



ATransC Occasional Update 11

Greetings!

This is our eleventh submission to the ATransC occasional Email Update list. We trust it finds you happy and well.

For our fellow Americans, may wisdom be with you when you remember to vote this November 8th.

Of Elephants, Wizards and Magicians

There are in our midst, earnest people seeking to understand the same things we seek to understand, but with different perspectives and with different objectives. They depend on the same phenomena as we and depend on our willingness to report experiences or produce phenomena for their study. Even though we share a common question and need to understand, they remain mostly aloof. We are taught to see them as all-knowing wizards, but on our close examination, we soon discover only magicians pulling levers from behind a curtain.

Perhaps a little dramatic, but one of my attempts to explain the discontinuity between our expectations of parapsychologists and their actual intention. The following illustrations might help make my point.

Only Part of the Information

The story about six blind men trying to describe an elephant by touch alone illustrates my first point. Each “experiencer” thought the nearest part of the elephant represented the whole animal, and so insisted that the animal was as it was experienced from that perspective: a wall, spear, snake, tree, fan or perhaps a rope. The last stanza of the story reads:

*And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong.
Though each was partly in the right,
They all were in the wrong!*

The Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant, as told by John Godfrey Saxe, (1816 – 1887), from the collection of "Best Loved Poems of the American People" poemhunter.com/poem/the-blind-man-and-the-elephant/

It is probably safe to say that none of us deliberately believes something that is not true, or at least that can't be supported by some evidence. Yet I will wager that you can think of more than one friend who thinks something is true while you think it is not.

Paranormal phenomena are very complex subjects, of which very little is known in the sense that we can say they are proven or factual. As we are now learning, our own perception is at the top of the list of things we should be careful not to trust without examination. That is why we talk so much about witness panels, suspended judgement and best practices; why proper science is so important to our progress.

If you accept the idea that it is necessary to understand all of the phenomena in order to understand one, then the complexity of our phenomena also makes it difficult for any one person to know enough about all of the them to make a learned comment about one.

Okay, let me say that in a different way. Knowing that you have hold of a leg and not a tree does not necessarily tell you that you are holding onto an elephant. Being an expert at statistical analysis tells you diddly about EVP. Having a Ph.D. in philosophy does not give you a degree in transcommunication.

To understand EVP, we have found it necessary to also understand visual ITC, mediumship and other psi phenomena. If you look at the Implicit Cosmology in *Your Immortal Self*, you will see that the phenomena we are interested in can be modeled as an integrated set of influences. Understanding one is not enough. That is also why normalism or psi-normalism are unlikely to produce correct understanding; they ignore part of the elephant as a matter of policy.

The wizards of my first comment typically do not know enough about the phenomena to realize this truth. That is, one must realize that the elephant is more than just its parts to understand the need to coordinate understanding ... and in order to have a willingness to develop a consensus and not *"Each in his own opinion Exceeding stiff and strong."*

Wizard of Oz Syndrome

My second illustration is the Wizard of Oz Syndrome. An Internet search will give you several different versions, but as you can imagine, they are all based on the great wizard of the *Oz* story who turns out to be just an ordinary man putting on a good front. We are culturally conditioned to think anyone with a Ph.D. is some kind of superior personality, yet this expectation begins to break down when, say a retired philosophy professor tries to explain away EVP as audio illusion.

You may be familiar with my frequent reference to an academic-layperson partition. It is a social and functional divide enforced by many of the Ph.Ds. in our community. I can understand how it might have evolved out of difficulties communicating with people who are not trained in rational thinking, but the practical effect of this divide is the failure of those who are probably better trained to study these phenomena to collaborate with those of us who actually experience and produce the phenomena. It has also produced a cultural environment in which it appears to be okay for "researchers" to treat human research subjects with contempt.

To be clear, it is important to recognize that the process of earning a doctorate is intended to produce a more than average discerning, rational thinking person. Some curriculums teach methodic examination of evidence and careful exposition of results required for meaningful research. As such, people with a Ph.D. do deserve respect as educated people in general, but do not deserve trust as experts when working outside of their discipline unless there are extenuating circumstances. The problem is that we have no way of knowing if a claimant is a trained researcher or just a science pretender without candid disclosure, something made unlikely by the academic-layperson partition.

Honesty in Science

All of this is to set the stage for my main point. There are two approaches to the study of the phenomena we share. Both are gaining in influence and threaten to dismantle much of the progress we have made over the years toward gaining wider acceptance of survival concepts. It is the wider acceptance of these phenomena I think will attract more qualified, open-minded researchers.

Terms

Let us agree on the following definitions for the sake of this discussion:

Normalist: A person who adheres to the Physical Hypothesis, meaning the only accepted reality is that which is defined by currently accepted principles in mainstream science. Paranormal experiences are illusion.

Psi-Normalist: A person who accepts mainstream definition of reality but with the caveat that a psi field permeates reality. Influence of intentionality on the psi field is psi functioning. Survival exists as residual memory in the psi field which can be accessed by way of psi functioning (mediumistic/psychical). In this, the Super-Psi Hypothesis, paranormal experiences, including those attributed to survival, are either illusion or psi functioning.

Dualist: A person who accepts the evidence that mind is not body and that mind existed before this lifetime, as it will after this lifetime, as a sentient, interacting personality. This is seen as the Survival Hypothesis, which holds that the physical is an aspect of a greater reality. In the Survival Hypothesis, depending on extenuating circumstances, paranormal experiences are illusion, psi functioning or transcommunication via psi functioning.

I am a dualist in this context and I am writing to you with the assumption that you are as well.

Person: A conscious self which is an etheric personality (intelligent core) entangled with a physical body during a lifetime. This is modeled as an avatar relationship in *Your Immortal Self*. Your conscious self, which is how you experience your world, is oriented from the perspective of your body's senses while in the *person state*. It is oriented more lucidly toward your etheric personality while in the dream state.

Paranormal Phenomena: Any influence, event or experience not explained by known physical principles. From the dualist perspective, these include apparent psychic sensing, telekinesis, healing intention, mediumship and ITC.

Objective Phenomena: 1) Paranormal phenomena that can be experienced by more than one person without prompting; 2) Trans-etheric influences that originate external to a person.

Illusion: Experiences that originate within the mind and that are experienced only by that person.

Lucidity: In the context of the Trans-Survival Hypothesis, *lucidity* is used to describe how consciously and clearly aware a person is of unconscious personality.

Hyperlucidity: A form of false lucidity is frequently encountered amongst new paranormal practitioners. This is referred to here as hyperlucidity. In one example of this, a person claims the ability to produce astounding communication from the other side as if he or she is completely lucid. On close examination, it becomes evident the person is mistaking noise or imagination as communication. (This is my term and has no academic source; however, see Jerusalem Syndrome - <http://www.livescience.com/50373-jerusalem-syndrome.html>)

Important to note in these terms is the distinction between objective experience which originates *outside* of the person and illusory experiences which originate within the mind. A person becomes conscious of both by way of most of the same processes, making it difficult to make a distinction between the two experiences. Therein lies the challenge and confusion between researchers and experiencers. It is why the following two approaches to these phenomena are not entirely wrong.

Anomalistic Psychology

From page 218 of *Your Immortal Self*, "Anomalistic psychology is a Trojan horse field of study. The author of "What is Anomalistic Psychology?" (95) defines paranormal as: "*Alleged phenomena that cannot be accounted for in terms of conventional scientific theories.*" He explains that "*Anomalistic psychology may*

be defined as the study of extraordinary phenomena of behavior and experience, including (but not restricted to) those which are often labeled 'paranormal.' It is directed towards understanding bizarre experiences that many people have without assuming a priori that there is anything paranormal involved. It entails attempting to explain paranormal and related beliefs and ostensibly paranormal experiences in terms of known psychological and physical factors." ("What is Anomalistic Psychology?" Goldsmiths, University of London. 2015. gold.ac.uk/apru/what/.)

Basically, anomalistic psychology is a mainstream or normalist view of paranormal phenomena. To conduct research about such phenomena, say the presence of an apparition, it is necessary for normalist to ignore any model suggesting the possibility of an external etheric influence. The only allowed research results are that, in some way, the witness is deluded.

Of course, I am oversimplifying this explanation, but as you read research reports, look for circular referencing. Typically, test subjects are given a questionnaire to determine how open they are to the reality of paranormal phenomena. Then they are shown examples, some of which may appear to be paranormal. When people who are open to things paranormal identify an example as possibly paranormal, researchers report that it is the prior belief that caused them to think a mundane experience is paranormal. Ergo, people who report paranormal experiences are self-deluded.

As you might expect, I would score very high in proneness to accept paranormal phenomena questionnaires and would be pretty definitive if shown a reasonably good example of, say visual ITC. In the study of Anomalistic Psychology, I would be an ideal example for proving these phenomena are illusion.

Executional Experience Psychology

This is the subject of the JEEP journal discussed below. The exceptional experiences concept is partially attributed to Christine Simmonds-Moore. In a special issue of the *Journal of Parapsychology*, (#76 supplement, 54-57, 2012) which asked "Where Will Parapsychology Be in the Next 25 Years?" she proposed in "What is Exceptional Psychology?" that:

Exceptional psychology will seek to understand exceptional experiences as the result of interactions between the mind, subjective meaning, the body, and the social and physical environment."

And:

Exceptional psychology will integrate qualitative and transpersonal methodologies into the discipline (not to replace traditional objective methods, but rather to complement them) and engage in more systematic research exploring the role of belief in experiment outcomes (e.g., Schlitz et al., 2006) and the role meaning seeking plays in exceptional experiences (after Jung, e.g., Jaffé, 1989).

Exceptional psychology will connect the dots between modern parapsychology and its close cousins in mainstream psychology. In line with anomalistic psychology, the varieties of exceptional experiences will be approached with a truly "skeptical" approach and from a variety of explanatory perspectives.

There is a danger that I will read into some of these statements what is not intended. You should consider my observations with discernment. With that said, Simmonds-Moore's explanation includes way too many references to red flag concepts such as "in line with anomalistic psychology," "subjective meaning," "role of belief" and "a truly 'skeptical' approach." They seem to suggest a predisposition to explain away reported phenomena as a mentally needy person trying to manage grief or stress with illusion.

I really like the idea of young parapsychologists starting the JEEP. Even though the publication seems to begin as a possible tool for debunking transcommunication, we should seek ways to nurture a more

open point of view. As one doctoral candidate, Jean-Michel Abrassart, wrote in the article, “Paranormal Phenomena: Should Psychology Really Go Beyond the Ontological Debate?” *“I advocate that psychologists studying alleged paranormal phenomena should at least be able to state what their own beliefs are on the topic they are studying.”* That’s what I mean!

All of this discussion is concerned with the need for honesty and integrity in exchanges between those who would study these phenomena and we who produce and experience them. It is fine to seek to debunk our point of view, but it is without integrity to do so like a magician pulling levers behind a curtain.

This is a fine point that may become more important in future conversations. Parapsychologists should probably be thought of as Psi-Normalists, while anomalous psychology people function as psychologists debunking psi and survival phenomena. Exceptional experience psychologists appear to function as parapsychologists debunking survival phenomena.

Psi Encyclopedia

The Society for Psychical Research (SPR) (spr.ac.uk/) received a substantial donation with which they have funded a Psi Encyclopedia (psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/). It is being organized by Robert McLuhan ([See his blog](#)). We are disappointed to see that this potentially powerful tool to balance the bias of Wikipedia, is instead, being used to cast doubt on the survival hypothesis. See Braude’s attack on [Kai Mügge](#), for example. We also see that Braude wrote a bit on EVP that is very old news. Probably copied out of Wikipedia. See: the [Postmortem Survival](#) article.

Just as the founder of Wikipedia publicly stated that he thinks articles about paranormal subjects in Wikipedia are properly balanced, so McLuhan has expressed his belief that Braude has written a good article about Kai.

When SPR official were asked about the problem, they claimed that the SPR has no authority over the people assigned to help with the society. Lisa and I have always maintained that we are ultimately responsible for what the ATransC publishes, including articles written by other people. We have published more or less anti-survival articles when they were well considered, but if we thought proposed articles were out of line, misleading or in poor taste, we did not publish them. It would have been unethical for us to do otherwise.

It is my contention that, as staff of the [Society for Scientific Expiration](#)’s responsibility for what is published in their journal, staff of the SPR must accept responsibility for the material they enable. It is unlikely that learned Ph.Ds. who have been able to organize and provide a platform for communication, even fund research, would actually believe they have no moral responsibility for the results of their effort. The only rational conclusion is that they intended those results.

We think the Psi Encyclopedia will ultimately be a benefit to all of us, but only if the editorial policy is brought in line with modern ethical standards that support more balance. Right now, it is potentially even more damaging than Wikipedia thanks to that trust in Ph.D. thing again.

Journal of Exceptional Experiences and Psychology (JEEP)

As co-editor Erika Pratte explained in the front of the present issue of the journal (exceptionalpsychology.com/), *“JEEP was in part inspired by the late Dr. William Roll, who started the research journal Theta in 1963 with the Psychical Research Foundation.”* She explained that *“I hope that JEEP is at least one brick in the bridge between the scholarly study of exceptional experiences and the people with the experiences.”*

You can download the issue at the above link. When you read it, please note that many of the contributing authors and staff are Ph.D. candidates. The publication appears to be a product of the next generation of academics in our community. Given the right models, many aspects of the phenomena we are interested in can be objectively experienced and should be easily studied. If this is true, and if these young people come with an open mind, I feel confident they will help us better understand our work.

Website Changes

In the last update, I talked about the need to change the website I (Tom) manage from hard-coded content to a more mobile friendly content management system such as WordPress. As of a few days ago, the conversion has been completed. Yes, there are a few problems, but those will be corrected as they are discovered. Please feel free to let me know if you find something that needs fixing.

An interesting side benefit of the conversion is that it is much easier for me to make changes because it is all done online via a control panel. A second benefit is that each page has a comment tool, which means website visitors have an easy way to make a comment about an article. This is a capability I have tried to add years ago with little success. Now, it comes with WordPress.

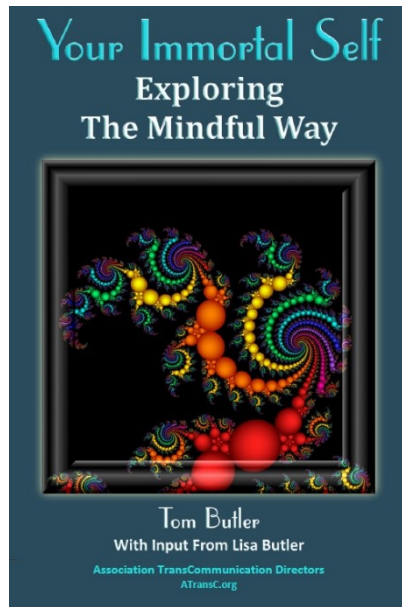
The “Media Watch” column Lisa produces for [NSAC's National Spiritualist Summit](http://spiritualistsocietyofreno.org/) magazine is now archived at the <http://spiritualistsocietyofreno.org/> I maintain. Using the search tool for the website can produce an interesting selection of articles for your further study. For instance, a search for “healing” will produce nearly 40 articles in which “healing” is mentioned. We try to include proper references so that you can go to the source, although many of the news outlets only keep articles online for a year or so.

The <http://atransc.org/forum/> is still noncompliant for mobile devices. I am not sure how I will fix that. The same goes for <http://atransc.org/bp/Collective>. There is a plugin for WikiMedia, but I understand it is not stable.

The WordPress, ethericstudies.org/essays/ section has been merged with <http://ethericstudies.org/>. I think you will find it easier to navigate.

The next stage is to add a PDF archive for past *ATransC NewsJournals*. I expect to have that done later this year. My objective is to have them in individual PDF files, but include the ability to search the archive for an article as if they were all combined in a single file. I could use a little advice about how to do this.

One last point. Lisa and I travel together, something that would be discouraged in the corporate world out of need for institutional continuity should something happen. The websites page masters are now on the Internet and only a password away from access by a possible new manager. In this way, we hope to assure survival of this work a little while past our ability to do the work.



Your Immortal Self

Releasing the new book has made it necessary for me to be more open to the public. Thus far, I have been on Sandra Champlain's **We Don't Die** talks show (<http://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/id/4669302>) And Roberta Grimes' **Seek Reality** talk program at <http://webtalkradio.net/internet-talk-radio/2016/10/10/seek-reality-tom-butler-talks-about-studying-the-greaterreality/>

We actually have three reviews on the [Amazon web page](#) for the book, thanks to the kind words of Michael Tymn, Steve G. and Victor Zammit. As you probably expected, I am not much of a sales person, so all of the help you can give in getting the word out will be appreciated ... but only if you find value in the work.

A page is being maintained to provide color versions of all of the pictures for people who purchase the black and white paperback. I am keeping a record of errors there as well. See: http://ethericstudies.org/immortal_self/

The Idea Exchange

As I have said before, the Idea Exchange discussion board is a good place for you to ask questions about the book. If you have not already done so, please make sure you are using your real name. We are entering into a time in which it is important that all of us to stand up in support of our community.

Practitioner Advocacy Panel

The article at <http://ethericstudies.org/practitioner-advocacy-panel/> is a very rough draft explaining what we intend for a panel which might help sort out the ethical, practical, social interaction issues of our community. The idea is not to *fix* the community or set rules. We want to find a way to provide guidance in ways to deal with criticism, personal attacks and researcher mistreatment of research subjects. Free discourse is important, but there are ways of conducting such discourse without needlessly harming a person or the community.

A little progress has been made toward making the panel a reality, but much work remains. We are interested in your thoughts on the subject, so take a look at the draft practice and let us know what you think.

Q&A

Question: *How should I select an app for EVP?*

Answer: Any technology that has the capability of recording a sound stream should be able to produce EVP. The operative psi/physical principles appear to be the influence of intention on the randomness of included sound energy and the process of stochastic amplification.

I think a major factor in the ability of psi influence to produce EVP is the stability of the sound stream and the circuit the sound stream must traverse to be stored. I made an early attempt to explore this concept here: <http://ethericstudies.org/trans-etheric-influences/>. From observations, we see that electronic circuits that are designed with a lot of moderating signal feedback to reduce noise, over amplification and frequency drift are so stable they reduce the possibility of stochastic amplification. Also, linear circuitry does not promote small signal amplification, so the more active elements such as transistor junctions, the better.

We do not see transform EVP being formed in a digital circuit (not nonlinear) and so it is the analog-digital interfaces we look to for EVP.

A very stable signal stream also discourages EVP production because it provides little opportunity for introduction of external influences. It is as if the pattern formed by a string of clean sine waves makes it more likely the next cycle will follow the same pattern. We are dealing with concepts that produce physical effects, so think in terms that a psi influence may act on the virtual pattern more than the actual physical cycle. This makes sense because we see that occasional perturbations in a steady-state signal in the form of sharp spikes is better for EVP than a steady-state signal alone.

All of this goes to selection of an app intended to produce transform EVP (presumably via stochastic resonance). If the app uses environmental influences to select pre-recorded information or to trigger some process, then it is also necessary to consider the sensitivity of the environmental sensors.

WiFi sensors for Internet access are likely designed to eliminate unwanted signals. One way to do that is to make the sensor so stable that the mostly transient signals will not be detected. If this is the case, then the WiFi rf detector as a trigger for the EVP app would be less desirable.

I think the same goes for GPS, temperature, magnetism, accelerometer ambient light and eye stare. This is not to say that these environmental sensors will not work. We have seen that some do. What I am saying is that the objective is probably to have as much randomness as possible with a fair amount of perturbation.

There is little objective evidence that a local ghost produces an environmental signal that is directly detectable. Instead, I think we are looking for the nonlocal psi signal causing a change in randomness in some way. To date, that is the only way we have found to detect psi other than with another mind.

My apologies to ghost hunters for not thinking their equipment is detecting the local ghost ... only the one they have call to the place. :-)

Thank You!

That's it for this update. We look forward to your comments about the new book in the Idea Exchange.

As I try to understand the nature of these phenomena, as I learn to talk about them, I am realizing that they are just symptomatic of who we really are. Psi functioning is not some phenomena a few people can produce or experience. It is just as native to who we really are as are those five senses native to that body you are using during this lifetime.

Move your perspective from inside of your human's head to the more universal perspective of your immortal self. The world looks much more interesting that way.

Tom

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