therapy. Past-life regression was used on some clients but in one case a woman found herself regressing spontaneously to life in the Thirteenth Century. This case study is discussed in relation to past-life regression, channeling and the creativity of the unconscious mind. Results from past-life regression, channeling and research on related areas indicate that there is a therapeutic purpose for these experiences. This is discussed in a tentative way in relation to the main case study and other relevant studies.

447.5 Hypnotic age-regression, cuing and memory creation

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The use of hypnotic regression-like techniques to retrieve childhood memories from patients has become popular among psychotherapists. Hypnotic age-regression, however, should not be relied upon to yield veridical childhood memories. Research has shown that age-regression does not constitute an actual reliving of the past. Subjects may confabulate and claim high degrees of confidence in the veracity of their memories regardless of accuracy. Memories retrieved by subjects can also be influenced by the experimenter. New data will be presented, which suggests that subjects’ memories can be influenced and created in regression to early childhood and in utero.

447.6 Posthypnotic postcards

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Real, hypnotizable and simulating, unhypnotizable subjects were given a posthypnotic suggestion, and control subjects were given a nonhypnotic request, to mail one postcard every day to the experimenter for either a specified or unspecified number of days. Over 56 days, real and controls, rather than simulators, returned more postcards. Also, those given the specified, rather than unspecified suggestion/request sent more. These findings allow inferences to be drawn about social processes in hypnotic and nonhypnotic settings, cognitive processes in hypnotized and nonhypnotized subjects, and the interaction of social and cognitive processes in determining posthypnotic responding.

447.7 A phenomenological study of the hypnotic context in reports of UFO abductions

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Hypnotic narratives of ten abductees were phenomenologically compared to 30 non-abductees’ simulated abduction experiences. The narratives were compared on UFO experience-related dimensions. Abductees did not differ from non-abductees in psychopathology, or in hypnotizability. Abductees do exhibit greater richness in imaginative cognitive style. Abductees also endorsed more beliefs in paranormal phenomena, and conspiratorial thinking, consistent with fantasy proneness, which is a vulnerability factor for memory distortion and confabulation. The content of the narratives were indistinguishable between the two groups, suggesting that imagination is sufficient to create compelling stories of UFO abductions when in fact none took place.

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Language

448.1 Modularity in lexical access in speech production: Phonological coactivation of near-synonyms

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The modular two-stage model of lexical access in speech production (Levelt et al., 1991, Psychological Review) holds that phonological activation of lexical items is contingent on their selection. We present a series of cross-modal picture-word interference experiments which suggest that this assumption may be too strong. In case of near-synonyms (like sofa and couch), not only the target item but also its near-synonymous competitor becomes phonologically active. This finding calls for a modification of Levelt et al.’s model in that it allows for cascading of information if semantic competition is extreme, leading to phonological concreativity.

448.2 Semantics, linguistic headedness, and lexical representation of English compound words

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The issue of how English compound words are represented in the lexicon was investigated in a set of cross-modal priming experiments. Compound words were primed by their constituents or by other compounds sharing common morphemes; constituent morphemes were primed by compounds or by other constituents. The data showed strong effects of semantic transparency of compounds and of semantic relatedness between compounds, but weak effects of linguistic headedness. No priming was found between the first and second constituents of a compound. Overall, the data pose challenges to morpheme-network views of the lexicon.

448.3 Processing of Chinese sentence ambiguity

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Two experiments examined the role of meaning frequency and the effects of prior and posterior context in processing of ambiguous Chinese sentences. Subject reacted to target sentences that were consistent with either the dominant or subordinate meaning of ambiguous sentences. The results were as follows: (1) Effects of prior context that provides greater predictive information upon resolution of sentence ambiguity are greater; (2) The dominant meaning of an ambiguous sentence is more speedily accessed; (3) The dominant meaning of ambiguity can be activated under short interval between stimulus and target sentences.

448.4 The instinct instinct: A critique of Pinker

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While Steven Pinker’s book, The Language Instinct, met with much acclaim, much of what he says is wrong. He argues against the idea that “the foundational categories of reality are not in the world but are imposed by one’s culture.” I argue that to talk about “the foundational categories of reality” is itself a metaphysical mistake that presupposes that we can validly make a statement of the sort: “this is how things stand.” I argue that we cannot. The paper is relevant to any research that attempts to link behavior to genes.

448.5 On the comprehension of irony: What variables matter?

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The present study sought empirical evidence about the psychological relevance of different variables, such as echoic mention, degree of counterfactuality, predictability, salience, etc., related to the representation and processing of irony as proposed by linguistic and philosophical theories. Our aim was to assess the contribution of these variables to the online comprehension of ironic utterances. The procedure used in our study was a reading time paradigm, in which subjects read ironic or literal remarks following a context. Our results allow us to propose a taxonomy of irony based on the psychological import of the variables mentioned above.

448.6 Communication et processus cognitif chez les enfants

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Des enfants âgés de 7 à 9 ans examinent des images et en font la description orale individu-