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Re: Otherworld Reality Conference - Review PT. 2

From: **Stephen Miles Lewis - ELFIS** <elfis@austin.rr.com>
Date: Fri, 25 Jun 1999 01:35:34 +0000
Fwd Date: Fri, 25 Jun 1999 17:02:45 -0400
Subject: Re: Otherworld Reality Conference - Review PT. 2

Otherworld Reality
"Exploring the Ontological Status of Imaginal Consciousness"
Conference Review Part 2
by SMiles Lewis
www.elfis.net

Part 1
<http://www.elfis.net/RnR/smlotw.htm>
Abstracts-Bios-Links
<http://www.elfis.net/RnR/absbio.htm>

Conference Day 2
Sunday 5/2/99

With the conference title of Otherworld Reality and its stated agenda of Exploring the Ontological Status of Imaginal Consciousness, this symposium's work was cut out for it. The previous days explorations into the reality of imaginal experiences, while providing a fundamental background for the entirety of the wide spectrum of otherworld consciousness, lacked the physical data required to satisfy most as to the true nature of their ontological status. An anthropologist, philosopher, dream researcher, mathematician and others seemed to come up short when it came to truly "pinning down" the physical REALITY of Imaginal Encounters. Though they each gave details of the phenomena which point to the validity of information revealed through the experiencing of imaginal consciousness, the second days' line-up of speakers beckoned us onward towards more arena's within which to continue our pursuit.

The second morning of the conference, having a better grasp of getting around on the tubes, I used the Circle line to get to Embankment station right by the conference location near the river Thames. I arrived just in time to say hello to a few people and make my way upstairs to take my seat.

The actual conference speaking room was a square high-ceilinged hall on the second floor of the Royal Society of Arts, which the brochure calls the Great Room. The main doors enter upon its tiered space midway up the stepped enclosure. All four walls are adorned in an almost garrish panorama representative of a Renaissance style by painter James Barry titled The Progress of Human Knowledge. It was both impressive and perhaps a little gawdy. The centerpiece of the room's high ceiling was an apparent cuppola which had a circular patch at its center (which turned out to be a sky light opened only briefly before the first speaker after lunch). The room could supposedly seat up to 200 audience members. The head of the tiered hall falls at the bottom level to your right as you

enter its main double doors from the south side. On this bottom level were the panel chairs behind a long narrow table. Facing it head on one finds the actual speaker's podium to one's right; a video camera watching the audience over the speakers' shoulders and the slide, overhead/video projector screen hanging above and behind the panel table. Most intriguing to me was the doorway, usually closed, at the back left of the panel table, which when opened revealed an impressive atrium-like stone stairwell area which may have connected at least four other rooms across two levels. . .

Peter Rojcewicz

The first speaker was Peter Rojcewicz whom I'd the pleasure of sharing lunch with the day before. Peter's paper was originally to be an overview of the different types of imaginal experiences from ufo encounters to NDEs and beyond. However, he changed his paper topic completely to address the deepening problem of higher education and its lack of encompassing noetics to better the life loving capacities of the student body. I had a prelude of his paper from speaking with him the previous day over sandwiches with Brian Johnson, Tony Arcari, and Michael Grosso. Peter is an excellent speaker, and though I was a little disappointed at not hearing his descriptions of the multitudes of imaginal experiences (including his own encounter with an MIB), this fact reminded me of the Eastern perspective that it is not as important to focus on these phenomena as such, so much as it is important to learn the lessons they may teach us so that we may better our living within this reality.

That is what his focus was on; the incorporation of the lessons to be learned from these phenomena within the existing institutions of higher learning. A return to the charge of these schools to more fully educate the students at what it is to be human. Not to continue the existing monetary paradigm which Colleges and Universities find themselves in today. With conviction and compassion Peter convinces us of the necessity to do so if we ever hope to turn around the downward spiral of the materialist paradigms which have brought us so close to the brink of dehumanized existence we find ourselves already knee-deep in today.

Peter began with a quote from Jung on the nature of the addict; the addiction is ultimately a thirst for gnosis and wholeness. This thirst for wholeness is within all of us, especially those who seek after these phenomena. Peter states that the "healing of the split requires a long multidisciplinary effort." Unfortunately, in our culture, "curing is usually a quick fix."

Mr. Rojcewicz' proposition for fixing the same split in our gnosis institutes was to state that "Noetic Education promotes development of other modes of knowing; experiential, moral, aesthetic. Extrarational modalities encompassing analytical approaches to myth, etc." Why should we accept such a proposal? Because, "all modes of seeing have blindspots." The Noetic student becomes a "Human Intellectual Hermes" capable in the art of the "Reading of Images," cultivating an "Aesthetic Literacy."

Peter went on to say that "lack of this literacy propogates the ability to be manipulated, for image is the primary source of philosophy." This is the "paradoxical nature of Image as psychic basis and social reality." All human experiencing of "physical, social and religious realities is inferred as image."

Ultimately the two consequences of the adoption of such an Aesthetic Literacy, according to Rojcewicz, is the knowledge that "we are tools for exploration, primary instruments of learning" and the "discovery of the interior life of exterior matter."

Peter's concluding remarks were very Jungian in their understanding of the need for the integration of the Shadow: There is "no wholeness without pathology."

Richard Rudgley

Richard Rudgley provided the second presentation which was an extremely good ethnography of the imaginal as found within the ancient global entheogenic (psychedelic plants) shamanic

traditions. Mr. Rudgley, though a reserved speaker, did a fine job of illustrating the incredibly long history of the use of such psychoactive compounds as ayahuasca, ginger, tobacco, mushrooms, the elusive soma, and more, dating back perhaps as long as 60,000 years to the time of the neanderthals. He gave specific information on many aspects of this most valuable area of research that I was not nearly as familiar with as I had thought. He was also rather humorous in that dry British way.

Beginning with an appreciation of the fact that western cultural approaches to psychoactives are similar to the west's approach to the imaginal Rudgley embarked upon his own investigative approach which embraces the plants value as imaginal facilitators. A litany of examples of the varying degrees of use of such plants throughout both old worlds and new lends evidence for a cultural difference instead of a lack of biodiversity as the probable reason. It seems to always flourish among cultures which come to integrate instead of irradicate. Other variables needed to understand disparities of use among different cultures revolve around issues of researcher bias. One such bias being more investigation into the sacred use of such plants in male mystery cults as opposed to female ones.

Amongst some New Guniea initiatory rites, akin to those of Masonics and other secret societies, there is a documented system of 12 successive levels starting the neophyte out with the ceremonial use of large amounts of ginger often coupled with fasting. Though typically not considered a psychoactive plant, ginger can apparently become so if used within an enculturated "mystery religion" context. Initiates use these trance catalysts to travel out of the body with the help of ancestor spirits whereupon they gain the knowledge of that particular level's lesson. Increasingly difficult lessons are rewarded with increased ecstatic ascetism. Apparently narratives from the Americas' offer similar reports.

Mr. Rudgley proceeded to illucidate the even more unknown, to me, use of tobacco as a pscyhoactive facilitator. He chronicled its spread from South America where it originated to eventual be spread world wide. Tobacco, again in sufficiently excessive amounts, has been used for generations by shamans as a near death induction technique to learn the origins of disease, says Mr. Rudgley. The smoking of 5 or 6 three foot cigars in one session is not uncommon. Prior to the European invasion tobacco use was entirely sacred. Continuing the tobacco chronicle Richard suggested that perhaps the origins of agriculture arose from the cultivation of sacred plants and not utilitarian food production. He also raised the issue of the early European perspective of all smoke as hellish and thus demonic in nature. Mr. Rudgley ended the tobacco expose with a reminder that when the "Russians" introduced it to the Siberians they quickly took it up for psychoactive use.

Then came an expose of the Ayahuascan "Vine of the Soul" used by over 70 groups in South America and made from a mixture of over 100 plants. This entheogen's use has been dramaticly interwoven within and throughout the entirety of these cultures. All aspects of their daily and artistic lives is informed by the geometry of the realms opened by the concoction. The variety of admixtures and cultural contexts creates a multitude of different effects, however all of them create a consistently recognizable "psychic shorthand" of shapes and forms as well as an appreciation that THIS reality is the UNreality as compared to the opposite Western take. There is also a sexual connotation dealing with metaphors of the Cosmic Womb, says Rudgley.

In a brief informational on Peyote, Rudgely spoke of the discovery of peyote cacti remains found in a thousand year old grave. He gave one example of the negative effects of psychoactive use upon an aboriginal culture which involved the sudden use of peyote by its warrior class. Previously its use had been forbidden to all except the shamen. The use of the drug outside the sacred context of the caste system undermined the entire social order of the community.

Toward the end of his talk, Richard Rudgley pondered the identity of the elusive Soma described in the ancient Iranian Divine Comedy. It describes the use of two psychoactives. Was it some combination of Ephedra, Cannabis, and/or Opium? Again the question of how far back psychoactive use goes within human history is raised. Perhaps 60,000 years to a famous "flower

burial" which found that the pollen of six of the species had indentifiable medicinal properties, including ephedra.

Finally, Richard surprised me with a hum-dinger piece of information; DMT may exist in higher levels in the spinal fluids of schizophrenics. Shades of Dennis and Terrance McKenna's assertions that the human brain can produce a DMT experience "on the natch." Rudgley mused on the possibility of Kundalini symbollogy being connected to this idea of DMT laced spinal fluid. Niedam [sic?] is the term he used to describe the physiological creation of psychoactives. Something he thinks may ultimately lead to a new field of paraphysiology.

During the brief tea break I found myself again speaking with a beautiful psychic I had been questioned by at the end of yesterday's proceedings. She and her husband of seven years (a man who conspicuously looked like Bill Clinton) spoke to me about their use of new digital camera techniques and technologies which allow for the photographing and interpreting of human energy fields. She uses these in her practice of the shamanic arts to heal many people. She also spoke to me of the negative effects that one speaker at an ISEEM conference in Colorado had inflicted upon her (and possibly the other audience members).

Karl Jansen

Returning from the break we were treated to the most animated speaker of the conference by far, Mr. Karl Jansen, who spoke on Ketamine and the NDE. His paper had been retitled "Ketamine: the Mental Modem." Not only was he the most animated speaker, walking back and forth across the stage utilizing the wireless mike that no-one else seemed interested in using, but he also utilized the slide projector to good effect. His sense of humor also shone through and his flamboyant gestures were even more exaggerated by his extreme height.

Mr. Jansen's perspectives provided valuable insights into Ketamine. It helped dispell some of the myths I had heard as well as providing vital information about it and its effects within the brain. He even commented upon its use within the Club/Dance Culture as well as informing me of several things I didn't know like that continued use can create boyles and that it is commonly prescribed, at least in Britain, for ashmatics as well as for women with regard to obstetrics and gynecology. His intention to found a Quantum Psychiatry is indeed a much needed, yet obviously difficult goal.

At first he focused on K's (Ketamine's) connection to the NDE and NBE, near death and near birth experiences, respectfully. Yes, K trips can induce experiences whose narrative is nearly identical in character to those of NDEs. The near BIRTH experience is equally valid from Jansen's point of view. "Why are we so resistant to birth memory?" Karl repeated the refrain again and again that K does not (usually) stop or lower the heart rate, nor lower the rate of breathing. He lamented its 30 year safety record and emphasized the point that someone who has an NDE is not necessarily close to death. In fact he ultimately believes that the NDE is akin to the brain chemistry effects of K and is in actuality a defense mechanism to protect against brain death.

Jansen describes the narrative descriptions of the effects of NDEs and K as being similar in their content. Both describe psychedelic insights about reality, personality, sacredness, similar sounds, travel by tunnel into a light at high speed, conviction of death, God, OBEs, other realities, re-experienced memories, life reviews, clarity, a border between realms. As in some NDE cases, K trippers, though unconscious, can often recount the conversations and actions of spectators in the room with them. Both K trippers and NDEers insist they were not hallucinating, that the events actually happened. Mr. Jansen stressed his opinion that just because NDEs can be induced does not mean that they are unreal. In both experiences, he believes, the brain is re-tuned to a different reality; a reality of quantum connectedness wherein the mind's eye can "toggle between life and death" as well as travel to any place and time without the physical body going anywhere. In this way he equates the timeless realm that is contacted in these NDEs and K-trips as perhaps explicated by Bell's Theorom: a hyperspace where all realities exist as a single point.

Both NDEs/NBEs and K-trips can be very therapeutic if undertaken within a safe environment. Benefits include more concern for others, less depression, anxiety, and neurosis. However it should be stressed that there is a dark side to Ketamine. Besides the boyles, there is the same very seductive quality that is the nature of the imaginal. Karl Jansen continually spoke of the Faustian metaphor and of several instances where Ketamine enthusiasts took that final trip never to return. However, he emphasized that of these cases only one of them could truly be termed an overdose - it is nearly impossible to do so with this drug. He insists that these individuals simply chose to not toggle back to the worlds of the living. In each case the person was very happy in their life but felt it was time to move on. In this same way, Jansen made a point to not condemn people who make reality choices that we can hardly fathom; he specifically cited the case of Heaven's Gate (during the end of conference panel discussion).

Mr. Jansen concluded with a much too detailed explanation of just how Ketamine works within the chemistry of the brain. This is where he outlined his belief that the NDE is in effect a defensive mechanism to protect against brain death. He reiterated his conviction that K actually allows the human mind to penetrate new realities or "Transpersonal Fields" and that this should ultimately lead us into the new domain of quantum psychiatry.

Lunch

Lunch time brought the inevitable waiting around in the hopes of hooking up with someone with whom to share in the continued networking of ideas. Luckily I again found myself in the right place at the right time. This time, as before, it was with the presence of Michael Grosso, but the invitation came from the other luminary amongst our forming lunch troupe, Stanley Krippner. I had reintroduced myself to him yesterday right before his presentation of Vallee's paper/outline. Accepting the invitation I joined the entourage which ended up dining in a nice little Italian restaurant right around the corner - in nearly the opposite direction as the previous days food venture.

Among our group was a young man (perhaps my junior) who was lucky enough to get some sort of "scholarship" or grant to attend. More interesting to me was the presence of Roger Woolger, a transpersonal psychotherapist with skills in regressive hypnosis. Also present were Anthony "Tony" Arcari (again) and some 'followers' of Mr Woolger's that were a married couple whose names elude me. During our meal I found myself talking mostly with Woolger and the wife of said couple; both of them are extremely experientially educated in all these matters. This wonderful lady would turn out later to be one of the major instigators of a fantastic round of dialogue had during the final Q&A panel discussion at the end of the conference.

Dean Radin

Once back at the conference it was time for the final speaker who was one of the main draws to this event for me; parapsychologist Dean Radin. Having read his book the Conscious Universe, which I highly recommend, I was already aware of most of what he presented but the sheer joy of his speaking style, his sense of humor, his command of the data, and his effective use of the overhead projector made him the perfect ending to the conference. Also, I was overjoyed to hear him state certain phrases and ideas as well as his assertion that there were no less than 11 on-line random number generators around the world continuing the work into Field Consciousness effects.

Of all the speakers at this conference, Dean Radin was most certainly the one who best addressed its agenda of exploring the ontological status of the imaginal. Within Radin's speech we heard of the most convincing evidence for the physical reality foundation of psi phenomena and its related aspects of imaginal consciousness.

Like so many other speakers before him, Dean began with a Jung quote. This time it was Jung's words on the interconnectedness of psyche and matter. Radin also began with a couple of joke statements. He lamented that there is "no career track for

parapsychology," and asserted in anticipation of the skeptics regard to these phenomena that "reality isn't what it used to be."

You see, "measurement is addictive" according to Radin. He stated this in the context of describing the three realms within which we find ourselves looking at data; that of the objective, subjective, and what he calls the intersubjective. The intersubjective is his term for the imaginal. He described the term in relation to the sender/receiver paradigm which has yielded much success in the now famous telepathy in dream-state experiments utilizing the ganzfeld technique.

The really interesting information, though, had to do with Radin's continuing research of Roger Nelson and what they term Field Consciousness Effects. The idea, simply put, is that, if one human mind can influence systems as disparate as other minds and even machines, then what of the focused attention of MANY MINDS. This type of experiment tries to verify the influence of mass consciousness on the output of random systems, in most cases, an electronic random number generator. Results have been startlingly successful.

Dean Radin collected many of these cases in his book and reviewed them generously during his speech to the conference. In all test cases, random number generators began producing LESS RANDOMNESS coincident with events which were known to be watched by large numbers of people. Some of these events included Olympic broadcasts, the O.J. Simpson verdict, Princess Diana's funeral, New Year's Eve, the recent Baseball homerun excitement, and many many more.

These experiments are part of the Global Consciousness Project, also called the EGG, or Electro Gaia Gram. The reference being to both a metaphoric EEG of the planetary consciousness and the obvious symbolisms inherent in any egg analogy.

By far, the greatest addition to establishing the ontological status of the imaginal is to be found in the data Dean Radin presented next; that of the terrestrial and extraterrestrial forces (geomagnetic and otherwise) discovered that play a part in the human ability to access the imaginal. Some time ago, Michael Persinger and Martha Adams investigated the connection of geomagnetism and incidents of psi, both in spontaneous and lab cases. What they found were higher numbers of psi incidence during periods of lower geomagnetic activity. Since many people had been searching for some electromagnetic component to the mechanisms of psi, this was a breakthrough towards new areas of research. These new avenues are paying off and may soon be a rather firm foundation for new paradigms of exploration.

On-line random number generator experiments, coupled with retro-causation (aka retroPK) research have confirmed an extraterrestrial component to psi conducive states: the full moon. Long known in the occult for its psychic importance, science has finally proven it does indeed effect the realms of the physical AND psychical. Web sites like Mr. Walker's www.fourmilabs.com have shown that INTENTION can be effective backwards in time. The majority of positive effects were concurrent with the Full Moon.

One of the many examples of comparative, complimentary research into the effects of the moon upon the human psychic faculty is best summed up by Radin's research into the nightly payouts at gambling establishments. With the consent of the casinos, Dean looked at the nightly payouts and determined that the old gambler adage that you win more during the full moon... IS TRUE. Though, as he put it to the casinos, "gamblers just lose less on these nights."

Finally, Dean Radin regaled us with yet another recently discovered extraterrestrial influence on human psychic functioning: Cosmological effects. I had heard of the important discovery of a local sidereal time component to better psi results but Radin put them into a context I wasn't familiar with, that of facing into or out of our own galaxy. It seems that, when facing into the galaxy, there are of course higher EM levels than if one is facing out into deep space. These higher EM levels are deleterious to the average psychic human. However, other evidence has shown this to be the opposite with psychically

gifted individuals. They seem to actually do better on days of high geomagnetic activity and so may also do better by facing into our galaxy.

Radin concluded by harkening back to the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and his ideas of the noosphere - human consciousness entwined about the planet as the next aspect of human evolution. Dean used the moebius strip analogy to help explain how it is that some people may in fact perceive information that most of us cannot. Perhaps these people have some faculty that is either emergent or dormant within each of us. Perhaps we will all soon acquire the ability to perceive time and space as a moebius strip wherein one side is the physical/objective reality we all share and the other side is the psychical/subjective realms that mystics have described for millennia. Maybe gifted psychics have already developed this intersubjective talent for seeing the psychical and physical as the moebius strip whose dualistic qualities are simply gained through the inverting of one end of the spectrum to connect with the Other. Perhaps.

Question & Answer Audience/Panel Discussions Exploring the Imaginario

The conclusion to the conference was the long-awaited Q&A Panel Discussion whereby audience members were allowed to ask specific questions they had prepared and submitted to Stanley Krippner on note cards. Krippner was the Panel Chair and began the discussion by utilizing new insights gained from Tony Arcari's recent Saybrook paper on the differences and similarities between certain consciousness research terminologies. Tony had spoken to me of these concepts as well, and though they seemed simple enough, I had a hard time coming to grips with them. Krippner went so far as to create a drawing of these ideas on the overhead projector. However, this too failed to totally enlighten me on these ideas. I did like Stanley's use of the term Imaginario, though, to encapsulate these concepts.

Most of the questions and answers were rather staid and uninteresting until one particular note card from a female audience member pointed out the distinct lack of women on the panel. Stanley Krippner did an excellent job of balancing the potentially chaotic nature of ensuing audience/panel dialogue which erupted over this issue. He supported the observation with his own disappointment at this fact but assuaged any discontent with the news that several women had indeed been invited to participate but were all unavailable due to other engagements (no pun intended). Skeptic Susan Blackmore was one of the invitees who was unable to attend. He went on to incorporate the valuable insights offered by female audience members which, as I said, led to some of the best dialogue I have witnessed in years. Female audience member after female audience member chimed in with their own perspectives on the issue of the seeming lack of female representation within the imaginal/shamanistic traditions discussed within the course of the conference.

Most everyone addressed the prevailing biases in researching gender related issues of consciousness studies. The general consensus was that it is always difficult for a member of one sex to investigate the mystery religions of the opposite sex. Also, modern scientific experiments very often exclude female subjects in their projects. Reasons range from fear of drug effects upon the female subject who might become pregnant during the experiment, to underlying problems within a male dominated field which often simply ignores the feminine.

Richard Rudgley asserted that he was not only aware of female psychoactive societies but also of male ones which practice such acts as ritual penile blood-letting, as a sort of menstrual envy.

Charles Laughlin stated that women have easier access to these states and thus don't need the neurocognitive drivers such as initiatory rites. Someone else mentioned the differences between men and women's corpus collosum connections. Still others mentioned some experiments which point to gender differences in psychic ability: men do better influencing machines where as women do better in less mechanistic type exercises.

Another audience member brought up the subject of transgender/transsexual shamanism to which Charles Laughlin pipe up, "speaking as the only cross-dresser on the panel..." to which the entire panel and audience laughed heartily. Of course, the subject was then treated with much more respect as we were all reminded that both cross-dressing male and female shamans have both suffered at the hands of people inside and outside of their own tribe. Most shamanic traditions address androgyny in one form or another, usually identifying it with its own set of vast powers. Yet even those cultures often look down upon such transexual behaviours, typically reacting with prejudice and violence.

Another point was made that is relevant to the debate over sexual differences; that of trauma and its differing dissociative effects upon men and women. It is generally accepted that males get angry and externalize their anger where as females get depressed and internalize their feelings. It should not surprise us then when we discover that in America, more men are jailed and more women seek therapy than in any other country.

Finally, perhaps the most consternating aspect of the Q&A was the continual focusing by certain audience members upon the topic of Out of Body Experiences and other psi phenomena which seem to imply that human consciousness can move beyond the body. Particularly, two older gentleman whom I had eavesdropped on throughout the conference, had repeatedly talked amongst themselves about their own psi experiments whereby they placed a set of 3 random numbers atop a wardrobe and challenged any psychic to astral travel and discern the numbers.

Many panel members addressed these issues, citing different examples of psi experiments which lend credence to this very ability. Michael Grosso went so far as to recount his own encounter with a particular student's ability to do such, in this case actually moving an object in his home, apparently during an OBE. It was around this time that Paul Devereux was obviously growing weary of such old paradigm thinking, as he had his head down in frustration. He proceeded to launch into a perhaps less than technical explanation for why he feels this is a moot issue. He tried to sum up what had been spoken of repeatedly throughout the conference and its importance for new modes of thinking, re-stating the consensus that the human mind can and does move beyond spacetime and there potentially interacts with all matter and energy at an informational level - not on a physical, old paradigm level where the mind LEAVES the body. "There is no body to leave, therefore it is useless to continue talking about such matters in terms of Out of Body Experiences and Astral Travel."

While I understood exactly what he was trying to say, I also sympathized with his frustration at trying to get across these ideas to people who sometimes can not quite grasp the implications of what has been said. I suppose a better tack would have been to simply accept that such phenomena as OBEs, astral travel, remote viewing, clairvoyance, etc. are the old paradigm ways that humans developed to interact within these timeless, spaceless realms of Otherworld Reality. Once this is stated, it should be a little easier to then go on and try to find new paradigms which better describe the true nature of these realms. Easier said than done, eh?

All in all it was perhaps the best start towards actualizing the new paradigms explicit within the narratives of experiences of the imaginal that we could have hoped for. I for one do see an over-arching structure forming from out of these many varied speakers' presentations.

We have evidence of human exploration of these Otherworld Realities dating far back into human evolution, using such neurocognitive drivers as psychedelics, visionary states and meditation. We have similar explorations right up to the present in the form of lucid dream research. From anthropologists we learn that the information gained within these excursions into Otherworlds often has value towards our understanding of the orders within nature. The physicists and mathematicians tell us these things are possible and we may be on the verge of understanding the mechanics behind such phenomena. Philosophers implore us to take this evidence to

heart and to apply it to the institutions which sustain our civilization. Meanwhile, parapsychologists are helping draw the maps that will lead us towards a better understanding of psi phenomena and how it acts as interface between humanity and these Otherworlds.

Good job Consciousness Connection! May this set the stage for a continuing dialogue and exploration of our imaginal realms and the hopes they bring for a better world. Book me for the next one!

Afterward

The following days found me doing the touristy site-seeing bit, befriending several students residing in the University youth hostel where I was staying, as well as shopping for boots and books in the Soho district. I toured the Tower of London, saw the Family Jewels and the Tower Bridge.

My new found friends and I spent one night in a club below Leicester Square dancing to the same crappy music one finds in clubs back in the States. We wandered home through nearly deserted streets, past the gay bar that had been bombed a few nights earlier. Our long walk ended with a late night beer fest in the youth hostel commons area. The following day I heard that 7 people had been shot that night in a London club.

The friendliest of the University students I had gone dancing with was a tall, thin Belgian (nearly ten years my junior) named Mike. I spoke to him about American parapolitics (conspiracy theory) and UFO stories. I told him of his own country's dramatic publicized tracking of UFOs with military aircraft radar. He had no knowledge in any of these areas, specifically stating he'd never heard about his own country's UFO cases. Not that surprising I suppose.

My tours of the city were limited by time and resources but I managed to spend exactly the amount of money I took with me. No more no less. Had I bought those cute UFO/Alien postcards at the Alien Cafe, which was a stone's throw away from Palace - literally, I would not have had enough money to take the tube ride back to Heathrow airport. This tube ride nearly caused me to miss my flight due to delays along the tracks.

At one point our subway car stopped above ground. I looked up and saw a very interesting sight: through a huge window in someone's flat I could see two life-size inflated 'grey' aliens. One was blue the other green. There big black wrap-around eyes stared at me, speaking volumes without telepathy. Hanging on the wall behind and between them was a life-size paper cut-out human skeleton, mimicking the aliens black eyes with a relevance not entirely lost upon my own exhausted and frustrated frame.

Finally, the subway car lurched into motion again and managed to get me to my plane on time. The flight home was pleasant and uneventful. Much of the time I simply gazed out the airplane window watching the beautiful roiling contrail from a previous transatlantic flight which lay on our right side nearly the entire way back to America. All the while I considered its snaking trail in light of the current contrail conspiracy schmaltz making the rounds through the gullible American psyche. Aaaaaahh yes, back to America and its United States of Unconsciousness.

Will we ever wake from our evolutionary slumber?

SMiles Lewis

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