

## BOOK REVIEW

**Men and Women of Parapsychology, Personal Reflections, Esprit Volume 2** edited by Rosemarie Pilkington. San Antonio and New York: Anomalist Books, 2013. 422 pp. + vi, \$18.95 (paperback). ISBN 978-1938398018.

In recent years a number of books have been published that offer short autobiographical essays of academics, focusing on their research and how their life history affected their scholarly development. These could be labeled as “intellectual journey narratives.” Some volumes focus on philosophers and their religious faith or lack thereof (e.g., Clark 1997, Antony 2007). Psychology has its own version of the intellectual journey narrative in T. S. Krawiec’s (1972, 1974, 1978) multivolume set of autobiographical essays by contemporary psychologists.

In 1987, Rosemarie Pilkington edited her first volume of essays entitled *Men and Women of Parapsychology, Personal Reflections*. It contains autobiographical essays by Jule Eisenbud, Montague Ullman, Jan Ehrenwald, Eileen Coly, Joseph H. Rush, Gertrude R. Schmeidler, Emilio Servadio, Renée Haynes, Hans Bender, Karlis Osis, George Zorab, and Bernard Grad. The second (2013) volume contains autobiographical essays by Mary Rose Barrington, Eberhard Bauer, William Braud (now deceased), Stephen Braude, Richard S. Broughton, Larry Dossey, Sally Rhine Feather, Erlendur Haraldsson, Arthur Hastings, Stanley Krippner, Lawrence LeShan, Roger Nelson, John Palmer, Guy Lyon Playfair, William G. Roll (now deceased), Serena Roney-Dougal, Stephan A. Schwartz, Rex G. Stanford, Russell Targ, Charles T. Tart, and Walter von Lucadou. Between the two volumes almost every significant contemporary parapsychologist is represented, excepting the late John Beloff and the late Ian Stevenson.

This splendid volume is valuable for both its insights into the personality and lives of the parapsychologists as well as their intellectual development and current views in the field. Mary Rose Barrington’s opening essay reveals a remarkable sense of humor. While visiting a church as a small child, she was surprised to hear that at least one ghost was “holy.” Barrington dressed up in a sheet, said, “I am the holy ghost,” and as she puts it, she “pounc[ed] on my nanny with decidedly unholy glee” (p. 9).

Unlike laboratory-oriented parapsychologists, her focus is on testimonial evidence of psi. She defends such testimonial evidence, especially regarding

D. D. Home's demonstrations of macro-PK. She has a fascinating account of what she calls "jottles," in which objects seem to disappear from places and reappear somewhere else. She believes that at times such "jottles" are evidence of the fluidity of reality rather than a person's forgetfulness.

The other chapters maintain the high quality exhibited in the first. I learned a great deal from Eberhard Bauer's chapter, which focused mainly on the history of the Institute for Border Areas of Psychology and Mental Hygiene (IGPP) in Freiburg, Germany. The amount of work the Institute does is impressive; it focuses more than other programs on counseling for those who have anomalous experiences, and it contains the largest library of parapsychological works in continental Europe. For those unaware of the extensive work at IGPP in parapsychology, this chapter is invaluable.

The late William Braud's transformation from logical positivist to transpersonal psychologist is a fascinating story. Like Barrington and Stephen Braude, he does not disparage spontaneous reports of psi. He suggests that experimental work in parapsychology should have a psychological element that offers the possibility of significant research findings in mainstream psychology.

Stephen Braude's journey is a continuing exploration of the basis for an experience he had in graduate school while playing "table up" (table-tipping). When the table rose on its own, Braude committed to discovering the reason for what happened. After a career as a "mainstream" philosopher he published several books on parapsychology, ranging across the entire spectrum of psi phenomena—telepathy and clairvoyance, psychokinesis, and survival of death. During this time he moved away from his earlier philosophical materialism. Like Mary Rose Barrington, he believes that the best way to study psi is in natural settings rather than in the artificial setup of an experimental laboratory. He claims that parapsychologists who ignore testimonial evidence of psi are "generally clueless about what the evidence [is]" (p. 93). This is, in my judgment, correct, especially given the evidence for macro-PK in Home and Palladino.

Richard Broughton's approach to parapsychology is as a science, and his focus has been on placing the brain and psi into an evolutionary context. To some extent I am sympathetic, and a recent book by James C. Carpenter (2012) proposes a detailed version of a theory of psi in that tradition. If psi ability is part of human experience, as the evidence strongly suggests, then it most likely is a function that animals, including humans, gained in the context of evolution.

Larry Dossey's essay makes an interesting point about the current trend pushing "evidence-based medicine." He argues that intuitions and hunches also are important in medical practice. Such intuitions may arise from the

same nonlocal awareness that is the source of psi. He admits that nonlocal awareness at the macro-level may not be connected with the evidence of nonlocal action in quantum mechanics, but that such awareness may be analogous to how nonlocal connectedness works at the quantum level.

Sally Rhine Feather, the daughter of J. B. and Louisa Rhine, has continued her mother's work in collecting accounts of spontaneous psi experiences. She also details her work in maintaining the Rhine Research Center through times so difficult that the Center's survival was in question. She has been the main force in the Center's resurgence as an important center of parapsychological research. She also tells a fascinating story of one child's one-time exceptional success in guessing Zener cards.

I was particularly interested in Erlendur Haraldsson, whose work with Karlis Osis (1977) on deathbed visions was the first book I read by professional parapsychologists. His account is one of a full life, including tours in the Middle East and Asia in the early 1960s that included a stay with Iraqi Kurds. His surveys of the public on after-death experiences has offered a worthy addition to the literature on survival that updates Edmund Gurney's classic *Phantasms of the Living*. His work with Ian Stevenson on children claiming past life memories is also an important contribution to the literature on survival of death. Haraldsson's work on Icelandic mediums such as Hafsteinn Björnsson and Indridi Indridason, in my judgment, have significantly strengthened the evidential case for survival of death.

Arthur Hastings has sage advice on how to deal with a skeptic: "Don't clash swords with skeptics (leave their religion alone)" (p. 197). One can make a case for his advice since the energy spent by parapsychologists in arguing with skeptics might be better used in further process-oriented research or, even better, research into spontaneous psi phenomena.

Like many parapsychologists, Stanley Krippner's interest began with an early paranormal experience, in his case at age fourteen. He had a premonition that his Uncle Max had died, and almost immediately afterward his mother received a phone call informing her of his death. It is interesting that it was a philosophy of religion course that introduced him to the thought of J. B. Rhine—all too often today, psi is ignored in philosophy classes, including philosophy of religion classes where psi is relevant to such issues as survival of death. Krippner relates some humorous accounts of poltergeist investigations as well as his investigation of "Lady, the Wonder Horse." Krippner also impressively arranged talks to psychology graduate students by such giants in the field as Gardner Murphy, H. H. Price, and C. D. Broad. In addition to his work at Maimonides Medical Center on dreams, Krippner participated in Timothy Leary's work with psilocybin in 1962. Some of his later work has been in collaboration with Michael Persinger

on telepathic and precognitive dreams and their correlation to certain geomagnetic activity. Krippner opens a window into the history of twentieth and twenty-first century parapsychology.

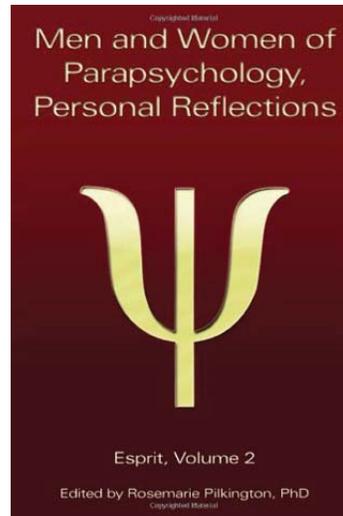
The chapter on Lawrence LeShan is from a 2011 interview with Dr. Pilkington. Professor LeShan notes “that the term ‘impossible’ is determined by your concept of reality.” (p. 228) LeShan holds that quantum and other theories of psi which are based on physics are not a promising way to understand psi. Instead (and here he reminds me of both Jule Eisenbud and Stephen Braude), he believes that psi is an irreducible process that, like love and compassion, “must be dealt with on their own level” (p. 233).

Roger Nelson worked with Robert Jahn at the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research lab, but is best known today as the director of the Global Consciousness Project. His chapter is brief, but reveals Nelson to be a scientist who, to use his own words, considers himself to be “100% skeptical and 100% open-minded.” His intellectual interests are broad, especially his knowledge of other cultures. I would have preferred a lengthier treatment of his life and career.

I understand John Palmer’s complaint about teaching undergraduates who do not care to learn instead of doing what he enjoys the most: research. He had the good fortune early in his career to land a research position with Ian Stevenson at Virginia. He has produced a large body of research over the years and continues to be an active researcher in the field. His experiments supporting the sheep–goat effect have been particularly valuable, and he supports continued research into the experimenter effect in psi. Regarding survival, his agnosticism is tempered by the humorous comment, “However, I would not be surprised if this changes when I am confronted with the prospect of my immediate demise” (p. 256).

Guy Playfair learned about the proper way to investigate spontaneous cases in Brazil, and is best known for his work on the Enfield Poltergeist (Playfair 1980/2011.) His autobiography contains fascinating accounts of the findings in some of his other investigations. His most recent work has been on twin studies and psi.

Sadly, the late William Roll was ill at the time of Dr. Pilkington’s interview, so she supplemented the material from the interview with some of



his writings. He details his belief in a “Big Mind,” similar to the pantheistic position of some Eastern religions, and which heavily influenced his interpretation of what underlies psi. As a philosopher, I must take issue with his statement that “philosophers have [their] noses pointed at an empty sky” (p. 286.) To be fair, he was focusing on the philosophers present during his time at the University of California at Berkeley. I am sure he was aware of the significant contributions philosophers have made to psychical research and to parapsychology—Henry Sidgwick, William James, C. D. Broad, Henri Bergson, C. E. M. Joad, and recently, Stephen Braude, are cases in point. Of course Roll is known for his work on poltergeists. His account of how his out-of-body experiences influenced his thought is interesting and informative.

Serena Roney-Dougal has an interest in Asian thought, and it is no surprise that, consistent with Asian thought, she considers psi to be a natural process. Her work on the pineal gland and psi is particularly interesting.

Stephan Schwartz’s summary of his own research contains some interesting material: that “nonlocal consciousness is not electromagnetic” (p. 315), an account of his work in locating lost archeological sites through psi, his work in remote viewing, and his part in founding The International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine. He also documents his journey from agnostic materialism into belief in nonlocal consciousness. His accounts of his own experiences observing psi phenomena as well as of his work in archaeology make his one of the most fascinating chapters in the book.

Rex Stanford’s autobiography reveals a childhood interest in science which predated his specific interest in psi. It was in high school that his study of Darwin’s theory of evolution started his journey toward developing the theory of psi as “unconscious” and “need serving.” This is the influential Psi-Mediated Instrumental Response (PMIR) model of psi, one of the first well-developed theories of psi. Among the courses he mentioned taking at The University of Texas were courses in philosophy of science, which helped him better understand the nature of scientific theories. It is refreshing to have a scientist affirm the usefulness of philosophy courses to his work in science. Later, he gives a brief account of his (and others’) break with J. B. Rhine—a sad chapter in the history of parapsychology, but which led to Stanford’s fine work at the University of Virginia with Stevenson and Gaither Pratt.

Russell Targ is convinced that psi is real due to his work in remote viewing for the United States government. His stories of the successes of remote viewing make a fascinating read for those interested in parapsychology and should provoke a second look at psi from skeptics.

Charles Tart, one of the best-known contemporary parapsychologists and the developer of transpersonal psychology, is concerned about the tendency of some parapsychologists to downplay the spiritual implications of psi. I agree—while parapsychologists have different worldviews, ranging from materialism to dualism to panpsychism, they should be open to interpretations of psi that are contrary to their worldviews. Walter von Lucadou's inclusion is useful to those who may not be familiar with his work in Germany. When he was a youth in school, one of his teachers, concerned by his dogmatic skepticism about psi, gave him a book by Hans Bender. Hans Bender later taught von Lucadou. Von Lucadou approaches psi primarily from the standpoint of theory. He focuses on "weak quantum theory" in his model of psi as "Pragmatic Information" in which psi is caused by "entanglement correlations" of meaning in a given situation.

Dr. Pilkington's book is highly recommended for academic libraries, for all people involved in parapsychology and psychical research, and for anyone interested in psi phenomena.

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