**EVP: An Alternative Explanatory Theory** 

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This month we are going to stray a bit from my typical "practical information" articles, and instead, delve into two of my favorite topics: EVP and theoretical physics.

Electronic Voice Phenomena – EVP. With the 2005 release of the movie entitled 'White Noise' starring Michael Keaton, the general public has increasingly become more interested in the fascinating phenomenon known as EVP, which has actually been the subject of intense research and scrutiny for close to 100 years.

In the early days of the Spiritualist Movement (mid 1800's), there was a resurgence in the spiritual belief of life after death, and many people began searching for ways to communicate with their loved ones who has passed away. At the time, there were very few methods with which people could communicate with the dead. The most popular methods were séances, psychics, automatic writing, and the Auto Planchette (a heart shaped end table with a series of graphite pencils attached; it was designed be an un-assisted method of automatic writing whereby the spirit would actually move the pencils in an autonomous manner.)

The Ouija board was invented in the late 1880's and quickly became the most popular method of communication. The board was so named because the inventor claimed that the first message he received from his board was "Ouija" which is the Egyptian word for "luck." Most people believe it means "yes yes" because "oui" means yes in French and "ja" means yes in German.

By the turn of the century, the Spiritualist Movement had expanded significantly and with more questions about the spirit world, its members began looking for new, more modern methods to contact the dead.

According to family friends, Thomas Edison first conceived the idea of capturing EVP via electronic technology in the early 1900's. By October 1920 Edison announced that he was actually building a device to do this. News headlines around the world ran articles about Edison and his "machine that could talk to the dead." Unfortunately, Edison died before he could fully complete his creation. After his death in 1932 the device was mysteriously never found despite the fact that his closest friends swore that they had seen the working prototype. Thankfully, Edison's theories on spirit contact continued circulating through groups of believers who continued to search for a method that would allow extended communication with the dead.

It wasn't until the early 1940's that official attempts were made to officially record EVP. A psychic who constantly heard voices around him asked a friend to help record them during a séance. Utilizing a 78rpm record cutter (which was considered state-of-the-art for the time), their results were considered poor. The duo attempted several other times, and finally achieved their

first successful recording in the later part of the 1940's utilizing a reel-to-reel recorder and makeshift microphone invented by Raymond Bayless. They had placed a microphone inside of a trumpet which was then put into a box where his psychic friend stood hoping to attract spirits.

EVP research got its next big boost in the late 1950's. While in the field recording bird sounds, Friedrich Jurgenson quickly discovered what he believed to be human voices which were recorded on the tape even though he was completely alone when recording. Sometimes these voices would respond directly to comments he had made. Jurgenson was fascinated, and dedicated many years to researching the phenomena. He published the results of his work in a book entitled "Voices from the Universe" (1964).

By the mid 1980's there were thousands of EVP experimenters throughout the world supposedly receiving messages from entities claiming to be spiritual. It would appear that our technological progression had been a facilitator (or possibly an enhancer) of these mysterious voices.

While traditional "hard" science has been slow to embrace EVP research, scientists are finally beginning to pay attention to this very real phenomenon and are dedicating more resources to effectively study it within the confines of scientifically valid methodology.

Where do the voices actually come from? Of course, that is the million dollar question, and one which continues to elude us. Until now, there has been no lucid scientific explanation; however, I will present one scientifically-feasible theory, which, to my knowledge, has not been previously proposed.

Traditional EVP research has held that the anomalous voices may be explained by the following possibilities:

- They are the disembodied voices of the dead. Perhaps this explains why many researchers seek out cemeteries for their EVP research (often very successfully.)
- The voices are psychosomatic, or subconsciously generated. One theory holds that the
  utterances are impressed or "imprinted" upon the recording media by the researchers
  own thought patterns.
- The voices are simply subjective interpretations (such as reading clouds). It has been argued (fairly successfully) that the human ear has an in-built tendency to perceptually create voices when there is no objective basis to do so. This is very similar to the phenomena seen in relation to visual imagery known as "matrixing" in which the human brain attempts to form recognizable images from random patterns.
- The voices are either hoaxed or real voices which are already present on the recording media.
- The utterances are radiated voices from TV, radio, cell phones, or other sources of electromagnetic radiation.

Utilizing the framework of physics provides a scientifically reasonable hypothesis which hereto forth has been lacking in every traditional explanation of paranormal phenomenon such as EVP.

Physics and paranormal phenomena appear inextricably linked. Physics is the study of matter, energy, and their synergistic interactions. Physics attempts to use formulas and equations to prove concepts which are often intangible, and which can often not be physically seen, touched, or heard. Physics gives us plausible possibilities, and in many cases can support theories of unexplained phenomena. In many respects, the analogies between both disciplines are astonishing.

I believe that the branch of physics which is intrinsically the most appropriate to explaining the EVP phenomena is quantum mechanics. Quantum mechanics is an emerging branch of theoretical physics which primarily concerns the characteristics of subatomic particles and which has many interpretations. According to Wikipedia, the definition of quantum mechanics is:

Quantum mechanics is a fundamental branch of theoretical physics with wide applications in experimental physics that replaces classical mechanics and classical electromagnetism at the atomic and subatomic levels. It is the underlying mathematical framework of many fields of physics and chemistry, including condensed matter physics, atomic physics, molecular physics, computational chemistry, quantum chemistry, particle physics, and nuclear physics. Along with general relativity, quantum mechanics is one of the pillars of modern physics.

Quantum mechanics has had enormous success in explaining many of the features of our world. The individual behaviour of the subatomic particles that make up all forms of matter - electrons, protons, neutrons, photons and so forth - can often only be satisfactorily described using quantum mechanics. Quantum mechanics has strongly influenced string theory, a candidate for a theory of everything.

In 1935 Albert Einstein, Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen developed the Einstein-Rosen-Podolsky Bridge theory. This theoretical paper drew upon a phenomena predicted by quantum mechanics known as quantum entanglement to show that measurements performed on spatially separated parts of a quantum system can apparently have an instantaneous effect and influence on one another. According to theoretical physicists, this theory paves the way for the possibility of parallel dimensions and universes by speculating that one point in physical space is the same as another under certain circumstances.

In 1957, Hugh Everett III proposed a radical new interpretation which furthered the original Einstein-Rosen-Podolsky Bridge theory. Everett's primary goal was to expand upon some of the more perplexing aspects of quantum mechanics. According to Everett's interpretation, whenever numerous viable possibilities exist, the world splits into many worlds - one world for each different possibility (in this context, the term "worlds" refers to what most people generally refer to as "universes"). From each possibility, the course of each universe develops independently with absolutely no communication between them. People living in those worlds (and splitting among them) likely have no idea whatsoever that this is occurring.

In this way, the world branches endlessly and continuously. What we refer to as the "present" would actually lie in the pasts of an unaccountably large number of different futures. Everything that *can* happen, does, *somewhere*.

This "Many-Worlds" theory is a fringe interpretation of quantum mechanics, and pertains to quantum events; however, it also has specific implications for all macroscopic systems like you and me. This theory posits that there are a practically infinite number of versions of you, who have all split off at some time in the past from the path which you are now following. There may be versions of you that split off five or ten years ago, or perhaps five minutes after you were born, to whom those choices may not seem unthinkable. But in a very real sense, those people are still "you" (but it can be argued that we should not use the word "are", or even "were"; perhaps we need to invent a new tense?) The "Many-Worlds" theory has been accepted by many prominent scientists today including Steven Hawking, Murray Gell-Mann, Steven Weinberg, and Richard Feynman.

In addition to the revolutionary aspects of this theory, further reflection would also bring about the understanding that this idea could be deeply disturbing to the majority of mainstream beliefs. If it is correct (and based upon currently known scientific data we have no reason to believe it is not possible), this could have profound, long-term implications regarding our understanding of the nature of the soul due to the fact that the soul (if there truly is such a thing) must branch along with the worlds that contain it.

In addition, the "Many-Worlds" theory poses a serious challenge to our notion of individualism, which, especially in America, is held sacred. In addition, it would seem likely that this hypothesis would be in conflict with most organized religions.

In retrospect, even before Einstein, the existence of these parallel dimensions or worlds has been a subset of most major religions for millennia. They are often referred to as "Heaven" and "Hell", as well as the various astral and spiritual planes. Since this paper is an attempt to explain the EVP phenomena via scientific means, we will not posit upon the religious facets further.

Based upon both my extensive theoretical physics and paranormal research, I believe that there is a very strong possibility that EVP researchers may somehow be accessing these parallel dimensions via the Einstein-Rosen-Podolsky Bridge. In fact, I believe that much of what can traditionally be classified as "paranormal" can be attributed to the existence of these parallel dimensions and the sporadic interactions between them and our dimension.

In order to more fully comprehend the breadth of this theory, it is important to further expand upon spatial dimensions and their importance (as well as relevance) to the overall framework of this hypothesis.

Since these parallel dimensions (or worlds) can exist simultaneously, and within the same physical space (however completely independent from one another); they would not appear "real" relative to each other. In fact, under normal circumstances, they would appear completely invisible to one another. However, when abnormal or unusual conditions intervene, the worlds may "interact;" that is, two or more of these dimensions or worlds may momentarily become "real", at least in part, to each other. When this occurs, a "paranormal" event is said to have occurred. The nature and means of the event, of course, depend upon the nature of the interaction.

An analogy to this can be seen in the natural properties of radio waves. At any given time, hundreds of thousands of different radio waves fill the same space in the surrounding air. As humans, however, we are completely unaware of any of them. Of course, we can turn our radios on and adjust the tuning to receive one of these waves which will then enable us to hear the music. Is the station (wave) we selected any more "real" or less "real" than any of the others coursing through the air at the same moment? Of course not - all of the waves are equally "real", however, we are only tuned into one of them. It would surprise most individuals to know that, at extreme subatomic levels, matter is also composed of waves which display similar properties.

Theorized but not yet completely proven, is the idea that the waves which comprise subatomic mass particles can vibrate at various frequencies. It would be further possible to suppose that only those particles that vibrate at the same frequency would appear "real" relative to each other. Thus, we would have many dimensions existing in the same space, just as real as the other, with the only difference being the "frequency" of the matter-wave vibrations. "Our" dimension, world, bodies, etc. would all consist of matter of the same frequency. Other dimensions, realities, or universes would consist of matter waves oscillating at a different frequency.

What would happen if it were possible to somehow change the resonant frequency of our bodies to match that of another dimension? Theoretically, we would become a part of that world, as would an entity whose matter frequency was adjusted to match ours.

An entity which was not "tuned in" quite right would appear transparent and wispy, as a radio station not properly tuned in would be faint and static-filled.

As you can see, the application of this theory has many potential possibilities, and could easily explain the nature of EVP voices as well as "ghosts" and most other paranormal phenomena. We have often heard the terms "breaking through", or "crossing over" in regards to paranormal events. This theory could easily tie those expressions to an authentic systemic concept. This is a simple explanation which is devoid of new-age rife or other "spooky stuff" - just simple constructs of theoretical physics.

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity." – Albert Einstein

## About the author:

Larry Flaxman is the founder and President of ARPAST (<u>www.arpast.org</u>) – the Arkansas Paranormal and Anomalous Studies Team, which is a member of the TAPS

(The Atlantic Paranormal Society) family. He has been actively involved in paranormal research and investigation for over ten years, and melds his technical, scientific, and investigatory backgrounds together for no-nonsense, scientifically objective explanations regarding a variety of anomalous phenomena.

Larry has appeared in numerous newspaper, magazine, radio, and television interviews, and has authored several published articles regarding science and the paranormal. Larry is also co-authoring a series of books with Marie D. Jones, author of "PSIence" and "Supervolcano," starting with "11:11- The Time Prompt Phenomenon: The Meaning Behind Mysterious Signs, Sequences and Synchronicities," due for release in February 2009 by New Page Books.

In addition to involvement with ARPAST, he serves as technical advisor to several paranormal research groups throughout the country.