



Etheric Studies Occasional Update 16

Tom Butler
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An Emerging Paradigm

Unity Tree Art (AI generated)

stockcake.com/i/life-through-water_1821808_1260639

A tree is often used to represent the Axis Mundi which is thought of as the connection between heaven and earth. We are the Axis Mundi in the sense that, through our thoughts, we create aspects of reality that are given physicality by our intention.

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Introduction

The purpose of this Occasional Update is to explain the idea that the study of paranormal phenomena, and more broadly the study of consciousness, appears to be converging on a new paradigm.

Remembering that a paradigm is the dominant point of view of a system of thought, I think our **current paradigm** can best be described as the body-centric or *Physicalist* point of view that:

- People are human beings. (we are our body)
- Consciousness is an emergent characteristic of our biological brain.
- When we die, all that is left is memory of who we were. (memory, maybe residual energy)

The **emerging paradigm** appears to be a mind-centric point of view holding that consciousness is all there is and the physical is a manifestation of consciousness (*Idealism?*):

- People have a physical and a nonphysical aspect. (spirit having a physical experience)
- Consciousness is a characteristic of life.
- Mind is nonphysical.
- What we consider to be the physical is the expression of mind. (we learn to assign physical meaning to our perception of thoughtforms intended to be physical)
- When our body dies, we as spirit transition to a different “atmosphere and awareness.”

Idealism is a **metaphysical model** theorizing that mind is the fundamental aspect of reality. The [Implicit Cosmology](#) I work with is a **function model** that appears to be in agreement with Idealism.

The Abstract and contents of [What ITC Tells us About Consciousness](#) paper are included below to show the range of Psi phenomena that have helped form the Implicit Cosmology. The Abstract and contents of [Elements of a Useful Theory of Consciousness](#) paper are included below to describe the major considerations a functional model of consciousness needs to address. Together, they lead to the Implicit Cosmology described below.

All of the [Studying Psi Phenomena in the Current Political Climate](#) Opinion has been included.

Implicit Cosmology Theory

Propositions 1 – Reality is Conceptual

Reality is a dimensionless singularity that is conceptually infinitely large.

Propositions 2 – Reality is Intentional

Reality consists of life fields and their expressions.

Propositions 3 – Reality is Purposeful

Reality is bound by the difference of potential between curiosity and understanding.

Propositions 4 – Progression

Progression from curiosity to understanding constitutes reality. (compare conceptual progression with physical time)

Corollary 1 – Organizing Principles

Fundamental principles organize the arrangement and operation of reality. (compare organizing principles emergent from progression with physical principles emergent from the “Big Bang” singularity)

Corollary 2 – Life Fields

Life fields and their expressions constitute reality. In this view:

- Fields are conceptual.
- Fields are bound by the limits of influence exerted by a core purpose.
- Life Fields have a Personality functional area representing purpose.
- Life Fields have an *expression* forming functional area that supports its worldview.
- Life Fields have a *perception* forming functional area that develops moderating intention feedback to the expression forming function.

Corollary 3 – Expression

Life Field's outward expression of thought is either in the form of thoughtforms representing concepts or as an aspect of the Life Field. (think of an aspect as a "little me")

Corollary 4 – Nested Hierarchy

Reality is composed of Life Fields and their expressions that naturally arrange in a nested hierarchy architecture. (this is an Organizing Principle)

Corollary 5 – Thoughtforms

The expression of Life Fields is in the form of thoughtforms:

- Thoughtforms are gestalt-like conceptual representations of thought.
- Thoughtforms are hierarchical in the sense that thoughtforms representing relatively simple concepts constitute thoughtforms representing more complex concepts.
- Thoughtforms constitute Life Field's worldview.

Corollary 6 – Collectives

In the nested hierarchy architecture, expressed aspects of Life Fields (parent) are related as a collective of sibling Life Fields sharing a subset of the parent's purpose and worldview.

Corollary 7 – Creative Process

A Life Field's process of expression can be modeled as the Creative Process in which *changes in reality are expressed via personality's attention on an imagined outcome with the intention to make it so.* (this is an Organizing Principle)

Corollary 8 – Perceptual Agreement

A Life Field's expression is moderated by the Life Field's worldview. So that:

- Personality must be in perceptual agreement with the aspect of reality with which it will associate. (this is an Organizing Principle)
- The content of a Life Field's worldview is influenced by the worldview of other life fields. (Corollary 6, Collective and Corollary 4, Nested Hierarchy)

Corollary 9 – Venue

Progression toward understanding is facilitated by the expression of venues for experience.

- Venues may be personal in the sense of a single life field's imagining.
- Venues may be imagined by a collective or multiple collectives as a shared local reality.
- Venues have momentum in that acquired understanding of an individual Life Fields typically has little or no influence on the collective imagining. (think of "Nature's Habit" in [Sheldrake's Morphic Field Theory](#))
- Venues evolve as understanding becomes more specific.

Corollary 10 – Experienter

Life forms that are specific to a venue may evolve as a mechanism for experiencing the environment. (Morphic Field Theory)

- Local life forms are organized according to a nested hierarchy architecture imagined by one or more Life Fields.
- The ability of a Life Field to experience a venue is limited by Perceptual Agreement.
- Perceptual Agreement is achieved via entanglement with a local life form.
- The physicality of a venue is achieved by assigning physical meaning to thoughtforms and experiences according to worldview.

Survival Hypothesis

The Idea that some aspect of who we are continues to exist after the biological body dies is generally referred to as the *Survival Hypothesis*. It is difficult to find information about the Survival Hypothesis that goes beyond the various forms of “proof” such as reincarnation, mediumship and haunt phenomena.

It should also be noted that some versions of survival suggest that only other people’s memory of who we were survives. Others argue that thought never goes away and that mediums are actually communicating with residual energy in a similar sense as the [Akashic Records](#). See the [Super-Psi Hypothesis](#).

The above [Implicit Cosmology Theory](#) is an effort to consider the “so what” that is implied by consciousness and Psi studies.

The two papers discussed below should be considered companion documents that support the [Implicit Cosmology](#). However, I ask that you consider the material as a suggestion not as a final cut.

Anyone working with ITC should find the “lessons learned” by members and directors of the ATransC helpful. The material represents the kind of “experiences” that needs to be addressed by those who claim to study Psi and consciousness.

What ITC Tells us About Consciousness

Published April 2024 at ethericstudies.org/what-itc-tells-us-about-consciousness/ and independent.academia.edu/TomButler

Brief

An important talking point in my comments about things paranormal is that parapsychological research is incomplete if it does not at least consider lessons learned from ITC. This paper is written to explain how I understand those lessons.

The focus here is on lessons learned via the work of the directors and members of ATransC. The Association has published several important studies conducted by other groups and individuals and they are also considered here. The reason for each study, the apparent results, and most importantly, the implications of the results are addressed here.

As a general statement, our conclusion is that the study of ITC offers an important tool for consciousness research. We sometimes think of EVP as a new “lab rat” for research because of its repeatability and obvious ether-physical characteristics.

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The Directors

The Study

Audio Recording Equipment

Many Early Ideas

Crystals
Mirrors
Reverse Voice
Microphones

Transcommunication Devices

Technology Artifacts
EVPmaker
Radio-sweep
Environmental Energy
Foreign Language, Transform or Obscuring?

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Unrealized Studies]

Research Project: Energy Profile of Transform EVP
Sidereal Time EVP Study — call for participation
ET Visual ITC Study

Implications of the Lessons

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References

The *“What ITC Tells us About Consciousness”* paper addressed above may help you understand the points I made in this *“Elements of a Useful Theory of Consciousness”* paper. Beside IONS’ instruction to provide a *“Review and comparative analysis of theories of non-local consciousness.”* a more *back to the roots for IONS* focus essay question would have included *“Also assess their viability given current understanding.”*

This paper is intended to illustrate what I think is required for good science.

Elements of a Useful Theory of Consciousness

With

Comments on the 2024

Linda G. O’Bryant Noetic Sciences Research Winning Essays

Brief

In 2024, the Institute of Noetic Science (IONS) sponsored an essay contest with the instruction to provide a *“Review and comparative analysis of theories of non-local*

consciousness.” First, second and third winners were announced. I read the essays expecting to learn more about contemporary views of consciousness. Instead, I found the same old compilation of theories.

IONS is a public facing educational organization that, from my experience, has always been focused on supporting the seeker community. That is why I expected to gain a sense of the kind of guidance learned academics might offer to the lay community to help us understand our nature, the nature of reality and our relationship with reality.

My intention was to write a brief review of each essay intended for my imagined lay readers. As it turned out, the essay question was too open-ended, and the essays seem to add little to our understanding of consciousness.

The reviews are included at the opening. They are followed by a roundup of my qualifications and lessons learned from the Association TransCommunication (ATransC). This is in the form of twelve guiding observations. The “so what” of those observations is described in a four-part brief of the cosmological model I find useful for the study of consciousness.

By reading this paper, you should expect to have a better sense of your nature, the nature of reality and your relationship with reality. Those are the three objectives of the Seeker’s Way.

As an aside, I refer to the model I write about in this paper as the *Implicit Cosmology*. I have been evolving it for the past eight years and much of my past writing represents snapshots of that evolution. While I do tend to repeat the same talking points in my writing, the presentation in this paper represents my most current view. It also represents my latest approach to trying to make it more understandable.

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Elements of a Useful Theory of Consciousness

Brief

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Essay Challenge Sponsored by the Institute of Noetic Science (IONS)

First Place Title: Theories of Non-local Consciousness: A Review and Framework for Building Rigour

Second Place Title: The Arcane Nexus, Assessing the Roots of Non-Local Consciousness

Third Place Title: Breaking the Boundaries of the Brain

Consciousness from the Perspective of ITC

It is best to begin by explaining my point of view.

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The Three Aspects of a Teacher
Hermetic Tarot
Katha Upanishad
The Razor's Edge
Teachers

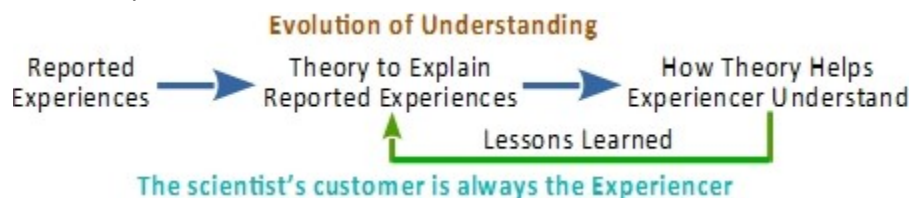
Concluding Remarks

But there is work to be done
The Takeaway of This Paper

References

Seeker

In my brief review of the 2024 IONS winning essays, I noted that the intended audience must be the average person. Consider this relationship between citizens who are the experiencers of consciousness and academics who study consciousness:



I described “Experiencers” in terms of seekers who are:

Seeking to understand our personal nature, the nature of reality and our relationship with reality.

To better address the needs of seekers (experiencers), I suggested that IONS might have included in the instructions to contestants:

“Also assess their viability given current understanding.”

My point is that beyond theory, the focus of science needs to be on the “so what” of research as it applies to seekers.

Since I write about Psi phenomena and ITC, I look to parapsychologists to express their findings in pragmatic terms that I can include in my “science reporter” style of writing. That has not worked out so well. I will admit that I have not read all of the parapsychological literature. What I have studied of it has left me with the sense that there is no collective wisdom concerning the *what*, *how* and *so what* of Psi. I have been an observer of parapsychology for years, especially since 2000 when Lisa and I began trying to figure out how ITC is possible and who is communicating.

Looking to the academic community for learned guidance was and continues to be frustrated by the collective assumption of much of academia that ITC is illusion, fraud or misassignment. The possible dark side of our paranormalist paradigm is collective incredulity in the face of evidence to the contrary.

Assuming good faith, I have developed the opinion that the field of parapsychology should be treated like a closed academic community. Yes, there is a lot of public facing parapsychological material but it is seldom more than “Gee Wiz! Look at this. How do you like me now?” I often refer to this information divide as the Academic-Layperson Partition.

Consider this quote from “The Conversation” 1/17/2025 newsletter article “[Biden helped bring science out of the lab and into the community – emphasizing research focused on solutions.](#)”

“Fundamentally, ‘use-inspired’ research aims to reconnect scientists and engineers with the people and communities their work ultimately affects, going beyond publication in a journal accessible only to academics.”

Opinion 20

Studying Psi Phenomena in the Current Political Climate



The Fool from the Case Tarot

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Brief

My assumption in writing this opinion is that our ability to study consciousness and Psi phenomena is not guaranteed. We should be mindful that there have been times in our history that doing so was considered demon worship or being controlled by demons. Of course, such suppression of free thinking occurred mainly when the state had a state religion.

Five major influences are identified that are shaping the emerging social order. Especially two of them, unregulated Capitalism and an emerging state religion, are likely to benefit from the suppression of free thought.

The Christian Nationalist point of view appears to be that such abilities as mediumship and Psi functioning are evidence of association with demon. We should be reminded of witch hunts of old and the gullibility of subservient citizens.

An analytical approach to consciousness and Psi researchers, including human potential (aka personal improvement) and paranormal phenomena fosters critical thinking. This can translate into a relative immunity to propaganda and conspiracy thinking.

How the way we think affects what we think is explored with emphasis on the difference between belief and discernment. I argue that changing a people's worldview is possible by showing them the value of questioning the implications of their belief. The Opinion concludes with recognition that we who are involved in consciousness and Psi studies may need to be more mindful about how we are viewed by the public.

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About the Fool

The 22 Keys (Major Arcana) of the [Hermetic Tarot](#)¹² represents a very old tool for teaching ancient understanding about our spiritual nature. While many people use the complete 78 card deck for divination, the 22 Major Arcana (keys to secret wisdom) are intended to be used as a textbook. Students were expected to contemplate the hidden meaning of the symbolism in each card to discover their hidden meaning.

Learning is cyclic in that we gain a little understanding about our nature, the nature of our world and our relationship with the world by way of life's experiences. In that context, *The Fool* in Key 0 represents the Seeker at the beginning and end of a never-ending cycle of experiences. People illustrated in the Tarot represent various aspects of the Seeker. Females portray the feminine or creative *potential* aspect of the Seeker. Men portray the creative *formative* aspect of the Seeker.

When religions dominated society as a state religion, citizens were expected to follow the teaching offered by the church. In effect, the only truth allowed by the state was that which was explained by the priesthood. Ancient wisdom such as the Tarot were designed to help Seekers learn to think for themselves, and thus, they posed a danger to the church. To protect Seekers and their teachers, the lessons were taught in secrecy, or like the Tarot, they were taught in a form that was meaningless for those who did not have “eyes to see.”

In our present society, it is no longer necessary to hide our study of personal potential subjects like the Tarot or mediumship. However, as discussed in this Opinion, our society appears to be rapidly evolving toward a more authoritarian government supported by a state religion. In this emerging environment, it might be sensible to think of a contemporary Tarot as a layperson’s textbook for consciousness and Psi studies. As such, the Fool is the Seeker.

Symbolism of The Fool

The Fool Diagram has many symbols with common esoteric meaning. Even the colors are given meaning. The meaning I give here is based on the old teaching but is intended to be more useful for contemporary seekers.

- The person represents both male and female seekers.
- The person seems about to step off a cliff. Think of the way we begin the study of a new subject. Seeking, especially, has the potential of many unexpected adventures. The cliff represents the unknown but always hopeful future.
- The white rose represents the desire for spiritual understanding.
- The dog represents our human aspects. In some versions, the dog is biting at the Fool’s ankle indicating that our human aspect holds us back.
- The pouch represents our acquired understanding. We integrate acquired understanding into our worldview. It is hidden (internal) because we are integrating previously acquired understanding into our worldview. In contrast, *Key 1 The Magician* represents the first potential of our next phase of seeking. In Key 1, the “tools” of seeking are visible on the table because the new experience is just unfolding.



Emerging Political Climate

Years ago, Lisa and I were in Laughlin, Nevada attending a UFO conference. The conference was in a casino. We played a little nickel video poker during a break. A lady playing the machine next to us asked if we were on vacation and we mentioned the UFO conference. The conversation wandered as they often do amongst strangers, mostly focused on the paranormality of UFOs. The conversation abruptly ended when she turned to directly face us and asked, “*You do believe in Jesus, don’t you?*”

It is moments like that in which I am reminded that there are people in the world who might be offended by the phenomena I study. I do pay attention to the mood of my audience but one of my teachers taught that it is important that Seekers are open with others about their understanding. His point was that people often need many encounters with such ideas before their self-realization might begin. In that sense, and of course because I am forever excited about consciousness and Psi studies, I seldom hesitate to talk about my interest.

Things are changing in our society, though. I try to consider news reports from the perspective of a Seeker. As I describe in this Opinion, what I am seeing in the news tells me that it may be a good idea for all of us who are working with Psi phenomena to be more aware of the point of view of our audience.

Politics is supposed to be about good governance, but it is always about promoting one group’s view of **good** governance over others. Who is defining “*good governance*” tells us a lot about what “*good*” might be. Let me define a few terms before I describe what I think are the dominant influences defining “*good*” today:

Good

In this context, “good” means governance that provides for the present and long-term benefit for citizens; governance that is humane; governance that respects the dignity of individuals; governance that treats all citizens equally, fairly and with an even hand.

Fair Share

Fair share means that people should help the community in some way that is commensurate with their cost to the community. For instance, production of a product imposes a cost to the community in the form of everything from the cost of educating workers, building and maintaining infrastructure, consumption of natural resources and disposing of depleted products.

Human Instincts

Human Instincts are primal, unconscious urges that moderate our behavior. The most influential instinct is a predisposition to do anything necessary to ensure the continuation, even dominance of our personal gene pool (survival). Human instincts color our every choice.

Discernment

Discernment is used here to mean awareness of actual meaning and making choices based on that understanding. “**Discerning Intellect**” is used here to mean the habitual examination of the implications of an experience.

Progression

Progression is sometimes thought of as increasing discerning intellect leading to greater lucidity. While greater discernment is thought to represent personal improvement, greater lucidity is thought to be a prerequisite for more conscious Psi functioning. **Lucidity**, then, is a mental state representing a degree of understanding a person has of the actual nature of reality.

The Seeker’s Way

The Seeker’s Way is defined here as *Intending to understand our personal nature, the nature of reality and our relationship with reality*. The [Implicit Cosmology](#)¹⁵ begins with the stipulation that the initial state of reality is curiosity. Each of us has the primal urge to gain understanding. The influence of that urge in our daily living depends on the dominance of our human instincts. The three parts of the Seeker’s Way:

1. **Our personal nature** – How do we develop mental perception and expression? What shapes our temperament and biases our choices? How does our human self relate to our spirit self?
2. **The nature of reality** – Is there a difference between what we think is real and what is actually real? Is reality purposeful? What does nonlocal mean? Is thought part of reality?
3. **Our relationship with reality** – Does some aspect of who we are continue after bodily death? Do we have a purpose beyond our human instincts? Are other lifeforms sentient? What is our relationship with other lifeforms?

Dominant Influences Shaping our (USA) Government

Capitalism at the Expense of Human Rights

Capitalism is “good.” Unregulated Capitalism is too often “not good.”

Unregulated expressions of our human instincts can produce a survival of the fittest environment that leads to less competition and higher costs for the public in commerce. This urge for dominance naturally leads to a “winner take all” attitude in which a few people develop great wealth at the expense of everyone else.

Our government has not done well at making citizens pay their fair share in the support of the operation of the community. As noted below, this has resulted in extreme disparity between a few wealthy people and average citizens.

Not unlike the age of [Rober Barons](#),²⁶ it is arguable that the USA is leaning toward becoming an [Oligarchy](#)⁴ controlled state. That is the pinnacle of unregulated Capitalism. Thanks to unregulated Capitalism, the USA has been drifting toward a two-class society. According to [OxFam.org](#)²²:

“The richest 1 percent have more wealth than the bottom 95 percent of the world’s population put together.”

This emerging plutocratic social order looks a lot like a new form of Feudalism. From the *American Prospect* article [“The Rise of Neo-Feudalism”](#)³:

“The history of the modern democratic state can be understood as a story of shifting authority and lawmaking, first from private potentates to sovereign monarchs, and then to publicly accountable democracies. Today, this centuries-long democratizing trend is rapidly being reversed. Western democracies are not simply embracing neoliberalism in the sense of deregulating the economy. Elites are pursuing something aptly described as a new form of feudalism, in which entire realms of public law, public property, due process, and citizen rights revert to unaccountable control by private business.”

The effect of this shift in emphasis from the citizens and the community to corporations and religious authority has been blatant selective enforcement of the Constitutional rule of law that favors the powerful over the average citizen.

In regard to this Opinion, an informed and discerning citizenry can only be seen by the new priests and lords as a threat to their reign.

Belief-based Governance

Religions are “good.” Unregulated religious influence on government is “not good.”

The focus here is on [Christian Nationalism as a state religion](#)². Some Evangelists and Christian Nationalists have increasing influence in American politics. Their influence has been shown in the harsh treatment of the rights of “others” aka citizens who are not white US Christians. This is especially concerning for those of us who study consciousness and Psi functioning. These religions tend to think what we study is associating ourselves with demons. Consider:

From [The Dangers of the New Age Movement](#)⁶ Podcast:

“Always remember that the source of these rife deceptions stem from the demons themselves, which seduce men from the truth of the Gospel; in fact, all adherents to New Age philosophies, embrace open and illicit contact with these nefarious spirit beings.”

The 2020 article [Millions of Americans Believe Trump Is Fighting Literal Demons](#)¹⁷ ends with:

“Even more concerning is the influence they’ve had over believers, both neo-charismatics and mainstream evangelicals introduced to them through allies like Falwell Jr. and Graham. People who believe in demonic conspiracies are well positioned to transition into secular conspiracy theories, including QAnon, Pizzagate, and classic anti-Semitism. If Trump is defeated, and prophecy once again fails, the danger they pose will be more than spiritual.”

And Deuteronomy 18:10-12 of the *Christian Bible*:

“Let there not be found among you anyone who causes their son or daughter to pass through the fire, or practices divination, or is a soothsayer, augur, or sorcerer, or who casts spells, consults ghosts and spirits, or seeks oracles from the dead. Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the LORD, and because of such abominations the LORD, your God, is dispossessing them before you.”

Radical conservative governance has gained support from religious groups by supporting the suppression of many forms of human rights such as birth control and equal access (DEI). The education system and such social engineering practices as book banning and anti- “woke” have been designed to blind citizens from the dangers of excessive religious and government authority. At the same time,

diverting public funding for education to private schools can only further erode social equality by indoctrinating children into radical conservative thought.

In regard to this Opinion, this Devil's bargain between church and state has the potential to return us to the days of female subjugation, superstition and witch hunts. Increased understanding of consciousness and our actual nature may eventually be seen as a threat to the emerging new order.

Noting that over 40% of USA citizens are not white, the current trend toward a white nationalist Christian state church puts the USA on a path toward a caste system, perhaps even outright indentured feudalism.

Self-centered Citizens

Citizen engagement in government is "good." Self-serving citizen's blind obedience to government propaganda is "not good."

While the urge to have unbridled Capitalism or a state religion is a predictable response to human instincts, the willingness of some people to sacrifice the well-being of society for their personal gain is not as easily understood. A large part of our citizenry has been voting to support a conservative government despite the government's openly declared intention to suppress their rights.

Education is part of the answer. From the [Pew Research Center](#)²³:

"Partisans without four-year college degrees are more likely than those with degrees to say a major reason for affiliating with their party is because it 'sticks up for people like me' – and this is especially the case among Republicans."

Like the *Pew* study, most discussions of citizen choices are focused on social factors.

The Conversation Newsletter recently published an article suggesting that citizens' need to belong has been a major contributor to the nation's partisan political divide. From "[How the oil industry and growing political divides turned climate change into a partisan issue](#)"²⁸:

"Within-group pressures also create stronger feelings of belonging among those who conform to the group's internal norms, such as which political positions to support. In turn, stronger feelings of belonging serve to further reinforce the norms."

Such answers seem to ignore the underlying dynamics of how we develop perception. Considering our human instincts, in many ways we are herd animals and there is safety in being seen as belonging to the strongest herd.

Human instincts and cultural norms underly the many reasons I can think of for a citizen to lean toward conservatism. Their grievances include the perception of too much government regulation interfering with personal wants and tribal grievances. While instincts predispose our choices, cultural norms color them.

In regard to this Opinion, the potent urge to assure gene dominance cultivates a self-centered rather than community view of personal responsibility. Grievances of self-centered citizens are easily exaggerated by central authorities aided by willing social media opinion setters. In this way, self-centered citizens have become a collective tool for authoritarian leaders.

Community-centered Citizens

Citizens cooperating as a community is "good." Citizen's willingness to engage in government is "also good."

The nation is almost evenly divided between people who are relatively self-centered and people who are more community focused. Community-centered people tend to be more humanistic and less aggressive in promoting their point of view. They often tend toward greater discernment concerning cultural influences. I have often written about this. For instance:

[Progression, Teaching and the Community](#)¹⁴

[Cooperative Community](#)¹¹

[A Personal Code of Ethics for the Mindful Way](#)⁹

[Why I Vote Humanist](#)¹⁶

From [The American Humanist Association](#)¹ website:

“Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism or other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good.”

The *Preamble of the Constitution of the United States* is Humanistic:

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

I have defined Humanism as:

“A humanist is a person who has adopted a personal code of ethics which emphasizes understanding principles of nature and seeks to live in accordance with that understanding to the benefit of self and others in a cooperative community.”

The personal code of ethics I try to live by begins with the admonition credited to [Jane Roberts](#)²⁵ Seth that we should not violate others.

Ethical Understanding	Ethical Principles	Ethical Expressions
Do not violate Others <i>Seth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Humanism• Respect• Kindness• Do no harm• Justice• Fairness• Suspended judgment• Courage• Discernment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Just because I can, doesn't mean I should• Mindfulness is a way of life• Citizenship means cooperation• How will my actions affect me and others?• Is it a belief or a supportable understanding?• I will not impose my will on others• Lessons come from new experiences• Contemplating implications

Possible Mindfulness Personal Code of Ethics

In regard to this Opinion, the problem for Humanists is that most Self-centered citizens, many belief-based groups and Capitalists do not follow a “Do not violate others” code of ethics. For most, morality is defined in terms of protection of their wants.

Steering the Ship of State

Groups thoughtfully examining governance is “good.” Such groups with unlimited funding and influence on government are “not good.”

It is important to note that the Conservative point of view is a blend of religious and capitalistic influences. Organizations have been formed to find ways to make the conservative point of view the national policy. The most influential conservative group has been [The Heritage Foundation](#)³⁰. From their website:

“Heritage’s mission is to formulate and promote public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense.”

And

[We also] *“help unite the conservatives around principles and ideas that strengthen our cause ... and the nation.”*

Deconstructing the Heritage Foundation’s statement of objectives:

- **“Free enterprise”** should be understood as *unregulated Capitalism*.
- **“Limited government”** should be understood as *government of local fiefdoms* disguised as state’s rights. This is close to the Libertarian desire for as little government as possible.
- **“Individual freedom”** should be understood as *let the strongest prevail*.
- **“Traditional American values”** should be understood as the more Calvinistic religious values of the founding colonies ... perhaps with a little Taliban and Handmaid’s Tale philosophy mixed in. Morality is defined here as a strict Christian value that leans toward subjugation of women and rejection of *“others.”* A large population is a powerful tool for one group’s dominance over another. That implies a group’s need for as many children as possible as long as they are indoctrinated into the *“correct”* point of view.
- **“A strong national defense”** should be understood as *Isolationism*.
- **“Unite the conservatives around principles and ideas that strengthen our cause”** is exactly what has happened. The American Heritage Foundation’s [Project 2025](#)⁸ is a manifesto for conservative governance that is being realized by the Trump administration.

The opening paragraphs of The Conversation’s [“Trump’s Project 2025 agenda caps decades-long resistance to 20th century progressive reform”](#)²⁹:

“For much of the 20th century, efforts to remake government were driven by a progressive desire to make the government work for regular Americans, including the New Deal and the Great Society reforms.

“But they also met a conservative backlash seeking to rein back government as a source of security for working Americans and realign it with the interests of private business. That backlash is the central thread of the Heritage Foundation’s “Project 2025” blueprint for a second Trump Administration.”

Mother Jones news outlet reported in the February 2025 article [“A Project 2025 Mastermind Now Holds the Reins of the Federal Bureaucracy”](#)²⁰ that:

“A self-avowed Christian nationalist, [Russell] Vought is a wonky bureaucrat and Washington insider committed to Trump’s obsession with “draining the swamp.” During Trump’s first term, he tested the boundaries of the law to advance the president’s radical goals. Founder of the conservative think tank Center for Renewing America, Vought is also one of the architects behind the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025 mandate for Trump’s comeback, advocating for expanding presidential powers and subjugating the federal government.”

[Project 2025](#) leaves little doubt that the Heritage Foundation intends to establish an authoritarian government that will impose its radical conservative (and Christian Nationalist) point of view on citizens. The President is not so much the leader of this movement as he is the Foundation’s willing instrument.

Shaping a Paradigm

The current radical conservative paradigm is composed of a complex of **stories** that favor an authoritarian, anti-government, pro-business point of view. The paradigm depends on citizens who are willing to accept the stories as truth. Considering the human instinct to get along by getting along, it appears to be easier for people to believe the stories than to examine or even discount them.

Telling people that their beliefs are baseless seems to only reinforce their beliefs. From the April 2023 *Newscientist.com* article "[We don't have any viable way of countering conspiracy theories](#)²¹" we see that:

"The vast majority of methods for quashing belief in conspiracy theories have little or no effect and the ones that do work are impractical. That is the conclusion of a review of 25 studies assessing various methods of tackling unfounded beliefs in secret plots."

And

"They are particularly hard to debunk because anyone trying to contest them is seen as part of the conspiracy. "They say, 'Of course, you will say that', " says O'Mahony."

When that article was written in 2023, *AI chatbots* were just becoming available as an increasingly powerful tool for information management. September 2024, the *Psychiatrist.com* article "[AI Might Actually Change Minds About Conspiracy Theories—Here's How](#)²⁴" told us that:

"What makes the results of this study particularly interesting is that people become so psychologically invested in their paranoid beliefs that changing their minds is often nearly impossible.

"But the success of the AI chatbot used in this study suggests that the right evidence, presented in a tailored, interactive way, can be very persuasive, painting a more optimistic picture of human reasoning, the authors write."

The takeaway from these two articles is that people tend to cling to their beliefs. Trying to change their mind by telling them their beliefs are wrong probably only reinforces their conviction. However, a dispassionate, rational conversation with a presumably neutral person can moderate that conviction.

Developing Discernment

In terms of the [Implicit Cosmology](#)¹⁵, our beliefs are part of our worldview. When I say that our worldview has considerable momentum, my point is that our unconscious mind develops a streaming narration of a story (perception) that is always based on what we think is true about externally sensed information. The effect is that we only experience what we think is true. For instance, a news article saying liberals are bad would agree with a conservative's unconscious worldview and it would be readily relayed to conscious self. Conversely, if the article said liberals are good, the information would likely be unconsciously ignored by a conservative.

I am using the term "tribe" in the sense it is used in *The Banner* 2020 article, "[Political Tribalism](#)²⁷":

"... Political tribalism is where loyalty to the political tribe is more important than loyalty to anything else. It means that tribe members will go to any lengths to defend their tribe's leader—be it Trump or Obama—from any criticisms or wrongdoings, regardless of facts. Tribalism means the tribe never concedes an inch to other tribes. It is an "us versus them" mentality, where "them" are seen as morally suspect and morally dangerous while "us" are saints by comparison."

How people consider what they are being told can be explained using [The Creative Process](#) Diagram below. Here is a brief explanation of how that diagram addresses the development of perception and feedback:

Mostly unconscious mental processes

- Step 1: **Source** – Inputs to the unconscious mind includes stories designed to support the person’s home tribe’s point of view. Stories designed to counter those stories are also present but are mostly ignored (incredulity blindness).
- Step 2: **Attention Complex** – The stories are unconsciously considered based on the person’s worldview:
- Possibility 1 – Express agreement if any of these are “yes”:
 - Does the story support the person’s current point of view?
 - Will accepting the story help secure the person’s place in the tribe?
 - Will accepting the story make the person safer?
 - Will accepting the story further support the person’s survival and dominance of the person’s family?
 - Possibility 2 – Modify the story to conform to worldview and express if any of these are “yes”:
 - Does the story seem familiar?
 - Is the story about the kind of information the person expects?
 - Possibility 3 – If Possibility 1 and 2 are not true, ignore the story.
- Step 3: **Expression** – This is a mostly *unconscious expression* of what the person believes that emanates from the Attention Complex as a psychokinetic expression. That expression is “cast” into the etheric and becomes the person’s *conscious perception*.

Conscious mental processes

- Step 4: **Mental Review** – The person becomes aware of the story as it is expressed in Step 3 and decides if:
- *Possibility A* – The person agrees with the story.
 - *Possibility B* – The person agrees with parts of the story.
 - *Possibility C* – The person does not agree with the story.
- Step 5: **Intention Feedback** – The conscious agreement or disagreement with the story produces:
- *Possibility A* (agreement) will produce a strong expression of intention back to the expression forming mental function that will reinforce acceptance of the story.
 - *Possibility B* (partial agreement) may produce neutral feedback resulting in no change in the status of the story. However, it may also modify how the person understands the story (change worldview).
 - *Possibility C* (disagreement) will produce a strong expression of intention that will reduce acceptance of the story. This feedback has the potential to modify the person’s worldview.

The points to remember are:

1. The only conscious control a person has on what they think is true is the Intention Feedback link. That influence is modest and probably requires many reinforcing events to change worldview.
2. Telling a person the story they believe is false is something of a threat to their survival because it questions their status in their tribe. The expected consequence of trying to change a person’s mind is a strong feedback signal to the Attention Complex that reinforces the person’s acceptance of the false story.

- The Step 4 Mental Review process represents the mental process that is able to evolve discernment. In simple terms, if the person is guided to evaluate the **implications** of the story, it is possible for the person to begin the process of aligning worldview to better agree with reality.

The concept that has inspired *The Creative Process* Diagram below comes from our study of the way Psi and ITC practitioners report phenomena that probably are not paranormal. To address this characteristic, I define **Hyperlucidity** as:

A short-term change in behavior marked by the tendency to find phenomena everywhere despite considerable testimony to the contrary by peers.

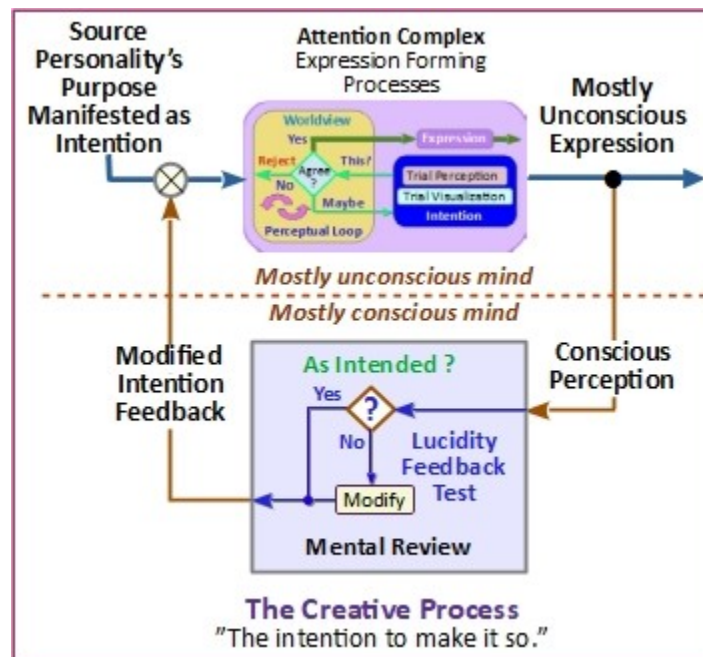
Lucidity is defined here as:

Clearly experiencing reality as it is and not as it is imagined.

Compared to lucidity, hyperlucidity appears to result from an amplified “want” bias in the Intention Feedback link of *The Creative Process* Diagram.

The idea of Hyperlucidity is based on the same sort of psychology suggested by the [Jerusalem Syndrome](#),⁵ From the article by the same name published by the Cambridge University Press:

Type III “...of the Jerusalem syndrome ... describes individuals with no previous history of mental illness, who fall victim to a psychotic episode while in Israel (and especially while in Jerusalem), recover fairly spontaneously, and then, after leaving the country, apparently enjoy normality.”



Referring to *The Fool* Tarot card, a few of the concepts implied by the [Implicit Cosmology](#)¹⁵ can be expected to be in the Seeker’s pouch:

Open Mind

We are constantly sensing information, and our mind is predisposed to decide what we think of the information. To have an open mind means to resist deciding if something is right or wrong until more information becomes available. That is the first part of discernment. Recognizing that so little is known about consciousness and Psi phenomena, some paranormalists I know habitually *intend* to maintain an open mind.

Suspended Judgement

A companion concept to having an open mind is learning to habitually resist deciding whether we agree or not about what we are being told. I refer to that as “*suspended judgment*.”

Intentionality

Our intention feedback signal is our only conscious influence that can change our worldview. If we agree with what we perceive, the feedback signal will be neutral. If we strongly agree our intention feedback signal will tend to make our expression more forceful. If we disagree, the feedback signal will tend to reduce the intensity of what we are expressing.

This feedback effect is especially evident in the fear response and fixation. Speaking in terms of the two-mind perspective of who we are, our human mind is afraid of the dark. For our spirit mind darkness is just an irrelevant local experience. The human response to darkness can easily become a fixation or obsessive response if it is not moderated by other factors such as familiarity and perceived safety provisions.

Examining Implications Leads to Increasing Discernment

Since our intention feedback signal can potentially change our worldview, it is that one influence on the way we develop our expression that Seekers depend on to develop *discernment*. That is to say, people who learn to examine the *implications* of their perception have the potential to eventually align their worldview with the actual nature of reality. The process of learning to do so is referred to here as the Seeker’s Way.

Environmental Awareness

This Opinion is intended to shine a light on aspects of the current political, social and economic environment in the United States that have the potential to suppress consciousness and Psi studies because they are an affront to religious worldviews. I am especially mindful of these social dynamics:

Conformance – The study of anything that is outside of the established Physicalist paradigm requires thinkers who are both open-minded and able to examine the implications of such evidence. That sort of free thinking is the greatest threat to ultraconservative control of government and the dominance of a state religion.

Capitalism – It appears that socially responsible capitalism tends to be humanized by unions and well informed employees who follow a personal code of ethics. They also hold the rule of law based on the US Constitution above morality codes of conduct designed by corporations to protect corporate interests. In contrast, unregulated capitalism’s focus on the bottom line seems to depend on subservient employees. Free thinkers are not typically subservient.

State Religion – Religions gain their power from large congregations, which in turn makes religious groups dependable voting blocks for supporting governments. Belief-based talk of right to life morality cloaks a more likely intention to out populate groups with contending ideologies.

Propaganda – Short of outright Gestapo-like control of citizens, the most effective way to counter a humanist point of view is to vilify it in the eyes of the larger population. In doing so, it becomes reasonable for a “caring government” to protect citizens by outlawing the offending system of thought.

While organized skeptics tend to be *Crusaders* of the status quo, a state religion has the potential to be the *Inquisitors* finding evil in every claim of Psi phenomena or nonphysical consciousness. Consider this from the article on Christianity.com “[Can Christians Believe in Ghosts?](#)”:

“As believers, we need to help others know the truth that ghosts are probably demons masquerading and that nobody should become involved with them. If somebody becomes involved with a fascination with ghosts, they could more easily be drawn into the occult.

“Once a person becomes involved with the occult, it can lead them to a myriad of things associated with the demonic. We need to do our best to educate others on staying away from being influenced by the paranormal.

“By helping others to know the truth about ghosts, we can help them become more aware of spiritual warfare and the different ways that demons try to trick us.”

In the context of this Opinion, an authoritarian government, under cloak of religious dogma, could easily show that paranormalists are associating with demons. That includes parapsychologists, altered state experiencers (OBE, NDE), paranormal phenomena experiencers, mediums, psychics, ghost hunters, ITC practitioners and consciousness researchers. Just as it is difficult to prove we are studying actual Psi phenomena, it would be difficult to argue that we are not studying demons.

It is unrealistic for us to hide our interest in the paranormal. The study is too important to stop. Besides, many of us are on record in some way via books, clubs, associations and social media. Who we are is who we are. For most of us, our interest is in scientific inquiry. It is for us to present ourselves as such.

So how to React?

My sense is that it is important for all of us to become more engaged with the larger community. This means:

- **Self-education** – First, it is for us to educate ourselves in the state of the art of science of consciousness and Psi studies.
- **Speak rationally** – Second, each of us could do well to examine what we think is true and how we talk about it. Learning to speak of consciousness and Psi studies in rational sounding terms can elevate how we are seen by others from seeming to be superstitious ghost hunters, for instance, to the appearance of being thoughtful investigators.

Learning to speak in more rational terms has the added benefit of us expressing our intention to our perception forming mental process to be more rational.

- **Theory rather than belief** – The majority of reasonably well informed paranormalists seemingly try to stay close to good theory and evidence. It is a bad idea to tell any person involved in organized religion that we **believe**. If what we “believe” is not in agreement with the religion, then it must be demon inspired. Say instead that we are studying the *theory* and *evidence*. We might not accept the theory, but it is an interesting subject. Ask what they think?
- **Show benefits of discernment** – The motto on my website reads: *“Believe what you wish but understand the implications of what you believe.”* The most important step any of us can take to protect consciousness and Psi studies is to teach others to examine the implications of what they think is true. It is a good idea not to confront people’s beliefs. Instead, try to find ways to be a role model for discernment. Critical thinking is a skill that can naturally lead to more rational choices.

Be ~~The Fool~~ **The Seeker**. As Lisa and I did in that Laughlin casino, it is too easy to stumble into a confrontational discussion with people who fear nonreligious thoughts about consciousness and survival. We exited that conversation by putting on our harmless rational face. That was then. The social dynamics are much meaner spirited today and it is reasonable to expect today, that woman would be more aggressive.

There is much that we do not know about the nature of consciousness and Psi phenomena. For instance, ghosts are not necessarily evidence of dead people. We psychokinetically express our thoughts. One of the theories offered to explain poltergeist events holds that people’s unconscious psychokinetic expressions can sometimes produce large scale physical effects. The same for any human reported, apparently paranormal experience.



It makes no sense to be assertive about what we think is true. Keeping an open mind and practicing suspended judgement is probably the most rational perspective we can take about paranormal phenomena and religious beliefs.

As I have proposed before, the academic community can better serve its lay customers by establishing a more coherent model of consciousness. It is so much better if we can cite a model that is well supported by science than to only argue that *“this is what I think.”*

This advice is intended to make you an emissary for rational thinking. You are the teacher. Teach by example.

With all of that said, you are still citizens and have a duty to participate in the political process. Seekers do not retreat to a cave. Seeking means gaining understanding through experiences. Today’s political environment offers a most important opportunity to gain understanding about our nature that otherwise might not be available.

Key Terms to Remember

Suspended judgement – Our mind is predisposed to decide about sensed information. By resisting deciding what we think of it, we open ourselves to considering possible new information. That is the essence of having an open mind.

Consider the implications – We each experience the world from a different perspective. There is no right way to think. However, there are more rational ways. By learning to always stop and consider the implications of what we think is true, we offer gentle guidance to our perception-forming mental processes indicating our desire to be more discerning.

Be a teacher – The three aspects of a teacher are: 1.) Teach the principles, 2.) Be a role model demonstrating the operation of those principles, 3.) Demonstrate the effect of living the principles by who you become. While your human might prefer the traditional “do unto others” Golden Rule, it is likely that your spirit mind prefers the *“Teach me as I teach you”* version.

Personal responsibility – What happens to us is often out of our direct control. How we react to what happened to us is our choice. Remember that anything that happens is an opportunity to gain understanding. If you accept the idea that you are spirit having a human experience, you will understand that gaining understanding through life experiences is your purpose.

It is my understanding that the only way we can change our country is to teach citizens the value of discernment by always considering the implications of their choices. One teacher begets two. Two teachers begets four.

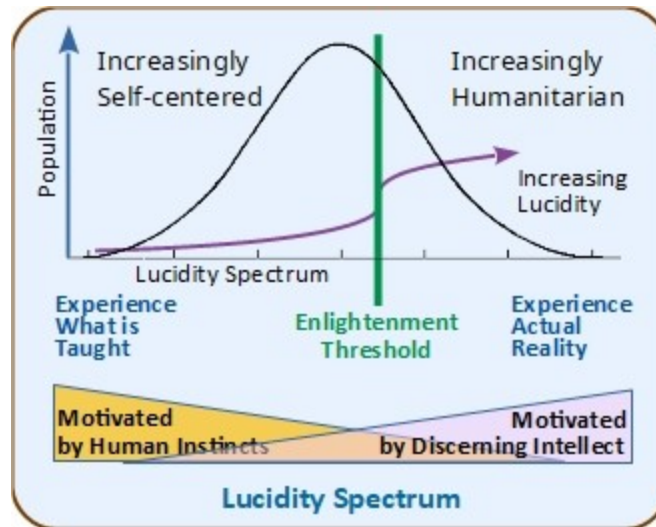
One world, Many Tribes

This Opinion is about how people make choices, the choices they make and how some of those choices might negatively affect people interested in consciousness and Psi studies.

The Lucidity Spectrum Diagram below is an attempt to illustrate the relationship between choices guided by human instincts and choices guided by discerning intellect.

It is important that we keep in mind that there is a difference between the good in people and the ideologies held by some people. Treat all people with respect but be aware of their discernment. Teach others to consider the implications of their choices by example. People learn most when they ask.

Society is composed of many tribes representing many points of view. Learning to share reasons for accepting a particular point of view is an important builder of civilization. Be cautious but be kind.



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Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this update. I encourage you to follow the links I have included here. They are intended as study guides. While it is enjoyable to study as a group, seeking is ultimately a solitary journey. It is for you to do the work. All I can do is show the way.

As always, I am interested in your comments. We learn most when we learn together.

Thank you!

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The Hermit's Light

Finding Discerning Intellect

A Different Way of Seeking



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