



**SPECIAL
SUBSECTION**

Model-Building and Theory Formation on “Nonlocal Perception”: Introduction to the Special Subsection

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The 41st Annual Meeting of the Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE) at Indiana State University (July 23–26) included a lively slate of scheduled sessions, with some even livelier discussions on controversial topics behind the scenes. A cursory reading of the corresponding *2023 Abstracts of Presented Papers* (<https://shorturl.at/zIOR1>) reveals some curious trends—namely, one instance of a talk or poster with a title about “nonlocal perception/ consciousness,” three titles that specifically mention “psi,” one referencing both these terms, and finally four titles about parapsychological-type phenomena using alternative phrases like “remote viewing.” This linguistic diversity actually broadens when perusing the abstracts, i.e., two write-ups spoke of nonlocal perception/ consciousness, three of psi, one using both terms, and 14 with alternative names for potentially the same or related phenomena as discussed in many of these other summaries.

There is certainly strong interest in phenomena that frontier scientists typically describe as an “anomalous process of information transfer” (e.g., Cardeña et al., 2015), but seemingly much confusion, debate, or liberality exists over the most accurate definitions or terminology to apply. This could reflect theoretical differences among researchers, attempts to exchange nominal monikers for ones that convey underlining mechanisms, or maybe the differences are simply sly attempts to reframe or repackage controversial topics as more acceptable or mainstream topics (e.g., Braude, 1998; Cross, 2004). Whatever the motivation(s), the SSE Conference raised important questions that fortuitously coincided with three accepted *JSE* submissions. This happenstance (or synchronicity?) presented the opportunity for a special subsection about issues of model-building and theory formation with anomalous information transfers in various guises.

David Acunzo, Ph.D.—a cognitive neuroscientist with a background in telecommunications engineering—eagerly accepted our formidable challenge of digesting and exploring these selected papers for links or insights among their results and conclusions, as well as potential connections or contradictions to the latest conventional thinking in neuroscience. His qualifications are well suited to this task and involve research on visual perception, attention, and suggestibility, along with an interest in anomalous experiences and experimental parapsychology (e.g., Acunzo et al., 2013, 2019, 2020, 2022; Acunzo & Terhune, 2021). The eventual goal is to graduate from superficial or descriptive labels for certain anomalous phenomena to monikers representing suspected or established causal mechanisms. *After all, what are we dealing with here...poorly understood but conventional human capabilities that manifest under particular psychological or physical circumstances, new or extraordinary sensitivities or cognitions displayed by a privileged few, or perhaps experiences or events at the crossroads of quantum mechanics and whatever mechanisms produce or regulate human consciousness?* Readers are therefore encouraged to study this small set of papers, consider their results and

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interpretations, and finally to ponder Dr. Acunzo's unique insights that aim to get one step closer to reaching answers to these and other tantalizing questions.

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