



The Washington State Periphenomenal Survey



Statement of Intent

This research aims to systematically document and categorize **memorates** (first-person narratives of supernatural or extraordinary encounters) and **vernacular beliefs**. By employing an **Experience-Centered Approach**, this study seeks to distinguish between the primary physiological or sensory event (the "core experience") and the secondary cultural scripts used to describe it.

Unlike traditional parapsychology, which seeks to prove the objective reality of these events, this study focuses on the **phenomenology of the experience** and the **mechanisms of narrative transmission**. The ultimate objective is to map how modern digital culture, traditional folklore, and individual perception intersect to create new categories of belief (e.g., "glitches," "simulation theory") alongside traditional forms.

Outline: The Periphenomenal Survey

Section 1: Demographics and "Folk Group" Identification

Purpose: To establish the respondent's cultural baseline and identify the **"folk groups"** (social or digital communities) they participate in. This determines if their narrative is influenced by specific online subcultures or traditional heritage.

- **Basic Demographics:** Age, Gender, Location, Occupation (Occupational folklore context).
- **Cultural & Spiritual Heritage:** Family traditions, religious upbringing.
- **Digital & Media Consumption:**
 - Frequency of engagement with "high strangeness" media (e.g., specific subreddits, podcasts, TikTok trends).
 - *Methodological Note:* This tests the **Cultural Source Hypothesis**—did the media they consume "train" them to have this experience?

Section 2: The Memorata

Purpose: To capture the **vernacular narrative** exactly as the respondent tells it. In folklore, the way a story is told is as important as the content.

- **Free Narrative:** A prompt for an unguided description of the event.
- **Linguistic Markers:** Analysis of specific terms used (e.g., do they say "ghost," "entity," or "glitch"?).
- **Reality Testing:** Did the respondent perform "reality checks" during the event? (e.g., "I washed my face to make sure I was awake").

Section 3: Phenomenology

Purpose: To isolate the **physiological and environmental facts** from the cultural story. This aligns with David Hufford's methodology to identify cross-cultural patterns of experience that exist *before* language is applied.

- **Sensory Inventory:**
 - **Visual:** Was it peripheral or central? Color? Solidity?
 - **Auditory:** Directionality? Mechanical vs. organic?
 - **Somatic:** Paralysis, temperature change, pressure on chest, electric sensations (ASMR-like responses).
- **Environmental Context:** Solitary or shared? (Shared experiences challenge the "hallucination" model).

- **State of Consciousness:** Awake, hypnagogic (falling asleep), hypnopompic (waking up), driving (highway hypnosis).

Section 4: Transmission and Ostension

Purpose: To track the **life cycle of the story**. "Ostension" is the concept of real life imitating folklore (or vice versa).

- **Prior Knowledge:** "Had you heard of this specific type of phenomenon before it happened to you?" (Testing for *cultural priming*).
- **Narrative Sharing:** "Who was the first person you told? How did they react?" (Testing for *narrative negotiation*—did the listener help change the story?).
- **Digital Transmission:** "Did you post this online? If so, did the comments change how you view the event?" (Testing for *collective tradition-building*).

Section 5: Vernacular Theory & Interpretation

Purpose: To respect the respondent as a "**vernacular theorist**." Folklorists recognize that people build their own complex logical frameworks to explain the unexplained.

- **The "Why":** What is the respondent's personal theory for the cause?
- **Worldview Shift:** Did this event move them from a "skeptic" to a "believer" (or vice versa)?
- **Integration:** Does this event fit into a larger recognized system (e.g., Simulation Theory, Christian Theology, New Age Spiritualism)?

Classification of Periphenomena

*The phenomena are grouped by how they function as **narrative traditions** in modern culture.*

Category A: Techno-Mysticism & Simulation Folklore

Focus: Reinterpreting reality through computer metaphors.

- **The Glitch-in-the-Matrix:** Visual inconsistencies interpreted as evidence of simulated reality.
- **The Mandela Effect:** Collective false memory interpreted as timeline manipulation (Secularized eschatology).
- **Sentient AI / Ghost in the Machine:** Attributing consciousness or spirit to algorithms (Modern animism).
- **Time Slips:** Non-linear time experiences often described using "editing" or "lag" terminology.

Category B: The "Night Assault" Tradition (Sleep & Liminality)

Focus: Physiological events occurring at the boundaries of sleep, traditionally associated with "visitations."

- **Sleep Paralysis / The Old Hag:** Immobility accompanied by a sense of a hostile presence.
- **Out-of-Body Experiences (OBEs):** Dissociation interpreted as spiritual travel.
- **Hypnagogic Auditory Hallucinations:** Hearing explosions, voices, or music while falling asleep.

Category C: Contemporary Legend & Ostension

Focus: Events that mirror popular urban legends or viral internet challenges.

- **Liminal Spaces:** Feelings of dread in empty, transitional places (The "Backrooms" folklore).
- **Randonauting/Legend Tripping:** Anomalies experienced while intentionally seeking them out (Ostension).
- **Cryptid Encounters:** Sightings of creatures that embody "wilderness anxiety" (Bigfoot, Dogman).

Category D: Interactive & Social Psi

Focus: Experiences that rely on connection with others (Telepathy/Empathy).

- **Synchronicities:** Meaningful coincidences (Jungian folklore).
- **Crisis Apparitions:** Sensing a loved one is in danger or has died before being told.

- **Shared "Hallucinations":** Two people seeing the same anomaly (The "folklore of consensus").

Category E: Environmental Manifestations

Focus: Physical interactions with the surroundings.

- **Poltergeist Activity:** The "noisy ghost" tradition; distinct from hauntings as it involves object manipulation.
- **Apportation/Disappearance:** The "JOTT" (Just One of Those Things) phenomenon where objects vanish and return.
- **UAP/High Strangeness:** Aerial phenomena that behave like tricksters rather than mechanical craft.