

# EdgeScience

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*PTSD and Traditional  
Chinese Medicine*

*Pre-Birth Memories*



*Ten Women of Early  
Psychical Research*

*The Phenomenon Has Been Given  
Public Legitimacy*

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

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Courtney M. Block

# Ten Women of Early Psychical Research

*Many lesser-known women, whose names are familiar mainly to the historically minded, need to be rescued from oblivion. Eventually historical studies should provide us not with a one-sided view of women's work, but a balanced view of parapsychology's past in which we obtain a better understanding of the interactions between, and work of, female and male workers in specific historical periods. The past is gendered. It is as gendered as the present...* (Zingrone & Alvarado, 2019).

Names such as Henry Sidgwick, Frederic W. H. Myers, Dr. Charles Richet, Dr. J. B. Rhine, and Frank Podmore are well known to the readers of psychical research and early parapsychology. The efforts of these figures are certainly notable, however there are scores of other researchers whose work and impact in these fields is less frequently discussed. Below I present brief biographical sketches of ten select female figures who have impacted psi research but are perhaps lesser known than their male counterparts. These sketches are excerpted from my forthcoming publication with Rowman and Littlefield, *The Encyclopedia of Parapsychology*.

## The Perils of Representation

It is perhaps no surprise given the social conventions of the 1870s to 1940s that women were often missing from scientific and historical discussions of psychical research. Even when they were mentioned, bylines referenced their status as married women instead of researchers. For example, in Volume 28 of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, published in 1915, Eleanor Sidgwick wrote and compiled a 652-page document on the investigation of the mediumship of Leonora Piper. The byline refers only to Eleanor as “Mrs. Henry Sidgwick” (Sidgwick, 1915, p. 28). While readers or scholars already familiar with this era of psychical research may readily know that this byline refers to Eleanor, new readers will likely be left not even knowing the author's actual name. This practice is certainly not limited to psychical research, but it nevertheless represents the perils of representation and identity in documents written during a certain time period.

Unfortunately, we find other examples of this practice within the literature in the 1950s and 1970s. In the September 1952 edition of the *Journal of Parapsychology*, Hornell Hart wrote an article titled “Mrs. Rhine's Conclusions about Survival: A Critique” (1957). Though Hart refers to her rightly in the body of this article as Dr. Louisa E. Rhine, the title of this article fails to recognize her educational and professional expertise. Within this same journal, in June 1977, scholar K. Ramakrishna Rao refers to Louisa as “Mrs. Rhine” repeatedly while referring to Louisa's husband as “Dr. J. B. Rhine” (Rao, 1977). While it seems that there is no insidious motivation behind these naming conventions, it is an example of the implicit censorship of the role of women in this field—a patriarchal practice that leads to the names of women being spoken less frequently.

To be fair, there are male researchers during this time who, like the women mentioned below, are underrepresented in the popular literature. Tomokichi Fukurai, for example, was a Japanese psychologist whose textbook on hypnosis was considered a seminal text for many years. Fukurai was among the first to discuss the concept of thoughtography, or the ability of the mind to manifest marks and etchings on surfaces like metal plates (Takasuna, 2012). Richard Maurice Bucke was a Canadian psychiatrist credited with coining the concept of a “cosmic consciousness” who advocated for the importance of studying mystical experiences (Berger & Berger, 1991, p. 53). Cadambur T.K. Chari was one of India's most prolific contributors to the philosophy of parapsychological phenomena (Berger & Berger, 1991, p. 67). The Dutch psychiatrist Frederik van Eeden coined the term “lucid dreaming” (Bortnichak & Bortnichak, 2021, p. 9), and, according to scholar Ingrid Kloosterman (2012, p. 14), “was the first Dutchman actively interested in the work of the British (Society for Psychical Research)”. These examples of figures less often discussed in popular English language books and resources on psychical research may result from an emphasis on researchers from the United Kingdom and United States.

Now let us get acquainted with the work of notable, but perhaps lesser-known, figures in the history of early psychical and parapsychological research.

## Ten Women of Early Psychological Research



Mary Boole

### Mary Boole (1832–1916, Mathematician)

Mary Boole was a self-taught mathematician and one of the founding members of the British Society for Psychical Research (SPR). She was, in fact, the sole female founding member. She remained with the SPR for about six months, at which point she left the group, leaving some to wonder if being the lone female voice in a group otherwise dominated by men left her feeling unheard. Others have postulated that she perhaps stepped away from the SPR to devote her time to the various social causes to which she was dedicated. Mary was actively devoted to promoting the role of women not just in society, but in education as well. She was the author of children's math books, and also promoted the merits of psychical research (Lawrence, 2015, p. 597-603). In 1908, she wrote a nearly three-hundred-page book titled *The Message of Psychic Science to the World* in which she urged the academy not to dismiss the merits of knowledge gleaned from psychical pursuits. In this book, we learn that Mary's father was an occultist who also urged his colleagues to seriously consider trance and mesmerism (Boole, 1908).

### Rosalind Heywood, (1895–1980, Parapsychologist)

Rosalind Heywood was a psychic and member of the British SPR. She noticed that she had extrasensory abilities when she served as a nurse's aide in World War I. Resorting to unconventional methods to save patients, Rosalind couldn't describe how she received the knowledge, but knew that it came from outside herself. She continued having telepathic encounters and joined the SPR in 1938 to learn more about her own experiences and contribute to the knowledge of the field. She contributed to the society's experiments and literature, and published multiple books, one being an autobiography (Berger & Berger, 1991, pp. 179–80).

### Betty Humphrey (1917 - ?, Parapsychologist)

Betty Humphrey is the author of *Handbook of Tests in Parapsychology*, published in 1948 by the Parapsychology Labs at Duke University. Humphrey became interested in parapsychology while engaging in psychical research during her undergraduate studies at Earlham College in Indiana. Because of her interest in this topic, she pursued graduate work at Duke University, knowing that, at the time, they had an established lab devoted to parapsychological study. Naturally, she befriended J. B. Rhine, who asked her to continue her research in a formal position in the parapsychology labs. Along with her husband and fellow parapsychologist J. Fraser Nicol, Betty's research uncovered a link between extroversion and psychical abilities. In other words, she discovered that those with extrasensory abilities often have extroverted personalities, and she also discovered a link between mood and psychical ability, noting that participants in a calmer mood often exhibited higher rates of psi ability (Berger & Berger, 1991, p. 292).

### Ina Jephson (189?–1961, Psychologist)

Ina Jephson was a British psychologist who was among the first to report on the decline effect. In 1928, Jephson designed an experiment in which more than 240 people, in pairs, would attempt to correctly identify playing cards held by one participant. She noticed, through the course of this experiment, that the statistical significance of correct guesses seemed to follow a certain pattern. Correct guesses began occurring early in the test, then fell off only to have a slight surge again toward the end of the experiment. Jephson also referred to this as the "fatigue effect," and her experiments on telepathy were highly regarded by the SPR, in which she became a member in 1920 (Berger & Berger, 1991, p. 207).



Rosalind Heywood

### Alice Johnson (1860–1940, Psychical Researcher)

Alice Johnson was a research officer for the SPR and secretary of fellow parapsychologist Eleanor Sidgwick where they were both working at Newnham College. In her research, Johnson was involved in the inquiries into both Leonora Piper and Eusapia Palladino. Johnson also spent decades studying the curious phenomena of cross-correspondences - instances in which the speech or writing of two separate and unconnected mediums are either a direct match or appear to answer one another. Many cross-correspondences occurred during automatic writing sessions and were sometimes signed off with the name of a deceased person. To Johnson and her fellow researchers, cross-correspondences suggested the survival of life after death. In addition to her research, Johnson was editor of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* and helped posthumously complete Frederic W. H. Myer's *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (Berger & Berger, 1991, pp. 89, 209).

### Fanny Hoppe Moser (1872–1953, Biologist)

Fanny Moser was a Swiss biologist credited as one of the first scientists to link psychical phenomena with altered states of consciousness. Dr. Moser attended a séance during which she witnessed an object levitate. According to an article in the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, this moment “shattered



Louisa E. Rhine

her scientific world view” and “in the following decades [she] undertook a critical examination and reappraisal of the entire field of mesmerism, hypnotism, Spiritism, and early parapsychological research” (The Australian Institute of Parapsychological Research, 2019, pp. 231-232). This decades-long examination resulted in the publication of *Okkultismus*, which outlines twenty-seven of her most memorable cases (pp. 274-275). As part of her will, Dr. Moser left funding for psychologist Hans Bender and the Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health to continue the parapsychological inquiry that she had started (pp. 274-275).

### Louisa E. Rhine (1891–1983, Botanist and Parapsychologist)

Similar to her husband, J. B. Rhine, American parapsychologist Louisa Rhine began her professional career as a botanist. She eventually found her way to Duke University under the mentorship of psychologist William McDougall. Her husband co-founded the Parapsychology Labs at Duke University in 1930, and she began investigating psychical phenomena under its auspices. As her interest in psi phenomenon grew, she began, in 1948, to collect spontaneous parapsychological experiences that people sent to her. It's estimated that she compiled nearly fifteen thousand cases. Some of these were instances of PK and other instances of nonphysical psi phenomena, such as clairvoyance or precognition. She wrote numerous articles for the *Journal of Parapsychology*, and also published a handful of books which were lauded for their approachable nature, essentially bringing psychical science to the general public (Berger & Berger, 1991, p. 358).

An article published in the *Journal of Parapsychology* upon her death summarizes her impact, as readers learn that “Louisa Rhine helped to bring legitimacy to the study



Fanny Hoppe Moser

of psychic phenomena...while her husband designed simple laboratory experiments to test the possibility of psi abilities, Louisa analyzed literally thousands of real-life psychic experiences and laid the ground for a taxonomy of psi. Author of six books and numerous scholarly papers, she was the first lady of parapsychology for nearly half a century.” (Rao, 1983).

### Helen Salter (1883–1959, *Psychical Researcher*)

Helen Salter was a research officer and editor within the British Society for Psychical Research. She served on its council alongside her husband, William Salter, who also engaged in psychical research. She was also the daughter of Margaret Verrall, a famous British automatic writer. Through the connections of her parents, Salter grew up surrounded by key figures in parapsychology, and even became an automatic writer herself, an ability that she practiced for nearly thirty years. She was one of the automatic writers involved in the decades-long study of cross-correspondences, and her research appeared in many journals, including the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* and the *Journal of Parapsychology* (Berger & Berber, 1991, p. 375; Ruickbie, 2022).



Eleanor Sidgwick

### Eleanor Sidgwick (1845–1936, *President of Newnham College and Psychical Researcher*)

Eleanor Sidgwick was a Scottish psychical researcher, and according to researcher Carlos S. Alvarado (2018), “was one of

the most productive psychical researchers” in the early days of the British Society for Psychical Research (SPR) (p. 127). She joined the SPR in 1884 but had been involved in psychical studies of mediums alongside Frederic W. H. Myers, her husband Henry Sidgwick, and Edmund Gurney, to name a few. One short year after joining the SPR, Sidgwick undertook a massive task to analyze almost four hundred case reports the society had received regarding haunt phenomena, or as the SPR would be wont to say, “phantasms of the dead” (p. 128). Her ability to organize, analyze, and classify was unparalleled, and from this work she identified patterns of hauntings, ferreted out cases of misidentification or fraud, and presented theories to explain the genuine cases that were left. As others have noted, “the amount of detail and critical analysis presented by Sidgwick had no precedent in the previous literature examining apparitions of the dead” (p. 128). Her work analyzing these hundreds of haunt cases not only shed light on patterns of haunt phenomena, but also helped create a standard set of criteria for ferreting out genuine cases of haunt phenomena moving forward (Block, 2020, p. 57). A few years after her work on that project, Sidgwick assumed the role of primary investigator on the SPR’s Census of Hallucinations, a survey sent to seventeen thousand people over the course of three years. It investigated waking hallucinations, that is, it asked people if they had ever, while being fully awake and conscious, seen an apparition, heard a phantom noise, or even felt something that wasn’t physically there. Eleanor and her secretary, Alice Johnson, are the two who are credited with analyzing and organizing all the data, and the Census of Hallucinations wouldn’t be the amazing document it is without their hard work (Keep, 2019, p. 582). Eleanor undertook this work while simultaneously serving as president of Newnham College in Cambridge.

In addition to the work above, she also designed experiments to study telepathy, and even presented her research at the International Congress of Experimental Psychology. There, she proclaimed that while there was an overwhelming amount of case studies and examples of telepathy, little had been done by science to seriously examine the nuances of this phenomena. She was also a key investigator in the thirty-year study of cross-correspondences, which involved automatic writers (Alvarado, 2018, p. 129). Her contributions to the field of parapsychology are immeasurable, and she is a shining example of one of the earliest female members of the SPR.

### Gerda Walther (1897–1977, *Psychical Researcher*)

Gerda Walther was a German psychical researcher who, as a child, experienced telepathy from both living and deceased persons. She began her psychical career as an assistant to fellow psychical researcher Alfred von Schrenck-Notzing.



Gerda Walther

Walther studied the medium Rudi Schneider and believed that he exhibited genuine psychical abilities. She is the author of two notable books on the topic, and she helped spread international awareness of European psychical studies when she contributed summaries to the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*. Interestingly, during World War II, Walther was approached by the German government and asked to train psychics to detect enemy submarines, but she refused (Berger & Berger, 1991, p. 460).

These are but a few of the notable women who have contributed to our understanding of psi and who represent some of the earliest efforts at scientifically understanding psychical phenomena. For those interested, you can search the archives of various open access journals, Google Scholar, HathiTrust, or even ask your local library for access to resources written by and about these women. For an even more comprehensive list of notable figures along with an annotated bibliography of parapsychological resources spanning from the 1870s to the 2020s, ask your local library for a copy of my upcoming work, *The Encyclopedia of Parapsychology*

Remember, too, that there are many women who were participants in psychical studies—women like Marthe Béraud (more commonly known as Eva C.), Florence Cook (also known as Katie King), the controversial Mina Crandon (referred to as Margery), Eusapia Palladino, Nina Kulagina, Leonora Piper, Elizabeth d'Espérance, and many, many more. There are those, too, since 1940 who have continued the effort at understanding this “expanded universe” that Dr. Louisa E. Rhine tells us about—women like Helané Wahbeh, Caroline Watt, Annalisa Ventola, Michaeleen Maher, Rhea White, Nancy Zingrone and countless others.

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Andy Hilton

# Pre-Birth Memories

“**Infantile amnesia**” is the name for not being able to remember anything before we were two or three years old. However, some people *can* remember parts of their very early lives. And some recall experiences in the womb, and even before that. This is the category of *pre-birth memory*.

## Infantile Amnesia and Regression

The inability to recall the first years postpartum, extending back to birth and pre-birth, was once explained in terms of the repression of traumatic and id-based memories and of the impossibility of forming any memories at all without language. Nowadays, the Freudian and linguistic framings of infantile amnesia have largely given way to experimental psychology and neurology. And apparently, children do have recollections from when they were younger, but lose access to them (relatedly, there is also childhood amnesia, referring to poor memories of anything before the age of about 10). Infantile (and childhood) amnesia, it is theorized, may be a function of the development of the hippocampus (Alberini & Travaglia, 2017).

Therefore, we should ask the children what they can remember—or ask their mothers, which is what obstetrician and gynecologist Akira Ikegawa did. In his 2002 survey conducted in two Japanese cities to which 1,600 (45%) kindergarten mothers responded, a quarter (428) reported their children as having displayed memories of when they were in the womb or being born (Ikegawa, 2015). So, we *can* recall our early experience—even pre- and perinatal—but that ability tends to decline and disappear as we move into pre-puberty (broadly corresponding with other childhood losses, both in conventional areas—associated with brain plasticity, such as ease of language learning—and also non-conventional ones—including memories of having been someone else in a “previous life” (Stevenson, 1987; Tucker, 2021). That these memories *tend* to disappear, however, means generally but not always.

In my own case, for example, I remember being surrounded by bright yellow and held up by my father in the bathroom of the house where we lived when I was young and being loved with my mother beside him. I was a baby. My mother confirmed the likelihood of the memory in general, but the bathroom was mainly white, not yellow. Then, she remembered, I had been bathed in a bright yellow bowl in the house before that, where we lived until I was nine

months old. So, the yellow element of the memory was likely from some time in the first few months of life after birth.

This personal anecdote introduces the subject of evidence and the nature of memory. First, there is a moderate claim here to prove that the memory was true (veridical), of something real (objectively the case). Sometimes such memories can be verified. Second, there was the conflation of the single sensation (bright yellow) with an event in the second house (an episodic memory). Indeed, there are well-known issues with the construction of memory as well as its general reliability (note: memories are presented here as such, unqualified by scare quotes, as claims, “so-called,” etc.). Third, there was affect, the feeling of being loved. Emotions are crucial to memories (determining whether we have them, even). And fourth—a new detail—I only gained access to this memory in my mid-20s, during a “body-holding” weekend workshop when the composite event was relived (internally seen and emotionally felt). Previously forgotten events can pop up into our minds at any time, but especially when we are primed, as in workshops.

Since the Western goal of realizing our “human potential” became popular during the 1960s and 70s, the workshop structure has routinely taken people into deeply internal mental states. Popular activities like meditation, psychedelic trips, and trance-dance have also produced inner journeys. Among other things, this has involved the widespread production, sometimes deliberate, of experiences of regression.

Sigmund Freud identified regression as a subconscious response to early-life trauma, whose memory he accessed indirectly (using symbolic association via dreams, etc.). For the last half-century, however, early life memories themselves have been sought, and not only for their psychodynamic efficacy (healing dis-ease) but also for self-realization (becoming whole) on a path of consciousness expansion. Regaining access to memories from the start of life may be a part of our spiritual unfolding, an awakening—or “rebirth.”

In the New Age field, rebirthing was the experiential process initiated by hyperventilation in Stanislav and Christina Groff’s “holotropic” breathwork. I recall him explaining his idea of the “perinatal matrix” (the womb and birth experience as a template for later life), and then, in a workshop, physically making ourselves into a “passage” to help a Kenyan woman act out her birth. But I also remember



my Irish workshop partner recalling her role in a team operating a cannon in Napoleonic times and the sight of her dead mother in the pool of the family's Roman villa—and also the woman re-enacting that birth canal struggle now singing gloriously, entranced, an African queen once again. Rebirthing always went beyond the physical birth scenario to past lives. Now, it has extended from the classical group workshop setting to one-on-one internet sessions and tech-assisted auto-hypnosis (e.g., MonroeInstitute, 2021)—and from past-life regressions to past deaths, through which we enter into our life “on the other side,” between incarnations.

The womb environment may impact on the developing fetus in many ways. Maternal stress during pregnancy affects its size, for example, probably through the amniotic fluid (La Marca-Ghaemmaghami et al., 2017). Newborn babies respond to the music their mother listened to during the pregnancy, as well as to her voice and that language, indicating recognition, thus memory (Partanen et al., 2013). We clearly have unconscious memories stored from before we were born that affect our later lives—but the root of such memories may predate the pregnancy. The children of Holocaust survivors are relatively prone to trauma, for example, a transgenerational effect thought to be transferred epigenetically (Yehuda et al. 2015).

There is an interesting parallel history here. Just as the physical cause of memory has been pushed deeper (to amniotic fluid, now to DNA) and backwards (to the womb, now to previous generations), so also has rebirthing in the psychical realm moved from early life and past lives (on Earth) to life “beyond the veil” and what Michael Newton (2004) has dubbed our “life between lives” (LBL). The former takes empirically determined influences on an individual's current life back through their body and cellular memory (c.f., Verny, 2001) and thence to the parental environment—toward the aphoristic sins at the seventh generation! The latter takes conscious memory as experiential data, which then becomes detached from the physical world—and goes beyond simple materialism.

### Going Back, Going Beyond

In addition to the memory inferred (by psychoanalysis, via galvanic skin response, etc.) and retrieved (at workshops,

etc.), there are also naturally occurring or conscious early memories. That is, some adults simply remember something about their early life without any aids. Some recall their first days in the world or being in the womb. Some remember incarnating, and some before that—Martin Ettington gives a succinct account (Mketteringtonbooks, 2022). Such memories may return after childhood (having been subject to the amnesia) or during childhood (initially prevented, perhaps due to the maternal oxytocin produced during delivery). Memories of the “pre-life” are sometimes triggered by a death in the family or near-death experience (NDE). And sometimes the memories seem to be continually available throughout childhood and after—they have always been there, since...well, since it happened. But did it?

Early life memories can sometimes be checked, like my yellow (bathing bowl). Generally, this is not the case, but some reports have been investigated and confirmed—including from before birth (see below). The conventional materialist assumption will have people who sincerely claim a memory from before conception as having unconsciously fabricated it, and then any verification as coincidental (however improbable). False memories are fairly common, of course (and notorious in witness testimony, hypnotic suggestion, etc.). In other words, people with pre-birth memory (PBM)—of being in the womb or before—may not be remembering an experience of something that really happened but experiencing a memory as if it really happened.

The issues raised around memory here are not just psychological, but also philosophical, since as soon as we refer to what actually happened, we imply questions about the nature of reality, which becomes highly problematic in a nonstandard context (like life before conception). To illustrate with another personal anecdote: I remember my father teaching my sister and I how to fly when we were children. We went to the local park one afternoon, he levitated, and we copied him, rising to the height of the trees and above. After a while, we all descended, lay on the grass, and went home. I only remembered this recently. The memory emerged as from a fog, like a memory of a memory, and then became clear. Under hypnosis, I retrieved further detail, and a little more has come back since. The initial memory has been extended, clarified, and fixed, though it



hasn't changed.

I don't suppose the event occurred quite as remembered. But nor do I believe the false memory account that would have to be concocted by a "skeptic"—of a dream of flying, say, conflated with normal experience (a visit to the park) and mistaken for a real recollection. In such a case, we begin to delve deeply into the human psyche, into our collective mental culture, and beyond. We can still do science (develop methodologies for memory access and measures for assessment and extrapolate for theory-building), but unverifiable claims are being made, so it is fundamentally different.

### Pre-Birth, Pre-Earth: Assessing the Unverifiable

In evaluating the evidence for PBM—as opposed to just dismissing or ignoring it—one approach is to enter into it empathetically. The second person conjoins with the first person's complete clarity and crystal conviction, which characteristically accompany their numinous experience of pre-incarnation. Misplaced certainty, however, is also a commonplace human fallibility; confident mistakes abound (especially when we believe we have God on our side). The standard scientific approach to PBM would be to consider it objectively, in the third person, and attempt a conventional explanation. But what if a child were to recall when he was physically conceived—seeing the sex act of his parents-to-be—and later have the details of that memory confirmed by those parents? It was in the front seat of the car, while his sister-to-be was asleep in the back. This is Glenn's memory. He was born in 1929, remembered as a child, and finally checked it with his startled and embarrassed mom and dad when he was twenty-five (Susanna Lopez Yoga, 1999).

Assuming that no prosaic explanation is plausible, should we believe that the son-to-be was already conscious, as he says, an unincarnated individual observing the scene in real time? Or should we construe a more sophisticated interpretation: actually, the young Glenn acquired temporally distant information (ESP of the past, the event in the car), unconsciously and spontaneously remote seeing back in time and then building the memory from that? The former might be preferred because it is simple, takes the compelling first-person testimony as face value, and also accords with other experiences and related data on death and the afterlife and reincarnation. The latter, however, draws on something we already know—our (super)human abilities to access the informational field across time-space (mediumistically channeling from the "akashic record")—in order to avoid something even more exotic. Essentially, this is the clever skepticism—or objective detachment, dispassion, the scientific stance—employed in non-survivalist explanations of contact with the deceased. It could also be used, we might note, for veridical NDEs of events perceived

when the brain shows no activity—they are actually pre- or post-cognitions, gained before or after but not during clinical death.

It may be that the living agent (super) psi explanation is ontologically more parsimonious. But we give too much to Occam anyway! His razor gives a good rule of thumb, a principle, but it is not a law; it is very useful, aesthetically pleasing, but also *unnecessarily* restrictive. In this case, both explanations may work, and perhaps we don't need to choose. Mystically, they are not incompatible. For even as souls experiencing LBL heaven, we do not go beyond illusion, as reports of the ascended hierarchies encountered there indicate—their being is far beyond mere immortals like us! Rather, we inhabit a *relatively* rarified realm on the other side, as materially less dense and more loving but still living agents—and now with super-duper psi! It's just a higher maya! We can paradoxically hold to both the justified faith in literal survival and the subtle wisdom of our reticence.

Glenn told his story to Elizabeth and Neil Carmen in 1999, who had been researching this field since a decade before that. They thus recorded an early confirmed example from contemporary times of the "anomalous" phenomenon of pre-conception memory. Their subject matter has a worldwide history (Carman & Carman, 2019) akin to that of NDEs (Zaleski, 1987), although it is much less well known—presumably because NDEs have recently been studied by physicians due to their suddenly increased frequency in the clinical setting of hospital emergency rooms that provide real-life laboratory-type conditions—none of which applies to PBM.

Such a history has also been identified for UFOs (Vallee, 1993)—a comparison that is pertinent here since the challenges about what to believe and how to explain it only become more difficult—and easier just to ignore—when, as expressed by psychiatrist John Mack (after a 1952 US Air Force press conference), incredible memories are recounted by credible people (Mack, 1994; US National Archives, 2013). In the case of PBM, these include recollections of a one-off incarnation straight from Source, of previous lives on other planets and dimensions, and of the beginning of this universe and the moment before (AlphaZebra, 2016; Words with Emily, 2020; Love Covered Life, 2021).

In such a context of non-physicality and unverifiability, what researchers like the Carmens do is essentially to follow the path cleared in the mid-nineteenth century by Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail. Writing as Allan Kardec, the French academician, pedagogist, and educator collated the various spirit responses of ten different mediums—ultimately, to a thousand questions for the five books of the *Spiritist Codification*. A similar route has been taken for the development of NDE theory (to ascertain its core features, etc.). Now, we can go a step further; since both Kardec's Spiritism and NDE cover some of

the same ground as PBM, a certain degree of cross-referencing or triangulation is enabled. For example, a common item in PBM is selecting the level of difficulty of the lessons to be learned in the upcoming life on Earth; similarly, people have NDEs in which they can decide whether to return to complete their mortal duty, or “mission”; and Kardec (Question 258) reports that “before taking on a new corporeal existence... a spirit... chooses for [themselves] the kind of trials [they] will undergo” (Kardec, 1875, p. 120).

A little differently from the Spiritist communications, it is with earthly personal testimonies that we set out in the case of PBMs when developing the new concept, or category—as was also the case with Raymond Moody’s 1975 “life after life,” which didn’t gain currency, and the more modest “near death experience,” which did (Moody, 2015). Concerns about the person testifying and the details of their testimony are, of course, paramount. Returning to the UFO theme, the case of alien abductions is pertinent. Thus, we follow Mack’s methodology of a common-sense judgement and open-minded observation of the general similarity and stability of unconnected accounts, the reliability and unsuggestibility of the individuals reporting, and the sense of their genuineness and lack of ulterior motive. Interpretation comes later; for the science, evidence comes first, *explicandum* before *explicans*.

In collecting the data for PBM, to develop its main features, the core story—as in the case of NDEs (and with abductions)—it is the *commonality* of independent, trustworthy reports that is key (akin to laboratory *repeatability*). In this realm of the subjective, agreement becomes evidential. And regardless of whether we know or even can know if the PBMs are “true,” people are reporting the same type of experience. This alone gives it validity. The minimalist, skeptical position requires at least a recognition of the interpersonal agreement establishing an intersubjective reality—which in some metaphysics is all we ever got anyway!

### Structural Considerations of PBM as a Category

NDE is now a well-established category. NDEs may occur not near actual physical death, and they may also occur during it (Parnia et al., 2014). Regardless, they occur in the context, as Bruce Greyson (2021) puts it, of a “confrontation with death.” They commonly involve an out-of-body experience (OBE) in the physical realm (e.g. looking down on the surgical bed), whose details may be later verified, indicating an NDE-OBE overlap—these cannot be reduced to the other, they intersect (KMTV, 2013). As a complete, sequential narrative (which is not necessarily followed and mostly, in fact, uncompleted), the NDE morphs into a nonphysical reality (with helpers, life review, etc.) imbued with affective qualities, like radiance, tranquility, and all-encompassing love, and subsequent effects, such as spontaneous supernormal (psychic) abilities

and a conversion to some sort of theism. Such “full” NDEs are transcendent and transforming, and the more common, partial NDEs (e.g., with just a tunnel and distant light) much less so. Thus, they constitute “enlightenment” experiences, to be graded and grouped with other *samādhis* or modes of cosmic consciousness. This phenomenological cartography of the NDE has become socially grounded as the construct of an apparently shared reality that appears innately human (transcultural, historical).

A full NDE commonly involves a desire to stay in the otherly realm and not return to Earth that is not permitted, although individuals sometimes feel a pull and choose to return (and occasionally can choose not to, as mentioned). Similarly, PBM may also involve a positive desire—to incarnate—while other individuals want not to. This is reminiscent of the response to Kardec’s (1875, p. 73) Question 184, “In passing from one world to another... Has the spirit the choice of the new world... to inhabit?” which begins “Not always, but [they] can make this demand, and it may be granted.”

There is a parallel here between NDE and PBM in terms of choice; issues around freewill and its limits are features of both. PBM choosing (and its limitations) may include selecting aspects of one’s character and appearance, parents, and families, in addition to the tasks and challenges (life purpose), with key decision points previewed in a life tree graph of probable futures. These choices are made with the guidance of nebulous, authoritative individuals, such as light beings, guides, and angels, perhaps in an empty space or ethereal realm. For the incarnation, a distant light is the target. There is a sense of the time to go being due and then the entry itself, which is fast and sudden.

In this full narrative, there are often only one or two memories from the womb and after birth; the numinosity is paramount. Thus, people with a full PBM tend to have a certain awareness of their spiritual Self, they come in already enlightened, as it were. When the recollection is (re)gained later in life, that is the enlightenment experience, just as a full NDE is an enlightenment. Another parallel: in physical death, it is observed that the spirit may leave the body some time before the shutdown of biological systems, while in birth, entry may occur after biological (sperm-ovum) fertilization. Just as the death in NDE may occur in two steps, so for the birth in PBM—but in reverse.

This reversal is a key feature; NDEs and PBMs are not just similar but also opposites or inversions. Full NDEs take us *to* the afterlife and full PBMs *from* the beforelife. In NDEs, we can’t actually die; with PBMs, we are already born. The NDE has a life review; the PBM has a life script. Structurally, the NDE and PBM exhibit the logic of binary opposition, as analyzed for initiation by Edmund Leach (1976). This links to Arnold van Gennep’s (1909) tripartite model of

initiation, with its oppositional stages of death and rebirth, presented as separation and (re)incorporation, and the liminal in-between.

The death in NDE involves separation from the earth plane and the liminality of ascent; the initiating “death” in PBM, on the other hand, is a separation from the bliss-realm, with the subsequent liminal phase a descent into the earthly life. The disembodiment of (near) death starts with a dualistic separation in which individual consciousness goes *out* and *up* from the physical body; incarnation is an incorporation of the self-mind *down* and *into*. Gravity (density, mass) is alternatively escaped and encountered in these opposite movements.

Profoundly, LBL is the liminal phase between lives as seen from our earthly perspective of death and reincarnation—but experientially it is home, so reincarnation is a repeated separation, death a return, and it is this earthly life that is liminal. Together, PBM and NDE reveal what mystics teach about our fleeting moment on the world’s stage—which spirit-workers may use and the elderly may learn (to become elders).

Other structural considerations can be introduced. PBMs, like NDEs, have a paradigmatic form or conceptual core (which can be developed and researched for change over time, false positives/negatives, etc.) (e.g., Lange et al., 2004). We can expand this to talk about an *NDE nexus*, which includes shared death and end-of life experience (Peters, 2013; Kerr & Mardorossian, 2020). Then, the *PBM nexus* includes mothers’ and others’ supernormal experiences around birth (pre-birth communications). One girl, for example, insisted she was going to have a brother, who she used to play with in heaven, which the mother didn’t take seriously—until she had a dream of choosing her baby; indeed, she was pregnant, and it did turn out to be a boy, who, as a youngster, made unsolicited comments about heaven and rebirth (Prenatal Memory, 2019). Children-to-be may choose their mother, but mothers-to-be also choose their children, which extends to both parents, and families and beyond.

Regarding the triangulation, mediumistic reports on pre-birth planning have progressed from Kardec with Robert Schwartz’s *Soul* trilogy, which follows a similar methodology. Schwartz’s work further develops PBM, suggesting that our life-plans default to love (we pass “God’s test” by taking the most loving option for any decision), suffering cultivates the “divine virtues,” and soul-families co-plan, taking into consideration things like parallel selves and interdimensional parenting (Wisdom from North, 2017). The metaphysical mechanisms of this model are those of spiritual law, involving karma and a teleological evolution in which more difficult life-tasks offer greater developmental potential on the path toward universal self-realization. The long-established phenomenology of heavenly realms, a

hierarchy of beings, and the primacy of love and light are all maintained, as well as God or Source, of which we are individualizing expressions.

Impelled to testify, many people are uploading their PBM stories nowadays, and several social media and website spaces have sprung up dedicated or oriented to PBM—such as Jeff and Jody Long’s (1998–2000) research/testimonial site and community group. Some accounts share interesting details—for example, of a “pool” or “basic technology” in the preparatory “entry room” (used as an immersion for incarnation practice)—while others feature supernormal and paratural experiences in subsequent earthly life, which may be wondrous or difficult (e.g., *APeopleExperiencer*, 2013a, 2013b; Pre-Birth Memories, 2020; DivineInside, 2021). An impressive interpersonal confirmation is supplied by a combined narrative: Roy Mills (1999) remembers being in the preparation place and, against the rules, turning round to look at the others, and Sandy Briggs (Unity&Love, 2018) remembers seeing him, and six others (they incarnated together as a group with interconnecting missions to share their PBMs and spread the message of pre-existence).

## Conclusions and Futures

As a category, PBM is implied by its opposite, NDE. Thus, we establish an NDE-PBM binary. NDEs and PBMs have a “shared language,” in the words of Christian Sundberg, who also emphasizes the problem of sequencing with PBMs—since they “transcend linear time,” they are equally memories of what is not past. Then, applying this to NDEs, there is a sense in which these do not tell us about any future awaiting! Through the category binary, we can extrapolate meanings from one to the other.

Metaphysically, NDE and PBM afford two understandings. The first supports a *post-materialist paradigm*. For NDE, this is supplied by veridical OBEs of events that occur during clinical death. Equivalently, PBMs can provide empirically verifiable data that push back the conventionally recognized onset of individual consciousness and against the physicalist approach to the mind-brain relationship. Going beyond this to the second understanding—to what may be dubbed a *trans-materialism*—NDEs supply evidence for post-mortem survival, and PBM further supports our (re)emerging, undogmatic dogma of reincarnation. It offers an epistemological extension.

The argument for survival may be considered in a legal sense with a best-case presentation of the preponderance of evidence. Jeffrey Mishlove (2022) recently deployed the argument strategy of assembling a “bundle of arrows” that may be independently weak but are united in strength. He supplied nine such arrows, including NDE. Then, PBM is a tenth. And, with conscious memory, uninduced, supported by veridical detail and related experiences in the PBM nexus,

our arrows may become sticks that raise a tepee. Or, we make the arch of reincarnation, connecting NDE through LBL to PBM. Inevitably, the “truth” of this reality may be disputed, partial, and superseded, but it seems to be well supported by a growing body of evidence. Thus, we create a whole new structure, or superstructure—and we move from intersubjectivity toward paradigm shift. The total effect becomes cultural, to wit, the highly successful movie *Soul* (Docter, 2020).

The sense of a sea change also applies to the still-emerging phenomenon of PBM. In 1951, Roy Mills understood that he was never to speak on the subject—until 44 years later, in 1995, when he was informed that “the time had come.” Perhaps it has. Perhaps the materialist spell is weakening, our world is transforming, and more people are coming in with PBM. Maybe the veil itself is thinning!

*Dedicated to Robin Foy, physical medium and spiritual scientist*

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Dr. Daniel Robert Stubbings

# The Phenomenon Has Been Given Public Legitimacy

The United States Government has asserted that there are real physical objects moving about our earth observed on multiple simultaneous sensors that defy military explanation (Cooper et al., 2017; House Intelligence, 2022; Office of The Director of National Intelligence, 2021). The name for these objects has historically been Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) but they are now being referred to as Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) or Unidentified Aerospace and Undersea Phenomena (UAUP). The mainstream inclination to these topics has been to relegate it to the purview of the eccentric but the volume of current and historical accounts coming from reputable sources is becoming too numerous to ignore (Elizondo, 2021; Good, 1996; Hastings, 2017; Rendall, 2021, Rendall 2022a, 2022b). Human error, misunderstanding, misperception, sensor malfunction, disinformation and misinformation may account for some of the alleged incidents, but prosaic terrestrial explanations will not suffice in all cases.

“The Phenomenon” is a broad phrase that encompasses UFOs, UAPs, UAUP, and any observable experience and/or event that is not caused by a terrestrial or celestial agent. In 2017, The New York Times released an article (Cooper et al., 2017) in which the former director of the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP) Luis Elizondo went public about the nature of his work from 2008-2017 (Elizondo, 2021). He revealed that there has been a classified program within the Pentagon that was investigating UAPs, the military’s preferred term for UFOs. The article also included three videos (Guardian News, 2020) that showed vehicles moving in ways that appear to defy explanation. Alternative explanations for the three videos (West, n.d.) do not include the confidential radar data or the extended footage reportedly in military possession (Mick West, 2021; Project Unity, 2022), which confirms that these objects are not caused by birds, balloons, other planes, camera illusions or atmospheric anomalies.

Since the *New York Times* article (Cooper et al., 2017) Luis Elizondo has been interviewed in numerous YouTube videos and podcasts (8 News NOW Las Vegas, 2018; Cable News Network, 2017; Fade to Black Radio, 2021, 2022; Theories of Everything with Curt Jaimungal, 2021) revealing more about his role and understanding of UAPs. In May 2021, Luis

Elizondo explained in a 60 Minutes documentary (2021) that there were five observable features of UAPs; 1) anti-gravity lift, 2) sudden instantaneous acceleration, 3) movement at hypersonic velocities without signatures such as vapor or a sonic boom, 4) low observability/cloaking and 5) trans-medium travel (from air to water, or space into air). Elizondo has since gone on to state that there is a sixth observable pertaining to biological effects (Fox Business, 2022). In April 2022, some of the documents associated with the Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Application Program (the precursor to the AATIP program) were released and one of these refers to three cases that show anomalous acute and sub-acute field effects on human biological tissues of people who have been exposed to a UAP (Defence Intelligence Agency, 2010). The subjects in this study were credible people whose accounts came with a verifiable chain of custody. The conclusion was that the subjects had been exposed to non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation and microwave energies that led to the following symptoms:

Erythema (heat and redness) overexposed... skin, and varying degrees of the following as a function of their body-surface exposure times: fever, pain, headaches, numbness, and parasthesia[sic], malaise, diarrhea, hair loss and alopecia, skin eruptions/boils, cardiac palpitations.... chronic headaches.... insomnia and dream disturbances... anxiety... extreme sensitivity to light, dry and scratchy-stinging eyes, and extreme inflamed blood-shot [whites of the eyes] with soft tissue swelling of the eyelids. One of the three experienced moderate blood dyscrasia and signs of radiation illness, and over several years developed signs of malignant transformations (Defence Intelligence Agency, 2010, p.v).

In March 2020 the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act* (2020) was released which included a request by the United States Congress to establish a UAP task force that was to produce a classified and unclassified report revealing what the military knew. The unclassified preliminary assessment report was released on the 25th of June 2021 (Office of The Director of National Intelligence, 2021) and

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the chief scientific officer was Dr. Travis Taylor (8 News NOW Las Vegas, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d). Although it was a brief report, it referred to 143 incidents that they could not explain and were not a result of secret US technology. This figure is particularly surprising when considering; 1) most of the incidents were within the 18 months prior to the report, 2) most of the data was from the Navy, which is only one of many American government organizations, 3) it is estimated that only 10% of sightings get reported (Richard Dolan Intelligent Disclosure, 2022). The report also referred to 18 incidents in which the UAPs show unusual movements/flight characteristics, such as moving without a discernible means of propulsion. Kevin Day was a radar operator on the Nimitz carrier battle group in 2004 (one of the incidents included in the classified report) and stated that he observed objects moving from 28,000ft above sea level down to sea level in 0.87 seconds stopping abruptly (Discover, 2019). If such maneuvers were done in a conventional craft, it would kill the humans inside and destroy the aircraft.

Then in January 2022 the *National Defence Authorization Act* (NDAA, 2021) section 1652 was signed into law by Present Joe Biden. This was the first public announcement of a permanent office to address UAPs and included aims to create a standardized procedure for documenting UAPs across agencies, using multiple types of sensors such as geospatial intelligence to coordinate data, releasing regular reports, and working with international governments. Two further goals were to provide “an update on any efforts underway on the ability to capture or exploit discovered unidentified aerial phenomena” and 2) “an assessment of any health-related effects for individuals that have encountered unidentified aerial phenomena”. Then the first congressional hearing on UAPs in 54 years took place on the 17th of May 2022 with Ronald Moultrie the Under Secretary of Defence for Intelligence and Security, and Scott Bray the Deputy Director of Naval Intelligence called for questioning by the Congress (House Intelligence, 2022). In this hearing, the witnesses explained how the Navy revised the reporting procedures for military personnel who see UAPs and that they now have 400 unexplainable incidents. They reiterated the conclusions of the 2021 Pentagon report that; 1) these objects are real, 2) they have been a threat to flight safety, 3) they don't know what they are, 4) they are not secret government technology, 5) they are observable on multiple simultaneous sensor systems, and 6) a subset of these objects show ‘breakthrough technologies’ (capabilities that defy our current understanding of what is physically possible with current and experimental technology). At the hearing, Congress member Mike Gallagher asked the witnesses what they know about the 1967 Malmstrom incident where it is alleged that military guards observed a UAP hover over ten intercontinental



ballistic nuclear missiles, while captain Robert Salas was at the controls and witnessed all ten nuclear missiles be turned off and then on again while the UAP was present. The witnesses reported having no knowledge of such an event and were asked by Congress to look into the matter further.

*... the phenomenon is now being referred to as UAUP instead of UAP and that these objects are transmedium, meaning that they are capable of moving from space to air, and air to water with ease.*

At the Congressional hearings on UAPs (House Intelligence, 2022) three videos were shown and the witnesses explained that the triangle shapes hovering in two of the videos could be explained by the way in which light enters the lens (a Bokeh effect). However, they did not explain why or how nuclear military ships in the middle of the ocean on a secret training mission could be swarmed by drones for hours and have no idea where they came from (Corbell, 2021a). The third video of a UAP was taken on a pilot's personal phone and no other information was shared at the hearing. The author of the 2021 Pentagon report went public with his identity a year after the report was released and stated the following in relation to the triangle UAPs; "it is not a Bokeh effect (objects looking like triangles due to the shape of the camera lens), there is some autofocus error but there is no aperture inside this night vision goggle... that causes that... Then the blinking part... it is blinking 400 times a minute, but the FAA law is 100 time a minute for any aviation light" (Travis Taylor, interviewed by Rick and Bubba, 2022).

David Fravor was a pilot in 2004 as part of the Nimitz Carrier battle group who intercepted a UAP that he described as looking like a giant tic-tac (a commonly available mint sweet) (60 Minutes, 2021; PBS News Hour, 2021; Vice News, 2019). As he approached it in his plane, it spiraled up to meet his plane and then moved off at incredible speeds to a secret location called the CAP-point that only a few people knew. Some of the footage captured on film has become public but the radar data remains classified (Corbell, 2021b). Knuth and colleagues (2019) have estimated the acceleration of the Nimitz UAP to be between 75g to 5000g, which is important given that humans can only stand 9g for a brief period. The radar operator during the Nimitz event, Kevin Day,

has corroborated the pilot's accounts (Discovery, 2019) and added that there were multiple trans medium objects. Pilot Ryan Graves was part of the USS Roosevelt group in 2015 and he has gone public stating that he was seeing UAPs almost every day (60 Minutes, 2021), the objects flew in formation, showed no propulsion signatures and one was the shape of a cube surrounded by a translucent sphere. It is also interesting to note that an identical description was given by credible pilots as far back as 1960 (Rogen, 2022), at a time when such technology would not have been possible by humans.

Much of this prior data in the public realm; 1) lacks a repeatable and accessible chain of custody, and 2) was not collected in the context of a peer-reviewed systematic process or even an evidence-based assessment protocol. Yet despite these limitations, there has been enough revealed to inspire others to investigate this issue in a serious way. The astronomer Professor Avi Loeb has begun the Galileo Project (Harvard University, n.d.) in which he has turned his research attention to exploring the skies of the Earth rather than space. He aims to search for evidence of the phenomenon that is not restricted to classified sources and can be released to the public. The first journal dedicated solely to the study of UAPs has been created (Limina, n.d.). Other scientific research groups have been set up such as the International Coalition for Extraterrestrial Research (ICER, n.d.), the Scientific Coalition for UAP Studies (Scientific Coalition for UAP Studies, n.d.), and the Orb Research Bureau (Orb Research Bureau, n.d.). One of the first funding sources for UAP research has been proposed in the State of New Jersey (A.B. 4060, 2022) and Luis Elizondo has stated that he is writing a book that aims to reveal more of what he did in AATIP (That UFO Podcast, 2022). NASA has also revealed that it will be establishing its own UAP research program to review its data (NASA, 2022). By the time this is published it is likely that even more organizations and information will have become available to the general public that the reader is encouraged to seek out.

It has been suggested that breakthrough technologies could have been invented by another nation on Earth that has not gone public with their technology (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2021). But this is an unlikely explanation given that similar shapes have been sighted for at least 75 years. In 2004, one of the objects was observed by the pilot to resemble the shape of a tic-tac (60 Minutes, 2021). In Russia in 1948, it was described by a pilot as a "cucumber-shaped" UAP (Good, 1996, p. 224) and in 1991 another unrelated Russian pilot described it as a "yellow-white cigar-shaped object" (p.253). A ground observer in the military in 1953 described "fourteen cigar-shaped objects... in a loose V-formation... no sound or means of propulsion" (Good, 1996, p.341). Unidentified objects have been described for hundreds of years (Vallee, 2014). These objects are very similar in appearance and/or abilities but are described using the parlance of



the time. There are also numerous compelling accounts that the phenomenon has been witnessed during World War II (Rendall, 2021) and in the following years (Rendall, 2022a; 2022b). It is possible that any of the technologically advanced nations, such as Russia and China, could have developed breakthrough technology unbeknownst to the nations of the Five Eyes Alliance (Tossini, 2020), but it is implausible that they had this technology 75 years ago and have not used it to gain a military advantage. Flying in formation, responding to the actions of pilots, and the ability to jam sensors (60 Minutes, 2021), if true, would be signs of intelligent control. There also appears to be growing public evidence (Coulthart, 2021; Good, 1996; Hastings, 2017; Rendall 2021; 2022a; 2022b) that governments around the world have tried to cover up and downplay whatever the phenomenon is. However, the policy of denial appears to be shifting. Avril Hanes the Director of National Intelligence (Rennenkampff, 2021) and Bill Nelson the lead administrator for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration have both publicly (Twist UAP, 2022) stated that the extra-terrestrial hypothesis needs to be considered.

It is likely that more information will emerge pertaining to this topic based on two pieces of legislation. The *Intelligence Authorization Act 2023* section 703-705 (Senate Intelligence Select Committee, 2022) calls for a renaming of the UAP Office, improved reporting procedures, and reviewing all historical information. The *Authorization Act for 2023* (Authorisation Appropriates Act for Fiscal Year 2023, 2022) section 703-705 is yet to be approved but is expected to pass in December 2022 and proposes additional legally enforceable directives that are aimed at better understanding the phenomenon. It is important to note that these changes have been specifically made in response to the information provided in recent classified briefings. Something/s has been shown to Congress that is of such convincing significance that increased money, military resources and government investment have been put forth despite the pressing context of other international crises. This bill includes several important changes. The first is that the phenomenon is now being referred to as UAUP instead of UAP and that these objects are transmedium, meaning that they are capable of moving from space to air, and air to water with ease. It also calls for greater expansion of a centralized repository, increasing international cooperation, improving reporting, compiling annual reports including unclassified versions, improved information sharing, and department cooperation, developing a 'science plan' to better understand and replicate the phenomenon, to provide an update on their ability to capture and/or exploit UAUP, and to provide an update on the biological effects. Of particular note, is that for the first time, Congress has asked for information on the number of incidents in which UAUPs are observed close to

military nuclear assets, which has been well documented (Hastings, 2017). One of the most significant changes is that it has been proposed that both written and oral non-disclosure agreements can be waived with protection from liability and reprisals so that informants from within government and private contractors can come forward with information. Section 705 puts forth a request to review all information from January the first 1947 onwards across different agencies and to include the oral histories of credible witnesses. The request of Congress to review the information pertaining to UAUPs and give those who are mandated to deny their knowledge the freedom to come forward without reprisal is historic as it has never been done before at that level of public governance.

If there is another intelligence controlling physical objects in our reality, then it is not a great leap to consider that there may be some truth to other previously overlooked topics. Potentially related topics include but are not limited to; the abduction phenomenon (Mack, 1994; 1999), animal mutilations (Howe, 1989; Hall, 2009), crop circles (Howe, 2002), and UAP crash retrievals (Davis, 2002). Lacatski and colleagues in their book *Skinwalkers at the Pentagon* (2021) describe several incidents in which people at Skinwalker Ranch who were employees in a government-funded project to investigate the area experienced severe and overt paranormal activity but were under non-disclosure agreements not to reveal that information. The authors report that the extended family members and people of the community known to the employees experienced similar things as the employees even though the members of the community had no knowledge of what the employees at Skinwalker Ranch had experienced or where they had been. The authors hypothesized that there might be a "hitch-hiker effect" whereby experiences of the paranormal may spread like a contagion. The point here is not to prove or refute the veracity of these claims, because that cannot be done without more public data. But it is important to acknowledge that if the UAUP issue is going to be addressed seriously then the scientific community needs to combat the stigma of the subject and tackle all alleged potential aspects of the phenomenon with scientific rigor, transparency, critical thinking and an extremely open but rational mind.

The summary of what appears to be emerging from the above public information is that there could be objects in Earth's purview that demonstrate an ability to move in ways that defy gravity and that these objects are being taken seriously by Congress. The US government has stated that UAUP objects are real, they don't understand their propulsion system, they are observed on multiple simultaneous systems alongside the best military-trained eyewitnesses, and they are a potential threat to flight safety. Although not impossible, it is implausible that one of the

most sophisticated military organizations repeatedly cannot distinguish across multiple sensory platforms and agencies the difference between breakthrough technology not made by human hands and birds, planets, camera effects, sensor malfunction, and any other terrestrial and/or psychological explanations. It is possible that some, or even the majority, of UAUPs could eventually be explained. But it will only take one incident of irrefutable clear public evidence to permanently open this topic to humanity. Either way, whatever is going on, it is unlikely to be solved behind closed doors and humanity needs to shine an unbiased scientific critical light on what the data reveals and follow the conclusions where they lead, whether they be mundane or exotic.

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Caitlin A. Connor

# Traditional Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Intervention on Long-Term PTSD and Depression



**B**oth depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) occur at a high rate in urban populations in the US and can be very debilitating. There are high numbers of veterans returning from Middle Eastern conflicts, often with PTSD. Research has shown that veterans commit suicide at approximately a rate of 22 per day (O’Neal, 2015). Long-term depression often presents in combination with PTSD and has a recovery rate that is equally poor with a high rate of recidivism (Murray & Fortinberry, 2015). This suggests that for both groups, quality of life is suffering. Unfortunately, this is an area where Western conventional medical treatment may not have a long-term benefit (Steinert et al., 2015).

Chronic illness is a significant issue in healthcare today and the costs associated with chronic illness and chronic care are significant. Conventional treatment also has limited success in symptom improvement in many chronic conditions. Acupuncture has a history of treating chronic illness

successfully and cost-effectively (Cummings, 2009; Furlan et al., 2010; Hinman et al., 2014). Supporting research within the acupuncture community is a key component in promoting improved quality of life for humanity and in continuing to develop methods to successfully address healthcare issues.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has a long history with many different names but was first officially defined as PTSD in 1980 in the DSM-III (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). It has layers with both physiological and psychological effects. There are over 500 research references found in the National Library of Science database, showing that there has been a lot of research done on PTSD in the last ten years, but so far that research has failed to find a cure. Instead, it has focused primarily on reducing reactions in individuals to the point where they cannot react to situations in daily life that trigger symptoms. This does reduce visible symptoms but does not clear the underlying residuals from their traumas.

There is equally no cure for those experiencing severe chronic depression (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2022a). Antidepressants work for 35% to 45% of the depressed population, though more recent figures suggest rates as low as 30%. Antidepressants, particularly SSRIs, work only as well (or less) than placebos (Murray & Fortinberry, 2015). NIMH states that 16 weeks of therapy has a 47% relapse rate within 12 months and a 46% remission rate with medication (NIMH, 2022a). Acupuncture has a long history of successfully treating chronic health issues (Cummings, 2009; Furlan et al., 2010; Hinman et al., 2014; Linde et al., 2009; Manheimer et al., 2010; Vickers et al., 2012; Vickers & Linde, 2014), as well as influencing mental/emotional problems, despite cultural avoidance of any mention of mental health issues. (Hopton et al., 2014). As such it is a reasonable step to explore Traditional Chinese Medicine's (TCM's) impact on new and changing mental health issues.



Many programs across the country, such as the “Wounded Warrior Project,” are making efforts to address and resolve the underlying issues (Westat, 2015). Most interventions provided today still focus on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which is a form of talk therapy; Exposure Therapy (ET) (McLean et al., 2022); or Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) (Mayo Clinic, 2018). NIMH (2022b) has stated that

To be diagnosed with PTSD, a person must have all of the following for at least 1 month: at least one re-experiencing symptom, at least three avoidance symptoms, at least two hyper-arousal symptoms, symptoms that make it hard to go about daily life, go to school or work, be with friends, and take care of important tasks. PTSD is often accompanied by depression, substance abuse, or one or more of the other anxiety disorders. (NIMH, 2015).

While Western treatment has reasonable success with acute depression, it has been notably unsuccessful with the

treatment of chronic depression. Major depression is currently defined (NIMH, 2015) as:

...severe symptoms that interfere with your ability to work, sleep, study, eat, and enjoy life. An episode can occur only once in a person's lifetime, but more often, a person has several episodes. People with depressive illnesses do not all experience the same symptoms. The severity, frequency, and duration of symptoms vary depending on the individual and his or her particular illness. Signs and symptoms include: Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” feelings, feelings of hopelessness or pessimism, feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness, irritability, restlessness, loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex, fatigue and decreased energy, difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions, insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping, overeating, or appetite loss, thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts, aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment.

Acupuncture has a rich and different perspective from that of standard Western medicine and has a 3000-year history from which to pull. It is important to remember when researching traditional medicine forms, that there is often no direct correlation between diagnosis. There is no corresponding single TCM pattern that matches the Western diagnosis of PTSD and severe depression. However, there are trends in diagnosis that apply to this area of Western diagnosis such as Liver Yang Rising, as both are defined by a constellation of symptoms.

One of the most commonly diagnosed Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) patterns for PTSD is *Liver Qi Stagnation*. This covers a number of acute symptoms, such as emotional disturbance and insomnia, as well as some of the underlying patterns. Based on Connor (2022), this TCM diagnosis appears to be more of a secondary pattern and not the underlying cause. Heart Shen disturbance, caused by heat or a constitutional deficiency, is also commonly referenced in the literature (Kim et al., 2013), and includes symptoms such as anxiety, stress, and difficulty breathing, all of which are also common with PTSD.

Current information now maps the meridian system as overlapping parts of the lymphatic system (Ahn et al., 2005; Feinstein, 2010). It also appears to overlap elements of the nervous system. The concept of the release of “Qi,” or static bio-electric overcharge on an area of the lymphatic system is consistent with the evidence that the body has a variety of electro-dermal potentials across its surface (Becker & Selden,

1985; Flick, 2004) and that acupuncture points are strategic conductors of electromagnetic signals (Ahn et al., 2005, Feinstein, 2010, Lee et al., 2009).

The National Institute of Health Consensus Statement on Acupuncture (1998) provides a succinct summary of the gradually growing acceptance of acupuncture in the U.S.:

Acupuncture as a therapeutic intervention is widely practiced in the United States. While there have been many studies of its potential usefulness, many of these studies provide equivocal results because of design, sample size, and other factors. The issue is further complicated by inherent difficulties in the use of appropriate controls, such as placebos and sham acupuncture groups. However, promising results have emerged, for example, showing efficacy of acupuncture in adult postoperative and chemotherapy nausea and vomiting and in postoperative dental pain. There are other situations such as addiction, stroke rehabilitation, headache, menstrual cramps, tennis elbow, fibromyalgia, myofascial pain, osteoarthritis, low back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and asthma, in which acupuncture may be useful as an adjunct treatment or an acceptable alternative or be included in a comprehensive management program. Further research is likely to uncover additional areas where acupuncture interventions will be useful.

Qi Gong and meditation are also considered part of TCM. Qi Gong is defined as “an ancient Chinese healing art involving meditation, controlled breathing, and movement exercises”, (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b, para. 1), and meditation is defined as “the act or process of spending time in quiet thought” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a, para. 1).

Current research regarding acupuncture and PTSD is primarily focused on refugee populations and the military community. However, the quality of reports is fairly diverse, as is shown in the comparison between various careful reviews of the literature. For instance, Lee et al. (2013) present a meta-analysis of 52 out of 1480 studies focused on trauma spectrum responses to acupuncture treatments that met strict research criteria (Lee et al., 2013). Lee concludes that “acupuncture appears to be effective for treating headaches, and although more research is needed, seems to be a promising treatment option for anxiety, sleep disturbances, depression and chronic pain” (Lee et al., 2013, p.1). In contrast, Kim et al. (2013), were much more narrowly focused and detailed in their analysis. They did a systematic review of randomized controlled clinical trials or prospective clinical trials and of 136 only six met their criteria. They concluded that “acupuncture plus



moxibustion vs. SSRIs favored acupuncture plus moxibustion” (Kim et al., 2013, p. 1).

Moxibustion is a technique commonly used in TCM. It involves the burning of mugwort leaves either near or on the body to warm or energize areas that have been identified as cold or deficient. Further, recent studies further support the efficacy of acupuncture for the treatment of PTSD. Engel et al. (2014) demonstrated positive results, though with a small sample size of 55 subjects, with a 12-week intervention. Hollifield et al. (2007), showed a significant effect of acupuncture ( $p < 0.01$ ) in the PTSD group and also showed improvement in anxiety, depression, and sleep issues. Sniezek et al. (2013) found significant differences between acupuncture for depression and at least one control group in all six trials they reviewed. In addition, data showed continuing areas of secondary improvement. Overall “there is high-level evidence to support the use of acupuncture for treating major depressive disorder in pregnancy” (Sniezek et al., 2013, p. 1). Wang et al. (2014), showed  $p < 0.05$  on PTSD and depression for acupuncture, with SSRI compared to SSRIs only. Spackman et al. (2014) showed that acupuncture for depression was a cost-effective method of improving the overall quality of life, as contrasted to both counseling and usual care. Arvidsdotter et al. (2013) showed an improvement over conventional treatment for subjects with both anxiety and depression, though integrative therapy appeared to be equally as strong.

Acupressure is also a recognized component of TCM, and a modality that has researched effects. McPherson et al. (2013), show that self-care strategies can contribute to the treatment of PTSD. A survey by Feinstein (2010) showed that a variety of Energy Psychology tapping techniques on acupuncture points were successful interventions for the treatment of PTSD. Folkes (2002) showed similar results with Thought Field Therapy, a specific Energy Psychology method. Energy Psychology techniques which involve tapping on acupuncture points as a self-management technique for participants to use between regular acupuncture sessions may increase the effectiveness of treatments.

Connor, 2022 found that consistent improvements were shown when the presenting complaint was directly addressed and that significant shifts in all symptoms were seen in all three cases starting in week five of treatments (Connor, 2022). In all the cases, where there were comorbid issues, addressing the direct needs of the patient rather than the Western diagnosis, as would be done in Western medicine, showed a more direct benefit to the individual (Connor, 2022). Distinct improvement was made in significant areas of discomfort because they were directly addressed and not suppressed (Connor, 2022). Key findings were a reduction in PCL-C scores on an average of 18 points over the eight weeks, and that all subjects moved from the severe depression rating to the mild-moderate (Connor, 2022). Norming on the PCL-C suggests changes between 5-8 points over a substantially longer period primarily with the use of cognitive-behavioral treatment applications (Weathers et al., 1993). Most notably, an extended analysis of results within the individual answers to each of the questions by case on the PCL-C showed improvement in the area of chief complaint in each case study (Connor, 2022). In severe long-term depression, remission is possible but is not generally sustained. In cases where the severe depression has continued in excess of five years, remission is unusual and the Western standard of care is medication maintenance expected throughout the rest of the patient's life. It is important to note the frequent change of needling patterns and herbs in the treatment process in each of these cases in the study, as practitioners with limited training and standardized diagnosis skills should not be encouraged to treat individuals in these categories (Connor, 2022). Significant damage to the patients can occur in this very vulnerable population.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) treatment has shown success in improving PTSD and long-term severe depression. Comparisons between overall treatments would be needed, as well as the flexibility to build individual treatment plans focusing on the disparate areas of the individual chief complaint. Acupuncture shows promise as being able to treat a complicated mixture of psychological and physiological issues.

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