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“Periodic Reports from the Editorial Subcommittee”
(Continues *“Contributions on the ‘W’ Cache and Related Sources”*)

Documents Ostensibly Pertaining to the Origins and Development of
“The Order of the Third Bird”

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THE HALE EXPERIMENTS: OBJECT-ORIENTED VENTRILOQUY DURING THE COLD WAR

THE PROSOPOPOEIA WORKING GROUP¹

We write to bring to the attention of discerning readers of the *Proceedings* a recent discovery in the W-Cache that appears to bear on a fascinating (if troubling) episode in the history of the Order of the Third Bird. A full historical airing of these materials and their implications must await further research, but the initial investigations of our working group permit us to surface a number of claims at this time. To wit, we have evidence:

- ✦ that a group of New York based Birds cooperated with a CIA funded investigation in 1961 (they may have been compensated for their time, though this is not clear);
- ✦ that this work was “whitewashed” through the “Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology,” and took place in New York City, nominally under the research umbrella of several university-based psychologists (then engaged in a larger program of inquiry into “dissociative states”), but in fact largely under the scrutiny of a career CIA officer, Willard James Coppleston “Copse” Hale;
- ✦ that this work was linked to the (notorious) MK-ULTRA program;
- ✦ that this program was short-lived, and ultimately unsuccessful.

1. The Prosopopoeia Working Group (2014-2017), consisted of the following ESTAR(SER) researchers: D. Graham Burnett, Jeff Dolven, Catherine L. Hansen, Jac Mullen, Len Nalencz, Sal Randolph, David Richardson, and two contributors who prefer to remain anonymous.

The documents that have led us to these early conclusions are known as the Hale Transcripts, a portion of which will be presented below. In toto, the surviving transcripts consist of a sheaf of 117 letter-sized sheets of paper, all of which appear to be photocopies of typewritten documents secured through a Freedom of Information Act. Some redactions and stamping suggest US government provenance. Associated documentation (in the form of similar photocopies of letters and several articles), and internal clues appear to date this body of sources to the years 1960–1962. This bundle as a whole (collated within an acid green pasteboard sleeve tied with twine and labeled “K”) came to light two years ago in the “W-Cache.”²

It would seem that this bundle (the “K-File”) represents a portion of the written records of a series of experiments conducted in the summer of 1961—experiments in which a group of putative associates of the Order of the Third Bird appear to have cooperated with psychological researchers interested in assessing the techniques of the Order, and more specifically in understanding if “Birds” were in fact capable of attaining “metempsychotic” union with objects.³ Which is to say, these researchers wished to establish if individuals trained in Bird methods could in fact (as they claimed) answer the Wordsworthian injunction to “see into the life of things,” and, by means of Birdish protocols and practices, enter the subject-being of an

2. The “W-Cache” will be known to most readers of the *Proceedings*, as it forms the basis of the majority of publications in this forum. The W-Cache consists of a large (and arguably infinite) body of primary source material bequeathed to the Editorial Committee of ESTAR(SER) some time ago—apparently the cullings of an erstwhile Historian of the Order, who seems to have collected this vast trove of rare documents in the hopes of eventually writing a definitive history of the Birds. It was not to be. But the archive was saved from oblivion by an enterprising patron, and it has been, as readers of the *Proceedings* will know, the primary labor of ESTAR(SER) over these last years, slowly to issue scholarly editions of the W-Cache sources, in the hopes of placing the Order’s true history upon a sure and critical foundation. For details on the provenance of the Cache and its structure, consider: “Presenting and Representing the ‘W-Cache’: Problems of Selection, Access, and Documentation in Relation to the Material Culture of the Order of the Third Bird,” *Proceedings of ESTAR(SER)*, New Series, Part VII, Supplement (2016).

3. Metempsychotic union with the attentional object is a hallmark of Birdish practices, which, while geographically and historically diverse, quite consistently set some form of “inwardness” with objects as the aspirational *telos* of a collective “Action.” Modalities of access (and degrees of mania) vary, but something of the general program is captured by one of the touchstone catchphrases of the Order, “Temporary metempsychosis may occur, but must not become permanent,” commonly used as a valediction in internal communication.

object—returning therefrom able to speak meaningfully of its perspective, memories, experiences, and general lifeways.

Needless to say, this in itself would be interesting for any student of the Order and its doings. The interest is all the more intense when we discover that this small group of Bird-Associates appear to have been making use of a protocol—the “Protocol of the Prosopopoeia,” or “Action of Ventriloquy”—not previously recorded in the annals of the Order. This protocol, reconstructed out of these sources, is reproduced in the Appendix below.

But imagine our surprise, on beginning to reconnoiter these sources, as it became increasingly clear that these “experiments” were not merely being conducted by psychologists curious about aesthetics, say, or scientists curious about the physiological responses of individuals undergoing intense, meditative concentration upon some inanimate object. Indeed, it seems increasingly difficult to deny that these experiments were being conducted at the peripheries of the unsettling world of the Cold War sciences of mind and behavior. Indeed, it appears that this group of Birds, wittingly or unwittingly (and this is not entirely clear), were in fact participating in an enterprise indirectly linked to the notorious work of MK-ULTRA, the CIA’s elaborate and highly secretive skunk-works program to explore the far reaches of the paranormal and the psycho-dynamic in the service of US clandestine operations.

Project MK-ULTRA, led by the spymaster/“dirty trickster” Sidney Gottlieb, reached into terrible zones before its final collapse in the early 1970s.⁴ Across its twenty-year history it was responsible for some of the strangest projects of a very strange period. In the 1960s, MK-ULTRA explored everything from hypnosis to sensory deprivation to psychopharmaceuticals like LSD in a ranging and largely unsupervised smash-and-grab through the mind-sciences of cold-war subjectivity. It has been the task of the Prosopopoeia Working Group to investigate what possible interest the spymasters of MK-ULTRA might have had in a bohemian club of histrionic aesthetes such as the Order.

4. For a discussion, see the classic study: John Marks, *The Search for the “Manchurian Candidate”: The CIA and Mind Control* (New York: Times Books, 1979). For more recent critical perspective, consider the articles gathered in a special issue of *Grey Room* published in the Autumn of 2011 (issue number 45) under the collective title: *On Brainwashing: Mind Control, Media, and Warfare*.

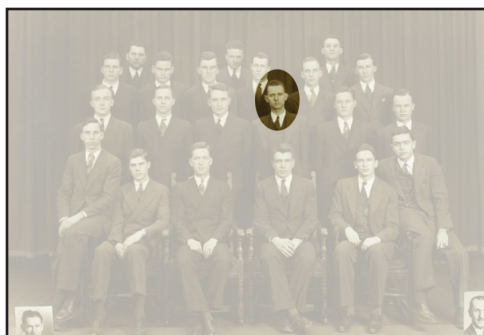


FIGURE 1

Our sources suggest that this work was conducted as the pet project of one Willard James Copleston Hale—a career OSS/CIA man, known to his friends in the Yale class of 1938 as “Copse.” Despite our researches, Hale remains something of a cipher, but the lineaments of his biography may be dimly descried in the half-light of a shadowy historicity. It would seem he left Yale shortly before graduation under uncertain circumstances (Figure 1). After a brief stint teaching at Robert College, an American missionary school in Bebek (just outside Istanbul), he found employment with an American insurance company closely associated with a Greek shipping magnate based in London. Postings after the war in Ankara and Jakarta sketch the trajectory of this WASP-spy, who wound up back in Washington, DC, by the mid-1950s (Figure 2). Was he a member of the Order of the Third Bird? It appears not. But it seems he knew of a “volée” of the Birds (a “flock,” the intramural term for a practicing community) who were associated with the Elizabethan Club at Yale in the interwar period. We must assume that it was this brief encounter that stayed with Mr. Hale, as he watched certain parts of the CIA, across the late 1950s and early 1960s, drift into increasingly experimental territory.

It is in this context, then, that Hale conceived the work that became the Hale Experiments. Recalling the rumors that circled around the Birds of his acquaintance in the 1930s, Hale doubtless seized on the notion that Bird-adepts claimed to be able to achieve that much-bruited “Metempsychotic Union” with objects. If they could, in fact, commensurate their minds and bodies with a painting or sculpture, he appears to have reasoned, then why not with some other object presented to them—perhaps any object at all?



FIGURE 2

And if indeed the Birds knew how to enter things, and return from this psycho-physical sojourn with intimate knowledge of them, was this not the proverbial “Holy Grail” of spooks everywhere? Bird techniques would literally be capable of turning every object in the world into nothing less than a perfectly undetectable “bug.” Everything could serve as a recording device—better yet, maybe everything in the world had already been recording everything that had ever happened, and awaited only Birdish solicitation to be tapped as a source. Each scrap of paper, each doorknob, each cigarette butt, each fingernail paring could be made to tell everything it had ever seen or heard. It was nothing less than the ultimate forensic fantasy: everything would speak; nothing could hide.

The odds might be low, but the upsides were stratospheric. Pushing that logic, Hale appears to have persuaded his paymasters to fund a small series of experimental investigations into the power of the Birds. How Hale found his experimental subjects, we cannot say. And exactly what they did across the weeks of experimental Actions that were conducted in a safe house in Forest Hills, Queens—this too we cannot account for with certainty.

What we do know, however, is that four apparent Birds did indeed do Bird Actions under controlled observation as part of a more general research program into “psi-aportation”—an investigation coordinated through the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology, Harold Wulff’s Cornell-based front operation which funneled CIA money into the human sciences in these years.

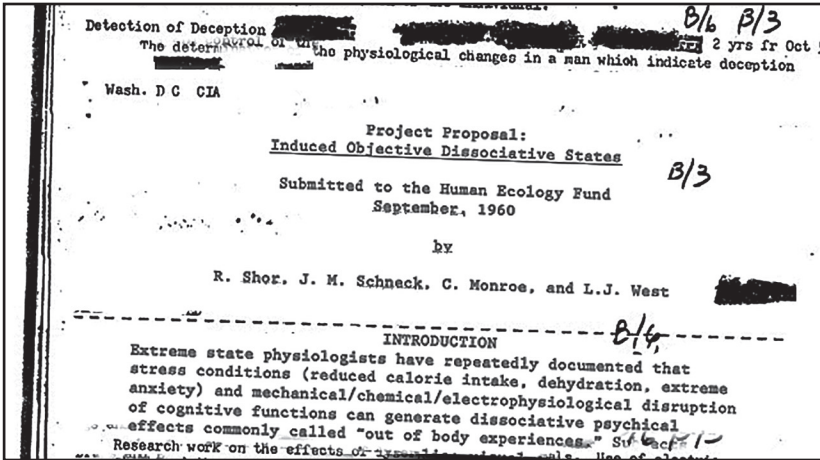


FIGURE 3

A copy of the grant-application through which the Hale Experiments were funded (Figure 3) provides invaluable insights into the undertaking. A full copy of this surviving document has been reproduced in the Appendix that follows the transcript text below. The excerpts here cited will give a sense of the general project:

Extreme state physiologists have repeatedly documented that stress conditions (reduced calorie intake, dehydration, extreme anxiety) and mechanical/chemical/electrophysiological disruption of cognitive functions can generate dissociative psychological effects commonly called "out of body experiences." Subjects thusly affected report, inter alia: visual apperception of their own bodies seen from without; coenesthetic memories of ascension or flight; and/or a general sense that the personality-bearing components of their persons (sensory capacities, memory, bearing, general mental life) have been "liberated from" or made autonomous in regard to their physical bodies. The motility and (apparent) integrity of this abstracted human person – its bodiless free-agency – has been the subject of several studies, and seems to be well established as a psychological datum. Less well understood are the documented instances of this abstracted human person coming to rest, subjectively, in a body not its own. But this phenomenon

is by no means uncommon. Accounts of such "episodes" are ubiquitous in the annals of ethnographers, and these "transmigrations of souls" play a central role in shamanistic practices in many parts of the world. We propose the term "psi-apportation" for this psychological effect, which is known to include the relocalization of the subject position into animals, corpses, and, significantly for the purposes of this investigation, objects.

The general project proposed to explore this topic various ways, including by means of:

- 1) collation of field reports of the phenomenon as witnessed among primitive tribes, ascetics, and religious fanatics;
- 2) documentation of elicited psi-apportation under laboratory conditions, permitting general physiological and specifically neuro-psychological monitoring of relevant indices;
- 3) experimentation with and inquiry into techniques (psycho-pharmaceutical, eusocial, operant regulatory) for stimulating, directing, and focusing these experiences.

It would seem that Hale's work with the Birds fell under the third of these subheads. Reading on in the document, we find that:

the investigators propose to work with a community of individuals trained in formal techniques of psi-apportation. [REDACTED] engages in a practice they call "temporary metempsychosis" and adepts claim to be able to achieve states of psychic conciliation with particular classes of objects, notably works of art. Their techniques are not widely known or well understood, but [REDACTED] without the use of psycho-active agents, collective consonant dissociative states of remarkable intensity in which they claim [REDACTED]. The internal loyalty structures of the group have made evaluation of these claims difficult, but the investigators have secured access to a small community of these practitioners, who appear willing to collaborate in laboratory analysis of their putative abilities.

All of which brings us to the Hale Transcripts themselves. These transcribed recordings document several experimental sessions led by Hale in June of 1961. The sessions were conducted in an observation room outfitted with a

one-way mirror across one wall. It is apparent that Hale would stand behind this mirror (off-stage, as it were), though it would seem that he made use of some sort of two-way sound-link to the room to direct discussion among the experiment participants in the main room. In this sense, he functions as a kind of invisible interlocutor in what those familiar with Birdish rites will recognize as a “Colloquy”—the semi-formal round-table discursive “outro” by which practitioners cycle narratively through what occurred in the course of their Action, recovering both the experience and, in a manner of speaking, themselves.

In the transcript portion reproduced below, Hale engages four (apparent) Birds in parley concerning the metempsychotic reveries out of which they have just emerged. A word about the participants, whose biographies we have been at some pains to reconstruct:

The first individual to be quoted, and by far the best known to posterity, is the Estonian-born sound engineer Rein Narma. Forty-five years old at the time of recording, Narma was an émigré/refugee from Soviet Russia who worked for the U.S. Army as a broadcasting and recording technician during the Nuremberg trials.⁵ Later, he immigrated to the New York area (he was based in Bergenfield, NJ) and took a job at Gotham Recording. Narma and several others subsequently founded Gotham Audio Developments to build and sell recording gear, some of which remains highly prized by audiophiles to this day. Les Paul hired him to modify his first 8-track, and later Narma built consoles for Rudy Van Gelder, Olmsted Recording, and others.

The second, we believe, is one David Mindle, who in the early 1960s worked as an assistant editor for the *Partisan Review*. Mindle graduated from Berkeley in 1958, having switched majors in his junior year from physics to religion and writing a senior essay inspired by the work of Carl Jung.

5. Narma’s work in relation to the Order will be familiar to those who have consulted “The Narma Tapes: Polyphony and Politics in the Cold War,” an ESTAR(SER) brief report presented at Art in General and the Vera List Center in the Spring of 2015. This text presents another “W-Cache” artifact: a reel to reel audiotape labeled “Beckmann, MoMA, 12/19/1964” (and initialed “RN”), which contains nine minutes and three seconds of lyrical cacophony in three discrete “movements.” Overdubbing and even (apparently) reverse playback characterize these challenging and layered recordings. Internal evidence suggests that this unprecedented acoustical source represents an elaborately manipulated *sound recording of six associates of the Order of the Third Bird engaged in a “colloquy.”* The object? One of the Max Beckmann paintings on display at the MoMA exhibition that opened in mid December of 1964. This revelation will be aired in full in a forthcoming issue of the *Proceedings*.

His first Bird contacts seem to have been in San Francisco, and it appears that he was linked to Narma's *volée* by San Francisco-based jazz critic Ralph J. Gleason.⁶

The third participant on the recording, and the only female participant in this portion of the transcripts, is almost certainly Ellen Montesquieu, then aged twenty-nine. Montesquieu was an American Airlines stewardess and poet living in the West Village in Manhattan. We have been able to determine that she flew Caribbean routes, and spent time in Cuba before 1958. Montesquieu had Birded almost a dozen times by 1961, and she is thought to have been responsible for an Action that has entered the annals of Bird lore, namely an all-night vigil of sustained attention to the American flag in front of the Centre Street state court house (there remains a great deal of ambiguity around the precise nature of the gesture). Her father, Achille Montesquieu, was a professor of physiology at Cornell.

The fourth and final interlocutor recorded during the session in question is Douglas Naxos Armatreading. Born in 1923, in Coney Island, Brooklyn, to a family in the amusement park business (his father was a barker, and his mother made costumes), Armatreading eventually secured a reasonably steady job on Broadway, where he worked as a carpenter and stagehand. A familiar denizen of Times Square after dark, Armatreading's Bird-connections have not been traced, but his biography suggests a demimondaine affiliation. Interestingly, he moonlighted as a psychic medium, a field in which he was deeply self-educated (as a frequent reader at the New York Public Library). Out of these independent researches, he came to think of himself as a medium for the spirit of Amanda T. Jones (1835-1914), an American psychic, inventor, and author.⁷

The reader of the transcript will wish to correlate these biographies with the stenographer's abbreviations: Narma (RN), Mindle (DM), Montesquieu (EM), and Armatreading (DNA). Additional context will be of use to those attempting to make sense of the material that follows. We can presume that the four participants were seated around a table for the duration of the Action itself (which was not recorded, and was apparently silent, in keeping

6. Gleason, who attended Columbia University as an undergraduate, maintained Bird connections on both coasts. There have long been rumors that the San Francisco underground band and vaudeville act, "Wanda and Her Birds," (about whom Gleason wrote) were splitters from the Order.

7. Amanda T. Jones, *A Psychic Autobiography* (York, PA: York Printing, 1910).

with standard Bird habits), and it would seem that they have remained in that configuration for the sequential, phased debriefing for which we have this remarkable verbatim documentation. The discussion appears to follow the ordinary pattern for a Colloquy: *ad seriatim* rapportage around the group, phase by phase; hence, in this version of the “Protocol of the Prosopopoeia,” four circuits of the four participants. We present here below as an extract only the fourth circuit of the group, in which the four experimental subjects describe their experiences during their fourth and final phase of the protocol (“Channeling”). Those familiar with the traditions of the Order will be aware of the very strict Birdish injunction against performing Colloquy in the presence of the object itself—which presents, in this case, something of a mystery, in that the closing exchange of the transcript alludes to the object in direct terms, as if it is still lying on the table. We surmise, therefore, that the object was covered immediately upon the close of the actual Action, and that it remained so for the duration of the exchanges captured on tape.

As for the protocol itself, it is otherwise unknown in the W-Cache, and no complete copy of it exists—which is to say, we have no copy of it that elaborates its movements or prompts. Indeed, there remains some ambiguity as to whether it ought to be given as a three- or a four-phase protocol. In the full Hale Transcripts we clearly discern four rounds of Colloquy, corresponding to four phases, which are explicitly named: Greeting; Parley; Hypnotic Interval; Channeling. No information about the timing of these phases is given, but they are similar enough to the “canonical” protocol of the Order (the so-called “Protocol of the First Day”) that one feels confident assuming a standard duration.⁸ Uncertainty as to whether the Protocol of the Prosopopoeia might have been practiced in three phases derives from the existence of a single, unique leaf in the K-File materials that actually inscribes the phase prompts themselves: there, one finds the “Greeting” phase struck through (Figure 4), which has led some ESTAR(SER) researchers to speculate that the Greeting and Parley phases were sometimes

8. There is evidence (albeit not perfectly clear) in the Hale Transcripts that this same group also performed the canonical protocol on objects under Hale’s observation, and indeed that the whole series of experiments began with a series of standard Actions conducted with works of art (three oil paintings) borrowed by Hale from the wife of a well-to-do Yale classmate then resident in McLean, Virginia.

We may put these questions aside in a research article like this one, which is intended for a nonspecialist audience. Of greater importance to the general reader is that veiled object lying at the center of the table. *Upon what object did the Hale experimenters actually practice in this Action?*

It is a very important question, one that frames the inherent drama of the transcripts that follow. And here is what we know: at the end of several weeks of ambiguous results, Hale's direct superiors appear to have begun to mistrust his enterprise, and it would seem that they decided to put it to the test. In this experiment, then, which would prove the final one, Hale's group was set to work on an object sent from Washington, an object presented to them (and to Hale, it appears) as one of Fidel Castro's personal effects—a small piece of technology smuggled from his boudoir; to wit, a 29-centimeter-long, steel, Soviet-manufactured shoehorn. As will be discerned in the final document presented in the Appendix, there is excellent evidence that the object did not, in fact, belong to Fidel Castro.

Be that as it may, the following text permits us a rare glimpse into the inner life of those who pursue the inner life of things. The scene is set: We enter the flow of the conversation in the opening of the final phase of an Action of Ventriloquy, Protocol of the Prosopopoeia, performed upon a Soviet shoehorn (steel, about eight inches in length) and said to be the property of Fidel Castro; our four Birds sit around it on chairs in a semicircle. There is, we can establish on the basis of internal evidence elsewhere in the transcripts, wine on the table—glasses and no fewer than three bottles.

THE HALE TRANSCRIPTS

(an edited extract)

WH: OK, final round of colloquy here -- the "Channeling" phase. Rein, I think you are up ...

[SOUND OF TAPPING]

RN: So, man, I snap out of it, you know? And there it is on table, just a "whatchamacallit" ... KING-AS-LUDICRUS [inaudible] ... is what my father he said.¹⁰

WH: A shoehorn.

RN: Shoehorn, shoehorn -- yeah. And I'm kind of waiting, like just trying to focus my audio, you dig? And then I'm like, "ahhhhh."

WH: It says something?

RN: Is singing something! I mean, look, is just the shape for listen, no? Cup like your hand, when you tune in, like ear, like cup of your ear -- the sound, she sworls there like drop rum in glass. So smooth, you dig? And the KINGASS ... the shoehorn ... like an ear but P000ALEM [inaudible], long and silver also like a tongue, you say silver-tongue, yes?¹¹ And I am thinking, man, the engineer [that] made this really knew his groceries, ear is tongue is tongue is ear: no wires no tubes, is something else, man! Or no: not is something else; I am hearing singing in here! Is me!

WH: Can you remember what it was singing?

RN: Singing like sea, hi-fi, baby; like sea and palms, and you hear tocororo, singing ko-ah, ko-ah: highs are real sweet,

10. Presumably *kingalusikas*, Estonian for "shoehorn."

11. We surmise that this articulation, which clearly threw off the transcriber, may have been *püha lehm*, Estonian for "sacred cow."

real clear, like you are in house by the sea, you dig? Oh baby: like a microphone headphone all in one, like my head was headphone, shoeophone. Man, somebody know his groceries, is all I can say. A real zonk on the head, yeah.

WH: OK, Rein, did you hear anybody say anything? Any words?

RN: Oh yeah, Daddy-0, lots of words; real good pick up in mid-range. Treble, bass, everything plus, baby. Attack: pow! [static; inaudible] Nice sustain, decay, release. And sometimes he is singing, dum dum dum, like for marching. Cut that disc, yeah! You know what crazy? Who knew everything listen like this? Listen all the time? Noodle it out, man: who needs LP, man; who needs fancy tape recorder we work so hard to make? Is like we live in big studio make perfect recording of itself all the time, needles jump day and night all you do is gotta ask, baby, but you gotta ask the right way.

WH: Rein, can you remember anything that was said?

RN: You know what's really crazy, man? I'm like: I can hear so clear, I mean, it can hear so clear -- 0 man, is off the cob, you know what I mean? Every time -- is so clear, is like I can hear the smoke, you dig? The cigar smoke, is like real LOPESAKASIAS.¹² Oh man.

[CREAKING]

WH: Thanks, Rein, thanks. Interesting. Let me see, where are we? David? You want to pick up on that for us? We still have your hypnotic stuff ringing in our ears. Where did it go for you? What were you picking up in the final phase?

DM: Yeah, well, sure. Yeah. Well, I thought. I thought, well, the whole situation. It's almost like an interrogation, man. The whole scene. The way you fellas have us going at this. I mean, I have done this Protocol before, but I never thought about it that way before. It's being interrogated, and in this way, I am being interrogated too. You know: the room, the one-way mirror, you out there, Mr. Hale, watching -- trying

12. We must take a guess here, but we suspect the phrase was "*lopsakas äikest*" — Estonian for "plush thunder." Interestingly, this was the name of nightclub in Tallinn in the 1920s. It has been impossible to establish any direct connection.

to figure it all out. So I am thinking, 'OK, you and me, we are in this interrogation situation.' Under the hot lights. They're gonna make us talk. We have to make up good alibis. Make sure our stories line up. And right away, without even checking with me, it starts talking. It blabs. It starts doing that thing they do -- saying absolutely ANYTHING. Giving me the hustle -- like a Times Square junky -- spinning, talking fast. It's all wound up. Out of its mind. It's terrible. I gotta get it out of here. We have to escape, both of us. So I tried to ... I tried to kind of lull it ... into a fantasy, a kind of escape fantasy. Both of us, letting ourselves go ...

RN: Yeah, you gotta let go, man.

DM: Right, right. So I tried to help it relax -- to lull it into comfort, into a kind of familiar space, trying to get it to summon memories, sensuous memories -- of the shape of the socked heel, the soft silk of the sock against its mouth, the lip of the leather shoe on length, the smell of ... the smell of shoeshine. And I am lulling myself, too. Going there, with it. The memories. And I realize we need a place, a place to go, together. A place where we can reside in this place of suspension, and in this way achieve, what felt like, to me at least, a kind of mutually present pure togetherness -- a place where we can lose ourselves.

RN: That's it, man -- now you are cooking!

DM: Yeah! I do! We do. And where else but the shoe? Pow! There I am. There we are! I'm in the shoe with her, basically, I'm in the shoe, and the foot's in the shoe, and the shoehorn's in the shoe, and there's a hand on it, maneuvering it, up and down, up and down, sliding the heel into the shoe, and I seized on that rhythm --

EM: The rhythm -- ?

DM: Of the "up and down," of the levering of the heel into the shoe.

[Many voices: "Mmmm" in affirmation.]

DM: So in the rhythm of the, of the ... the rhythmical insinuation of the heel into the shoe, by means of the shoehorn ... [trails off] The oscillation, up down, up down -- create what I could only really call a permanent binary present. A

sustained bipartite current-ness. An enduring be-split of now-ness. There. With the shoehorn. Levering.

RN: Now you swinging like sixteen, man!

[BREAK]

DM: And so at this point: we are really there, together, and we are safe. It feels safe. And I, I even hear it, it is speaking to me, but I realize: I don't need to hear it. Yeah: I just don't need to hear it. Or rather, it didn't need me to hear it. Rather, it just wants me to be there -- to be there with it, in the shoe.

WH: David, hold up for a moment. Stay with it. Did you say it was speaking to you and you didn't want to hear it?

DM: Yeah, that's right.

WH: OK, but we need you to try to push past that. We really need to hear what it is saying, remember? That's what we are aiming for here. This is key ... we are trying to gain intelligence from its speaking ...

RN: Hey man, we gotta let him do his thing, you know?

WH: Sure, sure. OK. I just don't want us to lose the thread ...

DNA: It is coming, I feel it: the speaking, it will speak.

EM: I am a tongue. Lengua, lenguaje, language.

DM: Yes, yes! The tongue! It was talking, that shoehorn, yes, it was talking -- but it was cooing, it was babbling, the way a child babbles, the way a child talks merely to be present, to be present and engaged, in engaged presence with the adult. It -- the shoehorn -- it was babbling like a child. It wasn't talking; it was learning how to talk.

[BREAK]

WH: Did you try to understand it? Did you understand any of what it said?

DM: "Diga-me," I told it. "Diga-me," I whispered. Getting close. Talk to me. At first, it was silent: but then I heard a whisper. A murmur, a murmur somewhere in the belly of the shoehorn itself. And then it spoke: its first words.

WH: It did?

DM: It did. And then, the bell rang and it was over.

WH: ... What ... What did it say?

DM: Sorry?

WH: What did it say? You said it spoke: what did it say?

DM: Oh. [PAUSE] It was ... private.

WH: What?

DM: I can't -- it wouldn't be right.

WH: Not again ... Really?

DM: Really. I promised. Anyway, it was very much for me -- personal. Like a kiss, really. Hard to share.

EM: A kiss. Exactly. That was my whole phase. A deep kiss. For I was the tongue. The mother tongue. A lengua, lenguaje, language. I'm just going to read what I wrote here ...

Bluster. Blister. Don't burn your tongue. Don't put your foot in your mouth. Put your tongue in your shoe. I hang on a nail in a closet. There is no "scene" in my closet. No intruder. The rest is silence. There is work. There is tarea. I am suitable for my task, my tarea. I dispatch my office. I underhear. A world of gutturals. The readiness is all. Daily, early: madrugada. Late afternoon, post-interlude, I am called on to perform my function. My dreams are olfactory: tobacco, rum, the sweat of labor in kind. Leather, cilantro, sugar cane. His dreams are of the tongue: salmon and sorrel, cream and champagne. You know about palm reading and subliminal perception. You know about phrenology. What you need to know is what I have learned: the epode of the ankle; the villanelle of the subtalar joint. These can be read. I have read them. I can speak them: the sonnet of the talus;

the sestina of the calcaneus. These can be read, and spoken. They are genres that can be known.

[BREAK]

DM: I think I am feeling something for you.

EM: That was the shoehorn. I had nothing to do with it.

DM: That's what I meant: for the shoehorn. For you as the shoehorn. I felt you were the shoehorn, and I love the shoehorn.

RN: He's the shoehorn. You're the shoehorn. He's you. You're him. You are IN IT, my friends! ... We were ALL in it -- in the last phase -- We jump together, like one cymbal crash -- The vibes!

[BREAK]

WH: OK lovebirds -- great. Ellen. Thanks for that. Lovely. Nothing exactly actionable in there, I think. But a lot of atmosphere. Can we keep moving? Doug? We're on phase four, did you dock with the object?

DNA: We met on the docks. And I began to reach toward the object, the shoehorn, I reach towards it, and ... [PAUSE] I'm in the BETWEEN.

You know all this but bear with me -- I'm in the BETWEEN, that pinkish everywhere like an infinite fog or mist of possibility. And I hear Amanda's voice, her thready voice, and she whispers "I'm here," so I know its going to work, she'll be able to guide me through the layers, the sediment of images. You guys know the first things we'll be tuning into are the most recent.

"Get ready," she says and ...

Yes, it comes in, the first picture. From the NOTHING ...

[BREAK]

It's dark. Dark and terribly cold. Oh, the bitterness of that cold. I am frozen and cannot move. I know this is weird, guys,

but I think this is because the shoehorn is, like, metal. I think it's about 80 or 90 degrees but to the shoehorn it seems desperately cold.

I seem to be dangling from a cliff face.

RN: Like on the hook, man?

DNA: Yes. There is a smell, the smell of smoke. I hear murmuring, deep sounds, voices. I can tell I'm in my familiar place, a usual place, that I dangle like this in the dark and cold, day after day, with nothing but muffled noises to amuse me. Ah! it's a closet! Then, a sudden rattle and bang. A vertical crack of light appears, and more smoke billows in. Light! I am reflecting that light. Oh, it feels good, silvering up and down my body. I am beautiful, I am beautiful! There are deep voices, human voices, speaking a language I don't know. A man laughs. HA HA HA! Another sounds angry. I hear something like "ply," "ply" "ply-ah?" "rohn" and some names I can't quite make out. "Ahnder." "Bark." They are arguing. They are angry. Then the light is blocked by a behemoth figure. A thick roll of leaves, on fire at one end, giving off smoke, protrudes from its hairy maw.

WH: A cigar? A beard?

DNA: SILENCE! SILENCE! The monster looms forward toward where I hang against my dark cliff, passing its giant hand over things below -- over the shoes, I see now. Then there is a bang and I am back in the dark again, in the waiting, in the silent, terrible waiting that is my existence.

I knew you wanted everything I can get, so I go back in.

So I'm in the fog again, the sound as if of wind but there is no wind. No up or down in this place. I still feel the pain of that unbearable waiting, the frozen helpless chill. Amanda chides me, a new memory won't form unless I purge myself of all the emotion. I rub my fingers against my palms in the cleansing gesture, calming the mind. "Yes," Amanda says, "yes."

[BREAK]

Now, there it is! I'm shaking all over, vibrating down a chute, dropped clanging into a heap. Oh, we are all alike! Brothers!

Sisters! Like silver fish! Hundreds of us, thousands. Quick hands pluck us up. We are stacked, nestling against each other. The shivery feeling as we hit against each other, ringing like bells.

The shock of that ringing sends me out of the scene and back to the place between worlds. Amanda wants me to stay there and talk to her, keep her company, but I press on. "More," I tell her, "I need more."

Slowly another impression appears. We're moving back in time. At first it's hard for me, me Douglas, to understand, because I can't feel my body -- it's as if I'm in a sea, but I am a sea. But it's not a sea of water, it's dense, intimate, sliding against itself constantly. I sense red and darkness at the same time, and weight and pressure, and then I realize I'm MOLTEN, I'm metal flowing, I'm LAVA, deep under the earth. I'm warm, I'm finally warm, oh GOD, finally, this is what I have wanted, this heat. It feels good, finally! I'm hot. This is how I'm meant to be! Liquid! I'm burning with delicious sensation all through myself, alive with heat, I'm free, I can move and dance! I'm nothing, I'm everything, I'm free, I'm free!

[BLOWS OUT AIR] That was it, that was it -- that's everything I got. Wow. So ecstatic, give me a minute, just a minute, yes, wow.

[BREAK]

WH: Doug, that was majestic. I'm shivering. But I wonder ... um ... I wonder if I could pull you back for a moment to one of those sort of more, um [gingerly], recent memories of shoehorn. You know, the stuff after the formation of the Earth and all that. You remember: The bearded figure, the Spanish phrases. I heard "Playa" in there. Beach. Could you get back there, maybe? Remember that we have some really heavy stuff that has gone down in the Bay of Pigs. It would be just incredible if ...

DNA: You want me to go back in? Oh, I don't know, I don't know, that was a sleigh-ride into the primordial inferno. I am still fighting for air. I'm singed.

WH: Of course, Doug. But there's so much at stake here. You all are American heroes, in a way, fearless soldiers

making night excursions into enemy territory -- fighting for this country in the terrifying realms of the spirit. Gird yourself, Doug. Go back in. With Amanda, she's invincible, Doug. She'll protect you ...

RN: You can do it, Douglas! Out of fire into frying pan again, daddy-o!

DNA: I don't know. Maybe Amanda can help, but I think my circuits are all burned up. I don't know if I can do any more.

[PAUSE]

Alright, alright, I'll try, but give me a minute here.

[BREAK]

Ok, Amanda help me now! Ok, I am seeing the BETWEEN, I am in the space, I'm waiting ... I'm waiting ... Ok, something's coming, here it is.

I'm flipped on my back. Helpless. I can't move. And the terrible chill, the chill is back. I'm on ... I'm on ... I don't know what I'm on. I can look up and see a kind of a pole, white, a cylinder or a rod, ah! I think it's a candle, yes, and it's lit. If I could get to the flame! Too tiny, too far, the little bit of fire way up there can't help me. I'm just completely frozen and lying there.

WH: Can you hear anything, Doug? Can you hear anything?

DNA: Voices, voices ... yes! yes! A barking, a kind of rhythmic bark. [Participant makes a barking sound] It sounds like some kind of ... animal ... OH MY GOD, they are FUCKING! ... Jesus H ... Ok, ok now they seem to be finished. There is smoke, oh yeah! A cigarette and a cigar ... And they are saying ... something ... two voices ... the girl ... she is saying "par" ... "see" ... no, oh: "siempre," "para siempre." They are saying "forever," both of them, while I lie there helpless, unable to move. OH GOD! They know NOTHING these two, their pathetic "forever" doesn't last more than a breath. I'm cold with my bitter anger, my anger that will outlive everything they've ever known or imagined. I hate them! Oh, but I will have my revenge, my release. I know that in time, in time. I will be free again, in the great blazing fire of the sun as

it finally explodes and consumes all of us into its molten ecstasy, when the fire comes, when the fire comes!

[BREAK]

RN: Wow, man.

EM: Magnificent.

[BREAK]

DM: I will never forget it. I will never look at a shoehorn the same way again ...

[BREAK]

WH: OK, well. I guess that's it for today. We'll have to go over the tapes and see what can be made of it all.

[PAUSE; TAPE BREAK; NOISES]

I, uh, I can't say as I know exactly how much of this will be of, uh, use, exactly -- but then, well ... I've heard stranger things. You know, talking to defectors, to agents, double agents, triple agents, God knows. In comparison to all that -- all the crazy crap that people will say when they have a gun to their heads -- well, in comparison to all that, this is downright tame. [PAUSE] I mean, in a way, this is just a hop, skip, and a jump from good old-fashioned forensics: Look at the object. Figure out what it has to say. At least we know that objects don't lie.

RN: Is lying there, though, Mr. Hale.

WH: "Is lying there." Yeah. You know what I mean, Rein.

RN: I do man. Is lying there. Is object lying there.

DM: That's all they do, all the objects. They lie around.

EM: And we lie with them, sooner or later.

[PAUSE]

DNA: Para siempre.

DM: Yes, para siempre. “And so I lie with her, and she with me ...”

EM: “... And in our faults by lies we flattered be.”¹³

RN: We lie with them! And they lie, Baby! They lie off the hook! That’s what it’s all about man.

WH: Come again on that, Rein?

RN: Mr. Hale. Objects, they lie. That is the main thing. That’s the whole think.

[BREAK]

WH: Really?

But I’ve been so patient here. At moments, despite all the craziness, I even kept feeling what it would be to believe. To believe it all. I even felt ... And now you’re telling me that the objects lie?

[BREAK]

But that was the whole project here: find something, some thing we could trust. If the objects lie too, what makes them different from people, then?

RN: Nothing, Mr. Hale.

13. The participants allude here to Shakespeare’s Sonnet 138: “When my love swears that she is made of truth / I do believe her, though I know she lies.” Which concludes, of course: “Therefore I lie with her and she with me, / And in our faults by lies we flatter’d be.”

APPENDIX

ITEM A

Protocol of the Prosopopoeia; Action of Ventriloquy

As reconstructed from the Hale Transcripts and supplementary material in the K-File, as discussed in the text supra (see Figure 4).

Protocol of the Prosopopoeia
(Action of Ventriloquy)

Greeting

Parley

Hypnotic Interval

Channel

ITEM B

Project Proposal

The original Human Ecology Fund research program under which the Hale experiments were conducted (see Figure 3 and the text supra).

Project Proposal:
Induced Objective Dissociative States
Submitted to the Human Ecology Fund
September, 1960
by
R. Shor, J. M. Schneck, C. Monroe, and L.J. West

INTRODUCTION

Extreme state physiologists have repeatedly documented that stress conditions (reduced calorie intake, dehydration, extreme anxiety) and mechanical/chemical/electrophysiological disruption of cognitive functions can generate dissociative psychical effects commonly called "out of body experiences." Subjects thusly affected report, inter alia: visual apperception of their own bodies seen from without; coenesthetic memories of ascension or flight; and/or a general sense that the personality-bearing components of their persons (sensory capacities, memory, bearing, general mental life) have been "liberated from" or made autonomous in regard to their physical bodies. The motility and (apparent) integrity of this abstracted human person - its bodiless free-agency - has been the subject of several studies, and seems to be well established as a psychological datum. Less well understood are the documented instances of this abstracted human person coming to rest, subjectively, in a body not its own. But this phenomenon is by no means uncommon. Accounts of such "episodes" are ubiquitous in the annals of ethnographers, and these "transmigrations of souls" play a central role in shamanistic practices in many parts of the world. We propose the term "psi-apportation" for this psychological effect, which is known to include the relocalization of the subject position into animals, corpses, and, significantly for the purposes of this investigation, objects.

OBJECTIVES

A broad inquiry into psi-apportation is here proposed, including but not limited to: 1) collation of field reports of the phenomenon as witnessed among primitive tribes, ascetics, and religious fanatics;

2) documentation of elicited psi-apportation under laboratory conditions, permitting general physiological and specifically neuro-psychological monitoring of relevant indices; 3) experimentation with and inquiry into techniques (psycho-pharmaceutical, eusocial, operant regulatory) for stimulating, directing, and focusing these experiences.

[ELLIPSIS]

METHODS

[ELLIPSIS]

Sub C) Induced Dissociative States in Trained Subjects:

For this portion of the inquiry, the investigators propose to work with a community of individuals trained in formal techniques of psi-apportation. [REDACTED] engages in a practice they call “temporary metempsychosis” and adepts claim to be able to achieve states of psychic conciliation with particular classes of objects, notably works of art. Their techniques are not widely known or well understood, but [REDACTED] without the use of psycho-active agents, collective consonant dissociative states of remarkable intensity in which they claim [REDACTED]. The internal loyalty structures of the group have made evaluation of these claims difficult, but the investigators have secured access to a small community of these practitioners, who appear willing to collaborate in laboratory analysis of their putative abilities.

[ELLIPSIS]

... these sessions of recounting/reporting (known to the members as “Colloquy”) will be recorded for subsequent analysis, and it is expected that, as in previous work, the SIHE (Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology) “friendly room” in New York city will be the right environment for these meetings, affording as it does an ideal architecture for unobtrusive observation by the investigators of the social dynamics of these interactions, together with valuable means for securing and archiving the relevant content.

[ELLIPSIS]

Rapid access to familiar medical facilities...

[ELLIPSIS]

TIMELINE

[ELLIPSIS]

BUDGET

[ELLIPSIS]

RELEVANT AND RELATED RESEARCH

[ELLIPSIS]

psychometry, etc...

REFERENCES

[ELLIPSIS]

ITEM C
Project "Choke the Flamingo"

Memorandum from Agent R. Lashbrook to MK-ULTRA leader Sidney Gottlieb, dated 13 June 1961.

13 June 1961

Memorandum for: Mr. Sidney Gottlieb
Supervising, etc.
Washington, DC

Subject: The Birdhouse, New York

Just received this note from Hale:

"Spent the morning lighting DR-made Cohibas from the deli down the block. The smell seems to help the Bird subjects 'catch a vibe.' These guys are serious: subject DM notes he had a dream just last night about Marx eating a mixto with extra pickles. Will forward full report by close of the week."

Seems our man in Queens has gone native on Birdshit. I want that quack pushing paper in basement on E Street. Proposal: mission "Choke the Flamingo." With your consent, going to send him a piece for analysis: a shoehorn -- you know, the one F.C. personally forwarded from Havana. We'll pass on his test results to finance. Should be a yuk for the boys.

One stone,

R. LASHBROOK