

Shared emotions among large populations can be viewed as disturbances with nonlocal consciousness that underlies reality. Within this framework, these disturbances are thus linked with the probability wave functions at the root of matter. Thus common emotions that affect nonlocal consciousness at the basis of reality also likely cause shifts in the probabilities governing subatomic particles. The RNG field effect can be understood, therefore, to be detecting such shifts in the probabilities governing matter within the area of influence of the collective emotions experienced.

## **ABSTRACTS OF RESEARCH BRIEFS**

### **THE INFLUENCE OF LATENT INHIBITION ON PERFORMANCE AT A NON-INTENTIONAL PRECOGNITION TASK**

Glenn A. M. Hitchman, Chris A. Roe & Simon J. Sherwood  
*Psychology Division, University of Northampton*

This research was funded by the Bial Foundation grant 105/08.  
We would like to gratefully acknowledge this support.

#### **ABSTRACT**

A property of spontaneous cases of extra-sensory perception, as opposed to those manually instigated, is the lack of conscious intention of the experient or exhibitant to manifest any kind of anomalous phenomena. Despite the wealth of spontaneous case report of ESP phenomena which have been collected by parapsychological researchers, experimental research has often involved asking participants to wilfully manifest anomalous cognition. However, some theories of ESP, such as Stanford's psi-mediated instrumental response (PMIR) model predict that such conscious behaviours and cognitions may be counterproductive to the psi process. As a result, recent research, including most notably studies by Luke and colleagues, have included tacit precognition tasks in which psi component of the study is disguised as a conventional psychological test. The paradigm developed by Luke and colleagues involves an image preference task, in which participants are asked to select their preferred images from a series of options. Participants are unaware that this actually constitutes a tacit, forced choice precognition task, with the computer making a random selection of a target image from the response options, which participants' selections being scored as a hit or a miss on the basis of whether they match with the computer's selections. Stanford's model also suggests that psi is goal oriented, helping individuals to achieve rewards and/or avoid punishments. In the Luke studies, participants are consequently either 'punished' or 'rewarded' based on their precognitive performance in relation to the mean chance expectation. The studies carried out by Luke and colleagues produced highly significant evidence of a non-intentional precognition effect. An attempted replication by Hitchman, Roe and Sherwood was encouraging but inconclusive in relation to the main psi hypothesis and a number of individual difference covariates predicted with Stanford's writings.

The present study incorporated a number of methodological refinements, whilst focusing on the relationship between performance at the non-intentional psi task and latent inhibition, a factor predicted to influence an individual's sensitivity to psi stimuli. Latent inhibition reflects an organism's tendency to filter out information from the cognitive system that it has learned is irrelevant to its on-going concerns. However, it is relatively time consuming to measure experimentally, and previous studies had assessed the construct indirectly via a proxy questionnaire measure of Openness to Experience. Encouraged by the suggestive results using such indirect measures, the present study employed a more direct performance measure of latent inhibition in conjunction with a 15-trial non-intentional precognition task. 50 participants completed a two-part auditory discrimination task which gave an measure of their latent inhibition, before proceeding to complete a battery of questionnaires and a binary, forced choice, tacit psi task. They were subsequently either positively or negatively rewarded via images from subsets which participants has pre-rated, with more images from their preferred subsets being shown the better they performed and vice-versa. The results were suggestive of a non-intentional recognition effect, with participants scoring a mean hit rate of 7.96, where 7.5 would be expected by chance, although their outperformance just failed to reach a statistically significant level,  $t(48) = 1.62$ ,  $p = .06$ , one-tailed. However, no evidence was found in support of the predicted internal effects, with both latent inhibition and Openness to Experience found to be unrelated to participants' precognitive performance. These findings are interpreted within the context of previous research and Stanford's PMIR model.

## **CRITICAL SPIRITUALISTS AND THE BEGINNING OF DUTCH PARAPSYCHOLOGY**

Ingrid E. Kloosterman  
Descartes Centre for the History and Philosophy of Science,  
Universiteit Utecht  
[I.E.Kloosterman@uu.nl](mailto:I.E.Kloosterman@uu.nl)

### **ABSTRACT**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1914, a séance took place in Amsterdam which shocked the Dutch spiritualists' community. The séance revolved around the American medium Susanna Harris who, as a 'trumpet medium', let spirits speak through a ship horn. While the medium was busy identifying a 'Jan' in the audience for whom she received a message from the spirit world, a skeptical member of the audience crawled across the floor in the dark and grabbed one of her three horns. When after ten minutes neither the medium nor the spirits noticed the missing horn, he publicly accused the medium of deceit. Surely the spirits should have noticed a missing horn! After a short discussion it was decided to cancel the séance, by which time the medium had already left the building taking with her the revenue of that night. Spiritualists were appalled by the distrusting behavior of the audience, but what shocked them even more however was that one of the most prominent spiritualists — Henri Nicolaas de Fremery (1867-1940) — supported the accusations.