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ATransC Occasional Update 15

Tom Butler, 2017

(Also at <http://mailchi.mp/c64e99e1d684/atransc-occasional-update-15>)

Greetings!

We trust this Update finds you well and happy. The last issue began with my bragging about the record rainfall we received during the first few months of 2017. Last week, we hit 105 degrees. The all-time record for Reno is 108. The number of consecutive days above 90 degrees in Reno had been 35 days, but the new record is 51 days. We are at around 4,500 feet in elevation. It is supposed to be cooler at higher elevation ... isn't it?

All of that water spawned all of those weeds which spawn all of the fires we are experiencing now. It seems that about half the time this summer, Reno has been a no breath zone. As of July 24, 272 wildfires have burned in Nevada. 76% of those were human-caused, many from people shooting guns for fun.

Being inclined to think we can do better, I occasionally write opinion essays, which I post in the Musings section of EthericStudies.org. The latest is [Irrational Nature of Gun Ownership](#).

The Need for an Objective Approach to Teaching

When Lisa and I assumed leadership of the AA-EVP in 2000, we accepted the responsibility to teach members and the public about EVP. Sarah Estep's objective to "*Provide Objective Evidence That We Survive Death in an Individual Conscious State*" has guided all of our work for the Association.

The Pledge posted at atransc.org/pledge/ begins with "*We pledge to do all we can to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information about all things etheric. While we do not know what will be seen as true in the future, we will attempt to identify what on this website is supported by empirical evidence, what is speculation and what is common knowledge.*"

Part of taking our directorship seriously is the acceptance of responsibility for what we say and what we publish. Our belief is that what we say is more apt to be acted on by our readers than if we were not ATransC directors. I often complain about abuse of academic authority amongst parapsychologists. The blade cuts both ways.

Consequences of What We Teach

Since we accept the evidence that our conscious self continues beyond this lifetime, it is necessary for us to consider the consequences of leading people to believe something about their etheric nature that is not rationally supported by the evidence. An important influence on this thinking is the realization that we create our personal reality based on worldview. An objective basis for this concept is pretty well established, exemplified by *First Sight Theory*. (1)

We have encountered very few people who realize that the reality-creating influence of belief follows us into our transition out of this lifetime. If, for instance, a person feels that suicide is a sin that condemns the person to eternal hell, it appears committing suicide can cause the person to create that reality on the other side. From what we have learned, it might take a lot of effort to break such a spell, even though the hell they are in is self-imposed.

Because we think this is true, it is unethical for us not to clearly distinguish the information we provide which is based on empirical evidence or well-considered theory from that which is based on belief. Perhaps we are a little too quick to challenge people who promote harmful notions such as evil, demons, sin and earthbound spirits, but the harm we see in people believing these concepts is simply unnecessary. Fear is such a harmful influence.

Each of Us Represents the Community

A second reason to carefully explain these concepts is that a person who believes nonsense tends to demonstrate that belief to the public. If members of mainstream society do believe in ghosts, God and heaven, they either believe because of their religion or in a casual, nonspecific way. When confronted with someone who actually behaves as if these phenomena are real, and perhaps even claims to have experienced them, their *go to* reaction is to think the person is crazy.

All of us who wish to study these phenomena are in the same boat, no matter which aspect of the paranormal or why. If one of us is seen as airy-fairy, then all of us are seen that way. When that is true, and today, it is pretty much always true, those who claim these phenomena are pseudoscience, and that pseudoscience is harmful to the public, gain more power. Funding for important research goes away and it becomes more certain researchers will commit professional suicide by studying things paranormal.

Once again, I point to Wilhelm Reich (2) as an example of skeptics talking the government into acting against one of us. The Orgone Energy Reich worked with is likely the same as the psi field studied today in parapsychology. Our government actually burned his books and put him in jail where he died. That was in 1957.

The crazier we seem, the easier it is to cast us as second-class citizens, making it okay to attack us. All of us can benefit by establishing an empirically defensible, rational point of view about these phenomena. Whatever Lisa and I express under the authority of the ATransC needs to contribute to that consensus. If you value your freedom to work with these phenomena, you will also encourage such a consensus. As always, we are at your service for that objective.

We No Longer Consider Opportunistic EVP Examples

The problem is that few people care for the objective description of their example of phenomena. In fact, we are often met with anger when we explain that their orb is light reflected from dust or their EVP is not actually a word. It seems the preferred expert is one who agrees that such examples are paranormal.

We may be wrong, but even so, we have been in the line of fire too many times from people who think we betrayed our responsibility in some way by not endorsing their phenomena. Our policy now is to focus on transform EVP and avoid opportunistic EVP. (3) The [Classifying Phenomena Best Practice](#) identifies two types of phenomena. (3) Type 1 is defined as *Transformed physical media; not always present*. Audio recorders with background noise produce Type 1 EVP. Type 2 is defined as *Always present; often as a persistent artifact*. Opportunistic techniques produce Type 2 EVP.

From our study, we see little evidence that the opportunistic techniques involving radio-sweep (Frank's Box, ghost box or spirit box) produce EVP. (5) (6) Other opportunistic techniques, such as EVPmaker (7) and environmentally stimulated libraries, have been known to produce EVP, but our studies indicate they produce too many false positives to be useful, especially for people new to the study. The same can be said for any technique requiring the communicators to transform foreign language into English EVP. (8)

We are not saying opportunistic EVP are not real. We are saying that we are not studying them and no longer wish to comment on them.

Red Flags

The one question you will benefit from asking when people make statements about things paranormal is if it is based on belief or on credible evidence. Here are a few potential red flags:

- If the information comes to the person by way of someone telling them, such as via mediumship, spirit “told me,” trance, dream and automatic writing, it may be contaminated by what the person has been taught and believes to be true. The information may be correct, but without collaborating objective sources, there is no way to know. It is best to put the information in your mental suspended judgment, *maybe-maybe not* folder.
- On average, 25% of the words in EVP should be able to be correctly understood by others who do not know what is thought to be said. As you gain experience listening to EVP, that average for you should approach 100%. If you cannot make out the example, it is better to say so. The practitioner may become angry, as they often do with us, but your silence may keep them from learning how to collect genuine phenomena.
- If you do not know how long after or before the response is from the question or comment, the example should be ignored. Some practitioners routinely clip out long durations, between question and answer, and then weave a likely story as to why the favored sound is the right answer. It is also better to discard the example if the words are not clear enough for you to understand without prompting. A single syllable is not usually sufficient to reconstruct the meaning of a multi-syllable word.
- Count syllable. If the person tells you that the message says, “*Mary had a little lamb*,” you should be able to find at least four corresponding disturbances in the sound stream, and close to six syllables-like breaks. You will encounter instances in which the person will report more information in the utterance than is physically possible, so even if you do not correctly hear the reported utterance, you can at least get an idea if the person is being rational.

A “She finds the entire Gettysburg Address in a ten-second clip” kind of falling out in the Idea Exchange began the final movement away from the membership model for the Association.

- Be aware that a person’s beliefs will color information coming to us via any form of trans-etheric influence. If a person is fearful, he or she will tend to channel or record information that agrees with that fear. It is important to recognize that the message may have begun as something like “*I am always with you*” but result in a message like “*I will haunt you!*” for a practitioner who is afraid of ghosts. Always be cautious about information produced by people deeply involved in any system of belief.
- The etheric has been shown to be nonlocal. That means the face in an orb or the voice in EVP are not necessarily indicative of a local ghost. We may record the voice of a person associated with a place because we expect to, not because the personality is stuck there.

By the way, the physical characteristics of the place can produce orb behavior that can confirm an overly eager person’s need for phenomena. I have seen orb-like phenomena that is very convincing, but almost all examples I have examined have been photographic artifacts. When in doubt, always err on the side of the mundane.

There is more, but I think you can get a sense of my point. The bottom line is that you cannot be a good witness if you do not habitually practice discernment. To do that, you must be reasonably well informed, else you should not make a decision one way or another. The most powerful tool you have for personal progression is suspended judgment.

Implicit Cosmology

A talk I gave to our local Spiritualist Society is titled *Conditional Free Will*. It is based on the essay by that name at ethericstudies.org/conditional-free-will/. The essay includes a pretty good outline of the Implicit Cosmology. The major points of that cosmology are provided here:

Anatomy of a Life Field

Assumptions

1. A person is an immortal self entangled with a human for this lifetime.
2. Physical brain is a transmitter-receiver necessary for converting physical senses into psi signals which can be used by nonphysical mind.

Corollaries

The consequences of this assumption include:

1. Conscious self is the experiencing aspect of our immortal self.
 - When awake as a person, our perspective is a body-centric one, looking at the world from the middle of our head.
 - When we are sleeping, in meditation or not in a lifetime, we have more of a spirit-centric perspective.
2. Mind is only able to process psi (nonphysical) signals.
 - Brain must convert information from the body's five senses into psi signals for mind to process.
 - Conscious self becomes aware of the physical senses as they are processed by mind.
 - We have learned to assign physicality to what has been sensed by the body. This, we create the physical environment around us.
3. During a lifetime, mind is shared by immortal self and the human mind.
4. Mind includes a storage function called worldview which contains memory and instincts.
5. Conscious self is only aware of environmental information after it has been processed by mind.
6. Information sent to conscious self has been modified to better agree with worldview, else it would have been ignored. (Cultural Contamination)
7. The only influence conscious self has on mind is the expression of intention.
8. The degree of lucidity (clear sensing) conscious self has is determined by how well conscious self has been able to express intention to sense environmental information as it is, rather than as it is understood by prior conditioning. (Mindfulness)
 - The decision to express such intention tends to require some form of awakening.
 - The process of seeking greater lucidity is referred to here as mindfulness.

New Book: Exploring the Mindful Way

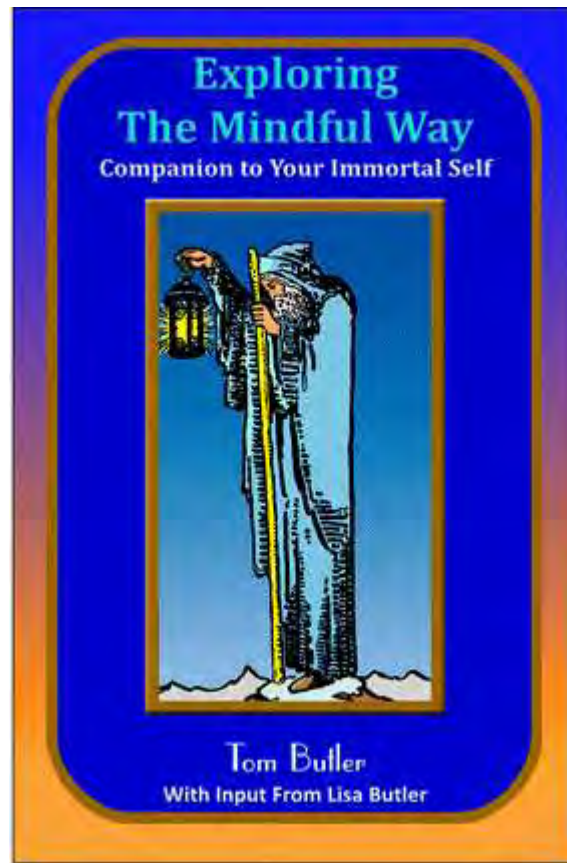
Of course, the Implicit Cosmology is explained in detail in *Your Immortal Self*. As it turns out, my effort to provide a full explanation in the book about the concepts, community and phenomena resulted in a reportedly intimidating 500-page book. In fact, reception is such that the book may never pay for the cost of proofreading.

Almost all of my writing these days is in the form of essays focusing on how the cosmology relates to specific subjects. The *Conditional Free Will* Essay is the latest, and I think the last for a while.

Around twenty-one of the essays are being compiled into a book. My intention is to provide a more approachable way for people to learn about the concepts. As a companion book to *Your Immortal Self: Exploring the Mindful Way*, it is titled *Exploring the Mindful Way*.

The proposed cover is below. I would really like input from you as to the sensibility of the design. Ideas?

You may have figured out by now that I am fond of Key 9 *The Hermit* in the Tarot. (3) While I can understand why people might think I am using it to represent myself, it is, in fact, the only symbol I can find that represents an effective way of learning and the importance of a cooperative community.



Possible cover

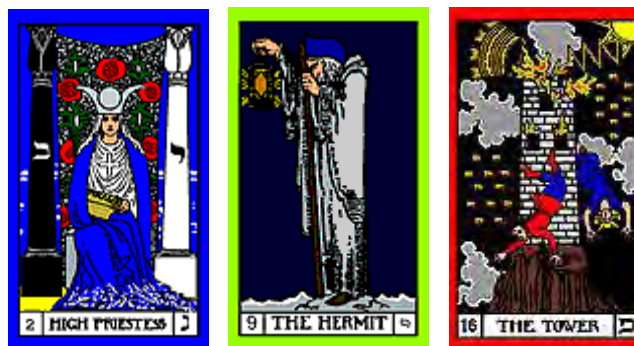
As I explain The Hermit in the new book:

The potential represented by The Priestess is memory of that which has occurred. In terms of the Implicit Cosmology, this is Worldview. She represents that which is below, as opposed to the Hermit which represents that which is above.

The Hermit represents Intelligence of will gained through understanding. Having followed the path toward understanding, he holds the light of reason so that others might follow.

The Tower represents the breaking down of old beliefs (the tower) caused by greater understanding (the lightning).

In terms of the Implicit Cosmology, as old beliefs contained in Worldview (High Priestess) are aligned with the actual nature of reality (The Hermit), our old ways based on false assumptions must give way to more objective expression (The Tower).



I expect to have the book out this fall.

AREI Conference

The Afterlife Research and Education Institute is conducting a conference in Scottsdale Arizona this September 15-17, 2017. They have quite a list of presenters and we expect it will be well attended. While the conference should give you a good look at current thought in our community, as always with such gatherings, you are advised to practice considerable discernment. See afterlifeinstitute.org/

Recent Interviews

I am maintaining a list of interviews in which I have participated. Sometimes, they are interesting.

Kane & Company

There is nothing on the website hinting at who was interviewed, so look for the 07-29-2017 archived session. The part I am in begins at the two-hour mark. wararadio.com/show/kane-company/. Dave Kane is the author of *41 Signs of Hope* davekane.net/index.php?content=41-signs-of-hope It is about the messages and signs we receive from our loved ones after their passing that prove we never really *lose* them. See: atransc.org/mommy/

Spirit Talk

The link below will take you to Chris Fleming's April Spirit Talk. We had a most interesting discussion in which you may be interested. Lisa and I had the opportunity to work with Chris on several occasions and thought he had considerable ability. It was during this discussion that I learned just how well informed and dedicated to this work he has become. spirittalk.planetparanormal.com/?p=1103

Shattered Reality

I had a good conversation with Fahrusha on Shattered Reality Podcast. An interesting possible EVP popped in after the discussion. You can hear the podcast and possible EVP by following the link.

atlanticcoastufos.com/shatteredrealitypodcast.com/podcast/tom-butler-evps-45/

Seeking Reality

One of the first people I spoke with about the book was Roberta Grimes on Seeking Reality. You can listen at:

webtalkradio.net/internet-talk-radio/2016/10/10/seek-reality-tom-butler-talks-about-studying-the-greaterreality/

We Don't Die

My first interview was with Sandra Champlain on her We Don't Die program. You can listen at directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/id/4669302

Let's Talk

The Idea Exchange is the ATransC discussion board. It is open to the public, but I can promise you it will remain a friendly place for you to express ideas and ask questions. Looking around the Internet, I see that there are few forums in which you can participate in a reasonably well-informed discussion. If you like your phenomena with a healthy dose of objectivity, then please consider participating See: atransc.org/forum/

As always, we would like you to let us know how we can better serve you ... not as a club or social site, but as a tool with which you might gain understanding. That is the path we all must follow.

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