that the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology is “one of the most respected psychology journals.” The New York Times article discusses criticisms from readers of the preliminary copy of the article, including the idea that such articles should not be published in academic journals because they refer to extraordinary principles that have not been accepted. And of course, one way to prevent these ideas from being accepted is to exclude such articles from scientific journals.

Rosenblum and Kuttner (2011: 254) state that scientists should be open-minded, but some scientists are too open and “have deceived themselves with paraphenomena experiments.” However, they point out that Bem “is an accomplished magician, and therefore less likely to be so deceived.” This line of reasoning suggests that they have spent more time reading debunking articles by people like the magician “The Amazing Randi” than articles by parapsychology researchers like Dean Radin, who has done far more lab research on precognition like Bem’s, but whom Rosenblum and Kuttner make no mention of (nor of any other comparable researchers).

Nonetheless the fact that they mention Bem also suggests that they and other mainstream scientists have at least paid attention to some psi research (Bem’s) because it has appeared in a mainstream journal (albeit surrounded with controversy). Their approach shows some curiosity, framed safely enough not to get them kicked out of the science club. They also hasten to add that “as yet, evidence for the existence of paraphenomena strong enough to convince skeptics does not exist.”

However, in *Science and Spirit* (Emmons and Emmons, 2012: 30-31) I discuss findings reported in Meyer (2007: 229-230) of a “survey of academics in which 55% in the natural sciences, 66% in social sciences (excluding psychology), and 77% in arts/humanities/education thought that ESP had already been established or was likely.” By contrast only 34% in psychology thought so, perhaps because psychology would be most threatened by a psi paradigm. Moreover, 34% of the psychologists thought that ESP was “impossible” in contrast to only 2% of the rest of the sample thinking so. In other words, there is some defense against new paradigms, but not as much among individual scientists as in the ideology of certain disciplines, an ideology more likely to be adhered to when scientists make public statements as opposed to when they reply to anonymous surveys.

Rosenblum and Kuttner (2011: 254-255) go on to say, “But if---if!---any such phenomenon were convincingly demonstrated, demonstrated to initially skeptical scientists (and magicians), we would know where to start looking for an explanation: Einstein’s ‘spooky actions’ [action at a distance, nonlocality in quantum physics].... Demonstrated existence of quantum phenomena expands the scale of what is conceivable....The extreme unlikelihood of paraphenomena within present physical theory means that any confirmation, no matter how weak an effect, would force a radical change in our worldview.”

To researchers who have seen a great deal of evidence for the “paranormal”, it ought to occur to them how shaky the defense of the old paradigm is. In fact, paranormal phenomena do conform to quantum expectations, and quantum physics has, ironically, already been mainstream physics for many decades. There also may be a spirited defense of the anti-paranormal paradigm, as demonstrated in the New York Times article referred to above. However, there is widespread acceptance of the new paradigm in the general culture. Remember, “The paranormal is normal” (Greeley, 1991). Also see Jeffrey Kripal’s analysis (*Mutants and Mystics*, 2011) of wondrous elements in popular culture.

THE UFO MYSTERY

How Much of a Mystery?

By definition UFOs are a mystery: “**Unidentified** Flying Objects” or UAP (“**Unidentified** Aerial Phenomena”). That means that they are not identified as something known or “normal”, even if they are allegedly seen up close in great detail. The concepts of “alien” and “ET” (extraterrestrial) are also considered not normal. However, it is also not clear that any or all observed “aliens” are extraterrestrial.

People who have experienced such objects (UFOs) or intelligent beings (NHI, Non-Human Intelligence) often consider them to be quite real, although they fear ridicule from others for saying so. Yet various opinion polls show that 30 to 50 percent of Americans believe in UFOs, and nearly 75 percent believe in extraterrestrial life (Pasulka, 2019: 6-7).

Ironically, although UFOs and NHIs are taboo in “normal” (mainstream) science, the consensus in astronomy is that planets like earth that are suitable for the evolution of intelligent life are countless. I discussed the Drake equation (about the likelihood of other planets having life) and astronomers’ agreement that UFOs were worth studying, even though they themselves did not study them, in my book *At the Threshold* (Emmons, 1997). By now the estimate is that there could be as many as forty billion inhabitable planets just in our own galaxy (Overbye, 2013). In other words, if some UFOs and NHIs are extraterrestrial it would not be a mystery how they could exist, although we might not understand how they got to Earth. It is increasingly untenable and unscientific to deny the possibility of ET visitation.

In fact physicist Enrico Fermi and others (Emmons, 1997: 43-44) have calculated that hi-tech ETs in our galaxy should have been able to colonize it all in short leaps by now, so why aren’t they here (the Fermi Paradox)? This of course ignores the abundant evidence, including physical evidence, that strange things associated with advanced technology, possibly extraterrestrial, are indeed here.

Physicist Kip Thorne has speculated that worm holes and time machines could account for interstellar travel from great distances without the necessity of traveling faster than the speed of light (Emmons, 1997: 127-131). There have also been speculations about the possibility of traveling faster than the speed of light, and scientific estimates of the amount of energy required to accomplish faster-than-light travel have declined in recent years (Christian, 2018). This is a good lesson in the danger of making ultimate pronouncements in physics, like declaring that interstellar distances make contact impossible, or that nothing can go faster than the speed of light.

I have pointed out before (Emmons, 1997), and I say it again, that our current state of knowledge argues powerfully for the need to designate public funds for the study of UFO experiences. However, the subject is not acceptable in “normal science” (mainstream science that labels topics and researchers normal or deviant), due to coverup actions by the government and military since the 1940s, the rigidity of academic paradigms, and the nature of mass media coverage (Emmons, 1997: 13-40).

It is clear that the U.S. government and military have been studying them secretly since the 1940s. In spite of the academic taboo against studying UFOs and NHIs, some astronomers are willing to consider the subject publicly. This would include Abraham (Avi) Loeb, Prof. of Science at Harvard University, who suggests that the interstellar space object Oumuamua (“scout” in Hawaiian) could be “debris from an advanced technological equipment,” moving so fast that it must have come from another star system (Selk, 2019).

What Do We Know?

In spite of the difficulty in getting research funds for the study of UFOs and NHI, there has been a great deal written on the subject, much of it popular and sensational. However, in my review of the literature in the 1990s, I learned not to dismiss anything out of hand, and not to accept anything at face value. These are three good nonsensational overviews of the field: *At the Threshold: UFOs, Science and the New Age* (Emmons, 1997), *Beyond UFOs: The Science of Consciousness and Contact with Non-Human Intelligence, Vol. I* (Hernandez et al., 2018), and *The Science of the Soul, The Afterlife and the Shift* (Swanson, 2018; esp. 427-483).

Several years ago, I attended a small, high-level conference on consciousness, at which a well-respected scholar, sympathetic to the study of UFOs, presented the thesis that there might not be anything physically real about UFOs because all of the best UFO cases end up having serious flaws in them. Although the idea was fascinating and well argued, I think that it’s the wrong approach. In fact, it is similar to the tactic of unsympathetic UFO debunkers: look for alternative explanations for all reports; except that debunkers typically look for vulnerable cases to ridicule rather than stronger cases.

At the same conference another sympathetic scholar asked me if I thought that UFOs were physically real or a manifestation of paranormal consciousness (or psi). I replied that they were both. In other words, both “nuts and bolts” and “New Age” (or spiritual, subjective) approaches are valid. More on this later.

Back to the point about frustration over looking for the perfect, flawless report. As I pointed out earlier in this chapter, when dealing with mysteries like UFO and ghost experiences, subjects for apparently “ironic science,” since we can’t yet explain them fully and directly, the best strategy is to take people’s experiences seriously and to look for patterns in the data.

There are many things that can go wrong in a single report: hoaxing or fabrication (fortunately my experience is that this is rare in such reports, because most people avoid reporting “deviant” experiences), misidentification or misinterpretation, distorted memory, and deception (on the part of NHI or the government), to name the main ones. However, when thousands of reports are accumulated (Hernandez et al, 2018), the signal begins to emerge from the noise. Add to this the confirmations supplied by multiple witness reports (as in the case of collective apparitions, but with UFOs there may be many more witnesses), and by multiple types of evidence: witness reports, radar, photographic recording, landing traces. People who are super-skeptical that there is serious UFO evidence should look at studies of landing traces, radiation effects and expert pilot reports (Emmons, 1997: 145-148).

As I pointed out earlier, however, reading the literature about anomalous phenomena is far less convincing than having one’s own experience. The main reason for the 91 ufologists in my study (Emmons, 1997: 50-51) daring to study UFOs was having had their own experience. And McClenon’s (1984) study of elite scientists found that having had one’s own zinger ESP experience was an important predictor of their thinking that ESP had been established scientifically; knowing the ESP literature was not. When subjects fall within the accepted paradigms, they have legitimacy, and we don’t have to make excuses for studying them. And we trust the experts when they present their findings.

For those of us who dare to study UFOs, what can we say that we know? Nothing for sure, but that is true of all science. Science is (should be) an open-ended search for better understanding. I think that the prime generality that we should support is that the UFO and NHI data suggest that highly advanced technology is involved.

Herman Oberth, the father of modern rocketry, said over 50 years ago that UFOs “are flying by means of artificial fields of gravity ... that would explain their sudden change of direction ... converting gravity into useable energy” (Swanson, 2018: 437). There have been persistent reports of UFOs stopping on a dime, turning at a right-angle without stopping, disappearing (or cloaking), accelerating at speeds that would crush a human pilot, beaming up things on rays of light, and other science fiction tricks. Experiencers sometimes find that the interior of a craft appears to be far larger than would be possible judging from the exterior dimensions. There is missing time. And communication with experiencers is often telepathic, or one hears internal directions like, “You have nothing to say about that!” (direct report to me by an experiencer who is also a ufologist).

One immediate concern might be that at least some of the NHI in the contact situation might be inclined to a malevolent use of such powers. A FREE study of 1534 people reporting contact with NHIs found only 9% considering them malevolent (Hernandez et al, 2018: 38). This is a relief, but are they disguising their malevolence or are we misinterpreting their actions?

This prime generalization, that UFOs and NHI are powered by highly advanced technology raises interesting questions. What do they know that we don't? Presumably they know how to manipulate nature, the laws of physics, far better. But they may have mastered artificial intelligence (AI) to the point that their biological selves may not appear or travel at all. In fact, AI may have evolved to the point that biological entities are no longer needed, or no longer even exist. Then all of the questions about consciousness raised earlier in this chapter arise. The NHI beings encountered could be realistic zombies without consciousness (Emmons and Emmons, 2012: 68-69). This could reduce our capacity to empathize with them, or to "think like a robot."

What Do They Want?

Since the 1990s I have heard ufologists and others speculate on the motives of NHI associated with UFOs. "Why would they want to visit us? What could we backward beings have to offer?" This presupposes for one thing that they are extraterrestrial, rather than coexisting either in this three-dimensional space (four-dimensional including time) or in a larger space that includes dimensions we are unaware of.

The best way to illustrate the extradimensional possibility is with Edwin Abbot's (1884) *Flatland* imagery. Imagine that the people (figures) in flatland are two-dimensional and cannot see beyond their own plane, which is like a sheet of paper. Along comes Ms. Sphere, who is three-dimensional. Nobody in Flatland can see her at all, even though she is very close by, until she contacts the plane of Flatland. At first she appears as a point (which has really no dimensions, and in fact she still couldn't be seen). As she passes through Flatland at an angle, she then appears as a tiny but growing circle, until she reaches the halfway point of her body, and then she appears as an ever-smaller circle, until she passes all the way through and becomes invisible, even when just an infinitesimally small distance away from Flatland.

Savvy UFO pilots who have mastered the ten or eleven dimensions that some theoretical physicists have postulated might know how to evade detection by humans who can perceive only three spatial dimensions. One close friend of mine, who I guarantee is not a hoaxer, describes a UFO experience she had at the age of 7 or 8. Her father pulled the car they were riding in over to the side of the road to see what a crowd of dozens of people were looking at.

There was a double-saucer shaped craft suspended in the air about 80 feet away, about 15 feet off the ground. It was at dusk, and they could clearly see that it was about 70 feet in diameter, silver metallic, with a row of bright lights around the center. After some time it lifted up to about an elevation of 25 feet, then moved off a bit farther and stayed there a while, then took off at high speed and was gone. My friend, who had been a spirit medium since age 3, asked in her mind, "Where are you from?" The telepathic reply she received was, "We're from right here." This is consistent with the possibility that such craft could be inhabiting a greater than three-dimensional space "right here" without always being visible to humans.

The next day my friend's father called nearby Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (this was in 1953 or 1954) and asked them what it was. They replied that it was a weather balloon! The most amazing part of this story is that her father believed them.

In the late 1990s this same friend was attending a UFO conference with me when she saw many of the "unoccupied" chairs, about fifty of them, filled with what looked like characters from the bar scene in *Star Wars*. She could not believe her eyes and kept rubbing them. Unlike spirit visions she has had, these looked solid rather than translucent or projected. There were many different kinds of beings, and some were short and looked like the grays that some experiencers have described; others were perhaps seven feet tall, although they were seated and it was difficult to tell. A few of them were laughing at what the speaker was saying. She tells this from memory and still finds it difficult to believe.

I have no doubt that my friend had this experience, although neither one of us quite knows what to make of it. I was there and didn't see what she did. If it has some reality status, it might represent the same extradimensional phenomenon referred to above. Imagine Ms. NHI Sphere hovering above a chair at the UFO conference just a millimeter away in an extra dimension, though coexisting in the same basic three dimensions that humans are aware of. She could have viewed the proceedings without detection, except perhaps by an extradimensional clairvoyant like my friend.

Back to the question of why NHI visitors would be interested in us. If they do share the same space rather than traveling from afar, then what we do to the environment would affect them as well. In fact, given the nonlocality principle in quantum physics, by which things at a distance are nonlocally connected, even our actions light years away might have an impact on the rest of the universe.

But let's just deal with the relatively simpler case of our actions impacting our neighbors who can hide from us by inching away in an extra dimension. They might be horrified by human degradation of the environment and by the threat of nuclear disaster. Astronaut Edgar Mitchell (who was also an MIT PhD in aeronautics and astronautics) told D.W. Pasulka (2019: 205-206) about how ETs had interfered with U.S. satellites and rocket launches, especially ones related to nuclear capabilities. Swanson (2018: 438) and others have reported that all Apollo and Gemini flights were followed by UFOs, but Mission Control ordered silence on such information. Russian pilots have had similar experiences. Swanson (2018: 475-477) thinks that photos of large objects that NASA could not explain in 2000 might represent UFOs involved in protecting Earth from potentially dangerous coronal mass ejections (CMEs) from the sun.

Another prominent theory about what aliens want is the abduction genetic/hybrid theory (Emmons, 1997: 207-208). Some major researchers in this area are Budd Hopkins (1987), David Jacobs (1992 and 1999), and Linda Moulton Howe (1991). This theme includes ideas that aliens need our genetic material, and/or that aliens are altering our DNA to create hybrids, possibly to take over our lives and society. Abductions are a huge area of controversy (Emmons, 1997: 166-182). Hypnosis has often been used to uncover repressed memories of abductions. Dr. John Mack of Harvard Medical School justified the technique, saying that "Virtually every abductee...will report that the aliens told them not to remember or forbade them to tell about their experiences," and hypnosis is ideal for "undoing the repression and bringing back into consciousness the forgotten experiences." (Mack, 1993: 205-206). There ensued a debate over the dangers of hypnosis creating false memories, and discussion of how to do hypnosis without creating them.

Even without confabulation due to hypnosis techniques, there have been other questions (Emmons, 1997: 172-182) about whether the aliens might be manipulating the abductees' memories, whether abductions are psychological or physical (or both), and whether some people are fantasy prone or have "encounter-prone personality" (Ring, 1992). One thing that I noticed in Ring's study is that the overwhelming number of both NDE and UFO Experiencers viewed their experiences as highly positive and positive and transformative. As noted above, the FREE study revealed that 67% of the UFO contact experiencers had seen a UFO and had contact with NHI but had never had an abduction. OF the 33% who had an abduction experience, over 70% of these individuals now call themselves Contactees instead of Abductees. Most people who had communicated with NHI found their experiences to be positive. 66% described their experiences as positive, 29% neutral, and 5% negative (Hernandez et al, 2018: 36, 38-40). Only 16% said that they would stop their contact experiences if they could; 9% considered ETs or NHI to be bad/malevolent/evil. 51% thought that NHI contact had changed their life in a highly

positive way, 22% slightly positive, neutral 17%, slightly negative 6%, and highly negative 4%. The FREE study, based on more than 4,000 respondents, was able to conclude that most had increases in prosocial attitudes and spiritual orientations (Hernandez et al, 2018: 41-42), very much like Near-Death and UFO Experiencers in Ring's research (Ring, 1992).

It is difficult to dismiss the persistent reports of medical examination and probing during NHI contact and abductions, but one wonders why a high-tech civilization would need DNA samples, supposing that it would have developed genetic engineering long ago. All of this is caught up in the mystery of what their intentions might be, and whether they are malevolent. "Malevolent" could be very culturally relative, depending on point of view. Interfering with nuclear weaponry could be defined as benevolent, in terms of saving the planet. If a high-tech civilization were malevolent in terms of being bent on the destruction of humans, we would seem not to stand a chance and unlikely to still be here.

Another seemingly benevolent aspect of NHI contact is the reported passing on of technological ideas especially to scientists. Pasulka (2019: 43-44) discusses the alleged "download" of ET information to scientists through inspiration and channeling. One of the ufologists I interviewed (Emmons, 1997: 69), a very successful inventor (if I told you one of his inventions, you could look it up and figure out who it is, a violation of confidentiality) told me that he had been abducted as a child, involving a little blue man and typical abduction examination marks. As an adult he had been guided by "the others" who gave him core principles rather than specific plans, which he developed into excellent inventions.

Transformation: Technological and/or Spiritual?

Some scholars in religious studies and sociology have been very interested in connections between UFOs and religion. The simplest view is just that anomalous aerial sightings (UAP) may seem like the work of the gods, as in popular books by Erich Von Daniken (*Chariots of the Gods*, 1984) or Zecharia Sitchin (1991). Another approach is to see passages in established religious texts like the Christian Bible as historical evidence of UFOs (Downing, 1968).

There have also been sociological studies of UFO cults (or New Religious Movements, NRMs), like the classic *When Prophecy Fails* (Festinger et al, 1956). Some New Age channels have claimed to contact aliens or even extraterrestrials at interstellar distances, as in the case of Barbara Marciniak (1992) allegedly channeling the Pleiadians. I observed Marciniak in person once as she spoke at a public event. In her channeling mode she said, "Don't ask us to be your encyclopedia. Once we tell you something, later we will tell you something else." I wondered if that wasn't a way to avoid being tested (on the part either of the Pleiadians or Marciniak).

When I did my research on ufology in the 1990s, I had little interest in religion and UFOs. Like my UFO researchers themselves, I was more annoyed at the labeling of UFO experiencers as religiously motivated and the conflation of UFO cultists with UFO experiencers. Ufologists hated it when journalists asked them, “Do you believe in UFOs?” They would reply that they were scientists, and that they were interested in evidence, not belief.

At the same time, I realized that experiencers often thought that they were going through some kind of spiritual enlightenment, even if they had no interest in UFO religion per se. Some ufologists also thought that they themselves were going through a transformation, and they saw ETs as facilitators in the process. I called this the New Age (as opposed to the Nuts and Bolts) approach (Emmons, 1997: 68-71). Out of 77 ufologists for whom I had the relevant information 9% had a high sense of mission, and 8% what I considered a moderate sense of mission, meaning that they had been somehow chosen and guided by the UFO phenomenon. All 17% (13 people) thought that they had had a UFO experience. Of the 7 with a high sense of mission, all but one thought that they were abductees. Of the 6 with a moderate sense of mission, one was an abductee and another said “maybe”.

By now I am beginning to see an important pattern emerging in the religious studies field especially, connecting UFOs and NHI loosely to spirituality (rather than to explicit religion). Darryl Caterine (2011) discusses how the Roswell UFO site is part of popular paranormal spiritual seeking in American culture. Anthropologist Susan Lepselter (2016) uses a folklore approach to understanding how Americans process “weird stuff” to make meaning relative to uncanny topics like UFO abductions and government coverups. Jeff Kripal (religious studies) also explores connections between UFOs and popular views of the paranormal (2010; 2012 with Whitley Streiber). D.W. Pasulka (2019), also in religious studies, especially explores how ufologists have a “sense of mission” (to use my phrase).

Pasulka (2019: 2-3) frames UFOs and religion (spirituality, I’d say) in the context of technology. It’s a complex relationship, including “invisibles” (Pasulka, 2019: 17-38) or scientists who are insiders studying UFOs privately, the download of ET-inspired technical knowhow, and the conversion experiences of researchers with a sense of mission who feel chosen to spread an understanding of the phenomenon. What is new for me is that the division between Nuts and Bolts vs. New Age (roughly what is called “subjectivist” by Pasulka, 2019: 187) is diminished. Pasulka (2019: 185-214) elaborates on the case of Rey Hernandez, who was inspired by his own interactions with NHI to co-found the Foundation for Research into Extraterrestrial Encounters (FREE) with astronaut Dr. Edgar Mitchell, Harvard Astrophysicist Dr. Rudy Schild and Mary Rodwell. FREE combines experiencer studies with other scientific approaches.

Some researchers are even considering the possibility that NHIs have made spirituality a science, adding a new dimension to Pasulka's idea of a technological religion. Swanson (2018: 427-428) says that "There is evidence that some ETs work with higher level spirits to carry out projects, to assist in our reincarnation and spiritual evolution." He goes on to say that some ETs claim no longer to need to reincarnate. This goes beyond the common theme that aliens are here to rescue us from earthly calamity and to help our consciousness to evolve.

One ironic byproduct of the role of advancing technology, as Pasulka (2019: 113-116) points out, is that convincing-looking visual evidence is so easy to fake, as her interview with Scott Browne, an expert on faked UFO images, explains. She also gives a sophisticated analysis (Pasulka, 2019: 120-152) of the potential for the unconscious cognitive impact of plainly fictional films, and of the progressive generation of cultural beliefs about UFOs and NHI based on them.

All of the sources referred to in the last two paragraphs here, especially Pasulka, show a holistic, sympathetic, non-dismissive perspective on the mystery of UFOs and NHI. They allow for a fresh take on this complex social, cultural, technological, spiritual, consciousness phenomenon without clinging to a narrow materialist scientific view, but at the same time preserving evidence-based inquiry. I would also say that much of their work includes Methodologies for the Mysterious, such as listening to experiencers' reports of their psi-related encounters.

Psi and Contact

Early on in the study of UFOs most researchers would hesitate to consider psi, such as telepathic communication with UFO occupants, a respectable topic. The old joke was that an acceptable report would be "Engineer sees light in sky." There has been a progression from reliance on Nuts and Bolts reports like nocturnal lights, daylight UFOs, Close Encounters of the First Kind (sightings within 500 feet), and Close Encounters of the Second Kind (physical effects like microwave burns or landing traces) (Emmons, 1997: 1-12) to more controversial Close Encounters of the Third and Fourth and Fifth Kinds (UFO occupants, abductions, and human-initiated contact respectively).

Viewed through the sociology of science, this makes sense. The stranger the report, the more taboo, even in ufology, because it aspires to be considered a respectable science. Logically, however, if there were UFOs, wouldn't one suspect that there was some kind of intelligent being (or robot) inside? The next paradigm shock is that the pilot might communicate telepathically and possess other psi powers, like levitation. However, the evidence that even humans often possess such powers is hidden in plain sight in research findings (Radin, 2006, 2018).

Somehow, I feel that I have already arrived at the whole point of the book *Beyond UFOs: The Science of Consciousness and Contact with Non-Human Intelligence*, namely that UFOs and NHI are blended with psi phenomena in a holistic, possibly quantum paradigm. Very much more than that we probably don't understand, and we just need to continue the research. Evidence for the UFO/NHI/psi connection is abundant in *Beyond UFOs, Vol. I* (Hernandez et al., 2018), but let's look at some highlights. Following my "methodologies for the mysterious" principles we need to take the reports of experiencers seriously, no matter how strange they may seem, and to look for patterns in the data.

Although many of the experiencers of NHI on a craft (total N=708) report interacting with a human-looking being (48%) or a short grey (45%) etc., 10% experienced a spirit/ghost form (Hernandez et al., 2018: 26-32). For those encountering NHI in a "matrix-like reality" (total N=749) 37% experienced a spirit/ghost form. In the matrix condition these were some of the paranormal consciousness phenomena: OBE (consciousness separated from body) 67%, mystical being or presence 79% (42% actually saw the being), saw or sensed deceased or religious spirits (37%), entered unearthly world (70%), time sped up or slowed down (76%), sense of harmony or unity with the universe (69%), seemed to understand everything (59%), saw scenes from the future (41%), perceived time did not exist (71%).

These data are powerfully suggestive of the blending of UFO/NHI contact with psi, if we take experiencer reports seriously and look for commonalities in the data. There is still available an alternative that the matrix-like reality especially might be a mental construct imparted in the minds of the experiencers by the NHI without any external "reality" aspects, meaning for example that they are imagining seeing a spirit based on some high-tech NHI neurological trigger.

There were also 70% of the entire sample of experiencers who reported telepathic communications with an NHI when the NHI was not present (Hernandez et al, 2018: 33-34). Regardless of the contact situation, 78% overall had some kind of telepathic communication with NHI. Categories of telepathic communication included personally relevant information (66% of experiencers), spiritual or religious messages (52%), philosophical or metaphysical (51%), scientific or technological (34%), global or social-political (34%). Visuals accompanied the telepathic messages for 53% of respondents. Nearly half heard a buzzing noise, a feature that has shown up in many of the classic UFO cases.

The above data on telepathic messages certainly confirm the theme of UFO/NHI involvement in the transformation of humans personally, spiritually, scientifically, and politically. In one sense, all of this could be seen as a spiritual/religious phenomenon, a kind of technological religion in Pasulka's sense (2019). On this study's "Lifestyle Inventory Change" questions, most respondents (generally in the 70-80% range) reported increased tendencies to want to help others, have compassion for and acceptance of others, be attuned to spiritual matters, appreciate nature, be concerned ecologically, and believe in life after death, after their UFO experiences (Hernandez et al., 2018: 41-42). As noted previously, these are common changes in people with NDEs as well.

High percentages of these experiencers have also experienced other psi or spiritual phenomena: OBEs (80%), NDEs (37%), medical healing on self or family by NHI (50%), past-life memory (66%), seen a ghost or spirit (76%), memories of visiting or seeing heaven or spirit world (46%), material objects mysteriously appearing (apports) to self or family members (25%), mysteriously moving or falling objects (self or family) (61%), can see or feel energy or auras around people (74%) (Hernandez et al., 2019: 45).

Dr. Jon Klimo (Hernandez et al., 2019: 123-292) also reports on Phase III of the FREE study, analyzing extensive responses from the first 1000 participants to this qualitative survey. He gives extensive quotations and organizes various themes from the responses. These also deserve further attention from subsequent researchers finding similar patterns in later reports, giving more clues to the nature of the phenomena. One thing that my UFO researchers did in the 1990s was look for specific details in experiencer reports, such as symbolic markings inside craft where abductors said they had been taken, to see if they matched details from unpublished reports from other abductees. This was considered a powerful type of confirmation of the reality of the experience, and evidence that experiencers were not just confabulating based on previous cases they had read about. Some ufologists asked their experiencers for even better evidence: steal an artifact from the ship and put it your pocket the next time you're abducted!

In short there are abundant data supporting the UFO/NHI connection with psi or spirituality or quantum consciousness. I think that this is a reasonable hypothesis with lots of opportunities for further research. When I was studying UFO researchers in the 1990s, I heard a lot of skeptics/debunkers saying that "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence." My ufologists would reply, "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary research."

Political Conspiracies?

There is one more question that I have been avoiding but that has to be considered here: political conspiracies or “conspiracy theories,” depending on your point of view. Another saying I heard a lot in the 1990s was “Don’t believe anything that aliens or the government tell you (Emmons, 1997: 204-205).” This problem is way beyond my expertise, but for those who are interested, see Robert W. Wood (2017, 2018), Michael Salla (2019), and Swanson (2018: 438-483).

Pasulka (2019: 113-216) has many interesting things to say about government coverups and conspiracy theories. There is ample evidence of U.S. and UK government coverups based on declassified documents. There are also absurd elements in many UFO experimenter cases that seem designed to thwart attempts to consider the phenomena seriously. This may be somehow related to George Hansen’s (2001) classic concept of “the trickster and the paranormal,” whether the trickster is seen as something perpetrated by NHI or just a cosmic joke that often pops up in studies of psi. Pasulka also notes that mass media coverage often sensationalizes or distorts UFO cases, which is what happened to Rey Hernandez’s personal case when it was presented on TV (Pasulka, 2019: 210-214).

One comforting thing is that by far most experiencers claim to have had good experiences with NHI, and even the theories about government-alien agreements tend to claim that most aliens are “good” (Swanson, 2018: 457-474). However, we must at least consider the possibility that some of what we think we know about UFOs and NHI is deceptive disinformation from either human governments or NHI.

A Personal Perspective

I pointed out earlier that there is nothing like a personal experience to convince people, including researchers, of the reality of an allegedly paranormal phenomenon that is rejected in normal, mainstream science. Keep in mind that convincing individuals with experiences does little or nothing to change the paradigm, which is a social structural issue.

In my case, I have had no obvious UFO or NHI experiences, although I have had many psi experiences (Emmons and Emmons, 2004). For the record, however, here are the things that convince me that UFOs and NHIs are well worth studying, because there is clearly something going on. First, I have had many people I trust tell me their own first-hand UFO experiences, and several of them are collective cases (multiple witnesses). One academic colleague told me that she and another woman clearly saw a huge craft full of lights cruising around a mountain, and that it was still there when they came around the other side of the mountain.

Another reason I am convinced there is something going on is the sheer weight of responsible research that has accumulated since at least the 1940s (Emmons, 1997). Again, let's look for patterns in the data instead of waiting for NHIs to speak before the UN. My most recent "gulp" came when reading Pasulka (2019: 240), and seeing that research scientists had tried to analyze an artifact allegedly from a landing site, but found that it was so anomalous as to be incomprehensible; "It could not have been made in this universe."

CONCLUSION:

The study of paranormal phenomena (including UFOs and psi) is a mystery wrapped in an enigma. Ironies abound. Most people have experienced something considered "paranormal," yet normal science denies the existence of such phenomena. By definition the paranormal is not normal within a normal science frame and therefore does not exist. Anthropologists and sociologists (and anybody else studying paranormal consciousness) must take these creation-of-knowledge facts into account.

Methodologies for studying mysterious consciousness have sometimes been limited or bracketed based on taboos in science against taking experiencers of the paranormal seriously, because their experiences have been defined as deviant. The myth of objectivity privileges scientists who show distance from these experiences. Nevertheless, experiential data are often the greatest potential source of information about apparently nonmaterial consciousness. Breaking these taboos can be a useful step in learning more.

I have also advocated a multiple disciplinary and multiple methodological approach to studying paranormal/spiritual consciousness and UFOs. This allows for a holistic approach that both tests for mundane explanations of all kinds and shows the complexity of the phenomena.

Redefining appropriate methodologies also has consequences for theoretical interpretations. If the totality of human experience from the perspective of experiencers becomes the focus of anthropological investigation, then a broader picture of what it means to be human is likely to emerge. Seen in a holistic frame, human potentialities (including consciousness) may become clearer on all levels: social/cultural, psychological, biological, and quantum physical. We should also be able to improve our understanding of a Larger Reality (Emmons, 1997: 216-219) that includes UFOs and NIH.

References

- Abbot, Edwin. 1884. *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions by a Square*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Aronowitz, Stanley. 1988. *Science As Power: Discourse and Ideology in Modern Society*. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press.
- Beischel, Julie. 2019. *Investigating Mediums*. Blurb.
- Bem, Darryl J. 2011. "Feeling the Future: Experimental Evidence for Anomalous Retroactive Influences on Cognition and Affect," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100, pp. 407-425.
- Berger, Peter L. 1963. *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*. NY: Anchor.
- Bowie, Fiona. 2012. "Devising Methods for the Ethnographic Study of the Afterlife: Cognition, Empathy and Engagement." Pp. 99-106 in Jack Hunter (ed.), *Paranthropology: Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal*. Bristol, UK: Paranthropology.
- Brown, Michael. 1997. *The Channeling Zone: American Spirituality in an Anxious Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press.
- Bullard, Thomas E. 2010. *The Myth and Mystery of UFOs*. Lawrence, KS: U. Press of Kansas.
- Carey, Benedict. 2011. "Journal's Paper on ESP Expected to Prompt Outrage," *NY Times*; Jan. 5, 2011.
- Cassaniti, Julia and T.M. Luhrman. 2012. "Encountering the Supernatural: A Phenomenological Account of Mind," *Religion and Society*, 2, pp. 37-53.
- Caterine, Darryl. 2011. *Haunted Ground: Journeys through a Paranormal America*. NY: Praeger.
- Chalmers, David. 2007. "The Hard Problem of Consciousness," pp. 225-235 in Velmans and Schneider (eds.): *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Christian, Jon. 2018. "Physicists Have a New Idea for Faster-Than-Light Travel," *futurism.com*, November 20.

Downing, Barry. 1968. *The Bible and Flying Saucers*. NY: Berkley Books.

Emmons, Charles F. 1982. *Chinese Ghosts and ESP: A Study of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences*. Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1997 *At the Threshold: UFOs, Science and the New Age*. Mill Spring, North Carolina: Wild Flower Press. 2010 "Roll Your Own Religion: New Spirituality in North America." Cobalt Blue Productions; www.scienceandnewage.com

Emmons, Charles F. and Penelope Emmons. 2003 (2019) *Guided by Spirit: A Journey into the Mind of the Medium*. NY: Writers Club Press. 2012 *Science and Spirit: Exploring the Limits of Consciousness*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.

Emmons, Charles F. and Jeff Sobal. 1981a. "Paranormal Beliefs: Testing the Marginality Hypothesis," *Sociological Focus*, January, pp. 49-56. 1981b "Paranormal Beliefs: Functional Alternatives to Mainstream Religion?" *Review of Religious Research*, June, pp. 301-312.

Festinger, Leon et al. 1956. *When Prophecy Fails*. NY: Harper-Torchbooks.

Frazer, James George. 1906-1915. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. Public Domain.

Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. NY: Harper Colophon Books.

Greeley, Andrew M. 1991. "The Paranormal Is Normal," *Journal of the American Society for Psychological Research*, 85, pp. 367-374.

Greenwood, Susan. 2005. *The Nature of Magic: An Anthropology of Consciousness*. Oxford, UK: Berg. 2010 *The Anthropology of Magic*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Hansen, George. 2001. *The Trickster and the Paranormal*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corp.

Hastings, Arthur. 1991. *With the Tongues of Men and Angels: A Study of Channeling*. Forth Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Hernandez, Reinerio; Jon Klimo and Rudy Schild (eds.) 2018. *Beyond UFOs: The Science of Consciousness and Contact with Non-Human Intelligence, Vol. I. The Dr. Edgar Mitchell Foundation for Research into Extraterrestrial and Extraordinary Experiences (FREE), Inc.*

- Hopkins, Budd. 1987. *Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods*. NY: Random House, Inc.
- Horgan, John. 1996 (2015). *The End of Science*. New York: Basic Books.
- Howe, Linda Moulton. 1991. "Further Evidence Linking Animal Mutilations and Human Abductions to Alien Life Forms," *MUFON 1991 International UFO Symposium Proceedings*, Seguin, TX: MUFON, 1991, pp. 134-137.
- Hufford, David J. 1982. *The Terror That Comes in the Night: An Experience-Centered Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions*. Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press.
- Hunter, Jack. 2012. "Introduction: Anthropology and the Paranormal." Pp. 21-41 in Hunter, Jack. (ed.): *Paranthropology: Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal*. Bristol, UK: Paranthropology.
- Jacobs, David M. 1992. *Secret Life: Firsthand Accounts of UFO Abductions*. NY: Simon and Schuster. 1999. *The Threat: Revealing the Secret Alien Agenda*. NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Kelly, Edward F. et al. 2007. *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., Inc.
- Kripal, Jeffrey J. 2010. *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press. 2011. *Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.
- LaBerge, Stephen. 1985 *Lucid Dreaming: The Power of Being Awake and Aware in Your Dreams*. NY: Ballantine Books.
- Lepselter, Susan. 2016 *The Resonance of Things Unseen: Poetics, Power, Captivity, and UFOs in the American Uncanny*. Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press.
- Luhrman, Tanya. 2006 "Subjectivity," *Anthropological Theory*, 6 (3): pp. 345-361.
- Luke, David. 2012 "Experiential Reclamation and First Person Parapsychology." Pp. 181-197 in Jack Hunter (ed.), *Paranthropology: Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal*. Bristol, UK: Paranthropology.
- Mack, John. 1993 "The UFO Abduction Phenomenon: What Might it Mean for the Human Future?" *MUFON 1993 International UFO Symposium Proceedings*, Seguin, TX: MUFON, 1993, pp. 203-213.

MacKian, Sara. 2012. *Everyday Spirituality: Social and Spacial Worlds of Enchantment*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, Macmillan.

Marciniak, Barbara. 1992. *Bringers of the Dawn: Teachings from the Pleiadians*. Rochester, VT: Bear and Company

Mayer, Elizabeth Lloyd. 2007 *Extraordinary Knowing: Science, Skepticism and the Inexplicable Powers of the Human Mind*. NY: Bantam Books.

McClenon, James. 1984. *Deviant Science: The Case of Parapsychology*. Philadelphia: The U. of Pennsylvania Press. 2002. *Wondrous Healing: Shamanism, Human Evolution, and the Origin of Religion*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois U. Press.

Overbye, Dennis. 2013. "Far-Off Planets Like the Earth Dot the Galaxy," *New York Times*, Nov. 4.

Pasulka, D.W. 2019. *American Cosmic: UFOs, Religion, Technology*. New York: Oxford U. Press

Radin, Dean. 2006. *Entangled Minds: Extrasensory Experiences in a Quantum Reality*. NY: Paraview Pocket Books. 2018. *Real Magic: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Science, and a Guide to the Secret Power of the Universe*. NY: Harmony.

Rhine, J.B. et al. 1940. *ESP After Sixty Years*. NY: Holt.

Rhine, Louisa E. 1978. "The Psi Process in Spontaneous Cases," *Journal of Parapsychology*, 42, March, pp. 20-32.

Ring, Kenneth. 1992. *The Omega Report: Near Death Experiences, UFO Encounters, and Mind at Large*. NY: Wm. Morrow & Co.

Rock, Adam J., Julie Beischel and Gary E. Schwartz. 2008 "Thematic Analysis of Research Mediums' Experiences of Discarnate Communication," *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 22, 2, pp. 179-192.

Roll, William. 1972. *The Poltergeist*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Rosenblum, Bruce and Fred Kuttner. 2011. *Quantum Enigma: Physics Encounters Consciousness*. NY: Oxford U. Press.

Salla, Michael. 2019 *US Airforce Secret Space Program: Shifting Extraterrestria Alliances and Space Force*. Exopolitics Consultants.

Samuel, Geoffrey. 2006. *Mind, Body and Culture: Anthropology and the Biological Interface*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U. Press.

Samuel, Geoffrey. 2012 *Introducing Tibetan Buddhism*. London: Routledge.

Schwartz, Gary. 2002. *The Afterlife Experiments: Breakthrough Scientific Evidence of Life After Death*. NY: Pocket Books.

Selk, Avi. 2019. "Harvard's Top Astronomer says an Alien Ship May Be Among Us," *Washington Post.com*, February 4.

Sitchin, Zecharia. 1991 *The Twelfth Planet*. Rochester, VT: Bear and Company.

Stoller, Paul. 2004. *Stranger in the Village of the Sick*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Stoller, Paul and Cheryl Olkes. 1987. In *Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship among the Songhay of Niger*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.

Strieber, Whitley and Jeffrey J. Kripal. 2016 *The Super Natural: A New Vision of the Unexplained*. NY: TarcherPerigree.

Swanson, Claude. 2018. *The Science of the Soul, The Afterlife and the Shift*. Tucson, AZ: Poseidia Press.

Taves, Ann. 2010. *Religious Experience Reconsidered*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton U. Press.

Turner, Edith L.B. 1992. *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing*. Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press. 1996. *The Hands Feel It: Healing and Spirit Presence among a Northern Alaskan People*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois U. Press. 2006. *Among the Healers: Stories of Spiritual and Ritual Healing around the World*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Von Daniken, Erich. 1984. *Chariots of the Gods*. NY: Berkley.

Waggoner, Robert. 2009. *Lucid Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self*. Needham, MA: Moment Point Press.

Wood, Robert W. 2017. *Aquarius: Assessment of the Situation/Statement of Position on Unidentified Flying Objects, 08 January 1989*. Heather Wade: *Midnight in the Desert* (radio show), June 13, 2017. 2018. *Majestic-12 Group Special Operations Manual*. Wood & Wood Enterprises.

Bio: Dr. Charles Emmons has a PhD in Sociology from the University of Illinois, Chicago and was a Professor of Sociology at Gettysburg College for 46 years. His research is mainly in the area of the sociology/anthropology of science, religion and the paranormal. His latest book, co-authored by his wife, Penelope Emmons, is *Science and Spirit: Exploring the Limits of Consciousness* (2012). They also collaborated on *Guided by Spirit: A Journey into the Mind of the Medium* (2003). Other publications by Charlie include *Chinese Ghosts and ESP: A Study of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences* (1982), *Hong Kong Prepares for 1997* (1987) and *At the Threshold: UFOs, Science and the New Age* (1997). He also appears in the TV documentaries “Ghosts of Gettysburg.” He is active in Exploring the Extraordinary, is an honorary member of the Board of Reviewers of the journal *Paranthropology*, and a member of The Society for Scientific Exploration.

Website: <https://gettysburgian.com/2020/05/after-72-consecutive-years-in-education-charlie-emmons-to-retire/>