ARTICLE

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Apocryphal media: an archaeology of mediated paranormal presence

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Abstract

Technology does not just encompass tools for humans to master and use, but also cultural objects that play a role in one's imagination of what is possible. Apocryphal media is a new taxonomic category within Media Archaeology that helps understand the impossible demands and expectations a user might make of a technology. Briefly, Apocryphal media are devices for which there exists an incongruity between the effects one expects the device to produce and what it actually produces. For example, there is an expectation that an electromagnetic field (EMF) reader can detect paranormal entities, but in fact, through the study of the discursive object, it only produces the effect of detecting paranormal entities. Starting with the most spectacular examples, this essay investigates the discursive structures surrounding the tools of paranormal investigation and the discourse surrounding their impossible effects.

Keywords

imaginary media, media archaeology, media theory, paranormal, ghosts

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Medios apócrifos: arqueología de una presencia paranormal mediada

Resumen

La tecnología es algo más que simples herramientas que los humanos dominamos y usamos: son también objetos culturales que desempeñan en nuestra imaginación el papel de aquello que es posible. Los medios apócrifos constituyen una nueva categoría taxonómica, dentro de la denominada arqueología de los medios, que ayuda a comprender las demandas y expectativas imposibles que los usuarios pueden exigir de una tecnología. En pocas palabras, los medios apócrifos son dispositivos que presentan una incongruencia entre el efecto que uno espera que produzcan y el que en realidad producen. Por ejemplo, si bien existe la expectativa de que un lector de campos electromagnéticos pueda detectar entes paranormales, en realidad, a través del estudio del objeto discursivo, lo único que produce es el efecto de que detecta entes paranormales. Empezando por los ejemplos más espectaculares, en este ensayo se investigan las estructuras discursivas que rodean a las herramientas de investigación paranormal y el discurso que rodea a sus efectos imposibles.

Palabras clave

medios imaginarios, arqueología de los medios, teoría de los medios, paranormal, fantasmas

Picture this: It's 1998, and I'm ten years old. It was recently my birthday, and my mom got me a brand-new Gameboy Colour (GBC). It's lime green and absolutely amazing. I've also got a carrying case, a light so I can play it in the dark, which is important because the original GBC didn't have a backlight, and a copy of Pokémon Yellow. So, I was already a little bit behind on video games – all of my friends had Pokémon Red or Blue, so they were keen to give me tips on playing yellow.

On the way home from school, my friend, Kyle, and I commiserate about how annoying it is when you try to catch a Pokémon, but then it escapes at the last minute – everyone knows this struggle. So, Kyle turns to me and says, "you know, you have a better statistical chance of catching a Pokémon if you repeatedly tap the 'b' button". I was pretty sceptical at first, but I had nothing to lose, so I thought I'd give it a shot.

Following Kyle's advice, I fire up my copy of Pokémon Yellow, walk through the grass and in a matter of seconds, a Metapod appears. Metapod is, of course, a trash Pokémon, but I catch it anyway to test out the 'b' button theory. I lower its health, I throw a Pokéball, and I hammer on my 'b' button. And, it worked! I caught the Metapod. I re-tested my experiment a few more times, and it seemed pretty solid. Tapping the 'b' button when catching a Pokémon became a consistent ritual when playing Pokémon. The 'b' button ritual didn't always work, but it seemed to help a lot. Even after I bought the next generation of the Gameboy and the next version of Pokémon, I still performed this ritual dutifully. Even recently, when I played Pokémon

Go, I found myself tapping the screen in hopes of bettering my chance of catching a Pokémon.

So I, rather religiously, believed that this act of mashing a button or screen actually did something when playing Pokémon. However, my faith was eventually crushed by an internet forum that broke down the algorithm involved in catching Pokémon. Guess what: the 'b' button trick is worthless, it doesn't do a thing, and life is meaningless.

I'm sure we all have some kind of weird ritual like this – maybe you compulsively close apps on your phone in hopes to preserve battery, or maybe when playing a video game you tilt the controller left or right even though the controller is completely without motion sensor. Regardless, our technology is somehow caught up in our systems of imagination and belief – we sometimes stumble upon technology that does not or cannot deliver on its real or perceived functions, yet it circulates the belief that it functions. In other words, there are occasions when we engage with digital and technical rituals, and we do not produce the effect we set out to, but instead, we only reproduce or reify a *belief* that the ritual itself is doing something.

Spurred on by these moments of incongruity between personal expectations and technological possibility, this essay will look at media machines as discursive artefacts for their "apocryphal" elements. These instances of impossible expectation and demand within our electronic and digital technology are what the media artist Jamie Allen has called "apocryphal technology". My intention here is to build the groundwork toward a theory of apocryphal technology through the archaeology of various media technologies.

A taxonomy of imaginary media

Before looking at any specific artefacts as such, I'll map out a few orienting methodological points. Siegfried Zielinski references three categories that compose imaginary media:

> Untimely media/apparatus/machines. Media devised and designed either much too late or much too early.

> Conceptual media/apparatus/machines. Artefacts that were only ever sketched as models or drafted as concrete ideas on paper, but never actually built.

> Impossible media/apparatus/machines. Imaginary media in the true sense, by which I mean hermetic and hermeneutic machines, that is, machines that signify something, but where the initial design or sketch makes clear that they cannot be built, and whose implied meanings, nonetheless, have an impact on the factual world of media. (Zielinski 2006, 30)

Media that are untimely, conceptual and impossible cover a lot of ground in the ways they help us talk about media that exist only virtually. However, there's a clear shortcoming in this taxonomy: it lacks the ability to talk about the unintended themes, incongruous expectations and pseudo-scientific affects that get mapped onto media objects. For example, there are media machines, like the Gameboy I mentioned above, and the paranormal investigation equipment I mention below, that is neither untimely nor conceptual, but still impossible in so far as their expectations can never be delivered upon.

Regarding Zielinski's taxonomy, I'd add one more category to the taxonomy of impossible media:

> Apocryphal media/apparatus/machines. Artefacts that are realised in their own time, actually constructed and not merely sketched, but are still impossible. Apocryphal media technology encompasses artefacts that exist but only produce the belief that they work.

The term "apocryphal", in its usage here, is best worked out in Jamie Allen's exhibition and workshop at the Media Archaeology Lab, *How to Build a Lie.* An overview of Allen's exhibition reports that attendees will:

> (…) analyse-by-doing, [to] better understand the distance between 'real' and 'imaginary' technological function. Synthesising apocryphal technologies – directly, and by hand – is explored as a way of engendering a more authentic and equivocal relation with our contemporary modes of technological existence. (Allen 2016, 1)

In the essay that accompanies the exhibition, Allen details media archaeologies of Lie Detectors, Love Test Machines and Scientology E-Meters. Each device is expected to deliver insight on the veracity or truthfulness of a subject through the conversion of bodily feedback into an electronic signal. While Allen's artistic research focuses on machines that report on one's truthfulness, it seems like apocryphal technology, contextualised through Zielinski's taxonomy, could be turned toward media archaeological research that investigates the discourses of actual media with impossible effects.

A spooky archaeology of media

One starting point for a media archaeology of apocryphal media is in the early intersections of electronic media and the paranormal. Jeffrey Sconce gives a relevant and illuminating cultural history and media archaeology in his book *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television.* Sconce's book lays out a history of the idea of tele-presence as it emerges from the techno-spiritualist inventions of the late 1800s. Sconce's history is relevant for apocryphal technology and electronic media because it outlines existing imaginary topoi that play out in various ways across actually existing media machines.

The electromagnetic telegraph has a long and varied history, but the device we know today as the telegraph began to saturate culture in the 1840s with Samuel B. Morse's experimental line between Washington D.C. and Baltimore.[1] The telegraph proved its general capabilities in 1866 with the first reliable transatlantic telegraph line. The telegraph produced a general cultural affect that many commentators have called *tele-presence* or the ability to communicate through technical disembodiment (Sconce 2009, 21). When covering the general goings on of a telegraph company meeting conducted completely over the wire, one telegraph employee related the following, "The members together in spirit – in communication, and yet in body seven hundred miles apart" (Sconce 2009, 21).

From these astounded remarks, the trajectory of cultural effect produced by telegraphy is clear. The telegraph is the first electronic media to create a disembodied tele-presence. The prefix *tele-* is the etymological indication of distance (television, telephone, telescope) and presence, we might say, denotes a certain "being there." Tele-presence is logically baffling because it is essentially a contradiction of terms – to be present, but at a distance. Jeffrey Sconce explains that the cognitive dissonance present during this introduction of the electromagnetic telegraph momentarily caught the popular cultural imagination of many and ended up getting entangled with a different tele-present mode of communication: spiritualism.

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1. This is a pitifully inadequate history; for more, see Tom Standage (2014).

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Spiritualism was a popular religious belief in the late 19th century based on the idea that the spirits of the deceased could be contacted and communicated with through a medium. The Fox sisters were three of the most popular and well-known early Spiritualists. Sconce carefully unpacks the uncanny timing concerning the spread of the popularity of the telegraph (a medium where one communicates through a code of taps signifying dots and dashes) and the spiritualism of the Fox sisters who revealed their ability to communicate with spirits via rapping and knocking on walls, tables, and headboards. Sconce explains, "Within [a] five-year period, the United States thus saw the advent of both the "electro-magnetic" and "spiritual" telegraphs, technologies that stand as the progenitors of two radically different histories of 'telecommunications'" (Sconce 2009, 24).

To obscure matters further, the technology of the electromagnetic telegraph and the spiritualism of the spiritual telegraph were thoroughly squashed together. The spiritualists lacked a hard distinction between where the technology of the electromagnetic telegraph ended, and the technology of the spiritual telegraph began. As Sconce notes, "Talking with the dead through raps and knocks, after all, was only slightly more miraculous than talking with the living yet absent through dots and dashes; both involved subjects reconstituted through technology as an entity at once interstitial and uncanny" (Sconce 2009, 28). Even more, both techno-science and spiritualism were further fused in the spiritualist technique called the "Spirit battery" (Sconce 2009, 29). The point of this exercise was to have the participants hold a magnetised rope which terminated in buckets of water in hopes to improve the medium's contact with the deceased. Essentially, the spirit battery was a practice that took its cues from the logic of the electromagnetic telegraph. The magnetised rope would conduct and boost the signal of the medium and other participants.

An incredible volume of research has been done on the topics of electric technology and spiritualism in the 19th century, more than can easily fit in this essay. However, I'd like to direct attention toward some more recent examples, as the entanglement of electronic media in notions of the paranormal never really went away and has only become reified through the technology used in paranormal research and the prevalence of these devices in popular television. So, toward my thesis of exploring technology which does not work functionally but does work in producing the disposition of belief, let me sketch out a few pieces of technology used to collect data in paranormal investigations.

EMF readers

The EMF reader is a standard piece of technology in paranormal research. It's hard to say where the origin of the EMF reader in paranormal research began. Even finding legitimate speculative sources on this issue is rather difficult – the best historical hypotheses I've found are from paranormal researchers themselves. On a semi-popular paranormal research forum, some researchers noted the use of EMF readers in the 1970s.[2] Before the 70s, however, some investigators report that they used Geiger Counters for their paranormal research. Though, what we can say is that the TV show *Ghost Hunters* played a huge part in popularising the technology in the 90s and 2000s (Piligian and Thayer 2005).

EMF readers of all kinds are readily used, but the most popular is the K-II EMF reader which has been featured on the TV show *Ghost Hunters.* Regardless of the somewhat shaky lineage encompassing the discourse surrounding the device, the EMF reader functions with a consistent logic in regard to the techno-spiritual past of the paranormal. The general idea here is that the manifestations of spirits influence the material world through the disruption and creation of electromagnetic fields. The belief that this device actually functions toward the collection of paranormal data assumes that there is a real correlation between electromagnetic fields and spirit activity.

Outside of paranormal research, EMF readers are often used by electricians and plumbers to hunt down sources of electricity hidden behind walls. Specifically, the EMF reader detects electromagnetic fields created through AC power sources – things like microwaves, refrigerators, computers, etc. will all register EMF readings.

The K-II EMF reader is specifically branded for ghost hunting and can be purchased on Amazon (among other places) for $59.90. The K-II is a single-axis EMF detector, which means that it detects EMF radiation in a single direction – the axis it measures is from left to right in front of the device. However, masterful practitioners have noted that turning the K-II in your hands will yield results that take in two axes – this technique is an attempt to get the K-II EMF reader to pick up more environmental data than it might otherwise.[3] It runs on a 9-volt battery and works with a five-LED display.

As evident in the K-II Amazon reviews, many users of this specific EMF reader consistently report false positives and a generally very touchy reaction to minor EMF fields.[4] However, the prominence and

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2. See: http://www.ghostplace.com/threads/origins-of-emf-theory.16790/. This isn't an ideal source, but it is one of the few fruitful avenues I've found.

3. This is insight I received from interviewing local paranormal investigators on 20/07/16. They preferred that I not use their names.

4. Amazon reviews are a less than scholarly source. There are a number of other reviews on this specific EMF reader, however many of them are written by "skeptics" and are rather rude and occasionally vitriolic towards individuals in the paranormal community. Besides, the Amazon reviews do support my claims and detail the experiences of regular users.

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popularity of this device in paranormal research is not beyond criticism even from those within the community of paranormal researchers. Some researchers interviewed for this essay expressed the unreliability of the device because of the difficulties in disentangling paranormal EMF activity from regular EMF activity.[5] Here, even in the criticisms, the assumption that paranormal activity correlates with EMF is left unquestioned. Instead of questioning that assumption, the goal is to find a more adequate and nuanced device.

Phenomenologically, however, it's not hard to understand the affect the device produces in the paranormal researcher. In terms of a media-studies approach to phenomenology, we might say that the EMF reader alters the ratios of sense perception in humans. With the addition of the EMF reader, humans can become sensitive to electromagnetic fields. The EMF reader is – as Marshall McLuhan might say – a medium that extends the human body. The presence of EMFs is related visually to the researcher through the LEDs on the device. With this additional sensory perception, one gets a feeling of detecting what is beyond one's bodily perception – this device adds an extra-sense to human perception.

The EMF reader actually detects EMF fields, but it doesn't tell the user about the origins of those fields – the combination of a device that has real, practical and scientific utility (not to mention the fact that it's relatively cheap and easily obtainable), and that is infused with the mythology of paranormal detection, is apocryphal in the sense that in paranormal research, the effect it produces surpasses the importance of what the device actually does.

In examining EMF readers, it's clear that there's a network of discourses playing out across this device. A very specific understanding of electricity and spiritualist metaphysics are wrapped up in this device. The EMF reader itself functions according to a rather banal blue-collar purpose, yet there are impossible demands being made of the device. In our taxonomy of imaginary media, we can see that this device is timely, actual, but still impossible.

Spirit Box

An EMF reader is a complicated device that demonstrates what a real device with impossible demands looks like. However, taking things a step further, the Spirit Box is a piece of equipment with even further demands – it doesn't just detect paranormal manifestations, but opens up an avenue for communication. In the paranormal research community, the Spirit Box and similar pieces of equipment are labelled as ITC (Instrumental Transcommunication). Before I get to the Spirit

Box specifically, ITC does have a documented history that is helpful in understanding what the demands of ITC are.

In his work on Instrumental Transcommunication, Ernst Senkowski explains that, "Communication means to share something or to inform someone of something; the prefix 'trans' refers to beyond of the material world. Transcommunication (TC) means the one-way reception of information from apparently non-terrestrian sources as well as dialogues with trans-entities, appearing as personal structures" (Senkowski 1998). Further, Senkowski offers the rationale that biological communication is about the sensations produced by the bodily organs. ITC requires an electronic prosthesis (my words) to initiate dialogue with "non-terrestrian" sources.

The "non-terrestrian" sources Senkowski notes as participants in ITC are categorised into living and non-living. For example, living sources of ITC might include humans, extra-terrestrials and "unknown energy beings". The non-living sources usually divert toward the paranormal rather than the extra-terrestrial. Broadly, ITC denotes a dialogic method rather than a specific technology. The spirit box, dowsing rods, Ouija boards and so on are all applications of ITC.

The Spirit Box is an incredibly interesting ITC device – it roughly looks like a rather unstylish hand-held radio you might buy from Radio Shack, but grafted onto this radio is a microphone.

Conceptually, the idea is that the radio will rapidly scan through AM/FM radio stations and spirits will use the bits of voice generated by the radio sweeps to produce messages for the paranormal investigator. The inventor of the Spirit Box, Frank Sumption, put it this way: the point "(…) is simply to provide a source of audio bits made up of fragments of human speech, music, and noise. This noise is known as "raw" audio, it is the raw material out of which spirits of the deceased, and other entities use to create their own voices out of" (Sumption 2010).[6]

The connection between radio waves and paranormal research is nothing new – in fact, there are well documented historical narratives from people we praise as technological innovators that were deeply invested in the paranormal and the occult. Both Ben Franklin and Thomas Edison had an interest in building devices to leverage technology toward paranormal ends. In Sconce's reports, radio introduced the notion of an "etheric ocean" – radio waves invisibly moving through every room and every person reach out further than we realise toward the unknown. In the early days of radio, a rather common hobby developed called DX, or distant listening. Radio enthusiasts would listen and log the distant broadcasts they heard. Americans, for example, would hear broadcasts from France and this was lauded as something quite miraculous. However, the

"etheric ocean" carried a lot of interesting turns in the wider cultural imagination. If radio waves are oceanic, then maybe one can get lost at sea, but this also implies a depth to these transmissions in which unknown creatures may dwell (Sconce 2009, 69).

Radio, a medium which allows for the electronic transmission of voice, fostered the growth that, perhaps, more intimate types of broadcast were possible into the ether. For example, Upton Sinclair, a novelist and journalist, published on a topic he called "mental radio", which detailed his experiments with telepathy (Sconce 2009, 76). As an aside, the German edition of Sinclair's work included an introduction by Albert Einstein. Einstein's preface is largely sceptical and does not commit to a conclusion concerning Sinclair's mental radio, though it does show a general willingness to collaborate.

Again, turning to a media phenomenological mode of observation, it's easy to see how these logics of the etheric ocean of radio play out in the spirit box. Unlike the EMF reader, there's a dialogical aspect to this device. One receives more than simply the extra-sensory understanding of presence, but rather the verbal verification of paranormal presence. The words generated by the device itself are to be an audio manifestation of what is beyond our human senses. However, whether or not the words produced by the machine itself have any correlation to the question asked is largely irrelevant phenomenologically. Humans have a huge capacity to apply meaning over the top of unstructured and chaotic events. Whatever is produced from the machine will necessarily be correlated into the paranormal investigator's scheme of cultural understanding.

Paranormal Puck

Finally, the Paranormal Puck is this essay's final example of apocryphal technology. The Paranormal Puck is the device that brings Instrumental Transcommunication fully into the digital age. The Paranormal Puck is another device popularised by ghost hunting TV shows (this time in *Ghost Adventures*). The Paranormal Puck is designed and produced by one of the most popular entrepreneurs in the paranormal research community, Bill Chappell.[7]

Having never used one, I've developed some understanding of what the device does through a slew of YouTube videos and some messages with paranormal researchers who've used them.

The Paranormal Puck is the most interesting example of apocryphal technology because of its technical integration into the array of technology we use daily, namely tablets and smartphones. There are two iterations of the Paranormal Puck. The newest iteration, Paranormal Puck 2, is a small, black, puck shaped, Bluetooth-enabled device with 6 different settings that monitor a number of environmental conditions. Specifically, it monitors the 1.) Temperature and Humidity, 2.) Ionisation and Static Electricity, 3.) Ambient Light, 4.) Barometric Pressure, 5.) Magnetic Fields. And finally, there's a mode that cycles through all of these sensors. Additionally, there's also a corresponding app for both iOS and Android to display, record, and archive all of this data for you.

However, the most innovative thing the Paranormal Puck 2 does is its ITC mode. Like the Spirit Box, the Paranormal Puck will allow two-way communication grounded in Senkowski's ITC theories. However, this is really interesting because rather than quick sweeps through AM/FM signals, the Paranormal puck lets paranormal Investigators type their questions into their preferred mobile device as if they were sending a text message. Even more, the Paranormal Puck contains a built-in dictionary of 2,000 words for spirits to access for reciprocal communication.

The Paranormal Puck 2 is an important turning point for apocryphal paranormal technology because it finally introduces the digital turn into paranormal investigation – it's no longer analogue. Despite the digital technology, the logics are still consistent with its analogue predecessors. Phenomenologically, this digital turn is important because it introduces paranormal investigation into the realm of digital media. The digital practice of texting normalises an otherwise difficult to conceptualise form of communication. Instrumental Transcommunication ends up coming to us in the same way text messages and tweets do. There's a pseudo-logic of scientific rhetoric reified in digital instrumental transcommunication – in 2016 new technology basically works like magic and the Paranormal Puck fits in surprisingly well with instantaneous digital communication. Do any of us really understand how all of those messages get to our phones anyway? They all float through the ether and – somehow – end up on our screens. Would it really be so hard to believe that there's more out there than just our packets of data?

Apocryphal media

With the above examples in mind, I want to trace out an initial foundation regarding what I earlier called apocryphal media. Apocryphal media is a category in the taxonomy of imaginary media that notes the mythic and affective production of belief or impossible expectation through a piece of technology. Apocryphal media doesn't work in the strictly functional sense, but does work in the sense that it is a source of reification in the belief that it works. Then, pulling from the examples given earlier, there are at least two explanatory points to give apocryphal technology a bit more depth: 1.) the positive feedback a device creates at the level of design and human interaction

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7. I've sent Chappell many messages trying to get some feedback on how the device works, but I have not received any response from him.

and 2.) the "negentropic" effect on meaning that is a necessary result of human communication.

The EMF reader doesn't actually detect spirit activity – or, if it does, it does so in a way that is unfalsifiable. However, the EMF reader does produce the effect of belief in the human deploying the EMF reader. The EMF reader produces belief in the human insofar as it acts as an extension of the human body and gives the human user feedback on what it detects. There's an element of cultural mythos at play here as well. After all, the EMF reader gained mass popularity after appearing on *Ghost Hunters*.

However, that the device exists in actuality is important: the pseudo-scientific rhetoric of holding a device in one's hand and getting responses from the machine in the form of flashing lights props up the paranormal mythos. The mythos provides a set of expectations, but the delivery of a possible resolution in the form of a LED lighting up delivers a positivity to the user that orients them in a certain direction.

Or in the case of the more technologically advanced Paranormal Puck, positive feedback from the device explicitly informs the user of spiritual activity via verbal signs. Positive feedback from a device with sufficient cultural mythos and scientific rhetoric is enough to produce belief in the user. Positive feedback, while something rather sparse to stake a complete claim on, is something that the user has to deal with experientially. Any, even minor, spectacular feedback from a scientific-ish paranormal device is enough to at least pique the interest of the user. It is the sedimentation of these experiences over time that may continually reinforce the effect of belief.

The illuminated LED or feedback from the Paranormal Puck indicates presence according to the mythos. One might argue that it's not the technology that is apocryphal, but rather it's all on the side of the mythos. If one takes up this line of thinking, then the object – the EMF reader, for example – becomes unimportant and anything could stand in its place. This would place us back into the imaginary media category of conceptual or impossible, because there's nothing relevant about the artefact itself; instead it would just be about the discourse at work. At the same time, the mythos of paranormal research and the device itself are integrally tied. It is both the object itself and the human relationship to the object that produces belief. For example, it's important that the EMF reader is a device with the capability to detect electromagnetic fields, and it's even more important, in the case of the K-II EMF reader, that it detects them erratically. There's a nuance here between the object and the human that is important to unpack – the cultural mythos defines expectations, but the object itself shapes and perpetuates the mythos in individuals.

In the case of my second claim concerning meaning, I want to draw a bit from Vilém Flusser. Flusser posits a philosophy of communication that works along a "negentropic" model. Flusser characterises "negentropic" as the inverse of entropic – rather than a system undergoing loss over a duration, negentropy is a system that proliferates meaning over a duration (Flusser 2004, 5). Flusser's deployment of entropy/negative entropy is to model the loss or addition of energy within a system. This is sort of a reduction of what entropy is scientifically speaking, but it works for what he's doing conceptually.

Communication, according to Flusser, is negentropic because of the human necessity of interpretation. Rather than a particular communication instance losing meaning over time (entropy), Flusser suggests the inverse – interpretation of communication does not shrink over time, but instead explodes (negentropy). In the case of the apocryphal media referenced above, there is an explosion of meaning that the human produces. As the Spirit Box skips across radio channels, the user hears a quick string of words that seem to correspond to a question they asked. From there, the human actor can fill in the blanks regarding context, intention, purpose, and meaning.

Instrumental Transcommunication thrives on the abuse of the negentropic tendency in human interpretation. The openness of the paranormal investigator, who is open to receive the positivity of technical feedback, stitches the data they receive together into a narrative with a degree of consistency. The paranormal investigator asks a question concerning any present spirits and receives the words *dead*, *father*, *pizza*, *box* and *apple* from their ITC device. The negentropic tendency in human communication might latch onto the words that make sense in the narrative and discard the rest. The ITC message comes to concern the investigator's dead father rather than a pizza box.

Taking these two explanatory points together, it's clear to see that apocryphal media are an intertwining of asymmetric human expectations and technical possibility. Paranormal technology highlights one place where human technical imagination becomes mapped onto objects that actually exist. Media objects are active participants in the cultural imaginations of humans: through the promise of mediating presences, they're grafted into more demanding and impossible technical situations. As media can bring us the voices of our closest friends and families, we, the users, are left wondering how far the signal carries. What else can be mediated to us through electronic and digital media?

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