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**A Parapsychological Inquiry into Purportedly Anomalous
Telecommunication Phenomena with Considerations of their
Contribution to the Survival Hypothesis Debate**

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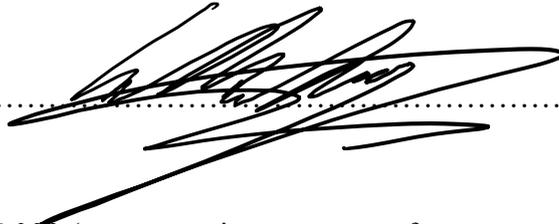
**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
the Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work (Route 2)**

2018

Author's Declaration

I, Callum E. Cooper, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled *A Parapsychological Inquiry into Purportedly Anomalous Telecommunication Phenomena with Considerations of their Contribution to the Survival Hypothesis Debate* and the work presented herein, are that of my own original thought. Any work that is not of my own original creation is declared by referencing of the original source.

Signature.....



Word Count: 15,000 (approx.: minus quotes, references and appendices)

Dedication

To Raven

My 'Rae' of light, my hope, my happiness, my reason.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was something which required much personal debate before deciding to commence on this second doctoral journey. I would like to thank Dr Mikel Burley (University of Leeds, UK) for advice and sharing his own journey on perusing a second doctorate, and the pros – and commonly assumed cons – of doing so. Thanks also should go to Dr Sara MacKian (Open University, UK), who informally discussed the notion with me and how the project could act as a post-doctoral project and useful extension of my first doctorate, of which, Dr MacKian was my external examiner.

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To Prof Chris Roe (University of Northampton, UK), for being a good friend and mentor in my journey thus far into exploring the nature of human life. Thank you for being a constant source of support and voice of reasoning, especially for why the research we are involved in is an important contribution to knowledge. I do hope you see this thesis as a pleasant surprise!

Acknowledgement should be given to Dr Robert Gilbert (editor: *The Christian Parapsychologist*) and Dr Janice Holden (editor: *Journal of Near-Death Studies*) for granting me permission to reproduce review correspondence within the appendix of this thesis.

Thanks to my examiners, Dr Craig Murray (Lancaster University, UK) and Dr Andrew Parker (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK), for taking the time to read this thesis and presenting me with some very deep questions – I enjoyed the challenge!

Thanks most of all go to the Society for Psychical Research and its Survival Research Committee. I was delighted to hear that they wished to support the project of producing a portfolio on the work of anomalous telecommunication experiences, combined with a critical commentary of some of the main published work of recent times. It was understood that this would assist my development of theories pertaining to the survival hypothesis in respect of telecommunication phenomena. This thesis/portfolio and commentary here-within, is intended to now rest in the library of the SPR. It is by no means a conclusive document, but a stepping stone to further thought and research, which in time I will present to the Society. I hope that in some way, it positively contributes to questions we might ask of consciousness/personality, how it operates, and how it strives to survive. These are questions which I feel are integral to the 'hard problem' of consciousness, and further emphasises how parapsychology is intertwined with the sciences, where mechanisms of mental and physical processes are yet to be understood.

Finally, Jo – thank you for supporting my endless writing and worldwide travelling in pursuit of *the bigger picture*.

Abstract

The study of anomalous telecommunication phenomena within the confines of standardised methods of the social sciences began with the published work of Rogo & Bayless (1979). This thesis offers a critical overview of published research and theories concerning how studying such phenomena have contributed to parapsychology and new knowledge. And, how appropriate the methods of inquiry have been to date. Included within, are reviews of four peer-reviewed papers, an extended book chapter and a book, all relating to the study of anomalies surrounding telecommunication. The publications cover the history of the topic, previous researcher biographies, sceptical approaches, the psychology of experiencers, modern analyses, and a critical consideration of criticisms raised of the research. Critical appraisal is given to the possible explanations that can be put to such reports, including: an anomalistic psychology approach, the survival hypothesis, super-psi theory, and finally, consideration of multiverse theory. The conclusion briefly offers suggestions for future progression, based on past and present thoughts for dealing with spontaneous cases and the psi vs. survival debate.

Publications Reviewed

- Cooper, C.E. (2010). Spontaneous cases concerning telephone calls and text messages. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 10 (2), 178-193.
- Cooper, C.E. (2012). *Telephone calls from the dead: A revised look at the phenomenon thirty years on*. Old Portsmouth: Tricorn Books.
- Cooper, C.E. & Foley, C.R. (2012). Did ET phone home, or was it the dead? Bridging ufology and psychical research with anomalous phone-call experiences. *Anomaly*, 46, 128-143.
- Cooper, C.E. (2014). An analysis of exceptional experiences involving telecommunication technology. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 78 (2), 209-222.
- Cooper, C.E. (2015). Telephone anomalies. In S.T. Parsons, & C.E. Cooper (Eds.), *Paracoustics: Sound and the paranormal* (pp. 107-138). Hove: White Crow Books.
- Cooper, C.E. (2018). Criticisms raised against the investigation of purportedly anomalous telephone occurrences. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 82 (1), 15-27.

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 – Thesis Structure

This PhD by published work contains the following structure:

In **Section 1**, I discuss the structure and themes of the thesis. I begin by outlining how the thesis has been structured (here within this section), followed by an overview of the thesis topic. I do this to provide a clear understanding of the phenomena which have been researched and discussed in the publications which are given a critical appraisal within this thesis. A rationale is provided, outlining the contributions such research *has* and *can* make to knowledge. Section 1 concludes with a summary of the introduction to the research topic and presented thesis.

In **Section 2**, the six publications which were submitted to the Manchester Metropolitan University, for consideration of a PhD by published work (see page vi), receive a critical appraisal in relation to existing literature and debates, both past and present. The publications submitted for this thesis date from 2010-2018, and include four peer reviewed papers, one book, and one book chapter.

In **Section 3**, I provide a commentary on how these publications have contributed to knowledge within parapsychology, theoretical physics (more specifically, discussions within paraphysics), and philosophy. The main question asked of these phenomena, is ‘what contribution do they make to the survival debate?’ this being, evidence suggestive of survival for human personality/memory beyond bodily death. This section is largely dedicated to this debate with particular reference to telecommunication anomalies.

Section 4 concludes the thesis. Given that strengths and limitations are discussed throughout Sections 2 and 3, the concluding remarks of Section 4 simply offer suggestions for future directions.

At the end of the thesis an appendices is included, presenting citations for known reviews of past (i.e., Rogo & Bayless, 1979) and present (Cooper) research on anomalous telecommunication phenomena, and correspondence regarding critiques of the research and rebuttals.

In this brief sub-section, the structure of this thesis has been outlined; the following section will define the themes of this thesis and that of the publications reviewed within.

1.2 – Anomalous Telecommunication Phenomena

This thesis includes a collection of publications concerning the investigation and analysis of reports of purportedly anomalous experiences involving telecommunication technology (i.e. interaction with the telephone: conversations, text messages, and voicemail messages) in order to explore their phenomenology, ontology and the surrounding epistemology. Such telecommunication experiences have been interpreted as anomalous, by some, in the sense that the experiences *appear* to the *experiencer* to be ‘paranormal’. In other words, we could say that “it may appear as unusual to the person having the experience in the sense that the processes involved in the experience appear to be ‘non-ordinary’” (Smith, 2010, p.1). Therefore, the investigation of such experiences and processes would be labelled a ‘parapsychological’ inquiry. Parapsychology can be defined as “the scientific study of experiences which, if they are as they seem to be, are in principle outside of the realm of human capabilities as presently conceived by conventional scientists” (Irwin & Watt, 2007, p.1). Thus, the literature included within this thesis and accompanying commentary, presents a critical approach to a parapsychological investigation of seemingly ‘anomalous telecommunication phenomena’.

Research into anomalous telecommunication phenomena began in 1977, and was presented in the form of a publically accessible book two years later by D. Scott Rogo and Raymond Bayless (1979). The study involved a collection of 50 such cases, which were then organised via the method of content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013; Rogo, 1971). Emerging themes from the content analysis presented the following types of telephone calls that people claimed to experience (Rogo & Bayless, 1979, p.19-40):

Type 1: Simple Calls – These are the most commonly reported phone calls from the dead. Typically, the dead caller says only a few words and is unresponsive to any questions asked. At this point the caller may say nothing at all and the line will go dead without any sound of the caller hanging up the phone or being cut off. Often, the recipient is aware the caller is dead, and recognises their voice.

Type 2: Prolonged Calls – These calls last for some time (30 minutes or so) and involve a conversation like any other telephone call. The recipient does not realise, until after the call, that the caller was in fact dead at the time. Due to the recipient of the call not knowing the caller is dead, this somehow seems to allow the conversation to last longer. Simple calls show that the

shock of knowing the caller is dead somehow leaves the conversation short, or the dead caller unresponsive.

Type 3: Answer Calls – These are cases where a living person makes a call to someone whom they do not realise is dead (or someone who simply wasn't home at the time the call was made) and yet they get an answer from what seems to be that very person. These calls are usually prolonged. No distinction was ever really made between these being calls to deceased or living persons. The key theme was that neither could have possibly answered in the given circumstances, and yet, upon making a call to them, they answered.

Rogo and Bayless (1979, p.30) reported the following type 1, where the recipient of the call later believed it to be their deceased friend, rather than displaying instant recognition of their voice, as is often the case with *Simple Calls*. Nevertheless, it is a clear example of how such telephone calls might play out:

Last year a friend of mine named Elsie died. She was the only Elsie I knew apart from an old lady aged 82, who hasn't got a phone and has never rung me anyway. A few weeks after the death my phone rang, so I answered "Hello". But all I heard was a faint "Elsie, Elsie" repeated a few times and getting fainter and fainter till it finally faded out. I kept on saying, "Put your money in", but that was all I heard. It was not till some time later that I suddenly realized that it would have been Elsie. I was not surprised as I believe in this kind of thing, having one or two experiences of a similar kind.

The majority of the calls were reported to be communication with the dead, as interpreted by the experient, due to specific information mentioned by the caller and/or their recognisable voice characteristics. A fourth type of call was found in which people would intend to make a call but changed their mind at the last minute; however, the person they intended to call insisted that the call still took place. These were labelled "Intention Calls". For example, the following case was experienced by Rogo himself during data collection for the original (Rogo & Bayless, 1979) study:

It was 4 o'clock on a bright Thursday afternoon, and I was lying on my living room couch thinking about making a phone-call to a psychologist I knew at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute. Although I intended to make the call, I never did. About six that evening, though, I got the shock of my life when a call came in from the Institute and from the office of the very

psychologist I had thought about calling. The call was from her research assistant saying that he was 'answering my message'. When I asked what in blazes he was talking about, he told me at 4 p.m. a call had come in to them from me. The caller had left my name, and had asked the call be returned!

(Rogo, 1986, pp.116-117)

The study by Rogo and Bayless (1979), and its methods, will be discussed in more detail within this thesis, especially when reviewing Cooper (2018a). Within this subsection, the topic of anomalous telecommunication phenomena has been defined with examples. The portfolio of work submitted for this thesis addresses recent thoughts and research on such phenomena, which commenced in 2009, thirty years on from the original research (cf. Rogo & Bayless, 1979; see Appendix A for a list of original reviews). The rationale for such continued work shall now be addressed.

1.3 – Purpose of Recent Research

Why is research into these specific phenomena of importance to science? I would like to begin answering this point by highlighting the mission statements of some of the leading research bodies within parapsychology; such as the Society for Psychical Research, the Rhine Research Centre and the Parapsychology Foundation:

The purpose of the Society for Psychical Research which was founded in 1882, is to examine without prejudice or prepossession and in a scientific spirit those faculties of man, real or supposed, which appear to be inexplicable on any recognized hypothesis. [www.spr.ac.uk]

The Rhine Research Center explores the frontiers of consciousness and exceptional human experiences in the context of unusual and unexplained phenomena. The Rhine's mission is to advance the science of parapsychology, to provide education and resources for the public, and to foster a community of individuals with personal and professional interest in PSI [www.rhine.org]

Since its incorporation in 1951, the Parapsychology Foundation has remained committed to two goals: To support scientific and academic research into psychic phenomena; and to provide professional resources and information to the academic and lay communities [www.parapsychology.org]

All such organisations, supporting and promoting research into parapsychology, have done so in an attempt to achieve understanding of *how* and *why* reports of anomalous experiences occur, in a quest for epistemological and ontological understanding. In the first editorial of the *Journal of Parapsychology* (McDougall, 1937), it is made clear that all such reports of anomalous claims demand thorough investigation, and should be faced with strict constructive criticism in order to explore all conventional options for how a given phenomenon may ‘appear’ to be anomalous. This is reflected in the mission statement of the SPR, where reports of perceived ‘real or supposed’ phenomena should be investigated that ‘appear’ inexplicable; thus acknowledging the innumerable conventional scientific explanations that may apply to a given phenomenon, before exploring new theories for the potential processes involved which stem beyond conventional science (cf. Irwin & Watt, 2007, p.1).

If we are faced with reports of human experiences and/or abilities which do not appear to conform to current scientific paradigms, what would we gain by attempting to learn more about them? What we have come to know is that there are three distinct domains of the ‘extended mind’ which parapsychology seeks to understand: (1) *extra-sensory perception* (ESP), this being any mental activity such as clairvoyance, telepathy or precognition (see for example: Rhine, 1934; Roe, 2009; Watt, 2017), (2) *psychokinesis* (PK) being instances of physical phenomenon such as the inexplicable movement and manipulation of objects (see for example: Braude, 2015; Randall, 1982; Varvoglis & Bancel, 2015), and (3) *survival*, being any phenomena which suggests survival of mental functioning and/or human personality, outside of the body or beyond bodily death, such as out-of-body experiences and near-death experiences, through to apparitions, mediumship, reincarnation and aspects of the telephone anomalies – to name but a few (see for example: Coly & McMahan, 1993; Doore, 1990; Gauld, 1977; Storm & Thalbourne, 2006). All of these three areas to date have received extensive research and debate since organised investigation began almost a century and half ago (for an overview, see Beloff, 1993; Cardeña, Palmer & Marcusson-Clavertz, 2015; Irwin & Watt, 2007).

Therefore, parapsychology is concerned with exploring issues directly related to the mind-body problem. Trying to find the answers to ‘what consciousness is’ and ‘how it comes to be’, has become casually known as the ‘hard problem’ (Chalmers, 1996), and sits well within the issues parapsychology deals with – ‘from whence does it come, and whither does it go’. Whether mind (consciousness) and brain (the biological organism)

work as one, or if mind can function beyond the confines of the physical brain, is still a topic of much debate between physicalists (aka materialists) and dualists, with much parapsychological research suggesting the latter is the case (for examples of such debates, see: Colborn, 2011; Kastrup, 2014; Kelly, Crabtree & Marshall, 2015). Rhine (1948) believed that because such phenomena are so rare – or rather *subtle*, since daily accounts of psi have been reported to be highly common (e.g. Sheldrake, 2003) – for a long time they were understandably ignored by science. Henry (1989) commented that “many critics are simply unaware of the quality and quantity of evidence and the few that are, find even good evidence hard to accept due to priori belief that psi is simply not possible” (p.41). Adding to this, Green (1963) stated that “the importance of parapsychology as a whole is that it reveals our ignorance of the world as it is. It touches the existing sciences at many points, and no scientist who is prepared to take its evidence at all seriously can fail to realize how far we are from a unified world view” (p.87). Thus, gaining further understanding of parapsychological phenomena would lead a way, or least give some further clues as to the hard problem of consciousness, in addition to understanding why in many cases people interpret something to be paranormal when in fact conventional explanations can apply (French & Stone, 2014).

When we consider the telecommunication anomalies, although they may be a unique subset of phenomena within parapsychology, they appear to include all aspects of psi: information exchanges (ESP), the physical ringing or other activity within the given technology and audible voices (PK), and in some cases, alleged communication with deceased individuals (survival). Therefore, to investigate such phenomena may provide a route to further understanding the extended mind, as they provide much wealthier information than any other parapsychological phenomenon, given that all aspects of the field can be explored under one roof. Since we are aware of reports of such spontaneous experiences, they deserve investigation. To sum up, in terms of their potential contributions to knowledge, they may teach us at the very least, two things:

- (1) How various psychological and environmental factors may produce an effect that appears like anomalous phenomena to the experient (anomalous psychology).
- (2) What such anomalies appear to tell us about the extended mind – including circumstances in which they occur and their potential purpose. That is, if conventional explanations do not appear to apply.

In this section, the purpose of the research has been discussed. This has mainly been done through a concise discussion of the mission statements of parapsychology, and the ultimate contributions it can make to science and our understanding of human potential, that is, if current scientific paradigms do not appear to account for the phenomena we are faced with.

1.4 – Section Summary

In this introductory section I have outlined the structure of the thesis. Following that, I defined the topic of the thesis, that being, publications focused on reports of anomalous phenomena concerning telecommunication technology. Parapsychology and what is meant by ‘anomalous’ were then defined. Explanations of parapsychology (mission statements of popular organisations) and what the field aims to investigate and understand were then presented. Reports of anomalous telecommunication phenomena appear to incorporate all the domains that parapsychology typically covers: ESP, PK and survival. Some justification was then provided to explain how researching any of these elements provides a contribution to knowledge, and in particular, to the mind-body debate. Focusing purely on telecommunication phenomena often offers all parapsychological domains within a single case, and therefore should be of interest to parapsychology and its progression to formulating sustained theories for any – or all – of its domains.

The following section will now present all publications that make up the skeletal structure of this thesis. They will be supported with a commentary surrounding what they attempted to achieve, and what – if any – theories and research before or after their publication may offer in terms of additional thought (i.e. possible strengths and limitations).

Section 2: Critical Appraisal

2.1 – Section Overview

In Section 1, the structure of the thesis was outlined. Definitions and examples of the central theme of the publications within were given, followed by a brief discussion of the contributions to knowledge they can make.

In this following section (Section 2), the publications submitted for this thesis are given discussion. Submissions include four peer-reviewed papers (Cooper, 2010, 2014, 2018a; Cooper & Foley, 2012), a book (Cooper, 2012a), and a book chapter (Cooper, 2015).

The personal advisor for the thesis – Dr Neil Dagnall – and myself, considered the number of publications included. Some PhDs by publication may include anywhere from six to ten peer reviewed papers – and perhaps more in some cases – to constitute the body of such a thesis. In this particular case, we, and indeed the examiners of the publications submitted for this thesis, saw the quality and quantity equivalent to that of perhaps more traditional portfolios. Aside from the four peer reviewed papers included, the book (Cooper, 2012a) covers a range of history, researcher biographies, discussions of known studies, and theoretical considerations. This publication alone includes ten chapters of some sixty thousand words, and would easily be split and edited into three or four papers for peer reviewed journal submission. Similarly, the chapter included for review in this thesis (Cooper, 2015), covers a wide variety of history and research issues as concisely as possible, though it is quite an extensive chapter in relation to the others included within the anthology (Parsons & Cooper, 2015). Therefore, the body of work submitted was considered of sufficient quantity required of a PhD by publication.

In the following sub-sections, these publications will each receive a discussion of their aims and contributions to knowledge regarding the central theme. This will be carried out in the order they were published, and consequently as the research on the topic progressed.

2.2 – A Sceptical Approach

Cooper, C.E. (2010). Spontaneous cases concerning telephone calls and text messages. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 10 (2), 178-193. ISSN: 1445-2308

Besides some casual articles published on the topic of ‘telephone anomalies’ by myself (see Appendix B for a full list), Cooper (2010) marked one of the first peer-reviewed papers, discussing new thoughts and approaches to such phenomena. My interest in the subject began between 2008 and 2009. This was due to news reports hitting the internet regarding an alleged ‘phone-call from the dead’ from the late Mr Charles Peck. Following his death in a train collision in California, that same night during the rescue-team efforts, his family reported receiving numerous calls from his mobile phone to theirs, with the family assuming that perhaps he was trapped in the wreckage. All that was heard when answering was static. On calling Mr Peck back, his mobile phone went straight to voicemail, as though it was switched off or the battery had died. It transpired that Mr Peck had died on first impact and that the mobile phone was never recovered. Although a number of conventional explanations could be applied to this particular case, especially regarding the presumed damage of Mr Peck’s phone, this case was widely perceived by those involved and enforced by media reports as a ‘phone-call from the dead’. Although the events may have occurred as reported, the media labelling the event as a ‘paranormal occurrence’ served largely to entertain than to consider the scientific implications of what was being suggested. Not only have recent studies given some consideration to how seemingly paranormal phenomena is being portrayed and represented in the media (e.g. Hill, 2011; Jones, 2017; Thomas & Cooper, 2016), it should also be noted that instances of strange occurrences involving the telephone have even been adapted from real-world reports and used within popular fiction as opposed to traditional ghost stories (e.g. Cohen, 1990; Dahl, 2012, pp.183-192).

Shortly following the media reports of Mr Peck, I obtained the original study of telephone anomalies by Rogo and Bayless (1979), and set about exploring accounts from modern day in an attempt to understand the psychology involved and physics of the technology. It seemed logical that since technology had progressed, especially with regards to telecommunication, so too would reports of anomalous experiences associated with them – as Bayless (1980) predicted. Considering how the account of Mr Peck was immediately portrayed, it seemed important to produce a paper that would

(a) consider some new technological advances which people use and may consequently report to be associated with anomalous phenomena, and (b) explore conventional explanations for such occurrences, and ways of reaching the most likely cause of such phenomena (assessing the ontology).

The paper outlines three case studies, involving perceived anomalous text messages and voicemail messages. The communications were generally interpreted by the experiencers to be from known deceased individuals. However, in one of the cases of anomalous text messages, it was stated that they had come from a deceased girl, unknown to the experiencers. Therefore, not all cases can be assumed to be associated with, or a bi-product of, loss and bereavement (cf. Cooper, Roe & Mitchell, 2015). The paper also discusses the importance of spontaneous cases (e.g. Alvarado, 1996; Rhine, 1957; Watt, 1990), as well as understanding the basic mechanics of telecommunication technology and how it might produce effects which appear anomalous, but are in fact basic faults or seldom witnessed functions. The main concluding discussion of the paper gave focus to using ‘Occam’s razor’ as a methodological approach to such reports.

Occam’s razor, is the principle that the simplest explanation (that which requires the least amount of logical steps to get to) is always the most likely explanation for a given process/phenomenon (Tornay, 1939). Therefore, as French and Stone (2014) state, it “implies that we cannot suppose the existence of paranormal processes without exhausting all the alternatives” (p.225). In the paper, the application of Occam’s razor appeared to work well for exploring all likely reasons as to why the experiences reported within the case studies appeared to the experiencers as anomalous. This often fell in line with manipulation of a telecommunication systems and failure on the experiencers’ part to appraise coincidence. French and Stone (2014, pp.224-227) give a clear and recent overview of the process and views on eliminating conventional explanations before considering new processes which we currently label as ‘anomalous’.

However, Domingos (1999) has argued that Occam’s razor is unfounded as a *universal principle*. This is unintentionally supported by Braithwaite and Dewe (2014), who presented a paper suggesting that neuroscience has conclusively demonstrated that dualist notions of the near-death experience (NDE) were simply not possible (I shall discuss in Section 3 why this debate is still ongoing). However, I would say here that even though Braithwaite and Dewe’s paper presented the quirky title of ‘Occam’s Chainsaw’ to suggest absolute certainty of their ideas, the content of the paper itself demonstrates misuse of Occam’s principle, especially due to ignoring elements of the

NDE of interest to parapsychology. This includes instances of veridical information received during the events, which the authors chose to ignore rather than explain within the context of Occam's razor. Domingos (1999) essentially argued that if Occam's razor is wrongly applied, significant opportunities for new learning can be missed, but equally, it should be restricted to the few applications where it is clearly appropriate. For parapsychological phenomena – in some instances – problems and pitfalls may occur within its application. Any researcher applying it should use critical thinking within this process to make justifiable conclusions with regards to all the available evidence they face.

I would argue that it has an appropriate place within the investigation of spontaneous cases, but should be used with caution. If we have instances of multiple witnesses to an event and/or veridical information, often the conventional explanations (such as self-deception and misinterpretation, for example) instantly become limited. Then the easiest explanation would be to say that the experience occurred due to a telepathic exchanged, as was argued by early researchers of psychical phenomena (i.e. Myers, 1903; Podmore, 1894); has been demonstrated widely within the population and in relation to communication technology (e.g. Sheldrake, 2003, 2014); and through controlled laboratory research (Cardena, 2018; Radin, 2018, pp. 64-168). Of course, this would bring limitations, potentially missing psychological processes or environmental factors that may apply. It would also leave us at an incomplete answer, given that ESP in general is not fully understood in terms of mental cognition and neuropsychology – although extensive research has been carried out and our epistemology on the matter is steadily advancing (see Williams, 2015). Therefore, logical justified steps of elimination are essential.

In summary, this paper set out to explore advances in reports of seemingly anomalous telecommunication, given practically no research had been carried out on the matter since 1979 by D. Scott Rogo and Raymond Bayless. The approach taken was to present three distinctly different case studies that were sent to me where experiencers could not find conventional explanations for the occurrence (instances of phone-calls, voicemails and text messages). My approach and main message of this paper is to be sceptical and critical but without simply dismissing how the cases have been interpreted by those who 'experienced' them. Suggestions were given for the use of Occam's razor, with some concern at the time for misuse of this principle (Martínez-Taboas, 1983).

However, it has been deemed an appropriate investigative and analytical method, especially within spontaneous cases of parapsychological concern.

2.3 – A Return and Revaluation of the Phenomena

Cooper, C.E. (2012). *Telephone calls from the dead: A revised look at the phenomena thirty years on*. Old Portsmouth: Tricorn Books.

From noting the limited information within the public domain on these phenomena at the time, this publication was produced as an attempt to update the original work of Rogo and Bayless (1979), with both being presented in the form of a publicly accessible book, while still displaying scholarly practice and methodological rigour. This publication presents a substantial overview of the topic. It begins with defining the topic of anomalous telecommunication phenomena and the sciences which are responsible for studying such claims (i.e. French & Stone, 2014; Irwin & Watt, 2007). This follows with a concise biography of both David Scott Rogo and Raymond Bayless from their research to personal lives. A detailed history of such forms of alleged communication with the dead is given, outlining purposeful attempts by various individuals to build such devices (notably amongst these figures were Thomas Edison and Harry Price) and historical spontaneous accounts. Since this publication, additional literature has appeared regarding such historical items, including contributions by Noakes (2016) and Josiffe (2018).

The body of the book (Chapters 4-6) offers what was at the time of 2012, a new analysis of a case collection – but it should be noted that a small scale study had been carried out in Italy (Biondi, 1984) and more recently, one in France (Kasprowicz, 2016). The research was carried out in the same manner as the original analysis (Rogo & Bayless, 1979) using a qualitative approach to content analysis (see Krippendorff, 2013). This process shall be discussed further in Section 2.5 regarding a formal report on the analysis. However, at this point, the analysis was written in a very informal manner, for the purpose of public understanding of social science research and the methods that may be employed to the understanding of parapsychological experiences within the real-world setting.

The analysis left readers with a set of five characteristic themes for the telecommunication phenomena, essentially explaining the ways in which seemingly unexplained telephone calls would play out. Although content could not demonstrate nor explain whether anomalous process were present, I explained how it could at least tell us about characteristics of any given phenomena we are not familiar with.

Therefore, I attempted to help the reader place such experiences within a conventional worldview, by exploring the possible psychological mechanisms that could account for why the calls were perceived as anomalous, thus taking an anomalistic psychology approach (French & Stone, 2014) and applying my previous work (Cooper, 2010).

If we have taken conventional explanations as far as possible for these phenomena – looking into the psychology, physics and environmental factors – then we are obliged to explore parapsychological theories for claims made that would entertain ESP, PK, and potential evidence for survival. Therefore, Chapters 8-9 considered such scenarios and how various theories might apply and allow for direct explanations in certain cases, rather than a series of considered and unlikely conventional explanations which would go against Occam's razor due to a number of steps required over a psi-based theory.

The book concluded in the same fashion as the original (see Rogo & Bayless, 1979, pp.149-164) offering a peer critique of the phenomena and methods of investigation. In the original work, three distinguished parapsychologists were involved: Dr Gertrude Schmeidler, Dr John Beloff and Dr John Palmer. In the present critique, Dr John Palmer agreed to offer further constructive criticism. Dr James Beichler, known for his research surrounding the survival hypothesis (Beichler, 2008), also agreed to offer his critique of the research I had carried out. It was my hope that Beichler would offer an alternative way of thinking to that of previous scholars, given his own background in physics (as opposed to psychology), with his own doctorate having focused on paraphysics (a branch of physics which explores seemingly anomalous processes, much in the same way as parapsychology, but with emphasis on physical effects). The third person to offer critique was John Randall (a biologist based in Warwickshire). Although by the time I completed the book Randall had passed away (Cooper, 2011), we had had extensive correspondence, and met a few times, in which we discussed the phenomena in question. Randall was a noted figure in parapsychology (Randall, 1975, 1982) and a long-time member of the Society for Psychical Research. Therefore, in paying homage to Randall, I extracted his comments from correspondence to act as the third critique.

The intention of this book was to act as a spring board to more rigorous research. I had appeared on TV and radio to discuss the phenomena which lead to some people coming forward and reporting their own experiences. I had also made contact with Dr Elizabeth McAdams (President of the International Foundation for Survival Research, Southern California, USA) – who had studied under Raymond Bayless (Cooper, 2012b) – and Jack Rogo, the father of D. Scott Rogo. I travelled out to California in 2012 to

interview them and gave a public talk to the IFSR on the research I had conducted to that point. I continued to speak publically about these experiences in order to reach out to international audiences and gather more cases for analysis (see Appendix B).

With the publication of this book, it helped provide me with more material and discussion, since various journals decided to review it (see Appendix C). Further literature support and data began to grow as a consequence of this work. If this publication achieved anything on its own, besides feeding public interest in parapsychological phenomena, it led to me receiving some correspondence from the public that the book had helped them come to terms with their own experiences and realise that they were not alone or necessarily suffering from any undiagnosed mental health issue. This is something which Krippner (2006) predicted as a consequence of the first study (Rogo & Bayless, 1979), while Evrard (2017) has recently offered advice as to how a clinical parapsychological perspective can be given in helping people who feel troubled as a consequence of anomalous telecommunication experiences. In my own original doctoral research, I further confirmed that any anomalous experiences reported specifically by the bereaved naturally helps them with coping and loss (Cooper, 2017), and even more so when comparing their experience to that of others and documentation of such accounts. Therefore, the book had some practical applications, beyond parapsychological inquiry and philosophical discussion of whether such phenomena could demonstrate the presence of psi processes.

2.4 – Cooper & Foley (2012) ‘What Affects Interpretation of the Phenomena?’

Cooper, C.E., & Foley, C.R. (2012). Did ET phone home, or was it the dead? Bridging ufology and psychical research with anomalous phone call experiences. *Anomaly*, 46, 128-143. www.assap.ac.uk

This article was co-authored with C.R. Foley (Clay R. Foley). Our paths had crossed as a result of not only the book (Cooper, 2012a), but also because of my data collection efforts in reaching out via the media for claims of telecommunication experiences and related interests. Foley’s background is in forensic criminal investigation, but he has always had a side interest in the literature of parapsychology and claims of anomalous phenomena. Foley was very much aware of Rogo’s work in general, and sent me a copy of his own review of *Phone Calls from the Dead* (Rogo & Bayless, 1979), which appeared in *The Canadian Ufologist* (Foley, 1996). Consequently, this triggered ideas for collaboration. His review gave focus towards the end on how some people claimed to have been contacted by extra-terrestrial lifeforms, via the telephone. Although I had given some mention to these claims in my own book (Cooper, 2012a, pp.87-88), I had not gone into any depth on the subject and why such interpretations in the reports differ. Therefore, Cooper and Foley (2012) discusses the overlaps between parapsychology and ufology, where interpretation of the phenomena appear to be moulded by experiencers’ personal lives (and hobbies) and social contexts.

The social psychology of those who report such phenomena appears to shed possible light on why some instances of seemingly unusual telephone calls are reported the way they are. Indeed, Rogo (1977a) had noted this to some extent in previous work. In instances where people had interests in gazing at the night sky and witnessing UFOs as a hobby (UFO: meaning unidentified flying object), this came with assumptions and mis-interpretations of their day-to-day world. For example, Rogo (1977a, p.157-159) discussed instances of UFO witnesses believing that they had been followed by “Men in Black” (MIB) or government agents, due to their interests and prying into seemingly unexplained phenomena, which many believe the government wish to suppress from public knowledge regarding extra-terrestrial activity (for historical overviews of these matters, see Clarke, 2015; Robertson, 2016). This went so far as people claiming they had received telephone calls from MIBs, and even extra-terrestrials themselves, describing the voices as “monotone” and with “machine like quality” (Cooper & Foley, 2012, p.133). In reference to Keel’s (1975) discussion of such cases, Rogo (1977a)

notes that whatever intelligence is behind the telephone calls they appear to “mimic real persons” and in some cases “do sound like practical jokes, but others are more complex” (p.159). We may question how often such reports occur, yet regarding any extra-terrestrial activity Love (1990) noted in writing to *The Skeptic* that even by the beginning of the 1990s, automated call-lines were established as a place for people to report their experiences – especially those troubled by them. Thus, interest for the subject and people claiming such experiences were increasing, and in many cases were likely linked with popular TV shows regarding extra-terrestrial activity (Clarke, 2015; Sparks, Pellechia, & Irvine, 1998).

The paper argued that a lot of seemingly anomalous telephone calls, and activity relating to the telecommunication technology, can be explained through understanding the social circumstances and interests of the person reporting the experience. People reporting to have been witness to UFOs, often have a general interest in ufology literature, or on the far extreme, even report having been abducted by aliens (cf. French, 2001; Rogo, 1980). Within those cases, it also appears that some people interpret their experience to be attributed to extra-terrestrial related sources (either the MIB or aliens themselves). In contrast, people with an interest in more parapsychological phenomena, such as ghosts, hauntings, or have lost loved ones and are in a state of bereavement, have typically attributed such experiences to be instigated by the dead. Baker (1996) has argued that when the mind is focused on various personal needs (including the want for anomalous experiences to occur), the experient may adopt ‘selective amnesia’ – especially in the case of the bereaved – which creates the desired experience. For example, when a call-centre telephones someone trying to offer a product for sale, the receiver of the call may imagine the voice of the dead, or in other cases, they may hallucinate the entire ringing of the phone and conversation – depending on their mental state, general health, and any medication they may be on. Baker (1996) further argues that this might be why Rogo and Bayless (1979) noted that in around 50% of their cases, the call companies found no record of such calls taking place at the times reported by the experient. Indeed, when there is only one witness to such an experience, it becomes their word against these possible conventional alternatives and many more, rather than jumping ahead to anomalous processes. To consider the presence of anomalous processes would potentially require veridical information, multiple witnesses, or evening recordings.

Baker's (1996) theory may also apply to those who report telecommunication anomalies attributed to aliens. Any worry, or paranoia, attributed to their prior experiences of witnessing UFOs, may become included within their interpretation of telephone calls or even text messages which appear to be irregular – “wish fulfilment and psychological need can, indeed, do strange things to the mind” (p.193). When in a state of bereavement, anomalous experiences appear to produce a positive impact on the experient, as a natural aid to coping and recovery (Cooper, 2017). However, Rogo and Bayless (1979) did note that in a very small percentage of cases, people had reported personal enemies allegedly calling the living following their death – which would support the idea of personal worry and paranoia being added to their interpretation of a normal call or telecommunication fault. Indeed, there are a few examples of negative experiences within bereavement cases, but research so far seems to suggest that this is just due to the instant reaction of the experience being spontaneous and therefore having taken the experient by surprise (Jakeman & Cooper, 2018; also see Coelho, Tierney & Lamont, 2008; Kramer, Bauer, & Hövelmann, 2012). Even so, the experiences still demonstrate themselves to be spontaneous in their occurrence. Anderson (1981) attempted to argue that people ‘expect’ or ‘anticipate’ a ‘paranormal telephone call to happen’, while Rogo (1981) argued that people don’t appear to expect strange telephone calls – at least those who reported experiences to him didn’t – nor should personal loss or anxiety lead to hallucinations to the extent of telephone conversations. People do however, expect calls from living individuals, which may then appear to have anomalous aspects (e.g. Brown & Sheldrake, 2001). Anderson and Rogo, did however, agree that a great number of other conventional explanations may apply.

Rogo (1977a) makes a final point on extra-terrestrial related calls which supports the comments of John Randall (see Cooper, 2012a, pp.165-168), in that these calls could be a simple hoax. If the experient is known for their interest in UFOs and aliens (and even life after death) it should not be dismissed out of hand that someone would be cruel enough to ‘prank’ the experient – “unfortunately, some people *are* naturally cruel” (Randall, cited in Cooper, 2012a, p.167). Rogo (1977a) states in his concluding remarks that “If these calls were a joke, they were purposeless. Yet, the level of mimicry is astounding. The knowledge the calls revealed seems paranormal, and this proves that no totally normal explanation could account for them” (p.163). Rogo attempts to support this claim by quoting the case of the call he made to the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Unit as mentioned in section 1.2 of this thesis. I cannot totally agree with Rogo on these latter points. Only if

such an experience includes multiple witnesses, veridical information, or recordings, does it begin to add extra barriers against the conventional explanations we may apply for the occurrence. Even with these additional features, conventional explanations have been known to still apply through an exceptional chain of events and circumstances (*sometimes* exceptional experiences have exceptional explanations).

Ufology gives focus to phenomena outside of the field of parapsychology, and therefore, little detailed focus has been given to these particular overlaps with telecommunication experiences and their possible ontology. Overlaps have been made (e.g. Basterfield, 2001; Cassirer, 1988; Evans, 1984; Imbrogno, 2009; Rogo, 1980; Wise, 2017), but to the broader aspects of UFOs with respect to alien abductions and the links with psi. Although there is much room for further research, those few cases that do fail to present conventional explanations do also appear to present a *prima facie* case for psi, as argued by Rogo (1977a). Alternatively, consideration of the ‘multiverse’ theory may be of equal and/or alternative relevance (e.g., Carr, 2008; Imbrogno, 2009). This shall be discussed in more detail in Section 3 of this thesis.

2.5 – Cooper (2014) ‘A Peer Reviewed Analysis’

Cooper, C.E. (2014). An analysis of exceptional experiences involving telecommunication technology. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 78, 209-222. ISSN: 0022-3387

This research paper was produced following the analysis that took place as discussed in sub-section 2.3, and due to peer comments made within the work of Rogo and Bayless (1979, pp.149-164) regarding scientific standards and the acceptability of the research topic. Schmeidler (see Rogo & Bayless, 1979, p.150) voiced concerns of the format in which the original study by Rogo and Bayless was published (i.e. in the form of a publicly accessible book, further discussed in the publication of sub-section 2.7) and those same concerns could be applied to my own research which was first published within *Telephone Calls from the Dead* (Cooper, 2012a). Such order to the presentation of parapsychological research has been argued overtime in various forums – “The results of such research after meticulous verification should naturally be published first in the scientific literature and only afterwards in the popular press” (Zinchenko, Leontiev, Lomov & Luria, 1974, p.17). Therefore, the aim was to take the informal presentation of further research and findings into accounts of anomalous telecommunication phenomenon, and write them up for a formal report in a credible peer-reviewed journal of relevance.

The paper was published in 2014 in the *Journal of Parapsychology* (est. 1937), a publication of the Parapsychological Association which is also an affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In recent years, it is also gaining in impact factor. I considered this the most relevant place in which to present the research findings formally, to an audience familiar with the previous researchers, the literature, and findings which they themselves could make use of in their own research efforts.

The study involved the gathering of 50 cases suggestive of anomalous telecommunication phenomena, researched as far as possible, and with enough qualitative information to be able to be subjected to a qualitative analysis. The form of analysis that was taken acted as an extension of the use of content analysis by Rogo and Bayless (1979), and therefore, themes were to be examined much closer and in relation to previously established characteristic/themes of the phenomena. Thematic analysis was applied to the dataset, following the procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke

(2006). The reasoning for this was to explore what changes – if any – would have taken place thirty years on from the original data set, given changes in technology with emails, text messages, and video-calls. Additionally, Bayless (1980) had proposed that reports of anomalous experiences would continue as technology advanced.

Schmeidler's request for a more respectable and scientific standard of reporting is understandable, especially within the domain of parapsychology given the claims that are being examined. In some instances, parapsychology has suffered from moving goal-posts when answering to the wider demands of science (Roe, 2010). For example, Rhine (1934) had helped introduce standardised methods of testing and statistical analysis into parapsychology, at the request of the wider sciences for recognition. However, upon doing so, such demands were still not enough to gain full acceptance, and yet, parapsychology was performing to more rigorous standards of methods and analysis than many other sciences (Horn, 2009; Rao, 1982). This same issue has occurred with regards to criticism of qualitative analysis within parapsychology – which shall be given further discussion in sub-section 2.7.

Publishing a formal report on telecommunication phenomena in a peer reviewed journal meant that to some extent, the topic could be given more serious consideration given that the formal and recognised methods and analyses of the social sciences had been applied – in an attempt to understand them better. As French (2013) has argued, this makes the study of anomalous claims no different to anything else we research with regards to human beliefs, behaviours and experiences. This also re-emphasises why parapsychology has been recognised for a long time as a well-established area of scientific enquiry (e.g. Angoff & Shapin, 1974; Flew, 1985; French, 2013; Neppe, 2005).

It was expected that the publication of this paper would produce correspondence and critical debate which would allow for areas of the topic or methodology, to receive further thought as to how any possible limitation could be improved. Alas, to date, that had not been the case, and the only forum in which critical discussion has taken place is through correspondence on book reviews (see Appendix A and B). Although not every paper published in a journal receives correspondence, the topic is closely in line with that of Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP) where people report strange sounds, scratches and even voices upon playback of audio-recordings, which were apparently not heard when the recording was made. When the first formal study of EVP was reported (Bayless, 1959), it did not receive any feedback, much to the dismay of the

researchers involved. However, in the decades that followed, new learning, teleological developments, and insight from various professionals and disciplines has created much more detailed information and understanding behind the psychology of such phenomena (Cooper & Parsons, 2015).

In terms of what this publication has achieved in the short time it has been available, I can see at least three positive outcomes. Firstly, it has met the request of Schmeidler (Rogo & Bayless, 1979, p.150) by being presented in a formal manner and within a peer reviewed forum. Secondly, it has recently lead to some researchers looking into the impact such phenomena have on experients from the perspective of clinical psychology and parapsychology (Evrard, 2017). And thirdly, it encouraged a national survey of such phenomena which was carried out by sociologist Laurent Kasprowicz in France (Kasprowicz, 2016). The latter is an ongoing investigation, as is the work of this thesis.

2.6 – Cooper (2015) ‘Experimental Research’

Cooper, C.E. (2015). Telephone anomalies. In S.T. Parsons, & C.E. Cooper (Eds.) *Paracoustics: Sound and the paranormal* (pp. 107-138). Hove: White Crow Books.

This publication was a chapter included within an anthology, entitled *Paracoustics* (Parsons & Cooper, 2015). For the majority of the chapter, an overview of the history and research into telephonic anomalies was given, with reference to material that has already been discussed within sub-sections 2.2-2.5. What separates this publication from the others is that it gives some discussion of experimental attempts to further understand the real-world claims of such phenomena. In other words, if someone claims that they have had a conversation on the telephone that they could not explain (from the living, the dead or an unknown entity) could this be recorded in order to explore conventional explanations of the source? This would provide vital evidence, and stronger than that of eyewitness testimony of events that have already been and gone – and information from the telephone companies where possible.

The problem with spontaneous phenomena such as the telephone anomalies, is that they are just that – occurring without prior expectation or warning. Unless we know more about the phenomena and their characteristics, the psychology of the experient, the social and environmental circumstances in which the calls typically occur, then we have no way of telling when and where reports of anomalous experiences are going happen for witnesses and somehow record it in action. Even then, such predictability has still not been achieved within parapsychology, but would require collaboration with chaos mathematics (Stewart, 1997; Zuchowski, 2017). Chaos theory has been argued to have an affinity with spontaneous phenomena and be of practical use to predictions of human psychology, particularly with regards to parapsychological phenomena in the natural world, creativity, health and sleep cycles (Krippner, 1994; Krippner & Combs, 2000).

Some studies mentioned within the chapter attempted voice recognition tests. In other words, if someone called who was known to be ‘dead’ and that was somehow recorded, and there was an existing recording of that person’s voice when alive, then the audio-acoustical properties could be compared. A few problems immediately struck this kind of analysis. If these few attempts got a match in the acoustical properties, they believed it might offer evidence for survival. Instead, they didn’t match, which could

mean it was likely an outright hoax, and someone prank calling (mimicking a deceased individual), or a wrong call and misinterpretation of the caller's identity. The other argument is that the voices wouldn't be expected to match, since one was recorded from the sounds produced from a living biological system, and the other, through a device which is seemingly generating a representation of the deceased's voice electronically. The former points are most likely the conventional solution, but previous researchers in favour of the possibility of survival have questioned the latter (e.g. McAdams & Bayless, 1981; Presi, 2001).

Obtaining voicemail recordings of seemingly anomalous telecommunication, is somewhat rare, or at least in terms of what recordings have been reported and shared for research purposes. Focusing on the spontaneity issue, and researchers rarely ever being there to witness suggestions of psi in the real-world setting, Mark Boccuzzi of the Windbridge Institute provided me with useful correspondence for the chapter regarding his own experimental efforts into telecommunication phenomena. In the laboratory setting, Boccuzzi created a closed loop telephone system. In other words, a landline telephone system given electricity, but no connection to the telephone network. The closed loop eliminates the possibility of outside connections being the cause of the call. If calls are created via anomalous means, then the telephone should both ring and generate a voice without need for a network connection. This was then wired to a laptop and recording system, so if the telephone did ring, the handset could be picked up and the conversation recorded. Although this still remains an unpublished pilot study, it is without doubt an original way of testing the real-world claims with a similar setup. It may be questioned as to what the chances may be of Boccuzzi's telephone ringing in the laboratory, compared to anyone else's in the real-world setting. A single telephone against millions limits the chances somewhat. It is nevertheless effort in the right direction. However, Boccuzzi suggests using professed mediums to attempt to *will* 'discarnate entities' to manipulate the telephone in controlled and randomised sessions, introducing statistical tests and exploring the source of psi (cf. D'Argonne, 1925).

This is by no means the first time that attempts of bringing phenomena suggestive of psi and indeed survival of human memory and personality beyond death, into the laboratory setting for examination and control. Mediumship has been put to the test in the laboratory in hundreds – if not thousands – of documented trials worldwide, which can be found scattered throughout psychical research history (Beischel & Zingrone, 2015). One of the most extreme examples of testing survival has been through lock-tests

(Stevenson, 1968, 1976), where serious researchers of survival sent combination locks to Ian Stevenson, with the intent that following their deaths they would somehow (perhaps through a medium) relay information about – or specifically of – the combination. Two such individuals who were dedicated researchers of survival were J.G. Pratt (died 1979) and Robert Thouless (died 1984), and both agreed to be involved in Stevenson's proposed study, with a lock submitted, and an enciphered message. Following alleged communication received from mediums, some of which the researchers believed were characteristic of the deceased individuals, the information provided did not crack the code of the lock or message (Stevenson, Oram & Markwick, 1989). Similar studies carried out by Houdini (1927) with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, had adopted some similar tests using codes, with Houdini himself having given a coded message to his wife Beatrice stating that if it was communicated by a medium after his death, then he had survived. Ironically, he outed the medium Arthur Ford as a fraud and yet it was Ford who correctly communicated Houdini's code to Beatrice in a séance following Houdini's demise (Tribbe, 1999).

Instances of apparitions and poltergeist activity suggesting survival are very unlikely to see their way into the laboratory setting for testing. The phenomenon closest to the telecommunication anomalies, which has received extensive research, is that of EVP (see Cooper & Stevens, 2015). However, the phenomena differ in that one is very much spontaneous and the other is purposefully sought, one occurs via telephone or perhaps intercom system, while the other takes place on audio recording devices. My own experience of examining the evidence for EVP suggesting survival of death has led to weak evidence, with simple and mundane explanations for the sounds 'assumed' to be heard upon play back. Two key extensive studies by Ellis (1978), and most recently Winsper (2015; also see Winsper, Marsh & Rogers, 2016), have taught us a lot about psychological effects – especially pareidolia – that contribute to what we believe we hear when listening to random sounds.

On one hand we can generalise EVP with the telecommunication phenomena, given there are suggestions of 'communication' over electrical devices. On the other hand, they are different systems, and occur in different ways. Also, some telephone conversations have been noted as lasting up to 30 minutes in duration like most typical calls, while EVP often contains snippets of words and phrases. The surrounding feature which has always linked the two – and that is only if conventional explanations cannot be found – is psi. Controlled experiments of survival in this manner are indeed scarce

(e.g. Grierson, 1921), with the literature being dominated by tests of mediums in controlled settings. This chapter highlights tentative suggestions for not only entertaining the possibility of observing and recording such phenomena, with a sceptical and methodologically rigorous approach, but also in advancing such studies beyond qualitative analyses that explore phenomenology, and instead, give focus to the ontology of real-world accounts.

2.7 – Cooper (2018) ‘Consideration of Criticism Raised’

Cooper, C.E. (2018). Criticisms raised against the investigation of purportedly anomalous telephone occurrences. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 82 (1), 15-27. ISSN: 0037-9751

Given that so little literature appears to exist surrounding the initial study of Rogo and Bayless (1979; also see McAdams & Bayless, 1981, pp.129-133; Rogo, 1986, pp.107-119), such as additional research by other scholars – with the exception of a single small scale study in Italy by Biondi (1984, 1996) – or journal correspondence, book reviews appeared to be the only way of engaging the reception of the early work and limitations I could explore. Following extensive searches of related journals that would have reviewed *Phone Calls from the Dead* (Rogo & Bayless, 1979) thanks to the libraries of both the Society for Psychical Research (UK) and the Parapsychology Foundation (USA), over a half dozen book reviews were located, which also pointed in the direction of additional thoughts and commentaries on the topic (see Appendix A). From these reviews, critical discussion and limitations of the original research were explored to see how fairly such criticisms had been applied and justified. It was surprising to find that most concerns focused on the methodology applied to investigate such claims, than the claims themselves. Therefore, this paper was created to address and discuss the criticisms raised.

The most extensive review was provided by Anderson (1981) with which Rogo (1981) provided a reply. The paper explains and summarises both of their points of view. It was agreed by Anderson and Rogo that there are numerous conventional explanations for such phenomena – especially in terms of psychology and self-deception that we can apply to many accounts of spontaneous phenomena. However, they disagreed on the methods used to collect and analyse such reports, which followed the pioneering work of Louisa Rhine (Rao, 1986). There was a clear clash of views, and arguably fatal errors on Anderson’s part when including additional information and features to examples of Rogo’s and Bayless’ (1979) cases he attempted to discredit – thus discrediting himself in the process. Nevertheless, I find Anderson’s review valuable in the wider context of the research as it was extensive, critical and had been given considerable thought to conventional factors – despite discrepancies.

What the paper also highlights is not so much pseudo-scepticism, but just poor applications of scepticism leading to misleading conclusions. For example, Stokes

(1997, p. 200) gave brief discussion of the work of Rogo and Bayless (1979) describing it as ‘sloppy’ and ‘credulous’ and above all “widely criticised” only to cite the book review by Hardy (1979). The research being seen as ‘widely criticised’ cannot be accepted. Although Hardy’s (1979) review was indeed negative, it also contains several inaccuracies regarding the method and analysis, suggesting she had not fully engaged with what had been written. Furthermore, the only other review that could be considered critical in a negative sense is that of Anderson (1981). All other reviews that were located are positive and in favour of the research (see Appendix A). If the positive reviews outweigh the negative reviews by almost three to one, it is difficult to understand why Stokes (1997) would conclude that the research was poor and widely criticised.

Stokes is an informed scholar of parapsychological material and is known as a critic of laboratory based experiments of psi. In recent years his thoughts have transitioned – to an extent – now presenting the case for why he sees spontaneous cases as the best forum in which to understand natural occurrences of psi (cf. Houran, Lynn & Lange, 2017; Stokes, 2017a,b,c; followed by Houran, 2017a,b; Stokes, 2017d; Todd, 2018; Stokes, 2018). As just one example, Stokes is however balanced in his presentation of the literature and his interpretation of it. Popular figures in science have been found to dismiss parapsychological research out of hand without even familiarising themselves with the literature, thus demonstrating cognitive biases towards what the data represent. Richard Dawkins has presented himself as a classical example of pseudo-scepticism when it comes to discussions on parapsychology (e.g. Sheldrake, 2007), often being misleading in his presentation of the evidence, or more so, denial of its existence altogether. This is not sceptical practice or scientific scholarship, where scepticism would consider all the evidence and then draw conclusions.

The statistician Jessica Utts has commented in her presidential address to the American Statistical Association (ASA) that, as far as most statisticians she’d encountered were concerned, the data relating to psi are “quite strong” statistically. They would be widely accepted if not attributed to more mundane phenomena (that which we haven’t labelled with dubious terms such as ‘paranormal’ or ‘supernatural’). Statisticians now would rather see one good case of psi, than more data. Utts states:

I have asked the debunkers if there is any amount of data that would convince them, and they generally have responded by saying, “probably not”. I ask them what original

research they have read, and they mostly admit that they haven't read any. Now there is a definition of pseudo-science – basing conclusions on belief, rather than data!

(cited in Radin, 2018, p.96)

Pseudo-scepticism and voices of 'unreason' from well-known scientists is an extensive discussion in of itself (e.g. French, 2013; Irwin, 2007; McLuhan, 2010; Roe, 2017; Sheldrake & Shermer, 2016; Weiler, 2013). Rogo had indeed noted that problems that he and Bayless would face in publishing their research, stating that "few parapsychologists have been prepared to study this incredible phenomenon. Indeed, it may well strike most of them as just a little *too* bizarre for comfort, though they are certainly no more peculiar than any other type of psychic manifestation" (Rogo, 1986, p.119).

The paper aimed to address the critiques that were discovered, and how some comments made were either remarks on professional status of the researcher, attempts at humour/ridicule towards the research, or issues with the methodology applied. This does not amount to useful critiquing of research, but says more about beliefs and prejudice towards new areas of human experiences that do need to be understood – shunning or hiding the issue achieves nothing (see Weiler, 2013), but may serve to damage the wellbeing of the experient who may have no one to turn to for help (Cooper, 2017; Evrard, 2017).

2.8 – Section Summary

In this section, a review and appraisal – with some critical commentary – has been presented for all the publications submitted for this thesis. This has been done to provide the reader with an understanding behind the purpose and contribution of each publication to epistemology and how each piece progressed to the next. However, critical discussion can be taken further in terms of what the phenomena investigated suggests in our epistemological assumptions, and by exploring their ontology. To this point, no research papers have questioned or rather given *detailed* discussion of the possible ontology of such phenomena and how these publications can contribute to science and existing debates. Therefore, in the following section, there is opportunity to present avenues of discussion we may pursue on the ontology of the telecommunication phenomena. The research implications will also be discussed in greater critical depth now that commentaries to the collection of publications have been provided.

Section 3: Research Implications

3.1 – Section Overview

In this section implications of the research will be given a concise critical appraisal. Noting that this portfolio/thesis is restricted with regards to the word limit, this section will attempt to provide an overview of what the publications of Section 2 are contributing to in terms of original thought and knowledge as far as possible. With focus on the main thesis title in terms of what ‘contribution these phenomena make to the survival hypothesis debate’ the reader will be provided with this consideration and others of equal – if not more – importance. The publications discussed throughout Section 2 have suggested several ontological roots for the phenomena reported, including: purely conventional explanations (anomalous psychology approach), evidence for survival, and evidence for psi processes. Additionally, multiverse theory was given brief mention in sub-section 2.4 and will be expanded upon here as a fourth alternative consideration.

3.2 – Conventional Explanations

Besides some of the basic assumptions put forth by Rogo & Bayless (1979) as to conventional explanations for the telecommunication phenomena, Anderson (1981) provided the most extensive consideration of processes which may be involved and fall within conventional understanding. These included: mistaken identity, hallucinations, dreams, fraud, expectancy and suggestion. With today’s technology we can withhold numbers, use various online companies and applications to send anonymous texts, along with many other methods of contacting people anonymously for the purpose of fraud and deception – no matter how cruel the motive. I would agree with Rogo (1981) that several of these assumptions do not adequately apply to many instances of such reports. When speaking to audiences of people in general on this topic, no one has ‘expected’ or been given the ‘suggestion’ that the dead are going to telephone them. Nor do they apply to instances of what appear to be a conversation with a living person on the telephone, whom would later be verified to have been elsewhere at the time the call was made.

Even though anomalous post-death experiences are common (Cooper, 2017; Cooper, Roe & Mitchell, 2015), Rogo (1981) argued that to hallucinate such phenomena as a direct consequence of bereavement was not recognised in the literature (Rogo, 1981), at least not through to the point of physical phenomena such as the telephone ringing which others can witness or even record. Although ‘sense of presence’ experiences and other parapsychological phenomena are indeed common features following the loss of a loved one, Rees (1971) found no relationship between age, gender, race, social groups, and levels of depression, on people reporting post-death experiences (also see Cooper, 2017). Much like with the modern study of telecommunication anomalies, classical accounts of hallucinations relating to the dead – and of the living – can occur for both the bereaved and non-bereaved, with many experiencers not acknowledging they’d been witness to seemingly anomalous processes until after the event (Gurney, Myers & Podmore, 1886). This relates especially to *Prolonged Calls* (Type 2), *Answer Calls* (Type 3) and *Intention Calls* (Type 5). It would, however, be worth considering in a case collection process; undiagnosed depression, bipolar disorder, and even Alzheimer’s within each experiencer, given links made to these conditions and hallucinatory experiences (e.g. Lyketsos, Baker, Warren, et al., 1997; Smith, Fowler, Freeman, et al., 2006).

Baker (1996) did discuss the possibility of hallucinating telephone conversations when a person is alone and bereft, which carries some plausibility in theory. It would be more plausible to say that in the delicate state of bereavement, the experiencer is more likely to be misinterpreting natural phenomena and faults as being anomalous – especially where there is a longing for the deceased and to have a final conversation with them. In such cases, the seldom witnessed faults of the technology lead to the interpretation of *something more*. Although it is common for people to report strange telephone calls following loss, these rarely are in the form of ‘conversations’ over the telephone, but rather strange activity of the telephone. Take for instance what some have called ‘insistent telephones’ where following the death of someone close, withheld numbers keep ringing, but only for a few rings, sometimes late at night (e.g. Haynes, 1991; Wright, 2006). This may often be cold callers and marketing scams trying to get through, which just so happens to coincide with the time of personal loss. Depending on beliefs in life after death vs. scepticism in any given experiencer, this may lead to varying levels of interpretation (e.g. Cooper & Foley, 2012; Irwin, 2009; Thalbourne, 1989).

Dreams may certainly account for many reported instances of telecommunication activity when people are in the hypnogogic and hypnopompic stages of falling to sleep and waking. Research has shown that one of the most common dream scenarios in which to interact with the dead is not simply face to face, but via the telephone (Barrett, 1991-92; Cooper, 2017). These may be perceived as actual conversations with the dead within the dream or confused with the waking state and assumed to be an actual conscious communication in waking reality. Veridical information would be required to move these explanations away from the conventional (cf. Cooper, 2018b; Crookall, 1974; Puhle & Parker, 2017; Saunders & Cooper, 2015).

Personal beliefs regarding the paranormal and religiosity have produced an abundance of data regarding those most prone to report anomalous experiences. There are various validated scales now available for measuring such traits and cognitive variables (e.g. Irwin, 2009). A number of implicit and explicit psychological predictors of psi performance – which we could relate to people’s interpretation of psi in the natural world – have been explored over time, including: neuroticism extraversion and openness to experiences, altered-states of consciousness, hypnosis, personal trauma, and creativity, to name but a few areas that have been explored (for an overview, see Cardena & Marcusson-Clavertz, 2015). With the perception of electrical sounds which may be reported as anomalous in their origin, recent research by Winsper, Marsh and Rogers (2016) have demonstrated relationships to several cognitive variables. For example, they reported that those most prone to reporting EVPs show higher levels of both auditory and sleep-related hallucinations, deficiencies in reality testing, fantasy proneness and positive schizotypy (the latter being “a dimensional variable; that is, it indexes varying degrees of schizophrenic-like behaviours that occur in the general population” (Irwin, 2009, p.97)). Thus, such traits and cognitive variables could show revealing overlaps when measured within those who report anomalous telecommunication phenomena.

There are a number of conventional explanations we may explore for how and why interaction with telecommunication technology might be perceived as anomalous. Judging each case on its merits and researching as far as possible can allow such explanations to emerge. The findings of such research into the conventional explanations for the reported phenomena contribute new and additional knowledge in particular to the work of anomalistic psychology (French & Stone, 2014). If we have

exhausted these explanations as far as possible, other theories we could consider for a possible explanation are of particular interest to parapsychology – as below.

3.3 – Survival Hypothesis

The way in which both major works were titled suggested that the phenomena would concern the question of survival for human memory and personality beyond bodily death (Cooper, 2012a; Rogo & Bayless, 1979). They are, admittedly, somewhat deceptive titles, used to gain initial public interest through accessible books, in the hope they might want to read on into the issues of data collection, methodology, data analysis, and the philosophical questions these phenomena *as a whole* pose for science. Therein lies the difference within the unity of popular science books and research papers, with the latter presenting titles which are either complex or a question posed of the topic discussed. For the lay person, there is more awareness and accessibility with books than journal papers, and interest must be gathered for one to help the other (French, 2018; Zinchenko, et al, 1974).

When data was collected for both studies, no bias information was put out specifically asking for ‘strange telephone calls from the dead’, but rather any seemingly unexplained activity involving telephones and related methods of communication. Biondi (1984) had done the same and found that in the majority of his cases, they appeared to focus specifically on cases of unexplained calls from living people rather than the dead – however, it did only deal with a small sample (N = 15). Kasprowicz (2016) collected a total of 17 cases. However, Evrard (2017) discusses comparisons of this study to the previous ones noting that it is difficult to do so due to an opportunist sampling protocol and disclosure of interest toward the survival hypothesis in the work of Kasprowicz (2016). The two major studies dealt with collections of 50 cases strong (Cooper, 2014; Rogo & Bayless, 1979), with the majority involving interpretations of contact with the dead. Findings showed that reports of contact with the dead outweigh those associated with the living by approximately 8:1 (Cooper, 2014).

We must question within reports of such phenomena how good the evidence is for survival and what contribution they can make to the survival hypothesis debate. Rogo and Bayless (1979, pp.117-148) were certainly in support of survival being an explanation for cases they had investigated. However, I agree with Anderson (1981, p.70) that specifically with the telecommunication phenomena, looking through what few cases are on file and have been thoroughly investigated as far as possible, we are

still lacking in cases of good veridical information supplied by the caller. At present, the most impressive cases we have are that where the experient discovers afterwards that the caller had been dead for some time before the call was made, or that the telephone they used was broken, or purely an ornament and not a working telephone. Within those experiences and conversations, some useful information and characteristics are displayed. Even cases of multiple witnesses to the call are intriguing, but if a case lacks specific information being received that only the deceased should have known – which then had to be followed up by the experient – then evidence for survival falls somewhat short of achieving Stokes' (2017a) 'grey crows'.

With mediumship to one-side, there have been cases of spontaneous phenomena following loss producing remarkable veridical information (for a concise overview, see Cooper, 2018b). For example, the 'Chaffin will' case has been in debate for many years regarding a deceased father coming back to one of his sons in a dream to inform him of a second will, leaving equal distribution of his estate to all the sons, where several years before it had gone to just one (Salter, 1928; Smith, 1952). After much searching and following up on information from the deceased, the second will was found and included such an instruction. Even today, critical debate has continued with what has appeared for many years as a strong case for survival, with discussion once more focused on the authenticity of the second document and handwriting of the deceased (Charman, 2013). The rare instances of reincarnation also appear to provide striking veridical and biological information when the evidence is examined (e.g. Haraldsson & Matlock, 2016; Rogo, 1985; Stevenson, 1997).

All phenomena that suggest survival come with a minefield of conventional and alternative explanations to consider. Parapsychology has refined methods and approaches to the investigation of such reports since the founding of the SPR in 1882. Today the debate over the survival hypothesis still remains strong, given that there are cases on file which appear to suggest the survival of personality beyond death, where conventional explanations of science do not appear to apply. The most recent debate over survival was triggered by the publication of two large anthologies: *Beyond Physicalism* (Kelly, Crabtree & Marshall, 2015) and *The Myth of an Afterlife* (Martin & Augustine, 2015). Extensive reviews and rebuttals from authors and editors involved appeared throughout the majority of the Fall 2016 edition of the *Journal of Parapsychology*.

I can agree with much of the material presented within the anthology of Marton and Augustine (2015), especially the neuroscientific evidence that brain activity – by our current standards of measurement – ceases at the point of death, thus suggesting on a material level that memory and personality which was generated by the physical and biological structure of the brain also ceases to be. What I find to be the strongest shortcoming of this work – and to play devil’s advocate to the survival hypothesis – is that no real attention was given to explaining ‘good’ cases of survival within the context of such neuroscientific findings. There needs to be some level of interdisciplinary play between neuroscience and parapsychology at this point (Williams, 2015). At present, critics of survival (and indeed parapsychology as a whole) sweep the notion of survival and dualism under the carpet on the basis of neuroscientific findings and the materialist world view (e.g. Beloff, 2001; Blackmore, 2017; Braithewaite & Dewe, 2014) – while grossly ignoring the masses of evidence suggestive of survival which require ontological and epistemological understanding. The dualistic perspective of mind and body working both together and separately – as discussed in the work of Kelly, Crabtree & Marshall (2015) – not only incorporates and accepts neuroscience in our understanding of the mechanisms of the brain and mind, but allows for survival to be a possibility, or at the very least, ESP and PK producing the illusion of survival from living agents.

Sheldrake (1990) posited a theory of survival, which worked within the theory of morphic fields (see Sheldrake, 2011). Essentially, he argued that much like the idea of morphic fields storing information on how biological life grows, learns, and adapts in order to survive and better the next generation, the fields may also store human memory. Being able to dig into this information through means of psi, would suggest survival not in the sense of conscious awareness for the dead, but at the very least aspects of memory and personality being stored and accessed. This idea is also extended by Storm (2006) and provides a plausible solution to survival themed phenomena such as reincarnation cases involving young children.

As mentioned, I do not see the evidence for survival within the context of the telecommunication phenomena – at present – as strong enough to satisfy science (or indeed myself) of survival. Similar conclusions have recently been drawn by Sudduth (2016), but with regards to the evidence and arguments for survival as a whole. The better cases are at most *suggestive* of survival and could still be explained by other parapsychological factors at play such as ESP and PK.

3.4 – Super-Psi

The notion of ‘super-psi’ (aka, super-ESP) may present a half-way house for the possibility of survival. It can be defined as “combined functioning of several aspects of ESP [and PK] of the living to explain so-called ‘survival phenomena’” (McAdams, 1979, p.25; for additional early critical discussion on the super-psi vs. survival, see Hart, 1959, pp. 139-151). A basis for super-psi is that when we explore early psi-tests instigated by the work at Duke University, through to modern day, psi appears to not be restricted by the concepts of time and space (e.g. May & Marwaha, 2018; Radin, 1997; Rhine, 1937; Sheldrake, 2003).

The super-psi hypothesis also presents some satisfaction for those who follow the concept of mind ceasing at the point of death, as supported by current neuroscientific findings, and our understanding of consciousness as it stands – which is still a long way off being understood (Blackmore, 2017; Chalmers, 1996). It allows for survival phenomena to occur, but the survival element itself is pure interpretation on the part of the living experient(s) whom may also be the source of the spontaneous super-psi, drawing on information pertaining to the deceased and in some cases projecting hallucinations of the dead. Within the content of telecommunication phenomena, information is received – often audibly – and there is a physical effect of the device ringing or alerting experients to an incoming message in some other form (which could be argued to be an element of PK).

It was posed by early researchers that experiences suggestive of survival such as apparitions were mental projections of the living, which in collective cases were telepathically passed on to other witnesses present from a single agent (Gurney, Myers & Podmore, 1889; Podmore, 1894). Murphy (1943) extended this discussion and questioned how we could separate the suggestion of psi from the living, from psi from the dead with the latter seemingly creating the experience. His argument was for a critical examination of the cases in order to reach conclusions as to who appeared to instigate the experience. In other words, was the living experient thinking of the deceased, or expected something, and then it happened? If so, it would be more reasonable to assume that they created the experience which might include evidence for psi. Alternatively, if there was no suggestion or expectancy of an unusual experience occurring, is it not within reason to assume the possibility of survival as the deceased may have instigated the experience? And yet, Murphy’s (1943) theory would also assume that the unconscious mind is *not responsible* for generating the

phenomena/experience. However, research suggests that psi-conducive states are that when we are in an altered state of consciousness, and therefore this would suggest the unconscious mind is more responsible for the production of psi than the conscious mind (see Roe, 2009).

Arguments have been raised as to the problems of super-psi, with the main issues being that to explain a case of survival via psi from the living, sometimes requires far more steps and processes to be involved, than the assumption that surviving memory and personality had the ability to produce visions or information for the living. Thus, to assume super-psi, results in the theoretical stepping over of the principle of Occam's razor, in many instances. Gauld (1977, p.615) proposed that survival vs. super-psi had reached a "virtual stalemate" due to both theories being able to explain the other's data. The weakness to favouring survival is that we don't know what is exactly meant to survive, and therefore, we have nothing to examine in terms of its mechanisms and ability to produce such information for an experient, as opposed to a physical living brain producing super-psi. Even in our present stage of knowledge, we have no idea as to what processes are taking place in the experient's brain during day-to-day activities if we are to assume super-psi. Both theoretical assumptions operate in silence, and without science observing. On the other hand, mediumship is currently being examined from a neuroscientific approach (Evenden, Saunders & Roe, 2017), but even identifying unique neural activity which correlates with information received still does not shed light on the *source* of the information obtained (survival or super-psi?). The philosophical assumptions surrounding the survival vs. super-psi problem are extensive and are still a matter of deep debate (see Braude, 2003; Sudduth, 2016).

It should be noted here that Rogo & Bayless (1979, p.74) proposed a 'paraphysical theory' for voices heard, which delivered information purportedly from the deceased. They had also referred to this term regarding the audio recordings of anomalous sounds and voices (Rogo, 1977b). The paraphysical theory considered whether the sounds heard were created within the telephone, or were produced within the air surrounding the experient – thus, attempting to explore the theoretical physical mechanisms behind the phenomena. If we extended their theory and turn to the literature of theoretical physics and parapsysics, we are presented with a fourth explanation for telecommunication phenomena (and indeed, other aspects of psi) which would present an alternative way of looking at ESP, PK and survival.

3.5 – Multiverse and Minds

In recently returning to literature and reviews surrounding telecommunication phenomena and theories for their occurrence (Cooper, 2018a), I could not help but notice overlaps between interpretations of survival vs. super-psi, with that of multiverse theory, which could provide a universal theory for psi. Such considerations for this theory become clear when considering instances of *Intention Calls*, where the intention is made to communicate with someone via technology, and yet the intent is put off for some reason, while the person who was intended to receive the communication still claims to receive it (see Cooper, 2012a, pp.68-73; Rogo & Bayless, 1979, pp.96-107).

Proposed by Dobbs (1965), hyperspace – or ‘multiverse’ – theory could be applied to account for precognition and a number of other psi related phenomena all under one unified theory. Herbert (1967a) argued that to those who object to this theory, it becomes difficult to identify any other theory that can combine all aspects of psi within one explanation for the experiences reported. He went on to state that if “matter in space-time is regarded as a group of electromagnetic ‘standing’ waves, then there is no reason to deny the possibility of similar hyperspatial ‘standing’ waves, constituting ‘astral’ bodies, inhabiting the hypersphere, which may on occasion make their presence known by approaching near to the surface and creating a temporary oscillatory disturbance in space-time (‘ghosts’), which could on this theory be sometimes a ‘mental’ and at other times a ‘physical’ manifestation” (p.22). Physics at that point – now some 50 years ago – was beginning to take interest in hyperspace theory, which Herbert (1967b) also discussed in relation to his previous review of the work of Dobbs (1965).

The ideas summarised by Herbert (1976a) appear to neatly – and theoretically – give an explanation for anomalous phenomena reported not just in relation to telecommunication phenomena, but to all events suggestive of psi where conventional explanations appear to be severally lacking. Given that our daily expectations are to interact with a 3-dimensional world, while trying to *contemplate* a 4-dimensional reality (inclusive of time and space), understanding multiple dimensions as being responsible for anomalous experiences are unlikely to be considered by the majority of people in day-to-day life. And yet, from the point of view of physics, it appears plausible, and would rule out a dualist notion of mind (to an extent), and account for mental and physical phenomena (i.e. hearing voices relay information on the telephone, the physical ringing of the phone, if indeed the network and technical fault are not the

cause). In much the same way as the *Intentional Calls*, we can see a comparison to reports of apparitions of the living, witnessed when we are in the right frame of mind (i.e. an altered-state; see Roe, 2009) to access this information through the multiverse window. It begs the question in such instances as to what this mental imagery actually is, a vision of the intent of that person to go to that place, briefly playing out for the experient to see, or retro-cognitive or pre-cognitive information of that person having been there or going to be there in the future. Through this, it is understandable as to why multiverse has been considered as an alternative to psi.

In recent years, Carr (2008, 2014, 2015) has presented an updated perspective of this relationship between mind and multiverse. Carr (2015) provides a detailed overview of hyperspatial models, including the interest gathered by parapsysics since its founding in the 1970s. A small number of researchers interested in psi, have attempted to explore the idea of higher dimensions, particularly in relation to remote viewing and near-death experiences. Carr (2015) offers a breakdown of these various phenomena, those which include physical effects (i.e. poltergeists – and indeed telecommunication phenomena) and how mind/experience may be exposed to effects from higher dimensions we perceive as psi.

The physical theories for survival of consciousness have been given extensive discussion by some such physicists (e.g. Beichler, 2008; Darling, 1995). Carr's (2015) summary of these views in relation to survival and related phenomena once more point to ideas of the higher dimensions storing aspects of memory and personality that may be retrieved, citing Stevenson (1981) who referred to such a system of storage as a 'psychophore'. This also brings us back to the more original ideas for survival and the retrieval of information relating to the dead, as discussed by Sheldrake (1990) regarding morphic fields, and Storm (2006) regarding 'radical survivalism', in which both discussed a system of storage and retrieval of human personality from a non-material space, which in light of multiverse theory, could reside within hyperspace. Carr (2015) concludes by placing the ideas of hyperspace and psi, within a 'universal structure' which could be termed as a 'higher-dimensional psychophysical information space' stating that "I believe this approach offers the possibility of a paradigm in which matter and mind are merged at a very fundamental level" (p.269). Certainly, the theories surrounding hyperspace offer useful alternative considerations for psi (especially for critics of parapsychology), and in particular survival themed phenomena such as aspects of the telecommunication phenomena. This present approach by physics demonstrates

the progression of early ideas in spiritualism and psychical research regarding astral planes of existence for human personality beyond death (e.g. Doyle, 1919; Tuttal, 1860; Hare, 1855). The hyperspatial theories now offer more grounding within physics since science has progressed greatly in the past century.

3.6 – Section Summary

In this section, a concise critical overview of four areas in which the study of the telecommunication phenomena can contribute to new and existing knowledge has been provided. These included conventional considerations (anomalous psychology), the survival hypothesis, super-psi, and multiverse theory. In the following concluding section, given that the publications reviewed within this thesis have already identified strengths and limitations of the research (see Cooper, 2018a, in particular) focus will be given to suggestions for future research.

Section 4: Conclusion

Where next for this research? Hyslop's (1943) approach to phenomena suggestive of survival offered useful stepping stones for attempting to separate psi from survival. Although the ideas Hyslop proposed have their flaws, a system of separation has been argued for telecommunication phenomena in recent years by Randall, stating that "somehow, we need a method for separating the calls that may be paranormal from all these other possibilities" (quoted in Cooper, 2012a, p.167). However, such a method at present may be the result of two avenues which still hold limitations. Firstly, a case-by-case approach as was the focus of the work in some of this thesis to explore ontology (Cooper, 2010), and secondly, qualitative methods on the level of experients to establish what constitutes 'truth' within their lived experiences and conceptualisations. At present, no one case of telecommunication phenomena on record appears to offer a *robust* case for survival that would hold up against more traditional survival themed phenomena (e.g. Doore, 1990; Storm & Thalbourne, 2006).

In Section 3, literature surrounding this issue suggests that we are presently at a 'stalemate' situation where one theory can explain the data just as well as the next (Gauld, 1977), as all possibilities are theoretical assumptions being placed on events that have already happened and do not occur on demand in order to be recorded or measured – though modern unique attempts are being considered (Cooper, 2015). Furthermore, Sudduth (2016, p.307) argues that the empirical arguments that have been presented for survival "fail to accomplish what they purport to accomplish" (p.307). This further supports Gauld's (1977) conclusions, that good experiments and theories could be established to assist the survival debate, however, this "would require the cooperation of a number of dedicated and able persons, convinced of the importance of the question, and with modest funds at their disposal... [the number of such willing individuals] is small indeed" (p.622).

I would agree with Hyslop (1943) that when collecting such spontaneous cases, we must be as thorough in our investigation as possible. As Jessica Utts argued with regards to the present state of 'evidence' for parapsychological phenomena, the statistical findings are 'quite strong' overall. Many scientists and statisticians are satisfied with such evidence to the point that most would rather see a good and thoroughly researched case study of psi, than more statistical data (Utts, cited within Radin, 2018, p.96). It is without doubt that mixed methods present a stronger case as a whole, and neuroscience's

involvement with parapsychology should assist in attentively answering the many questions still surrounding reports of psi phenomena (Evenden, Saunders, & Roe, 2017; Williams, 2015).

In moving forward in search of case studies which can be researched as far as possible, and then presented for peer consideration and critique, the recent thoughts of Stokes (2017a) should be kept in mind. Sufficient evidence (Roe, 2010), in our present state of knowledge and methodology, rests on acceptance of Stokes' 'grey crows'. It does not appear possible to have a white crow case of 100% certainty that no other explanation could apply but psi, and the discussion of Section 3 is testament to that. If cases are researched as far as possible, with all conventional explanations explored not only does the whole become greater, but the some of its parts can stand stronger on their own ground. Further research and new learning will lead to greater understanding of such phenomena for anomalistic psychology and parapsychology, and how we may justify the explanations we apply to account for each case that is presented.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A List of known reviews of original 1979 work

Appendix B Publications and presented talks to date (Cooper)

Appendix C Full list of reviews to date of the 2012 work

Appendix D Correspondence generated by 2012 reviews

Appendix: A

- Anderson, R. (1981). Phone calls from the dead by D. Scott Rogo and Raymond Bayless [Book Review]. *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*, 4, 66-74.
- Chari, C.T.K. (1981). Correspondence. *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*, 4, 226-227.
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- Frazier, K. (1979). Psychic vibrations. *The Skeptical Inquirer*, 3 (4), 14-16.
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- Paul, P. (1982). Correspondence. *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*, 5, 128.
- Rogo, D.S. (1981). Author responds to book review. *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*, 4, 75-80.
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- Truzzi, M. (1979). Books briefly noted. *Zetetic Scholar*, 3/4, 129-135.

Appendix: B

Presented in chronological order of their publication and/or presentation:

Cooper, C.E. (2010). Text messages from the dead. *Paranormal Review*, 53, 10-12.

Cooper, C.E. (2010). Phone calls from the dead. *Anomaly*, 44, 3-21.

Cooper, C.E. (2010). Spontaneous cases concerning telephone calls and text messages. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 10, 178-193.

Cooper, C.E. (2011). *Telephone calls from the dead: Returning to the research*. Presented at 35th International Conference of the Society for Psychical Research, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK.

Cooper, C.E. (2011). A study of phone call phenomena. *Psi Review*, 2, 22.

Cooper, C.E. (2011). Further comments on alleged phone calls from the dead. *Anomaly*, 146-154.

Cooper, C.E. (2012). *Ghosts on the line: A summary of strange telephone experiences*. Society for Psychical Research Lecture 5th July, Kensington, London, UK.

Cooper, C.E. (2012). *Telephone calls from the dead: A revised look at the phenomenon thirty years on*. Old Portsmouth: Tricorn Books.

Cooper, C.E. (2012). *A qualitative study of anomalous telephonic experiences*. Presented at the 4th Exploring the Extraordinary Conference, Holiday Inn, York, UK.

Cooper, C.E. (2012). *Telephone conversations with the dead*. Lecture given to the Scottish Society for Psychical Research, 7th November, Maryhill Burgh Halls, Glasgow, UK.

Cooper, C.E. (2012). *Did ET phone home? Interpretations of anomalous phone-calls*. Presented at the 1st Seriously Unidentified Conference, ASSAP 17th November, University of Worcester, Worcester, UK.

Cooper, C.E., & Foley, C.R. (2012). Did ET phone home, or was it the dead? Bridging ufology and psychical research with anomalous phone-call experiences. *Anomaly*, 46, 128-143.

Cooper, C.E. (2014). An analysis of exceptional experiences involving telecommunication technology. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 78, 209-222.

Cooper, C.E. (2014). *Telephone contact with the dead and other unique methods of after death communication*. The 8th Annual Afterlife Conference of the Forever Family Foundation (9th November), Marriott at Research Triangle Park, Durham, NC, USA.

Cooper, C.E. (2015). Telephone anomalies. In S.T. Parsons, & C.E. Cooper (Eds.), *Paracoustics: Sound and the paranormal* (pp. 107-138). Hove: White Crow Books.

Cooper, C.E. (2018). Criticisms raised against the investigation of purportedly anomalous telephone occurrences. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 82, 15-27.

Appendix: C

- Adams, P. (2015). Telephone calls from the dead by Callum E. Cooper [Book Review]. *Light*, 136, 68-70.
- Bocuzzi, M. (2013). Telephone calls from the dead by Callum E. Cooper [Book Review]. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 77, 295-297.
- Colborn, M. (2013). Telephone calls from the dead by Callum E. Cooper [Book Review]. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 77.2, 102-103.
- Cooper, C.E. (2014). Letter to editor. *Christian Parapsychologist*, 1 (10), 31-37.
- Cooper, C.E. (2014). Further response to the critique of 'telephone calls from the dead'. *Christian Parapsychologist*, 1 (11), 38-39.
- Cooper, C.E. (2016). Response to the book review of 'telephone calls from the dead'. *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, 35, 48-52.
- Gilbert, M. (2013). Telephone calls from the dead by Callum E. Cooper [Book Review]. *Christian Parapsychologist*, 1 (9), 34-36.
- Gilbert, M. (2014). Letter to editor. *Christian Parapsychologist*, 1 (10), 37-39.
- Giovetto, P. (2012). Telefonate dall'aldilà e altri fenomeni. *Luce e Ombra*, 112, 329-334.
- Haraldsson, E. (2013). Telephone calls from the dead by Callum E. Cooper [Book Review]. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 27, 352-353.
- Martinez, S. (2012). Telephone calls from the dead by Callum E. Cooper [Book Review]. *Journal for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies*, 35, 229-231.
- Müller, E. (2013). Telephone calls from the dead by Callum E. Cooper [Book Review]. *ITC Journal*, 47, 48-50.
- Price, E.W. (2015). Telephone calls from the dead by Callum E. Cooper [Book Review]. *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, 34, 57-61.
- Sewell, N. (2012). Telephone calls from the dead by Callum E. Cooper [Book Review]. *Anomaly*, 46, 189-190.
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Appendix: D

of the whole field of mediumship research. In seventy pages he manages to cover an enormous amount of ground in a highly readable manner. While many readers may be familiar with the famous names and classic cases of the past which are briefly referred to, the main value of this summary lies in the emphasis on recent research, much of it published since 2000 and not readily accessible for the average reader. Even those, like this reviewer, who think they have a reasonable acquaintance with the literature may be surprised at the gaps in their knowledge. The fourteen pages of references at the end of the book provide an invaluable resource for anyone wishing to explore the many facets of the subject. They also completely refute the widely held assumption that mediumship is of interest only to gullible cranks.

Hamilton's conclusions are typically cautious and balanced. He stresses the need for 'a concentrated research programme with adequate funding' to investigate how mediums achieve their results. His final verdict on the possibility of post-mortem communication, based mainly on his detailed examination of the recorded material and on his wider reading, is that, in Sam Goldwyn's words, 'it's a definite maybe'. All CP readers who support the rigorous study of psychical and spiritual questions should read and recommend this book.

Roger Straughan

Telephone Calls from the Dead

by Callum E. Cooper

Tricorn Books (a trading name of 131 Design Ltd.), 131 High Street,
Old Portsmouth PO1 2HW. 2012. 978 0956759726. Paperback. xiv +
193pp. £8.99

We live in an age when technology, especially in the field of communications, is continuously transforming the ways in which we interact with the world – from how we shop and receive our entertainment, to how we work and talk to one another. The denizens of the supernatural planet though, don't appear to be moving with the times.

Now well into the second decade of the 21st century, ghosts, at least in the popular imagination, continue to prefer their traditional ways – hanging

out in crumbling old houses, ruined castles and the ancient cellars of wayside inns – to any alternative situation.

However, this view may be merely a common misconception. Are the recent dead, the long dead and even other paranormal entities, in fact utilizing the smart new tools at their disposal to contact us? The exploration of this question ought to lie at the heart of Callum E. Cooper's *Telephone Calls from the Dead*. Sadly, the book represents something of a missed opportunity.

Returning to the earlier researches in this area conducted by Raymond Bayless and D. Scott Rogo – in particular in their 1979 book *Phone Calls from the Dead* – Cooper sets out to take a revised look at the subject thirty years on. The trouble is that the author sticks rather too closely to his predecessors' original remit and focuses almost exclusively on analogue telephones – and in the main cases originally looked into by Bayless and Rogo. There is of course some merit in Cooper reviewing old cases, but new material – even additional telephone based examples – would have been welcome.

A more worthwhile exercise would surely have been to continue and to update studies in this area by investigating examples of paranormal phenomena involving today's technology: smart phones, mobile telephones, the internet or video-conferencing, for example.

That said, the book does refer to some contemporary incidents involving more up-to-date equipment: the South Shields Poltergeist, where a family's mobile 'phones were apparently used by an outside entity, and The Vertical Plane case, in which, for two years from 1984, a BBC computer used by the owners of an old English cottage appeared to have been used by a sixteenth century character calling himself first Lukas and later Thomas Harden.

Harden is said to have sent messages to the then inhabitants of the cottage. Ken Webster and Debs Oakes, even, fascinatingly, claiming that the computer appeared in a ghost-like manner in his own time – referring to it in *Catweazle** style as 'the box of lights'.

[**Catweazle*. A British Children's TV series, which originally ran between 1970-71 on London Weekend Television. The programme featured an eccentric Norman Wizard who travelled through time to 1969 and was astounded by a modern world containing such things as a 'telling-bone'.]

Cooper's retelling of such cases is entertaining enough on the whole, but he doesn't research any further into them, simply relying on information from various secondary sources. However, he does make some interesting observations along the way and raises further questions, but does little to deepen existing knowledge of anomalous 'phone calls.

In reviewing Bayless and Rogo's casebook and notes in particular, Cooper dutifully cites his references, surveys the history of anomalous phone calls and quotes from peer responses to their original work, but the whole exercise feels a little pedestrian.

As a result, what could have been a fascinating insight into an area that warrants further attention becomes a rather dry, essay-style trudge through some of the available evidence. Little new is offered up by way of interviews with those involved, or information gleaned on visits to sites where anomalous phone calls are supposed to have taken place. Unfortunately, if the dead have been trying to get in touch, Callum E. Cooper has missed the call.

Matthew Gilbert *Matthew Gilbert is an advertising copy-writer and a long-standing member of The Ghost Club.*

The Cherishing

by Lyndsey CNG-Day

New Generation Publishing, 2 London Wall Buildings, London EC2M 5UU.
2012 (www.newgeneration-publishing.com) 9781909395565 Paperback 16
+ 159pp. £6.99

This book is one of a long line of 'channelled' or 'inspired' writings that aim to encourage and indeed galvanize the reader into taking spirituality seriously and to minister in an appropriate way. The author introduces the text with an account of many years of spiritual searching which culminated in a series of revelatory and transformative experiences during and after a number of personal and family crises. One cannot fail to be moved by the descriptions of the progress of healing at every level of Lyndsey's being. It may be that others may be helped by this account.

Difficulties arise, however, for a reviewer who is asked to consider the claims for a series of new revelations which lay claim to a significance beyond

Hinduism, Johnson clearly maintains the significance of Christianity in important respects. Concerning the death of Jesus, he is essentially Abelardian, and certainly not of the penal-substitutionary viewpoint. As regards the person of Jesus, Johnson acknowledges his divinity (Arian rather than Athanasian), but his viewpoint here is expressed in terms of his complex cosmology. Regarding mysticism, he writes with real authority, and would endorse Karl Rahner's belief that the future of Christianity is located here. His interpretation of mysticism is, again, influenced by his complex cosmology.

One point that will bother many Christians is Johnson's consistent advocacy of karma and reincarnation. However, a minority of Christians would endorse the view attributed to Dean Inge that this doctrine is "both credible and attractive", and certainly reincarnation has been explored in our own Fellowship (e.g. David Christie-Murray's excellent treatment in *CP* of March 2003).

His lofty vision of the human drama and its place in the original scheme of things is original and daring, and his works present profound spiritual wisdom as well as being enhanced by the enriching quotations from the great poets that he frequently gives. In addition to all this, Johnson's exploration of 'Imaginism', the little-known and under-rated philosophy of E.D. Fawcett is an important achievement that merits wider consideration.

Letters to the Editor

From Callum E. Cooper, University of Northampton, Centre for the Study of Anomalous Psychological Processes

I was delighted to see a review of my book *Telephone Calls from the Dead* (Cooper, 2013), which appeared in the last issue of *Christian Parapsychologist* (New Series, Vol. 1, No. 9). The review *appeared* to offer constructive criticism of the work carried out, as opposed to simple praise of the book from past reviews, which offers little new to comment on or take further in terms of research in the long run. And therefore I highly welcome constructive criticism of any book or paper. However, on reading through the review by Mr Matthew Gilbert (Gilbert, 2013), I think it is fair to say that the criticisms of the book are not constructive, as I do not believe that the

negative points raised are valid from an objective point of view of the book. (I obviously cannot answer for how each personal reader feels from a subjective point of view with regards to the book's style and phenomena discussed within.) I feel it a duty of any reader and/or researcher to bring such issues to the Editor's attention, as the late D. Scott Rogo frequently did, but classically so in one particular review of *Phone Calls from the Dead* (see Anderson, 1981; Rogo, 1981). We will only learn and progress in parapsychology, and other sciences, by forming debate rather than accepting the words of every book, paper and review that is published, which might show clear inaccuracies.

Allow me here to explain point-by-point why I don't believe the issues raised in the review are valid, by addressing each of Mr Gilbert's criticisms under several headings.

1) Mr Gilbert claims in his introductory and concluding point that the book represents a missed opportunity in finding out whether the dead are using new telephone technology to contact the living.

With regards to presenting evidence of discarnate communication, I would have hoped given Mr Gilbert's long standing membership with 'The Ghost Club', that he understood that conclusive evidence for survival is not so simple to present. If I had achieved such a task I'm sure the book would have been a ground-breaking best seller. Instead, the book makes it clear that this is a preliminary study into anomalous phone calls. The original book by Rogo and Bayless (1979) and a single short follow-up study by Biondi (1984) are the only existing studies on this neglected parapsychological topic. Therefore, I could only work with the simple, yet useful scientific methods to shed further light on the phenomena at hand, which at this stage is nothing more than suggestive of communication with the dead in some cases – not conclusive evidence.

As explained, all cases reported were followed up with interviews and/or extended correspondence with the percipients, unless this had already been done by previous researchers. Once this was done, a content analysis (aka, thematic analysis) was carried out to explore patterns, themes, or changes within the phenomena since 1979, and changes in modern technology over time. The preliminary study demonstrated that little had changed except for

the fact that technology had advanced and continued to become incorporated into paranormal experiences. Being able to place my finger on a single case suggestive of survival would have been down to my own subjective opinion, and therefore not a scientific approach. This initial analysis of fifty cases of anomalous phone calls, on my part, is presented for the reader to make up their own mind, without my adding bias to their decision (as noted by Dr Susan Martinez (2012)). Therefore, I would argue I have done my duty to the best of my ability given this is still a new area of study within parapsychology. However, some have noted that I justly left some cases open-ended, and concluded them to be unexplainable at present (see Haraldsson, 2013), as rational explanations were incredibly difficult to find in some individual cases cited. Overall, the various questions I raised lead to 'potential' explanations for the calls in terms of psychology and physics, before we consider the possibility that it was in fact the 'dead on the line'.

2) Mr Gilbert claims a more worthwhile exercise would have been to 'continue to update studies in this area by investigating examples of paranormal phenomena involving today's technology' rather than exploring analogue cases, and sticking closely to the remit of my predecessors and cases 'originally looked into by Bayless and Rogo'.

It is made clear in the book that even though I collected cases of modern technology being incorporated into anomalous phone calls experiences, there simply wasn't enough data (especially with regards to text message cases) to create a single methodologically sound analysis of the new technology against the old (e.g., Cooper, 2012, p.148: footnote). Therefore, all of the analogue and digital technology was combined into the content analysis to explore any potential changes in the 'call types' and how they occurred, compared to the original findings. The philosophical method of the 'bundle of sticks' approach (i.e. that many sticks bundled together become stronger than each individual stick), which was highlighted in some critical reviews (Paul, 1982), was the most appropriate way forward to understand the phenomena as a whole, rather than tackle each individual case as a 'case study'. Given this, the book acts as a follow up to the 1979 edition, and seemed the most worthwhile exercise to carry out while also giving examples of both analogue and digital technology for the reader. Even though it is not a

precise criticism of Mr Gilbert, it must also be made clear (as it is in the book), that the majority of cases presented in the book – as originally looked into by Rogo and Bayless – had never been published before. Only a couple of previously published accounts were cited. The rest of the cases mentioned took great lengths to obtain through two years of dedicated research. This involved the Californian Institute of Integral Studies' library staff sifting through Rogo's files for me (for the first time since they were donated in the early 1990s), by special permission of his father. This unearthed a folder of unpublished notes and documents, and also involved a research trip for myself alone to California to meet with Rogo's father and Dr Elizabeth McAdams (who worked closely with Raymond Bayless) to learn as much as possible about Scott Rogo and Raymond Bayless and where they intended future research to go.

3) *Mr Gilbert claims that 'little is done in the book to deepen existing knowledge of anomalous phone calls'.*

Before the book was published, the only existing knowledge on anomalous phone calls was: the book by Rogo and Bayless (1979), two follow up chapters by them in separate books (which brought nothing new to the table), an Italian study (Biondi, 1984), and a handful of book reviews in various parapsychological journals which offered a mixed variety of scholarly opinions on the topic. (And given the limited amount of available information on this topic, book reviews are the main thing in this instance to offer useful alternative takes and opinions on anomalous phone calls from individuals of various backgrounds and disciplines.)

I would have to argue that Mr Gilbert is completely wrong in this case. In terms of psychology and parapsychology, and from a research perspective, several things are done within the book to deepen existing knowledge on anomalous phone calls. For example, a second content analysis is carried out in which an additional call type is defined and explained within the book, various supplementary call related phenomena is discussed (including: dreams, hauntings, voicemail messages, and coincidences), chapters are offered on rare elements of the history of paranormal communication, the psychology behind the calls, and parapsychical considerations. A peer review section is once again offered in the final chapter to draw on other academic

insights into the call experiences. The key new finding is that even though we have advanced in technology, paranormal experiences are still incorporated into communication technology in some way. Bayless (1980) predicted that this would be so and is supported throughout the new book with various examples.

4) Mr Gilbert states the whole exercise feels somewhat 'pedestrian', and the book presents a 'dry, essay-style trudge through some of the available evidence', adding that 'little new is offered up by way of interviews with those involved, or information gleaned on visits to sites where anomalous phone calls are supposed to have taken place'. Humorously concluding (for some), 'if the dead have been trying to get in touch, Callum E. Cooper has missed the call'.

I would have to argue strongly that the book is in no way 'dry or trudge-ish' as this is contradicted by other reviews that argue the book to be presented in a very readable and accessible manner, even though it is presented in an academic tone, which Mr Gilbert refers to as the 'essay-style' (see Sewell, 2012; Tilley, 2012). My intent was to make the book follow on from its 1979 counterpart, and therefore, the book is publicly accessible and does not require the reader to be scientifically minded to enjoy and understand the book, while the book's entire overtone is a scientific stance on the bizarre nature of paranormal telephone calls. I would also have to argue my point previously made in 'section 2' that I did not exhaust 'available information' and drag readers through it, on the contrary, much of the information discussed was either never previously published or highly scarce. Therefore, the book brought all of this information together for the first time.

Though I appreciate and share Mr Gilbert's opinion on the need for field investigations and returning to the site where paranormal phenomena was first experienced in order to deduce a cause for the original occurrence, I don't feel that this criticism is at all useful in this particular case of spontaneous anomalous telephone calls. Dr John Palmer clearly stated that "...there is unlikely to be a trained investigator on hand when the phenomena occur" (Rogo & Bayless, 1979, p. 152), therefore, nearly all of our efforts with anomalous phone calls lie in the memory of the percipient. We must use social science research methods to gather cases through interviews and applications of memory recall techniques to produce as reliable account as

possible from each individual involved. Similar to the early methods of the Society for Psychical Research and Louisa Rhine's spontaneous case collection, the phenomena is then best examined as a collective sample, rather than case by case. However, in my investigation of each anomalous phone call, further enquiries were made with relevant phone companies and eyewitnesses where possible.

In the case of this specific type of spontaneous phenomena, I strongly believe that little would have been achieved by me returning to the scene of the event. Spontaneous phenomena occur spontaneously by their very nature when we least expect it, and this is easily learnt from the investigation of haunting phenomena. Many ghost-hunters will have spent hours, if not days or weeks, sat in the building with nothing occurring relating to previous accounts. While physicists would certainly gain more from spending time learning about the building, social scientists (including the parapsychologist) would learn more from investigating the experiential accounts. Though I cannot argue that Mr Gilbert might have *enjoyed* reading a few spooky tales about me conducting such an investigation and returning to the phone that allegedly made contact with a higher plane, it cannot be accepted as a criticism of the book. This is simply because it was not necessary to conduct such an investigation in this case or include it in the book, or previously published studies. Very little would have been gained from doing so, as the research aims of the study/book were achieved through a case collection and content analysis.

Though I can fully appreciate Mr Gilbert's individual opinion of the book as a reader, on an objective level of the suitability of research carried out and presented within the book, I certainly don't find Mr Gilbert's criticisms water-tight or truly applicable.

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From Matthew Gilbert, London

In response to Mr Cooper's letter (see above) I would like to reply to the points he raises under four headings drawn from my review of *Telephone Calls from the Dead*.

1) Where author and reviewer differ is in the wider approach taken. Whilst I appreciate the difficulties faced by the author in collecting and presenting evidence concerning apparent 'discarnate communication', my comments regarding the book being something of a lost opportunity were aimed at the ambition of the exercise rather than the scientific rigour behind it. I certainly didn't expect Mr Cooper to uncover conclusive evidence for the existence of ghosts, at the end of a telephone line or otherwise.

Within the scope of the book – as a reappraisal of the earlier work conducted by Rogo and Bayless – the content – in so far as an interested amateur can tell – seems sound: rigorous, measured and careful.

I simply felt that perhaps in a study of this kind, whilst useful and extremely interesting to academics conducting researches into the paranormal and parapsychology, there was not enough significant new information or material to make the book of especial interest to a wider and more general audience.

2) I believe that a wider ranging study of anomalous phenomena in relation to more up to date equipment than analogue phones may have made for a more ambitious and interesting book. I don't disregard the usefulness of Mr Cooper's work in conducting a thorough study and analysis of previous work in this field and I appreciate that his work includes many instances of previously unpublished cases. I simply felt that a new study, following on from the original work, building further upon it by embracing today's technology, may have been of more interest to more people. If the dead have perhaps been making 'phone calls, could they now be using mobile technology? What might they be doing with the internet? These are the kinds of questions I'd have liked to have seen addressed.

If the strict remit was simply to stick closely to the original study then perhaps the work would have been better off being published as a paper in an academic journal.

3) Here I accept the specific point that in my original review I may have been a little harsh. Mr Cooper rightly points out that his work has added and defined a new anomalous phone call type. He also includes in the book a detailed review of supplementary call related phenomena, along with several peer reviews of the work undertaken.

4) My review is based on personal opinion and therefore entirely subjective. I did feel that the style of the book was somewhat dry and still feel this to be the case. To me the book did read rather more like a doctoral thesis than a work intended for wider public consumption. This, however, is understandable given the serious academic rigour that Mr Cooper has applied to his study. I did though make it abundantly clear in my review that there were parts of the book that seemed to lift off the page a little more and which seemed more engaging to me than other sections concerned with setting out the minutiae of varying anomalous call types.

I certainly did not approach reviewing the book in the hope of reading a few 'spooky tales' about Mr Cooper's investigations, as the author postulates in his response. From the foreword on, it is abundantly clear to the reader that this book is intended as a serious preliminary study into anomalous 'phone calls. I certainly had no expectation, or desire, that the book ought to read like a modern-day Elliot O'Donnell style round up of half-baked, second-

hand accounts of ghostly apparitions.

That said, publishing a book with the title *Telephone Calls from the Dead* does raise certain expectations about its contents, which perhaps an academic paper entitled 'Anomalous Telephonic Communication: A reappraisal' and published in an appropriate journal may not have done.

From Dr James Paul Pandarakalam, Hollins Park Hospital, Warrington

The paper on "Hearing voices" by Michael Paternoster (CP, March, 2013) has been highly enlightening. Clinicians tend to ignore the fact that non pathological voice hearing does exist and medicalise all forms of auditory hallucinations. Very rarely, case reports of possible non clinical auditory hallucination appear in medical journals and one such exception was rendered by Azuonye Obialo Ikechukwu (Azuonye Obialo Ikechukwu, A difficult case: Diagnosis made by hallucinations. *British Medical Journal*, 1997; 315:1685). In this case, a previously healthy British woman began to hear voices prompting her to have a brain scan for a tumour. Interestingly, the hallucinatory content was proven true. The brain scan was done and confirmed a brain tumour. She underwent brain surgery and made a full recovery.

Third-person auditory hallucinatory experiences are a first-rank Schneider schizophrenia symptom and most manifestations involve variable verbal utterances. Auditory hallucinations feature in 75% of schizophrenia patients, 20–50% of bipolar ones, 10% of major psychotic depression patients and 40% of post-traumatic stress disorder subjects. Studies show 10–40% of non psychiatric population experience auditory verbal hallucinations. People experiencing non-clinical auditory hallucinations report positive content, less frequency, greater control over voices and less interference with their lives. Psychotic auditory hallucinations cause extreme distress and severe cognitive restrictions to the sufferer.

The characteristic features distinguishing clinical from non-clinical auditory verbal hallucinations can be listed as follows:

Clinical auditory verbal hallucinations

1. Greater Linguistic Complexity with limited vocabulary

wealthy, and all seeking a life away from western values. But I think that it was, possibly, an Elemental.

From: Callum Cooper, University of Northampton

Further Response to the Critique of 'Telephone Calls from the Dead'

[Constraints of space have prevented the printing of Mr Cooper's letter in full, but he wished to emphasise especially the originality of his research, referring to both his ongoing studies and earlier published papers on the subject, in one of which he 'focused primarily on mobile phones'. The full text of the letter, with references, will be supplied to readers on request.]

Firstly I would like to thank Mr Matthew Gilbert for taking the time to reply to my response of his review of my book *Telephone Calls from the Dead* (See *CP*, NS Vol. 1, Nos. 9 & 10). I appreciate that Mr Gilbert has clarified some of his critique, and in some areas admitted that the comments were a little harsh. I will admit myself that the book is written in an academic manner, but is nevertheless designed for general readership as well as an academic audience. [However,] two issues are still raised that I feel are either inaccurate, or need clarifying for Mr Gilbert and the readers of *The Christian Parapsychologist*. These issues are:

- 1) The originality of the book with regard to new and useful material discussed.
- 2) The book may have served better as a research paper published in an appropriate journal (i.e. peer reviewed).

To address the first point, Mr Gilbert believes that there should have been a focus on the new technology rather than revisiting the old technology. I must guide the readers specifically to Chapters 6 and 9 of *Telephone Calls from the Dead* in which strange cases of a variety of communications are discussed, and not just landline telephones.

The second point I wish to raise here is Mr Gilbert's proposal that the book would have served better as a research paper. ... I hope that in some way I can at least satisfy Mr Gilbert in stating that not only have the exact methods and statistics been presented as a conference paper but I also intend

to fulfil the wishes of [other reviewers and researchers] in ... a publication for peer review [that has been accepted by] the *Journal of Parapsychology*.

Reviews

The Science Delusion

by Rupert Sheldrake

Coronet Books (an imprint of Hodder & Stoughton Publishers Ltd.), 338 Euston Road, London, NW1 3BH. 978 1444727944. Paperback. 400pp. £10.99

Rupert Sheldrake, biologist, philosopher and author, is known for having proposed the concept of 'morphic resonance' - a non-genetic account of morphogenesis - and for his research into parapsychology. His books and papers stem from his theory of morphic resonance, and cover topics such as animal and plant development and behaviour, memory, telepathy, perception and cognition in general. The first of his many books based on his theory was *A New Science of Life* (1981), and his most recent (2012) is *The Science Delusion* (published in the USA as *Science Set Free*). Many will consider this riposte to Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* to be a landmark. Here is a sample of Sheldrake's thinking:

The sciences as we know them are weakest when they are dealing with or trying to avoid, the subjective aspects of reality. Our own experience of qualities like the smell of a rose or the sound of the band has been stripped away, leaving only odourless molecular structures and the physics of vibrations. The sciences have tried to confine themselves to I-it relationships, a third-person view of the world.

They have done their best to leave out I-you relationships, second person experiences, as well as first-person experiences, our personal experiences. Our inner life, including our dreams, hopes, loves, hates, pains, excitements, intentions, joys and sorrows, is reduced to charts of readings from electrodes, and is in electroencephalograms (EEGs) or changes in the levels of the

Further Response to the Critique of 'Telephone Calls from the Dead'

Dear Editor,

Firstly I would like to thank Mr Matthew Gilbert for taking the time to reply to my response of his review of my book *Telephone Calls from the Dead* (Cooper, 2012a), the review of which first appeared in Vol. 1, No. 9 of the new series of *Christian Parapsychologist* (Gilbert, 2013), and our correspondence in the March 2014 issue. I appreciate that Mr Gilbert has clarified some of his critique, and in some areas admitted that the comments were a little harsh. I will admit myself that the book is written in an academic manner, but is nevertheless designed for general readership as well as an academic audience. As I mentioned in my last letter, other reviews suggest that I achieved this, but admittedly I cannot argue against Mr Gilbert's subjective experience of the book as a reader. This being so, in Mr Gilbert's last response, two issues are still raised that I feel are either inaccurate, or need clarifying for Mr Gilbert and the readers of *Christian Parapsychologist*. These issues are:

- 1) The originality of the book with regards to new and useful material discussed.
- 2) The book may have served better as a research paper published in an appropriate journal (i.e. peer reviewed).

To address the first point, although I cannot argue any further that the book presented new material, as I made this clear in my last letter – contrary to Mr Gilbert's view – I will specifically mention his concern of new material, referring to digital communication, instead of landline telephones. Mr Gilbert believes that there should have been a focus on the new technology rather than revisiting the old technology. I must guide the readers specifically to Chapters 6 and 9 of *Telephone Calls from the Dead* in which strange cases of a variety of communications are discussed, and not just landline telephones. These cases include: voicemail messages, emails, text messages, and unusual correspondence via an old BBC computer. It's also worth noting that prior to the book I had discussed issues of anomalous text messages associated with the dead (Cooper, 2010a). However, as stated before, the availability of digital cases to follow-up, research, and investigate, was so minimal at the time, it would not have presented any form of useful results. Therefore such cases were not included in the overall analysis – only telephone call events. Digital communication was merely discussed as part of the additional findings, while some cases of strange telephone calls did occur on mobile phones, their characteristics were more or less similar to that of the landline telephone – with only a few characteristic differences (i.e., in some cases of receiving an alleged phone call from the dead on a mobile phone, the call information would self-delete after 24 hours or so, with no record of the call taking place when checked with the phone companies).

I cannot add any further to this debate of analogue technology vs. digital technology, and my reasons for the separation within the analysis. Even though I could not analyse

a data set of purely anomalous digital communications, an informal examination of the available cases suggests that Bayless (1980) presented an accurate hypothesis, in that as technology advances so too do anomalous experiences related to the use of that technology. I agree with Mr Gilbert that it would be beneficial to conduct such an analysis, but more cases are required. It was simply not possible to accomplish this at the time, and was made clear in the book.

The second point I wish to raise here is Mr Gilbert's proposal that the book would have served better as a research paper. This is partly owing to the deceptive title which might suggest the book to be something other than an academic study (never judge a book by its cover... or title). Mr Gilbert suggests a research paper of the title "Anomalous Telephonic Communication: A Reappraisal" may have worked out better.

May I remind Mr Gilbert and the readers that the full title of the book, as printed on the title page, is *Telephone Calls from the Dead: A Revised Look at the Phenomenon Thirty Years On*. I agree with Mr Gilbert that such research would serve a better purpose within an appropriate peer reviewed journal; however, it was such publications two years beforehand which led me to updating the original book/study of Rogo and Bayless (1979). Firstly, I published a paper highlighting the issue of spontaneous anomalous telephone calls and their transition into digital technology since the original book. I also focused primarily on mobile phones within this paper (Cooper, 2010b). This then led to a paper on applying critical thinking to the nature of these anomalous communications, once again, mainly focusing on new digital cases which had been presented to me in recent times (Cooper, 2010c). Then I decided to review the history of anomalous telephonic communications and present some initial thoughts and theories (Cooper, 2011). By this point, I thought it wise to present a new version of the book, given the amount of new information I had gathered, thus increasing the originality and decreasing any unnecessary repetition. This effort was strengthened after having sought permission from Jack Rogo (Scott Rogo's father), for me to sort through Rogo's unpublished files, which included a folder of unpublished accounts and notes on anomalous telephonic communication. Several months after the new book was published, this led to a conference presentation (at the University of Worcester) and a subsequent publication on the psychology of the phone-calls, and why various calls have been interpreted in different ways by different people. This included comparing accounts of alleged phone calls from the dead and phone calls from extra-terrestrials (Cooper & Foley, 2012).

The reason for a more academic approach is that the original book received criticism for not being more thorough in its overall methodology (Anderson, 1981; Hardy, 1979), or at least not clearly outlining the methods and procedures. This came across in several reviews where the case collection is clearly miscalculated and assumed to be $N = 100$ (Cox, 1980) or presumed to have not been included at all (Hardy, 1979). In fact it was stated as $N = 50$, but clearly not enough by Rogo and Bayless (1979). The late Dr Gertrude Schmeidler agreed that their book/study was of great value to parapsychology and was publicly accessible, but should be seen as a taster of things to come. In other words, Dr Schmeidler expected a follow up paper on the exact methodology used and a

clear outline of the data, either presented in a conference paper or published in a relevant journal. Even the recent book has faced these issues in at least one review, where it was suggested that the methods and statistical findings would benefit from being made clearer, via an added appendices, or a follow-up paper published in an appropriate peer reviewed journal (Colborn, 2013).

I hope that in some way I can at least satisfy Mr Gilbert in stating that not only have the exact methods and statistics been presented as a conference paper (Cooper, 2012b) but I also intend to fulfil the wishes of Colborn (2013) and indeed Dr Schmeidler (see Rogo and Bayless, 1979, pp.155-156), by producing such a publication for peer review (potentially in the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* sometime in 2014).

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BOOK REVIEW

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Telephone Calls from the Dead by Callum E. Cooper, Old
Portsmouth, England, UK: Tricorn Books, 2012, 210 pp, \$17.99,
pb ISBN 978-0957107410.

I first developed interest in studying after-death communication (ADC) after taking a course on the transpersonal perspective in counseling during my doctoral studies at the University of North Texas. Since then, following on Jenny Streit-Horn's (2011) research, I have reviewed and evaluated over 35 published books and articles related to ADC. In that work, I found that many researchers in the fields of psychology, counseling, bereavement, and parapsychology have examined ADCs using robust and rigorous social science research methods (Arcangel 2005; Guggenheim & Guggenheim, 1995; Palmer, 1979). In their studies, these authors provided evidence that transpersonal experiences are encouraging, natural, and common to the human experience. However, very few researchers have examined ADCs that involve the telephone as a communication medium.

In 1979, Scott Rogo and Raymond Bayless published the book *Phone Calls from the Dead* in which they examined case reports of people who claimed to have received messages from the dead via the telephone. Reviewers, such as Anderson (1981), criticized the work on the basis that the authors had not utilized empirical research methods to collect and analyze their data. In Calum E. Cooper's book, *Telephone Calls*

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from the Dead, he aimed to fill this gap in the literature by offering a refreshed commentary on the original work, adding new cases, and discussing possible theories as to how these phenomena occur. In my view, Cooper, a paranormal psychologist in Northampton, England, UK, provided a well-researched, unbiased, and fascinating narrative about telephonic ADCs. However, I found that he did not deliver much new material, as he spent a good deal of his book providing commentary on the original text rather than insight into his own research. Although Cooper acknowledged a need for stronger empirical methodology, I found him to have been vague when explaining his own research process.

Cooper opened his book with an introduction to the field of parapsychology and his personal discovery of the work of Rogo and Bayless (1979). He outlined his personal hopes for writing the current volume and appeared eager to continue the work from the original study in a manner that addressed previous criticisms. In chapter two, Cooper provided biographical background for Rogo and Bayless. In the third chapter, he reviewed historical information related to spiritual telephone calls. His review dated back to 1913 when David Wilson discovered an untraceable and mysterious telegraph message, and it continued to recent research by Massimo Biondi who provided much of the case data in Cooper's revised study.

In chapter four, Cooper classified the calls into five different "anomalous telephone experiences" (p. 45). The first four call types involve telephone calls between a deceased person and living receiver. These types include simple calls, in which the deceased caller says a few words to the receiver and then is unresponsive; prolonged calls, in which the receiver has an entire conversation with the deceased without realizing they are dead; answer calls, in which a caller calls someone without realizing they are dead and the deceased answers; and mixed calls, in which a prolonged conversation occurs with awareness that the caller is deceased. In the fifth call type, intention calls, no deceased person is involved; rather, the anomaly is that a living person receives knowledge of an intended phone message from another living person without an actual call having taking place.

In the fifth chapter, Cooper provided an analysis of the calls and recognized the challenge to find hard evidence in spontaneous transpersonal events—those involving the transcendence of the usual personal limits of space and/or time. He encouraged researchers to attend to the persons' subjective experiences of the world. Moreover, he acknowledged limitations from Rogo and Bayless's (1979) original study and

agreed that although thought-provoking, the writing appeared less academic in nature. Finally, Cooper provided a frequency table based on the prevalence of call types. In the sixth chapter, he examined miscellaneous calls that somehow involved telephones but that did not fall into other categories, such as calls that occur in dreams, voicemails that originate from the deceased, and haunted telephones that ring without a connection.

In chapters seven and eight, Cooper proposed potential psychological and paranormal theories as to how and why anomalous calls occur. Additionally, he established the need for researchers to use a ruling out process to eliminate the potential for rational explanations of these calls. In chapter nine, he shared recent data related to new technology such as email and text messages that originate from unknown sources. In the tenth and final chapter, Cooper concluded his book by reviewing and evaluating comments from peers.

Throughout his book, Cooper delivered a well-informed narrative with rich and detailed background information. He looked deep into the literature and discovered rarely mentioned cases dating back over 100 years. For example, in the second chapter, he reviewed the work of Oscar D'Angonnel, a Brazilian medium active during the 1920s who claimed to have the ability to communicate with the dead via telephone. Cooper also identified several inventors who attempted to create devices, such as ghost boxes and psychic phones, to manifest encounters with the dead. Finally, Cooper cited several previously unpublished case examples of telephone ADCs, one of which involved a woman who allegedly experienced several prolonged calls with a deceased friend.

Throughout his work, Cooper infused both passion and skepticism into his writing. Although I found him to be enthusiastic about his subject matter, I also thought he remained unbiased as he adequately addressed the limitations of case study research by repeatedly insisting on the possibility that these incidents of seeming telephone communication with the dead might be based in fraud, technical malfunction, or human error. Cooper encouraged readers to follow the data to reach their own conclusions regarding the genuineness of each case and of the phenomenon overall. Finally, Cooper remained open-minded to comments and criticisms from experts in his field. He even dedicated his entire concluding chapter to sharing his process of integrating feedback into his text.

From a researcher's perspective, I found some limitations in Cooper's work. He carefully evaluated Rogo and Bayless's (1979) previous

work, acknowledging the flaws in their design and calling for more stringent and academic-based research. However, other than stating that he used a “thematic content analysis” (p. 80) throughout his own research process, Cooper did not provide a description of his research methodology. Furthermore, he noted reviewer bias stemming from lack of understanding of the distinctions between parapsychological and scientific research. However, I know from my own research that some studies related to parapsychology and ADCs have indeed utilized traditional social science research methodology (Arcangel 2005; Guggenheim & Guggenheim, 1995; Palmer, 1979), so his distinction did not seem to me to reflect the complete body of ADC research. Additionally, throughout the book it seemed as though Cooper relied very heavily on the work of Rogo and Bayless (1979) and less on his own research. At times, I had difficulty determining which data originated directly from Cooper’s own work and which data came from previous studies. Finally, I found the title *Telephone Calls from the Dead* to be provocative, yet inaccurate, because he included calls that did not involve the deceased, such as his type 5 described above.

Overall, I found that Cooper made a strong case that unexplainable incidents related to the deceased do occur via the telephone. In fact, as I was writing this review, I received an email from my doctoral advisor detailing an account from a nurse who learned of an “answer call” from one of her patients. In addition, a few months ago I had an experience in a play therapy session with a child that seemed to involve an ADC with a toy phone; although I showed the session to several of my colleagues who can attest to the phenomenon, the session recording was then lost, erasing an objective record of the occurrence. I personally attributed both the email and my own clinical experience as indications that these experiences do indeed happen and mostly go unreported. In my final analysis, despite its limitations, I found *Telephone Calls from the Dead* to be a captivating read that redefines ADC literature and indicates a genuine need for continued research in this area.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Response to Book Review of *Telephone Calls From the Dead*

To the Editor,

May I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to Eric Price for his thorough review of my book *Telephone Calls from the Dead* (Cooper, 2012) and his generous comments on the work that took place (Price, 2015). Given that so little writing exists on the topic of anomalous telephone calls, I wish to expand on the review by addressing a few points that Price raised. Although I find myself in almost complete agreement with the issues he raised, I feel they would benefit from clarification on my part. I hope that in addressing the research limitations highlighted, I can answer the concerns raised in the review and any questions interested readers may have regarding the book and subsequent research.

The first points raised concerned limited presentation of new material. The original research of D. Scott Rogo and Raymond Bayless (1979) had practically been forgotten by the time I stumbled across their book in 2008 during my own academic studies and research within parapsychology. When I finally gave their work some attention, I realized that following their own efforts, little had been done in the area of research on anomalous telephone phenomena. I began testing the water by revisiting accounts of such phenomena (Cooper, 2010, 2011) and concluded that it was perhaps time to revive the research. Although I conducted a new analysis of accounts, I felt a lot of the book would benefit from re-familiarizing readers with the previous (and long out of print) work of Rogo and Bayless—and, indeed, their lives and work in parapsychology. This summary may have given some readers a clouded view of the things that I personally did which were new to the process. To make clear what material I presented that could be considered new: (a) I found new areas of historical importance regarding anomalous electronic communication experiences, (b) I considered new technological advances in relation to modern day experiences reported, (c) I presented a new analysis of accounts, and (d) I provided an updated peer review and discussion of the phenomena (see Cooper, 2014a, for further discussion on these points.)

Another point Price (2015) raised is the ambiguity of my presen-

tation of the research methodology. In the book, I had to appreciate from the publisher's perspective that the general reader would not be concerned about specific details of my methods of analysis but more about the outcome. I mentioned Rogo's uses of content analysis and my own uses of thematic analysis—with the inclusion of quantitative findings to reflect on Rogo's methods and outcomes. However, Price's (2015) point in this regard echoed those of Mark Boccuzzi (2013) and Matthew Colborn (2013) who argued that my exact methods and results could have been better displayed. This repetition served to show me that in presenting a book containing the process of a research project, it can be difficult to meet the needs of both public and academic audiences. In wanting to answer these constructive criticisms, I also turned to the peer review comments of Gertrude Schmeidler regarding the original research. She argued that the work of Rogo and Bayless should be presented to a peer-reviewed journal, with its full methodology and findings explained, as the work had "[fallen] sadly short of the scientific standards of reporting" (see Rogo & Bayless, 1979, pp. 155–156). Therefore, in response to the concerns of Schmeidler, Boccuzzi (2013), Colborn (2013), and now Price (2015), I submitted a research report describing the new study I had conducted—which I had only casually reported within the book (Cooper, 2012)—to the *Journal of Parapsychology*, so that it could face peer review and present the full and clear details of the methods and findings (Cooper, 2014b).

Finally, Price (2015) mentioned *my concerns* of "reviewer bias stemming from lack of understanding of the distinctions between parapsychological and scientific research" (p. 60), with regards to critiques of the original research (Rogo & Bayless, 1979). He went on to mention that researchers of anomalous post-death experiences—also termed after-death communication (ADC)—appear to generally utilize social science research methods. Thus, my distinction of research methods applied between parapsychology and other sciences did not appear to reflect the complete body of research on anomalous experiences, given that parapsychology *does* adopt standardized methods. I would further agree with this point due to having focused a lot of my own research on thanatology and anomalous experiences (e.g., Cooper, 2016; Cooper, Roe, & Mitchell, 2015). I am fairly confident that this concern may just be confusion regarding my concerns of Julia Hardy's review of Rogo's and Bayless's original study (Hardy, 1979) and also my discussions of the critique presented by Rodger Anderson (1981).

It appears from Hardy's review that she did not recognize parapsychology—and, indeed, the methods that have been applied to sponta-

neous cases—to be in line with scientific methodological standards. She thereby insinuated some difference between parapsychology and the methodological approaches of other scientific disciplines. This concern can more so be directed towards Rodger Anderson (1981, pp. 66–67), in which he argued that the application of content analysis by Rogo and Bayless (1979) was a weak and “careless assembly” of cases and was not a legitimate research approach. Furthermore, he argued that the authors assumed, due to persistent patterns/themes emerging from the data, that categories of telephone call types generated from the data suggested the presence of anomalous processes.

In Rogo’s (1981) reply, he made it clear that this was not the case but that content analysis could help sift weaker cases from stronger ones in which information submitted by the percipient was limited. It could help identify where characteristics of a given phenomenon are persistent across a broad range of people and help detect and differentiate fraudulent cases from those submitted with honesty and genuine experiences to tell. The majority of genuine cases should “over-ride” the fraudulent ones via a phenomenon known as the “Bundle of Sticks” paradox (Rollo, 1967), whereby many cases present greater reliability in the themes generated and characteristics identified than a single case can provide (see Rogo, 1981, p.75). This method may demonstrate genuine consistent characteristics of a given phenomenon but does not necessarily constitute evidence that the phenomenon involves anomalous processes—as Anderson (1981) had suggested the researchers had argued.

However, the content analysis approach at least acted as an “exploratory” starting point (Chari, 1981) for Rogo and Bayless (1979) from which the investigation of a previously unrecognized phenomenon could be understood, research methods improved, and further examination of potential psi processes critically considered. This process in itself is how Louisa Rhine compiled and utilized her spontaneous cases collection. By understanding the characteristics of real world events, experimental methods—adopting quantitative or qualitative approaches—could be devised. Rogo (1981) argued this very point against Anderson (1981), in that the use of content analysis has been a standard social sciences method in parapsychology most notably since the publication of Rhine’s spontaneous case research (in further support of this point, see Cooper, 2016; Haraldsson, 2012; Schouten, 1986; Weiner & Haight, 1986).

Once again, may I take this opportunity to thank Price for his thorough review and for presenting me with an opportunity to create

further dialogue on the research. I hope this discussion might encourage further debate or bring additional cases to the table—as I found Price’s own related experiences mentioned at the end his review of great interest.

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