

ANOMALOUS COGNITION / VERIDICAL PERCEPTION DURING NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES (NDEs)

15TH BIAL FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM ○ BEHIND AND BEYOND THE BRAIN: END-OF-LIFE EXPERIENCES

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IN THIS PRESENTATION

- Disclaimer
- How I conceptualize NDEs
- Define *veridical perception* (VP) and *apparently-non-physical veridical perception* (AVP) in NDEs
- Research into VP/AVP
 - Study of cases gleaned from the professional literature
 - Hospital studies
 - Collection of investigated verified cases
- Detailed examination of a sample verified case
- Conclusion

HOW I CONCEPTUALIZE NDEs

- Five aspects (~stages)
 - Exit
 - Material
 - Transition
 - Transmaterial
 - Re-entry



VERIDICAL PERCEPTION: DEFINITION

Report by a near-death experiencer (NDEr) of a perception during the NDE that is subsequently verified as accurate.

- Cases reported beginning with Moody (1975)

VERIDICAL PERCEPTION: TWO CATEGORIES

1. Explainable by current models of brain function
 - Material: Perception of one's surgeon performing one's surgery
 - Transmaterial: Meeting a deceased relative known to have died
2. Defying explanation by current models of brain function (Rivas et al., 2023):
 - Material: Case 3.1 Observing an Amputation
 - Transmaterial: Case 6.2 Death of a Sister

VERIDICAL PERCEPTION: TWO CATEGORIES

"Type 2" cases: apparently-non-physical veridical perception (AVP):

- Most evidential cases:
 - Occurred more than 30 seconds into cardiac arrest and time-stamped,
 - Involved idiosyncratic content,
 - Contradicted or exceeded NDEr's expectations, and
 - Verified by a credible third party.

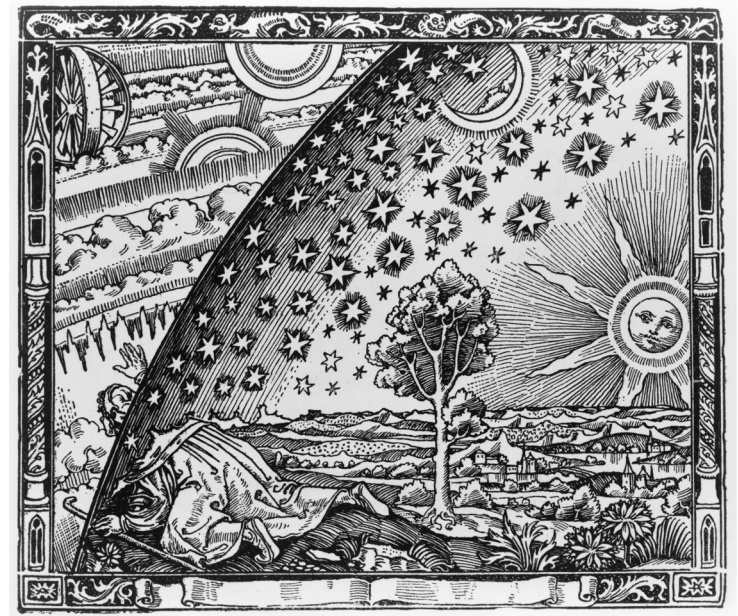
VERIDICAL PERCEPTION: TWO CATEGORIES

AVP is “anomalous”: “appears to be inconsistent with the usually accepted explanations of reality” (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2026)

- “usually accepted explanations of reality” = physicalism, materialism
- “a theory that physical matter is the only fundamental reality and that all . . . phenomena can be explained as manifestations or results of matter” (Merriam-Webster, 2026)

VERIDICAL PERCEPTION: THE QUESTION

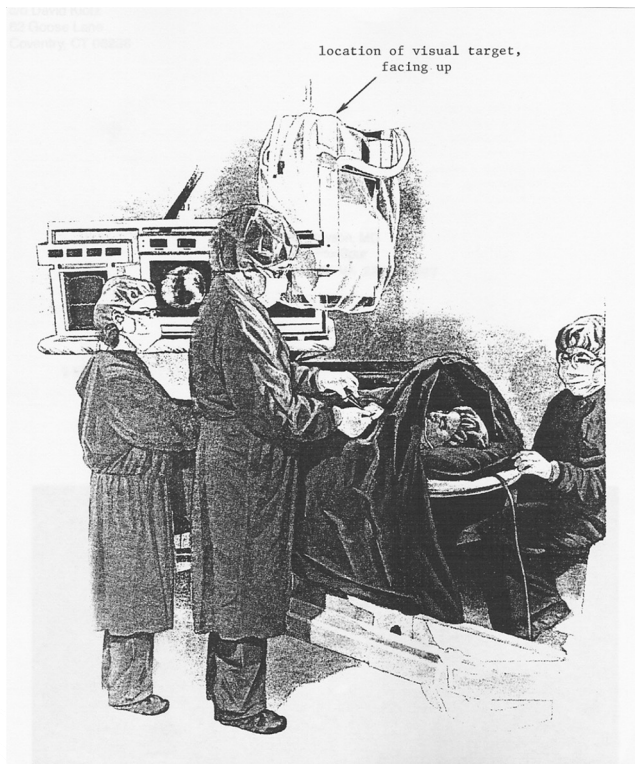
- Subjective reality of NDEs
 - Real/hyper-real glimpse into an alternate reality—but private, subjective experience
- Objective reality of NDEs?
 - Could AVP show that NDEs are also objectively real?



VP/AVP RESEARCH: 2009 ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

- Every case I could find: 107 cases total involving 111 perceptions
- Assessed evidential value:
 - Degree of accuracy
 - Quality of corroboration
- Results: 92% completely accurate; 37% corroborated objectively, 55% subjectively
- Conclusion: Cases of VP predominantly accurate.
- Challenges to these results and responses

VP/AVP RESEARCH: HOSPITAL STUDIES



- Involving visual targets visible only from ceiling
 - 7 studies
 - 1990–2023
 - United States and Europe
 - 1–25 hospitals
 - Data collection from months to almost 3 years
 - Results: No cases of AVP captured

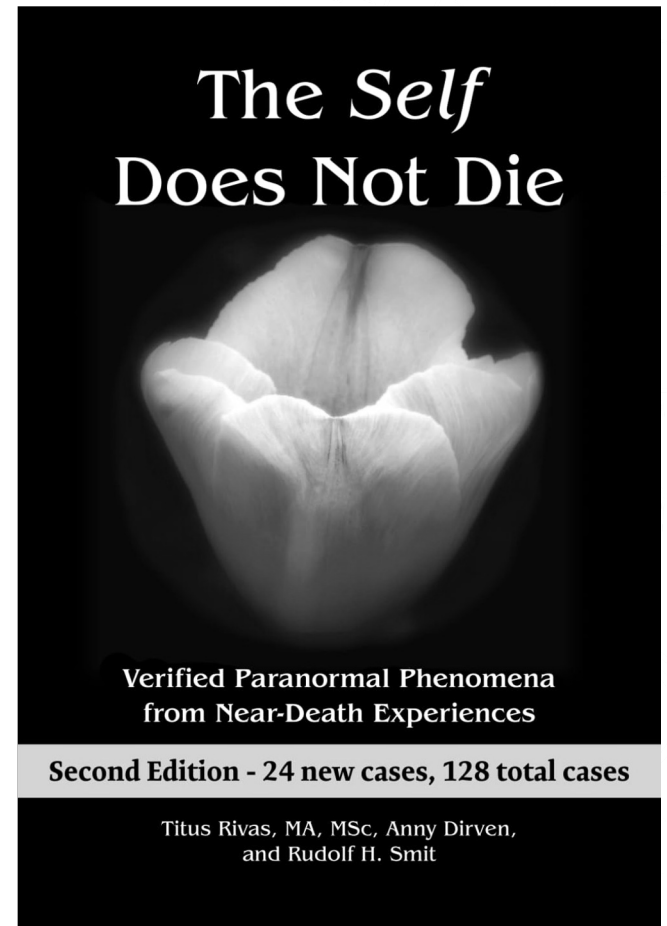
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VP/AVP RESEARCH: HOSPITAL STUDIES

- Many possible reasons for negative results
- The challenge: AWARE-II study (Parnia et al., 2023; 25 hospitals, nearly 3 years)
 - 567 resuscitations
 - 53 (9.5%) survived
 - 28 (5%) completed interviews
 - 6 (1%) reported NDEs
 - 0 identified visual stimulus; 1 (.002%) identified auditory stimulus

VP/AVP RESEARCH: VETTED CASES

- What we are left with: investigated cases of AVP
- 2023: over 125 cases of paranormal phenomena associated with NDEs verified as accurate by at least one credible third party – usually an attending physician or other medical professional
- Most are cases of AVP; a few cases of other phenomena, such as anomalous healing



VP/AVP RESEARCH: VETTED CASES

Cases include an NDEr who accurately reported

- medical personnel present only during resuscitation
- idiosyncratic objects used only during resuscitation
- idiosyncratic, silent gesture by surgeon during resuscitation
- surgeon's unspoken thoughts during resuscitation
- idiosyncratic conversations and events far from resuscitation
- location of a watch lost during resuscitation
- 12-digit number visible only from the ceiling

VP/AVP RESEARCH: VETTED CASES

Sufficient to support hypothesis of the objective reality of NDEs?

Much depends on witness credibility.

Most of the book's cases corroborated by 65 medical professionals:

<u>Professional category</u>	<u>Contributed to this number of cases</u>
48 MDs, two also with PhDs	>80
2 medically-associated PhDs	2
5 PhD-level nurses	22
8 non-PhD nurses and 2 similar	11

VP/AVP RESEARCH: VETTED CASES

...representing 10 diverse countries:

Argentina

Brazil

France

Germany

Netherlands

Pakistan

former Soviet Union

Spain

UK

United States



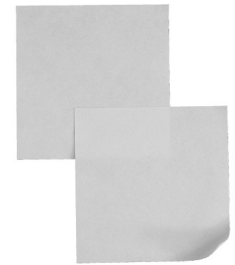
VP/AVP RESEARCH: VETTED CASES

- Medical professionals disincentivized to report AVP.
- The witness testimony of these 65 medical school professors, practicing physicians and surgeons, and other medical professionals:
 - Deluded, mistaken, or fraudulent?
 - Or sane, accurate, and honest – and courageous?

DETAILED EXAMINATION OF A SAMPLE CASE

Case 3.11 Lloyd Rudy's Patient (Rivas et al., 2023)

- Lloyd Rudy, MD
- Roberto Amado-Cattaneo, MD
- Deluded (thought disorder)?
- Mistaken (alternative, materialist explanations)?
- Fraudulent (perpetrating hoax)?



Invitation: Veridical NDE Scale (Greyson et al., 2025) of Chapter 3 cases

Sufficiency: not one case, but cumulative evidence from over 125 cases

EVIDENTIAL WEIGHT OF VETTED AVP CASES

In conclusion, AVP indicates that,

- At times, people have experienced their consciousness functioning lucidly apart from their physical bodies, accurately perceiving the material world and/or perceiving and interacting with beings and environments not of the material world, in ways that appear not to have involved their brains.
- In these cases, these experiencers and their corroborators can be believed: that the experiences were not only subjectively, but also objectively real—even though explanations from the current physicalist/materialist model are improbable, if not impossible.

IN CONCLUSION



Is AVP anomalous? Yes.

“Anomalies tend to get swept under the carpet until there are so many of them that the furniture starts to fall over” (Whitehead, 2004).

IN CONCLUSION

In addition,

- NDEs not alone in demonstrating AVP.
- Best: Convergence of evidence from careful research on NDEs along with other transpersonal experiences, including:
 - Terminal lucidity
 - Shared death experiences
 - After-death communication
 - Mediumship
 - Past life memories

IN CONCLUSION

- Together, implication that consciousness
 - can, at times, function independently of brain and, thus, is not produced by brain, and
 - may preexist formation of, and survive demise of, the brain.
- Needed: a new (old?) model of reality that explains both phenomena that
 - can, and
 - cannot
 - .. be explained by theory of physicalism/materialism.

QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?

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