

The Distinctiveness of the EP approach – viewed from the perspective of Chris and Isabel Clarke.

The following is our attempt to sum up the distinctiveness of the EP approach and then to outline how it is currently being taken forward in our work and that of others. We would summarise the main features of their approach as follows:

- Extension of empiricism to areas normally excluded by science – religion and psi phenomena.
- Religion as praxis that is predicated on having ‘real’ effects – and can be effective or ineffective; the variables associated with this can be investigated. E.g the operation of prayer; whether the mass has ‘worked’ – conversation between Margaret and Ted.
- Authentic enquiry into parapsychology. This involved openness to all comers, including those not academically respectable (e.g. the extensive enquiry into dowsing, interest in Out of the Body experiences), combined with treating all contributions with scientific rigour.
- A clear recognition of the seductive nature of such ‘borderline’ areas of knowledge (wowsky, to use their invaluable term) and a determination not to be seduced. This involves a commitment to operating ‘on the edge’ without toppling over.
- This line of approach involves a respect for the unknown and the unknowable – the inevitable boundaries of human knowledge, along with a commitment to defining and pushing those boundaries. This contrasts with the scientism that claims that it is only a matter of time before science has it all sewn up. The contemplative engagement with mystery will surely have helped here. Margaret often talked of ‘Effing the ineffable’.