

ALISON CHRISTIE
MA DRAWING
ESSAY UNIT THREE

What role do
'Psychic' real-life
magazines play in
the readers' lives...
And what do they
get from them?



As long as I can remember I have always been fascinated by astrology, the after-life and all things unexplained, paranormal and spiritual. I can remember copying a drawing from a cover of a sun signs book my auntie and uncle had in the 70's and learning all the information on each sign and characteristics, the illustrations are still very vivid in my mind even now - 35 years later.

In this essay I aim to discuss the very real need and purpose the real-life psychic magazines play in the lives of not only the readers but also the contributors who belong to a growing body who live and breathe angels, crystals, ghosts and all things other worldly.

My last essay explored how real-life magazines empowered women by giving them the opportunity to share their stories for money, with like-minded women who could empathise and comment on the events each other had experienced. As with that essay I could find only one relevant piece of literature...this time it was *Paranormal Media by Annette Hill* (2011). Interesting as this was - it really was only the first couple of chapters that described the growing popularity of this phenomenon in women's magazines.

Annette Hill explains the situation I found myself in - *'The paranormal is a neglected area of research in media, communication and cultural studies. An absence of dialogue on their subject makes it a challenge to research.'* (Hill, 2011, page 12)

So as before I resorted to primary research in the form of interviewing Editors, writers and professionals in the 'psychic world.'

Those I interviewed are:

Nicky Allen Detective Constable in the serious crime squad Essex police.
(Appendix 1)

Mel Brodie Editor-in-Chief *Notebook, We Love TV, Love Sunday* magazines
Trinity Mirror. (Appendix 2)

Tracie Couper features Editor of *Spirit&Destiny*, the leading UK mind, body and spirit title. (Appendix 3)

Mary Bryce Editor, *Chat it's fate* (Appendix 4)

Julie Thomas Cytotechnologist and co-owner of *Ghostly Gatherings With The Angels* (ghost hunters) (Appendix 5)

Rod Harrod spiritual medium (Appendix 6)

Barbara Goldsmith 'Astrologer to the stars' (Appendix 7)

and **Suzy Greaves** Editor of *Psychologies*, an upmarket, intelligent glossy monthly magazine (Appendix 8)

I asked them all the same question, which I sent by email so I had the written responses - which was:

'Just send me a paragraph about what you do, your beliefs (i.e. afterlife etc.) your reasons for being in this world (or industry) and mainly why you think the public are so fascinated with the whole range of subjects from mediums to astrology to ghost hunting....'

The full responses are found in the appendix for each person. As with a real-life magazine, I sent a copy of the full essay to each contributor to ensure they were happy with the way their quote had been used and to ensure they felt correctly represented.

In my essay I aim to approach how and why people are increasingly finding comfort and purpose in knowing (or thinking) there *is* life after death - or that there could be another realm. Death is so final and knowing that it's the only certainty that will happen to us in this lifetime is a totally terrifying prospect...

I want to show that the psychic arts are a science too and that there should be no snobbery or ridicule involved against those who do believe.

Plus I will also discuss the paranormal and how it has been represented in the art world - from **Georgiana Houghtons'** 'spirit' watercolours and **Susan Hillers** installations inspired by Near Death Experiences.

I was influenced from an early age by my two Nans, (Nana and Nannie,) whom I would hear discussing their visits to the Morden Spiritualist Church. Add Nana and her superstitions to the mix (Never walk under a ladder or open your umbrella in doors or you would have bad luck) and I was hooked.

Nannie was known to do hands on healing at the 'circle' but didn't really discuss it with us openly, as we were kids. However, once I had left home there was an incident when I visited her at her council house in Morden one Monday afternoon, that remains burnt into my memory for ever.

I was in her kitchen with her when she bowed her head and then looked directly at me, pointed and said, (in a deep, gruff man's voice with a Chinese accent) - "**You young things want everything NOW!**", and she banged one fist into the palm of the other hand and carried on a dialogue describing who she was and why she/him was talking to me. Her physical being had taken on a younger, stronger stance and she was rather angry - a way I've never seen my nan before. It was a very electrifying memory. I can't remember the exact content of the dialogue aimed at me but the gist was definitely 'advice' on how to live my life and to be patient - **from the other side?**

For my final MA show I am continuing to develop my self-portraiture, and it seemed appropriate at this stage to create my own 'real-life style' magazine, so, being a self portrait - every story is true and from my own life but produced in the weekly style of these products....I have sourced each photo from the family archive, and have written every caption and story in the style appropriate. With this particular project I have chosen to show only what I want to the public. Due to my fascination with the psychic mags there is a special 'Real-life ghost story' section - each and everyone true, contributed by friends who were more than eager to share them.

Origins of the psychic real-life magazine

It was whilst I was employed by IPC Magazines as Art Editor of **Chat** magazine (a leading real-life weekly), that I was asked to design a one-off '**Psychic Special**'. The publisher and Editor at the time had realised how popular the psychic content of the main magazine had become and wanted to exploit this further.

The main issue featured experts from the spiritual world including Grey Wolf, (who consulted his American Indian spirit guides to give advice), Bettina (who read palms via photocopied prints the readers sent in), Bernard Fitzwalter, (astrologer) and the hugely popular 'Ruth the Truth, a Scottish psychic. The public response to these regular features was immense - hence the psychic special.

Then in 2001 **Chat** launched its own dedicated monthly psychic magazine, **Its**

fate, Bauer's *Take a Break* followed the same year with *Fate and Fortune*, and then brought out the glossy 'aspirational' monthly *Spirit&Destiny* aimed at a slightly higher demographic.

These are the three major brands, however there are independents that have launched such as *Soul and Spirit* and *Kindred Spirit* but these are not mainstream. (i.e. will not be found in regular newsagents).

So this proves there is a huge interest in this subject,

'Chats it's fate is living proof of how widespread this interest has become - it's core readership are ordinary women (aged between 25 and 50) who read the sister title Chat's psychic pages and demanded more.' says Mary Bryce (Bryce, 2017)

Fate and Fortune and *It's fate* (sales in the region of 38k - I asked one of the art team!), are echoes of their main brand - A4 size, printed on low grade paper but the cover is of slightly higher stock. The cover design reflects the main brand - this has changed over the past couple of years as magazine sales drop (so it's now less like the interior) - which is hard sell. Brash reds and yellows and pure strong colours, featuring a shocking main; *'schadenfreude'*, cover line across the middle with it's brand identity shouting out at across the logo. The fonts used are strong sans serif condensed (INTERSTATE) - hard hitting and easy to read. On the psychic covers the biggest cover line is softer than the main brands (as more likely to be about a ghost) and the smaller ones slightly surreal but, with the usual mix of soft, sad, wacky and fun. There is considerably less horror featured than on the main brands cover.

'My vision of hell - ghostly bodies swung in the trees,' and *'Dad's best mate was a ghost - he just didn't know it'*, mixed with *'Death can't put out our fire'*, (love story) and the slightly surreal *'healed by a unicorn'* and *'Fairies made my dreams come true.'*

These are much less gory and shocking than the main brands - as the ghostly bodies are not real and the death story being one of love from the 'other side'.

Spirit&Destiny (circulation 36,279 in 2006. Ponsford, 2016) is less 'brash' and calmer with a less 'weekly' look about it, the cover leaning towards advice from their high profile experts as their selling tool. *'Doreen Virtue's Angel tarot cards'* and *'Fix your life with Tarot - Mystic master class'*. Glossy stock and a darker background creates a more aspirational, rather than sensational, feel. By using a mix of serif italic fonts and sans serif fonts in a mix of caps and upper and lower case - there is an overall calmer less 'in your face' mix.

The design of these magazines adopt the same devices, the typical colour palette of purples, cyans and magentas, and graphic effects such as linear blends, cut out pictures, layering, ghost panels, feathering and glow effects to type and transparency to pictures to create a soft ghostly see through effect, extracting maximum use of Indesign and Photoshop. (At the time of writing, *Spirit&Destiny* is undergoing a redesign to bring it nearer the look of the other two mags)

All these magazines contain spooky real-life stories, advice from the UK's top psychics and mediums (Derek Acorah, Sally Morgan, Gordon Smith, the higher profile ones in *Spirit&Destiny* and the lesser known ones in the more down market



publications) - in depth horoscopes from Justin Toper, angel workshops, past lives, crystal healing, uplifting triumph over tragedy real-life features...and all with a connection to the spirit world and the suggestion there is more to life than this one. **Spirit&Destiny** also favours the same mix but adds feng shui, holistic health and fitness to it's content.

It's not only in the printed media that we see a rise in the popularity of this genre, just look at the television - there are channels dedicated to it (**syfy**) - which constantly replays **Most Haunted, Ghost hunter, Ghost hunting with....** and every teenagers favorite, **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** etc.

Everywhere you look you will see evidence - the paranormal includes the **Harry Potter** franchise, films and books adults and children alike devour, TV's '**True Blood**', sexy vampires for grown ups - the **Twilight** saga - which took the world by storm, **Blair Witch Project**, and more recently **Paranormal Activity**. (Hill, 2011).

Personally, I think one area which Annette Hill neglects to mention is the music industry. As an art college student in the early 80's, image and music were of paramount importance to me as I strived to be as individual as possible. 'Goth' is a fashion and music genre - a derivative of Gothic, inspired by the Victorian Gothic horror novels and this gave me a chance to experiment and to be 'different'.

'GOTH - (Often initial capital letter) noting or pertaining to a style of literature characterized by a gloomy setting, grotesque, mysterious, or violent events, and an atmosphere of degeneration and decay'. (Dictionary.com, 2016)

The music was dark and heavy, the lyrics about death and unrequited love but it was the fashion and imagery that really influenced this movement. ...heavy black eye makeup, (for both sexes), back-combed hair and white foundation, black lacy flowing clothes, pointy boots and black nail varnish are all compulsory - think **Bride of Dracula**, mixed with the **Adams' Family**, and **Edward Scissorhands**. Band wise **Sisters of Mercy, The Cramps** and **The Cure**, are fine examples from the 80's and 90's. Still huge today is the infamous **Marilyn Manson** - Goth could be classed as rebellion, a phase all teenagers embrace - go to Camden and the proof is everywhere, teenagers love to get a reaction and the Goth fashion is perfect for upsetting parents. I certainly upset mine.

'Many Goths explain that they feel hemmed in by society's rules and feel stifled as free thinkers. Kids who try out Goth as a peer group may be artistic rather than athletic and use the clothing as a visual medium of expression. However, for many adults, that visual expression can seem threatening.' (Morin, 2014)

The American influence of Halloween has become a huge money spinner. Everything is affected around the end of October - supermarkets selling pumpkins and a huge variety of 'ghost' themed products spanning clothing, confectionery and party products. We all know to buy sweets to offer small children who dress up as spooks and embark on 'Trick or Treating'. Even my chihuahua has a Halloween outfit! From this across the country appear spin off attractions such as my local one in Kent, **Broadwitch Farm Haunt Fest**

My twin neices take part in the Broadditch Farm Haunt Fest



(<http://www.spookycastle.co.uk/>) - promising real haunting experiences for the public created by actors hired and dressed as ghouls and zombies. Terrifying but addictive!

So the evidence does indeed suggest that the interest in the paranormal and psychic world is continually on the rise even despite scientific knowledge growing at the same time. We can deduce from the above that in-fact instead of being unusual - paranormal is indeed becoming mainstream.

Mary Bryce Editor of *It's Fate* agrees, '**you don't have to be a weirdo to want to find out more about the non-material aspects of our lives.**' (Bryce, 2017) Interestingly this is backed up by research reported by *The Express* and *The Telegraph* about how the population of Britain believe in the paranormal. Jon Austin from *The Express* discovered that more than half of the public that participated have claimed to have had a psychic experience. '**A whopping 82 per cent of Britons believe in the supernatural.**' (Austin, 2015)

To me the most interesting statistic and heart-warming one is that more than half felt they had been given some sort of sign that a deceased loved one is still around and wants to let them know, '**and more than half (56 per cent) said they had been given a sign that a deceased loved one is present.**' (Austin, 2015)

In a survey carried out by theology think tank Theos it seems that the majority of people in the UK believe in heaven and life after death too which is a massive increase since, '**in 1950 only 10 percent of the public told Gallup that they believed in ghosts and only 2 percent thought they had seen one**' (Theos 2017)....again more proof that the paranormal is becoming increasingly popular one with which Mary Bryce agrees, '**Today, interest in the paranormal and psychic matters has never been greater. Just check out all the shows now on TV, the increasing number of magazines in the newsagents, the well-attended psychic fairs around the country**' (Bryce 2017)

But what reasons could there be for the rise in the popularity of this culture? Could it be, not only that people have lower incomes, the economy is looking bleaker and bleaker, the continual and very real threat of terrorism, the general distrust in the politics of today PLUS the extremism of religion? Is this why the public are turning to the spiritual world - a way to gain comfort and a sense of purpose in the real world today? Annette Hill thinks so, '**Marketing Week claims the paranormal can be one way of dealing with a credit crunch : consumers will increasingly crave perspective and security from a widening range of resource: spiritualism, 'evidence' or astrology,**' (Hill 2017, page 9) The public seek a change from the materialistic world, they are looking for a meaning in life and want to make a sense of why we are here.

Mary Bryce continues, '**Chat it's fate, is living proof of how widespread this interest has become - its core readership are ordinary women (aged between 25 and 50) who read the sister title Chat's psychic pages and demanded more. They love spooky true life stories of loss, weird goings on of ghosts and demons, past lives, being torn apart by premonitions...**' (Bryce 2017)

Role of the mags - COMFORT?

I believe psychic magazines give comfort - however, I'm still searching for that story that convinces me there IS life after death. I continue searching for that proof that there is something else beyond death - if there is nothing else then why live by

the rules as there will be no judgement day? Reading a story where the narrator continually finds 'evidence' of life beyond death is heartening to me - even if it still is hard to believe.... I've just read a story about love beyond the grave in *It's fate* ('Fuel to the Fire', June 2017) and I haven't cried so much for years - and the proof that there is more is so comforting. The thought that death is the end and that you may never see a certain loved one again is almost too much to bear and this does bring relief and a feeling they are still close. Having recently lost my mum to breast cancer I do search for signs she is still 'around'. Tracie Couper agrees, *'it's comforting stories too'* (Couper, 2017).

Although our three main psychic real-life magazines are not the biggest sellers in the newsagents they definitely fulfil a particular need for their readers, Mary Bryce describes the role, *'they provide a much needed outlet for the enquiring and spiritual woman. They also bring solace and comfort to the bereaved who are in need of reassurance or signs from the Afterlife.*

Readers talk of it as being a psychological prop and friend' (Bryce, 2017).

Tracie Couper agrees that *Spirit&Destiny* fulfils two major roles for the readers and the first one is *'a need for comfort ...a sense that there is something beyond death, something more than the physical body, and a desire to believe that our loved ones do 'go on'* (Couper, 2017).

Rod Harrod is a spiritual medium, he works with people who have passed away and are in the spirit world. He tours the UK spiritual churches, giving readings to the public. He realised he was psychic from the age of 5. He thinks that everything is in a state of flux, (be it good or bad), and he doesn't believe that things happen by chance - he thinks that things are predestined....

'Everything happens for a reason. I love giving public demonstrations of mediumship because it helps people understand that there is life after life. We cannot die the soul moves on and is always progress further. My work helps with grief and also the evidence is the most important thing. Giving people evidence from their loved ones helps them cope and understand that they in the spirit world are here around us even though we can't see them. Spirit your friends and family are just a thought away' (Harrod, 2017).

Making decisions and giving advice

I think it is important to consider the guidance that is within these magazines. For every problem there is a different way to approach it or a different type of advice - so the reader can choose whichever method suits them or fits their beliefs. As well as, *'Jenny Smedleys' explore the past'* (problem solving by delving into former lives with the help of her own past life spirit), there is aura reading advice, dream interpretation, runes, crystals, shamens, horoscopes, angel advice, a variety of different 'experts giving psychic advice' and even a 'love coach' to help you 'manifest a partner' plus *Texas the psychic horse* to help out with problems with your pets!

Suzie from *Psychologies* says *'I don't think tarot can predict your future but it can be a brilliant self development tool if you can learn about the deep and ancient symbolism and archetypes. I do have spiritual beliefs and believe in God but this is a belief system versus something that can be proven by science. It's about faith in*

something bigger than ourselves' (Geaves, 2017).

I personally have had my astrological chart drawn up many times by professional astrologers as I see this as a very personal science to understanding my behaviour and personality. Every year I will book an annual appointment to gain information on my coming year according to my birth planets, transits and planetary aspects - this is a very individual thing and I find it incredibly accurate (it's very different to the small slightly generic paragraph you will find in the daily tabloid) and it is expensive but there is a lot of detailed work involved. Usually my astrologer does use a certain amount of medium-ship too. Barbara Goldsmith is called **'The astrologer to the stars'** as in 'famous' people! and I use her recordings as advice on the way I choose to approach different aspects of my life as they materialize.

When I asked her why she thinks people are drawn to her craft she replied:

'The public seem to be fascinated (and some repelled) because most people are interested in the future. They are looking for a semblance of security, of continuity, of stability. Astrology can give you pointers and a direction that can be extremely helpful.

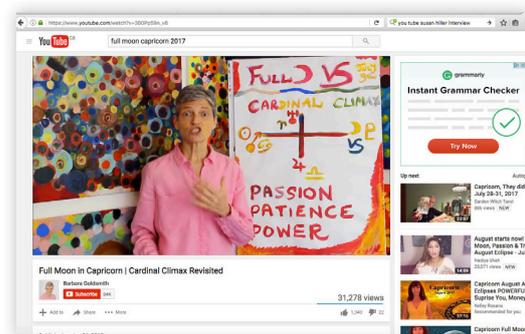
It enables you to be more prepared and therefore to handle the energies around you with more equanimity.' (Goldsmith, 2017)

Horoscopes or astrology are an integral feature in the majority of main stream publishing ...I have worked on several tabloids and their supplements, all of which carry an astrology column as an essential part of the mix.

Mel Brodie at Trinity Mirror knows how essential these are to the public, ***'Horoscopes are a big tradition in tabloid newspapers and their supplements, and the Daily Mirror and Sunday People are no exception. Readers expect to see them within the pages, whether they really believe in the predictions or not! Stars are a key ingredient to a daily or weekend read, and there would be flood of complaints should an editor attempt to remove a regular horoscope column from the editorial mix.'*** (Brodie 2017).

Again - you only need to look at **You Tube** - not only will you find pages and pages of daily horoscope videos but you will find weekly, monthly, yearly and special horoscope features too. For example on July 9th 2017 was a Full Moon in Capricorn - Barbara Goldsmith has a special 12 minute ***'Full Moon in Capricorn | Cardinal Climax Revisited'*** report on this event for which so far has had an incredible 31,966 views she says . ***'Yes, You Tube has helped me to promote my videos far and wide and I don't know how I would have achieved that kind of exposure without it.'*** (Goldsmith, 2017)

Below - a screen grab showing Barbara Goldsmiths Full Moon in Capricorn video



Community

In my last essay I discussed the popularity of the sharing of the real life story and how it gave power to the readers by them gaining power from the payment to the story telling and sharing their own experiences with each other via the media...this is from that essay:

Samm Taylor former editor of Hearst UK's Real People and ex-Assistant Editor of the Daily Star. says

'Social class... Real life, and to some extent TV, are the only story telling and portrait painting opportunities open to the lower classes. They are totally

excluded from the broadsheets and 'stylish and aspirational' mags because of their wrong look and a lack of all important disposable income. People don't understand that the working class is happy to share. Family and community - And sharing stories - has always been much more acceptable to them than to the outraged and buttoned up middle classes. Personally I think it comes from the fact that the poor historically had to get together and cooperate to survive while middle classes hid behind their curtains. (Christie, 2017)

As I began researching this essay it occurred to me that although the reader does get a payment for submitting their story - this is not the driving force behind the motivation on the psychic magazines. I was aware that so many friends had an 'unusual experience' call it psychic or paranormal, but they really were willing to share and discuss their experiences to make some sort of sense of it....so I asked around to see who did have a story I could publish in my 'magazine' piece for my final MA show. The result was astonishing - I have 22 and they keep on coming - as one person mentions it to another I receive more and more - this shows an eagerness to share.

The funny thing is that most people ask 'which is the scariest story?'

As I compiled my 'Psychic pull out' section, I read each story out of interest. The scariest one to me was emailed by Vanessa - it's very personal and deeply scary, and has all the makings of a terrifying horror film, involving three generations of her family and the beliefs held by them about their 'psychic powers' - so a subject only to be shared with an audience you trust? I asked her what made her want to share *'I often find that when I form a friendship or a relationship with someone and we develop trust, then I can tell them about what's happened but, up until that point, I feel the need to protect the story, in a way, and safeguard it from mockery.*

'What usually happens is that the person I am confiding in has their own unexplained story to tell and the taboo around the subject is lifted.

'I wanted to share my stories because I felt it was a safe environment in which I knew I would be believed.'(Vanessa, 2017).

Art and the psychic/paranormal

Whilst on my MA course I've been drawing myself reflected in the mirror for my self portraits. On one occasion a 'strange' thing happened. The reflection I drew was not myself - it was my mother. Several people commented on this which made me think maybe I was doing a 'spirit drawing'.

There have been artists who have been fascinated with the psychic realm too, **Georgiana Houghton** was such a person. A spiritualist born in 1814 known for her spirit drawings, she was already familiar with death by the age of 45 with four of her nine siblings dying, so it's not a huge surprise that she became engrossed in the psychic world of seances and automatic writing ...she attended a seance and received communication from one of her sisters on a subject which only she would have known about which gave her her belief. (McKenzie, 2013) She found her vocation in 1861 when she produced her first watercolour 'spirit' painting. Described as 'eccentric' the inscriptions on the back of the works explain that her painting was guided by spirits

'Including family members, several Renaissance artists, such as Titian and Correggio and higher angelic beings.

Below -
Georgiana Houghton,
Portrait of the
Lord Jesus Christ
(1862). Photograph:
Coutauld Gallery



These inscriptions, which are a form of automatic writing, also make clear that Houghton's richly patterned compositions are intended to be faithful visualisations of aspects of the spirit realm and designed to inspire and strengthen the spiritual life of their viewers' (Courtauld Gallery, 2016).

I found these paintings strange and childlike - Jesus is portrayed with huge cartoon-like eyes and infant face and the swirls seemed quite chaotic...however seeing her work did bring to mind that spirit drawing incorporated two of my favourite past times - and so decided to find out more and indeed if I (or anyone!) could do it.

I booked a Sunday course with **June-Elani Lane** who was recommended to me by Avril Price, a medium and Tarot reader who tours the country bringing messages from beyond the grave to her audiences. June-Elani works at the College of Psychic Studies in Kensington - as one of the leading spirit art teachers alive today. Her background defies her spirit drawing career of the present - June-Elani enjoyed a multi million pound career in the fashion industry but this all changed when she has what she describes as a 'spiritual emergency'. This made her look at her life and to learn and seek knowledge in Ayurvedic medicine and from there came into spiritual drawing.

The course was attended by around 20 people - squeezed in a semi circle around our teacher - all ages and all women bar one young man. June-Elani instructed us on tuning in and opening up to the universe and higher source to protect us from 'bad' energies (she doesn't believe in bad spirits) and then we did a series of exercises with chalk pastels - drawing each others auras from which we moved onto the actual spirit drawing. Again with several chalk pastels all of the same colour - just different shades. We scribbled on our page with each pastel, on its side, and then were asked to look 'into the drawing' and develop any 'faces' we could see there...as a designer I can see faces in patterns everywhere so this was easy for me!

I was not totally convinced by my drawing but it was a fun experience - what did surprise me were the 'messages' that each individual received with their drawing, especially the guy, who spoke clearly and as confidently as if he knew the person he had drawn, with no hesitation. June-Elani had asked us to 'channel' relatives of hers so that she could 'recognise' them - that all seemed a little 'suspect' to me as there was no way for us to verify it. However, it does appear that she does draw for sitters who then do provide photos to corroborate the identity of the drawing.

More recently I've become aware of the work of **Susan Hiller** - an American artist born in 1940. She studied film, photography and anthropology but decided to become an artist. Her work involves automatic writing - similar to Georgiana Houghton. Instead of the audience responding to the works she creates she finds people question her faith and opinions on the afterlife, which is not what her work is about - she is merely representing others experiences. They should be concentrating on the work created - and not question the motivation or her beliefs behind it... (Grayson, 2008)

Susan Hiller uses Near Death Experiences (NDEs) in her work - recorded tracks in

Below -
My 'spirit drawing'
showing a 39 year
old man who died
in a car crash
- according to
June-Elani



many languages - she isn't interested in the experience about death but much more the in the actual fact which she uses as her subject, *'as appropriate for the subject matter of art as Cézanne's apples or Schwitters' bus tickets.'* (McKENZIE, 2013).

Disbelieving

Where there is belief there is always some opposition...

Astrology has been around in the western world all the way back to Mesopotamia (2300bc) and the first Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Plus we can even see evidence in our every day to day existence - the effect the moon has on tides, women's fertility cycles and also the emergency services. This is shown in an article in the Guardian by Fred Attewill (5 June 2007) where he states, *'Police have linked full moons to a rise in aggressive behaviour among drinkers on the streets of Brighton.*

Senior officers have decided to deploy more police this summer to counter trouble they believe is linked to the lunar cycle.' he explains that research carried out by the Sussex police had shown that there was definitely a link to violent crimes and full moons.' (Attewill 2007)

My brother thinks I'm 'mad' when I mention psychic readings or that I'm going on another astrology holiday course in Greece ...why is there a fear about belief?

It's clear from the people I've interviewed (high profile editors, writers, astrologers, psychics, and a detective) that they are all vastly intelligent, rational individuals - and quite unlike the eccentric stereotypical character Margaret Rutherford portrays as Madame Arcarti in Noel Coward's play *'Blithe Spirit'*!

Nicky Allen says, *'I don't believe in the afterlife, I KNOW there is one. A certain percentage of society would read this and put me down as a delusional air head that wears cobwebby dresses and dyes my hair black! That's the problem, the media and general view of the sceptical world almost carry on a modern day witch hunt with spiritual workers. They judge before they even try and understand'*. (Allen 2007)

And Annette Hill (2011, page 13) agrees that people who do believe in the paranormal are often described by the general public as , *'suffering from an over active imagination, and sometimes just plain crazy,'* it's assumed that these believers are gullible and looked down upon. Why?

There are many professionals in the world of the paranormal who studied to have mainstream careers but detoured because of their beliefs or often some 'fateful intervention by spirit (such as June-Elani). These people are highly educated and often in some type of scientific role.

My friend and disbeliever, Tracie Couper who works on *Spirit&Destiny* has encountered many in her job as features Editor. She reminded me that *Doreen Virtue* the leading angel lady had previously worked as a psychotherapist, counselling individuals with eating disorders until she experienced an armed car-jacking in 1995. Again, divine intervention changed this ladies life and since that time Doreen is the 'come to' Angel lady - author of over 50 books and designer of Angel card decks. She is famous the world over - just type *'Doreen Virtue'* into Google and see how many results you get!

Nicky Allan is a detective in the Essex constabulary, she used her 'guides' to help her solve crimes.

Nicky's father had been killed in a road accident when she was a child - but it was this incident that led her to start seeing spirit people including her father, who appeared to her after his death to let her know he was OK. She was from generations of psychics and healers and had always wanted to be in the police. She joined Essex police and worked her way up to being a Detective on the Major Investigation Team. The spirit world supported her work helping her to solve crimes and with her role as family liaison officer for murder victims families and rape victims. She says of critics **'They judge before they even try and understand.'** (Allen, 2017)

Nicky gets incredibly frustrated with the way some psychics are treated and has had to deal with the sceptics continually. Having become famous for her gift she has appeared on TV but only honours programmes that were respectful to psychics, in particular she recalls a programme called *Angels* with **Gloria Hunniford**, where she had so many letters and emails from people who found the programme inspirational and life changing - that's all she wants to do - inspire, give people hope and help. **'As in any industry, there are very bad apples. The sceptics and media tend to concentrate on these types rather than the genuine spiritual worker who wants to do nothing but help humankind. The biggest pain we can ever endure is physical loss of our loved ones - including pets. This is where the fraudsters jump in and drain money from the desperately grieving. It turns my stomach. We as genuine mediums aim to bridge that gap by initiating a new relationship between our clients and their newly formed spirit loved one. It answers the age old question, is there life after death. We answer it. But as usual the sceptics through fear and arrogance refuse to see us as genuine.'** (Allen 2017)

Suzie Greaves is Editor of *Psychologies*, an upmarket, intelligent glossy magazine, it is a highbrow monthly advocating a healthy alternative way of life - positive thinking, advice for stress free living, yoga retreats and mindfulness. She has always been fascinated by astrology, tarot and the supernatural and admits to recently taking an online course in tarot reading although this really isn't the sort of thing her readers would expect - so Suzie finds it annoying to have people disrespect her beliefs ... **'I do find it arrogant when people think everything they believe is right. I have great respect for science and I also have my own faith and belief systems but I don't necessary expect people to believe what I believe but it can be irritating when people dismiss my beliefs out of hand because they don't agree'** (Greaves 2017).

So again another woman in a 'responsible position' who believes in the paranormal!

CONCLUSION

Despite my huge belief in astrology, plus my conviction that my Nannie was NOT 'acting', I am still waiting to be convinced - I read so that one day I will find the story that proves to me there IS life after death...some do stay with me and so come really close...and the next book - (which could be the one that convinces me) - is, **'Proof of Heaven - A neurosurgeons' journey into the afterlife'** by Dr Eben Alexander.

Basically I do think that the world is a scarier place at the moment - with the world economy as it is, the credit crunch, unemployment becoming a reality to all of us, the Grenfell Tower disaster, London bridge massacre, and all with no leader who can gain our trust - just look at the state of politics and the Brexit fiasco.

Religion is not the comfort it was to the general public in former years... to

the masses now it suggests corruption, wierdness and extremism and because of this very few teenagers have any interest in the Christian church which our grandparents found solace in - religion to them is now Isis and war. Nicky Allen finds the church, although supposedly believing in God and a higher being they are still persecuting the unknown, *'I believe that we are still sometimes living in the 17th century. Churches condemn us. At my shows I have had Christians giving out 'In league with the devil' leaflets. It makes me laugh as they now have 'Prophets of Jesus' giving messages to the church congregation. We are undermined as society, religion and the government still want to continue to contain us. I believe if we were given the respect and acknowledgement we deserve we would be stronger than any religion'* (Allen, 2017)

I think the magazines really do work for people as comfort, through the hope they give and a focus away from the drudgery of everyday life - and maybe a part of the psychic world is a fantasy that people need to escape the negativity of the 'news.' I know I personally try to avoid watching the TV news as its all so depressing - what hope is there for the average person caught up in the day to day effort of the commute with the credit crunch and terrorism so close to home these days?

Aside from the fact the psychic/paranormal has inspired a fashion, style and genre of its own - the important thing is that the magazines do give people a hope that there is something after death, and the comfort that loved ones are happy and are not gone forever.

One of my friends said these wise words to me about the subject of spirituality and the psychic....

If you are intellectual - its called 'philosophy',

If you are religious its called your 'faith',

If you are an ordinary person then it becomes the psychic and spirit world...

and I would agree with that.

THE 'PARA'NORMAL IS NOW VERY NORMAL INDEED.

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APPENDICES

MY QUESTION ASKED

'Just send me a paragraph about what you do, your beliefs (i.e. afterlife etc.) your reasons for being in this world (or industry) and mainly why you think the public are so fascinated with the whole range of subjects from mediums to astrology to ghost hunting....'

Appendix 1

Nicky Allen Detective constable in the serious crime squad Essex police.

When I was nine years old, I walked down the stairs to my family crying. My dad had been killed in a road accident. Three days later, he drove past me and put his thumbs up saying that he was ok. My granddad then pulled me to one side and explained that my time had begun. I would see, hear, taste, smell and know anything that a spirit person would want to bring to me. I came from generations of psychics and healers, so I was just carrying on the legacy. Sensing unseen energies and knowing the future, seeing people's souls, communicating with angels and talking to spirit guides was as natural as breathing. I don't believe in the afterlife, I KNOW there is one. A certain percentage of society would read this and put me down as a delusional air head that wears cobwebby dresses and dyes my hair black! That's the problem, the media and general view of the sceptical world almost carry on a modern day witch hunt with spiritual workers. They judge before they even try and understand. I had always wanted to be a police officer since I was a child. I wanted to be a detective investigating serious crime. I joined Essex Police as a cadet and worked my way through in a very short time to a Detective on the Major Investigation Team. I was in my element. Most people in my work environment knew that I was psychic. In the evenings I would do readings for them and their families. During the day I would investigate serious crime and also had a main role as a family liaison officer for murder victim families and rape victims. I had a lot of help from the spirit world that helped investigations be solved. I was medically retired from the police service in 2003 and it proved a very short while before I was a full time highly acclaimed medium travelling the world demonstrating my gift in communicating with the dead. I also taught spiritual workshops and wrote about angels and the afterlife in mainstream, spiritualist magazines. I was offered lots of TV work but only honoured those sorts of programmes that were respectful and coloured mediums and psychics in a positive light. One of those programmes was Angels with Gloria Hunniford. I had so many emails and letters from people who found the programmes inspirational and life changing for them. That's all we want to do, inspire people and pass our esoteric knowledge on to humankind. That's it. As in any industry, there are very bad apples. The sceptics and media tend to concentrate on these types rather than the genuine spiritual worker who wants to do nothing but help humankind. The biggest pain we can ever endure is physical loss of our loved ones including pets. This is where the fraudsters jump in and drain money from the desperately grieving. It turns my stomach. We as genuine mediums aim to bridge that gap by initiating a new relationship between our clients and their newly formed spirit loved one. It answers the age old question, is there life after death. We answer it. But as usual the sceptics through fear and arrogance refuse to see us as genuine. I have been trolled so many times. The most common accusation is that I prey on innocent vulnerable people. They bang my door down for readings! They have travelled from all over the world including America and Australia for a reading with me because I prove absolutely no doubt that their spirit loved ones are speaking with them. I never have had to go out and seek people, they have always found me. The only praying I do is praying, for people on this earth. You then get the sceptic who has an amazing reading accuse you of googling them! I tend to not worry any longer of the sceptics as they will find out when they pass that they wasted the opportunity to embrace this wonderful phenomena whilst living on the earth. It must be such a lonely place to be, thinking you are alone! I believe that we are still sometimes living in the 17th century. Churches condemn us. At my shows I have had Christians giving out 'In league with the devil' leaflets. It makes me laugh as they now have 'Prophets of Jesus' giving messages to

the church congregation. We are undermined as society, religion and the government still want to continue to contain us. I believe if we were given the respect and acknowledgement we deserve we would be stronger than any religion and could assist in police investigations as a respected expert as they do in the US. As from the condemned pagans from hundreds of years ago, we are deemed dark in our occult work and fraudsters. It's a shame but we have been taught through aeons of time to fear and ridicule if we don't understand. I used to feel very upset by societies prejudice, but I no longer do. I have helped thousands of people by helping them to understand the afterlife, how to start a spiritual relationship with their loved ones who have passed and how to allow angels into their lives. I also help people through workshops on how to live a content life by living spiritually and with love around them in abundance. I am a very intelligent, very grounded woman who served eighteen years as a police officer. This has served me well as a spiritual worker, as people know I am not a fairy headed cob web dresser! I am an open minded professional person who wishes to do nothing but educate humankind that this life is nothing but a speck of salt in a huge ocean and that we are never alone. The people in society that scoff at us must be some of the most lonely people in the world. We all have designs to hope that a higher power is looking over us, so why reject us. If people opened their eyes and minds to the genuine light workers out there, it would change their life forever.

Appendix 2

Mel Brodie Editor-in-Chief Notebook, We Love TV, Love Sunday magazines Trinity Mirror

'Horoscopes are a big tradition in tabloid newspapers and their supplements, and the Daily Mirror and Sunday People are no exception. Readers expect to see them within the pages, whether they really believe in the predictions or not! Stars are a key ingredient to a daily or weekend read, and there would be flood of complaints should an editor attempt to remove a regular horoscope column from the editorial mix.'

Appendix 3

Tracie Couper features Editor of Spirit & Destiny, the leading UK mind, body and spirit title.

I am the features editor of Spirit & Destiny, the leading UK mind, body and spirit title. I believe that there may be such a thing as ghosts, but would need to see one to be wholly convinced. I do not believe in past lives, or an afterlife, or that your astrological chart affects your personality or events that happen in your life. However, I very much believe in the power of positive thinking and manifestation.

What is it about psychic/spiritual magazines that attract readers? I think it's two-fold. Firstly, there's a need for comfort ...a sense that there is something beyond death, something more than the physical body, and a desire to believe that our loved ones do 'go on'. Secondly, with regard to subject matters like tarot and astrology, readers are seeking to make sense of their lives, to understand events that have happened, and to feel that they're not flailing around without guidance or a path in life. They get comfort from the idea that a greater force is with us in our lives.'

Appendix 4

Mary Bryce Editor, Chat it's fate

The women's magazine market is dominated by the glossies and the weeklies, but look a bit deeper and you'll find the fascinating niche of the psychic world. These paranormal magazines may not sell as many as the mainstream titles, but they provide a much needed outlet for the enquiring and spiritual woman. They also bring solace and comfort to the bereaved who are in need of reassurance or signs from the Afterlife.

Today, interest in the paranormal and psychic matters has never been greater. Just check out all the shows now on TV, the increasing number of magazines in the newsagents, the well-attended psychic fairs around the country - you don't have to be a weirdo to want to find out more about the non-material aspects of our lives.

Chat it's fate is living proof of how widespread this interest has become - its core readership are ordinary women (aged between 25 and 50) who read the sister title Chat's psychic pages and demanded more. They love spooky true life stories of loss, weird goings on of ghosts and demons, past lives, being torn apart by premonitions... Readers have an insatiable appetite for alternative health, folklore, magic, dream interpretation, angels, and horoscopes - and Chat it's fate provides trusted experts in each of these fields. It is a unique title in combining plenty of true life and general interest angles, which the rival titles don't cover as widely. Readers talk of it as being a psychological prop and friend.

Appendix 5

Julie Thomas Cytotechnologist and co-owner of Ghostly Gatherings With The Angels (ghost hunters)

I saw a fairy when I was a little girl I couldn't believe my eyes .. I saw my first ghost at 15 .. and then continued to see them from then on .. I was taught the Quabalah in my thirties and tarot and astrology I had a profoundly spiritual experience when I first went out to lefkada when a friend of jo's channelled a message to me from Archangel Metatron .. I went on to learn about crystals and did a 2 year course with Hazel Raven and become a reiki master .. I really enjoy ghost hunting and always get stuff happen .. as you know lol xx

9:53amAlison

Fab Julie thanks for your time. And your official work title is pathologist? What did you think of the quabalah? And what did the fairy look like? Did it scare you? Interact with you?

And so you'd say you totally believe there is something else after life?

12:02pmJulie

Hey darling god no I'm not a pathologist they are doctors I am a Cytotechnologist .. the Quabalah taught me so much about life .. how you attract the life you are leading and the people in it .. how if you argue with people you are to blame as well as it is reflecting something about you .. how positive thinking works . How sending love to enemies heals the rift .. and lots more ..

Julie

My fairy scared me a bit but totally looked like a person I saw her completely I saw a bright light coming towards me it was dark so this light was bright and it landed on me ...

Yes totally believe ..

Alison

Appendix 6

Rod Harrod spiritual medium

Hi Alison. I am a, spiritual medium. This means that I work with people who have passed away and are in what we call the spirit world. There is a difference between a Psychic medium who works on a Psychic level is reads mind ect. I have worked with Spirit since the age of 5 when on a hot summer day I was upstairs on my own and saw a old man in my mum's bedroom. I thought this strange as it's roasting hot and he has a large overcoat on. I ran down stairs and told mum thinking as we had just moved in was it Mr castle the owner of the house because it was a tied cottage i as my father was working on the farm. From that day both mum and myself could see and hear the old man but dad and my brother could never see him. A strange house. Feeling watched and hearing noises especially the clunk of the old man's boots on the concrete going round the back of the house.

I think my reasons for being in this world are that we are all here for a reason. Learning lessons every day and moving forward spiritually. Everything changes nothing good or bad lasts forever. I feel I am blessed to serve spirit. I don't believe in coincidence , everything happens for a reason.

I love giving public demonstration of mediumship because it helps people understand that there is life after life. We cannot die the soul moves on and is always progress further. My work helps with grief and also the evidence is the most important thing. Giving people evidence from there loved ones helps them cope and understand that they in the spirit world are here around us even though we can't see them. Spirit your friends and family are just a thought away.

I have a sense of humour. So Spirit will work with me who like a laugh and indeed I bring through character of the person who has passed. Also I am very sensitive so I do get extremely emotional .

Thank you thank you! Brilliant! Keep going!!

I could go on but if you need anything else just phone and I will be happy to give you some more on Spirit matters. Xx

Appendix 7

Barbara Goldsmith 'Astrologer to the stars'

I love astrology because it touches on all the fields of life and beyond.

From mundane issues like money, health, relationships, career,
to emotional issues, mental issues, spiritual direction and destiny.

It's vast and ever unfolding in new and magical ways.

The public seem to be fascinated (and some repelled) because most people are interested
in the future. They are looking for a semblance of security, of continuity, of stability.

Astrology can give you pointers and a direction that can be extremely helpful.

It's like being prepared for stormy weather - you wouldn't go out without your raincoat
and galoshes. Or if it looks as though it's going to be fine, you'd put on a light T shirt and
sandals.

It enables you to be more prepared and therefore to handle the energies around you with
more equanimity.

Yes, YouTube has helped me to promote my videos far and wide and I don't know how I
would have achieved that kind of exposure without it.

Appendix 8

Suzy Greaves Editor of Psychologies, an upmarket, intelligent glossy monthly magazine

I'm editor of Psychologies, an upmarket, intelligent glossy magazine but I've always been fascinated by astrology, tarot and the supernatural. In fact, I've recently taken on online course on tarot reading. I am fascinated by psychology and about looking and challenging the way we see the world. I don't think tarot can predict your future but it can be a brilliant self development tool if you can learn about the deep and ancient symbolism and archetypes. I do have spiritual beliefs and believe in God but this is a belief system versus something that can be proven by science. It's about faith in something bigger than ourselves. I do find it arrogant when people think everything they believe is right. I have great respect for science and I also have my own faith and belief systems but I don't necessary expect people to believe what I believe but it can be irritating when people dismiss my beliefs out of hand because they don't agree.