

Introduction by the Editor: A Most Ingenious Paradox

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Nicola Tesla reportedly said that when science began exploring non-physical phenomena that it would uncover more knowledge in 10 years than it had in all of the previous centuries of its inquiries. This special issue of *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology* explores the work that is currently being undertaken by academic psychologists who use the structures and caveats of science to inquire into the presence, nature, and impact on humans of phenomena that elude perception by the physical senses on a predictable and replicable basis.

On first pass it seems incongruous that the confines of our current positivist scientific paradigm could possibly be employed to prove that there are

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phenomena that exist beyond the limited ability of our physical senses to perceive them. The articles in this issue are examples of accepted scientific paradigms and procedures being used in ingenious, creative ways to accumulate documented evidence affirming the strong possibility that anomalous phenomena are not substance-induced or pathologically based glitches in someone's cognitive apparatus. Rather, the researchers contributing to this issue have used laboratory experiments, quantitative instruments, and qualitative methods in controlled environments to observe, measure, replicate, and predict anomalous experiences and perceived phenomena. They have remained within the boundaries of sanctioned scientific practice in their procedures to explore an area of knowledge that has long been dismissed as specious. And therein lies the paradox demonstrated by their meticulous research, namely that by following accepted scientific paradigms and protocols one can produce evidence that has the potential to turn the current perception of consciousness and reality on its head.

In *Flow, Liminality and Eudaimonia: Pagan Ritual as a Gateway to Life with Meaning*, Drs. Chris Roe and Charmaine Sonnex offer the results of a recent qualitative study into the connection between participation in pagan beliefs and rituals and enhanced sense of meaning and direction in their lives. As the majority of pagan beliefs incorporate elements of animism, pantheism, and magic, this discussion and analysis offer observations and insights into an expanded alternative lifeworld. Dr. Christine Simmonds-Moore shares her meticulous laboratory research into the correlation between the perception of anomalous phenomena and a proclivity toward experiencing synesthesia (*Synesthesia and the Perception of Unseen Realities*). Simmonds-Moore has done considerable research involving reports of ghost sightings, and this article is an offshoot of her previous work. In a similar vein, Dr. Malcolm Schofield and his team employed established assessment instruments to explore the possibility of correlations between the ability to perceive anomalous phenomena and the presence of elements of narcissism, psychopathology, Machiavellianism, and sadism. *Tales from the Dark Side: The Dark Tetrad of Personality, Supernatural and Scientific Belief* explores the possibility of such correlations to determine if they exist, if they are valid, and, if so, what it means for future research into anomalous lifeworlds and the perception of so-called paranormal phenomena and experiences.

Dr. David Luke has delved into the lifeworlds and perceptions reported by individuals under the influence of psychedelics (predominantly Ayahuasca) for many years. In *Anomalous Psychedelic Experiences: At the Neurochemical Juncture of the Humanistic and the Parapsychological* Luke integrates the phenomenological elements reported by his participants with analyses of the neurobiology of the drug(s) being used. Finally, Dr. Steven Taylor's

discussion of *When Seconds Turn to Minutes: Time Expansion Experiences in Altered States of Consciousness* examines the perceived phenomena of time distortion. Taylor begins his exploration by recounting his own experience and expands his field of inquiry and analysis to encompass our perception of time. How does time exist outside of our own malleable perceptions of it? Finally, the *Preface* to this issue written by Dr. Stanley Krippner—an acknowledged pioneer in the exploration of anomalous lifeworlds, phenomena, and altered states of consciousness (including dreams and shamanic journeys)—presents readers with a critical discussion of all the articles and places them into a scientific-historical context.

In his 2010 book *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred*, the religious scholar Dr. Jeffrey Kripal looked deeply into the lives and research of four groundbreaking explorers of non-physical, unseen worlds from the 19th century to the present day. The contributors to this issue stand on the shoulders of the brave scholars honored by Kripal who risked their livelihoods and reputations to explore the world of the unseen. The articles in this issue use accepted methods and knowledge of science to ascertain the presence of phenomena that exist beyond the fringes of recognized physical reality. In so doing, they join the ranks of their predecessors to create what the 19th-Century lyricist W.S. Gilbert (1879) referred to as “. . . a most ingenious paradox . . .” By operating within the structure of the current science and materialistic-based paradigm, they are demonstrating that there just might be something beyond that paradigm that requires more investigation. Furthermore, this collection of articles indicates that there is a place for such exploration within the purview of Humanistic Psychology since each of them integrates scientific methods to the research of anomalous phenomena within the context of human psychology. In doing so, these articles represent the validity of such research into the non-physical realm by proving it to be not only possible, but significant and possibly even paradigm changing in the years to come.

It has been an honor to work with the authors and the staff of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* on this project. My special thanks go out to all of the contributors, and especially Dr. Stanley Krippner for his support and his *Preface*. Thanks in abundance are due to Dr. Shawn Rubin for giving this issue his blessing in 2018 and to Dr. Sarah Kamens for her enthusiastic support and assistance. And finally, thanks to co-editor Dr. Jacquie Lewis for her keen eyes and vast expertise.

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Dr. Karel James Bouse is the author of *Neo-shamanism and Mental Health* (2019) and *Transgenerational Colonialism: Wounding, Overcoming and the Reconstruction of Collective and Personal Identity* (2021). She is an educator, Integrative Spirituality Consultant and the founder of the Institute of Esoteric Psychology.