

## BOOK REVIEWS

ADVANCES IN PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH 9 edited by Stanley Krippner, Adam Rock, Julie Beischel, Harris Friedman, and Cheryl Fracasso. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013. Pp. 220. \$55.00 (paperback). ISBN: 978-0-7864712-6-3.

*Advances in Parapsychological Research 9* is a timely collection of cutting-edge thought and research in the field of parapsychology. This is the first *Advances* published since 1997, and the editors assert that there have been a number of advances since the previous edition. This is the case despite a lack of mainstream acceptance of the subject matter, and sometimes accusations of fraud and shoddy methodology (e.g., in the responses to Bem's publication of results supportive of the psi hypothesis in a mainstream journal).

This collection is of value to the esteemed parapsychologist as much as the newcomer considering the current state of play of this field. The book includes an introductory chapter on science and psi by the editors, reflections on the contributions of Jule Eisenbud by Stephen Braude, a discussion of the global consciousness project by Roger Nelson, the value of research on ESP in dreams by Simon Sherwood and Chris Roe, a discussion of Thalbourne's theory of psychopraxia by Lance Storm, a consideration of various statistical means of interpreting the outcomes of the ganzfeld database by Patrizio Tressoldi, further understanding the relationship between psi and altered states of consciousness by Adam Rock and colleagues, the value of unconscious measures of psi by Ed Modestino, how understanding from energetic traditions might impact this field by David Feinstein, and William Braud's thoughts on how parapsychology might develop as it moves forward.

In their introductory chapter, the editors examine the state of play of parapsychology as a science and note that the findings in the field represent a threat to the dominant paradigm—potentially a Kuhnian crisis state in terms of scientific revolution. The contents of this volume certainly attest to progression in the field in terms of findings, theory, and approaches toward the subject matter. The lack of mainstream acceptance is a common but valid lament of the parapsychologist. Throughout parapsychology's history there are frequent suggestions of “error some place,” whereas, in contrast, the history of parapsychology actually reflects a strong dedication to research methods (and statistics). It is of note that many methods that are commonplace in psychology were pioneered in parapsychology. The question still seems to be what constitutes *sufficient* evidence to change the mainstream perspective. The editors note that there are a number of other problems within parapsychology that hinder its acceptability. These include the so-called source of psi problem, the problems associated with the term “psi” (its negative definition as what remains when we rule out all normal explanations), the small effect sizes, and what they term the “slippery” nature of psi; these render it difficult to fully understand which factors truly correlate with psi. The editors suggest that only when these problems are overcome will there be a transition from a Kuhnian crisis to a solution stage. This author considers that some of these issues are more problematic than are others. For example, psi may be better considered as a property of a system (e.g., von Lucadou's models as applied to RSPK) or recipe; according to one recent model of psi (Jim Carpenter's *first sight* model), we would expect the source of psi to be associated with the person for whom it has the most meaning. Equally, the effect sizes may well be larger under certain circumstances. Many of these observations refer to parapsychology as defined according to the natural sciences. In this volume, William Braud considers that “science” should be expanded beyond the restrictive approaches that have perhaps hindered this field throughout its history.

The collection begins by alerting the reader to the contribution of Jule Eisenbud to this field. His story is intriguing and made this author want to go and read some of his early work on psi and psychoanalysis. Eisenbud is a key name in psychoanalysis, psychiatry, and parapsychology. He is also very well known for his research with Ted Serios, a psychic claimant who was tested by Eisenbud for his claims of thoughtography (thoughts being psychically represented on photographic film). Braude describes Eisenbud as a great thinker, pioneer, and friend. He notes the intriguing differences between the public story of the interchange between Randi and Eisenbud and how Randi's claims were never actually executed in terms of being able to replicate the thoughtography experiments using normal means. These experiments have often been written off as the work of clever sleight-of-hand

(for example, Serios often required the presence of a “gizmo,” a hollow tube to enable his psychic performance). However, Braude notes Eisenbud’s commitment to engaging in attempts to replicate Serios’s performances and various controls applied to this case (including the use of a Polaroid camera, which would prevent any interference using sleight-of-hand, as the photographs would be immediately produced without the possibility of interference). Many of these controls and replications render a completely normal explanation very difficult. Braude writes that the letters between Eisenbud and Randi and many of the thoughtography photographs are currently on display at the library of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

The global consciousness project is an intriguing project which is in its 14th year of operation. The project consists of globally placed “EGGs” or electrogaigrams (named for an earlier incarnation of this project). These consist of random event generators (RNGs), which emit truly random streams of numbers. These are placed around the world to explore correlations between global events and deviations from normality in the structure of the randomness of the data of the RNGs. The data indicate that there is structure in the data that correlates with a series of major world events. Indeed, the patterns reflect “structure . . . in the random data more than it should” (p. 32) and the overall effect size has odds against chance of less than one in a billion. This nonrandomness cannot be attributed to electrical grid stresses, mobile phone activity, or electromagnetic fields. These effects also behave differently than selected moments of nonrandomness within a random string of numbers from a random system. Spatial and temporal analyses support meaningful structure in the data that is not consistent with these effects resulting from an experimenter effect. Interestingly, there also seems to be a relationship with shared perceptions and emotional states, in particular when there is a high level of compassion.

Nelson argues in favor of a consciousness-related explanation for the structure in the data collected to date and is sympathetic to field-like models of consciousness. The chapter ends with discussion of the implications of these data, which Nelson argues are suggestive of a universal mind, the idea that there are subtle linkages between people. It is difficult to know what is really going on. These data are certainly very intriguing, but one always needs to exert caution when proposing causality with correlational data.

This volume also includes an updated version of Sherwood and Roe’s excellent evaluation of the dream ESP databases. This version includes articles published since the time of the publication of the original manuscript. The chapter begins by noting how the ganzfeld became the successor to the dream studies, but it is not clear to what extent the ganzfeld constitutes a change of state per se. The authors argue that the nocturnal dream state is a better-defined altered state of consciousness, which has a clear and strong association with subjective paranormal experiences throughout the literature. The work presents a critical evaluation of the Maimonides dream studies, including a summary of the specific nature of the research methodologies across the series, and the aspects of the methodology that may be worthy of further thought for future study in parapsychology. The authors cite Markwick and Beloff, who note that dreams may be the “royal road to psi” and that this state is a fruitful one for researchers to explore for further understanding psi. Sherwood and Roe present a comparison between the Maimonides dream studies and the post-Maimonides dream studies and note that both databases result in a deviation from chance supportive of the psi hypothesis. However, they note various criticisms applied to the original series, including the lack of replications of the exact Maimonides methodology. The post-Maimonides studies are characterized by a significantly lower effect size overall (albeit supportive of a nonchance effect). These studies have been, for the most part, carried out in the homes of the participants, partially from a need for ecological validity and partially due to economy. The costs associated with these benefits appear to be a reduction in the psi-conduciveness. For example, the authors suggest that one of the key elements may be that there is a reduction in rich dream imagery in the home environment, as it is less likely that people have access to as much of their dream imagery when they awaken naturally as when they are awoken in the middle of a REM period. They note that dream studies are a neglected but promising paradigm that warrants future replications. They also offer a few suggestions for optimizing psi performance and balancing ecological validity with economy, and maximizing what can be learned from the original Maimonides studies.

An interesting inclusion in this volume is Lance Storm’s chapter, in which he compares Thalbourne’s theory of psychopraxia to two similar theories: Jung’s theory of synchronicity and Stanford’s psi-mediated instrumental response (PMIR) theory. He notes that psychopraxia has received little consideration within academic parapsychology, perhaps because the 2004 monograph has yet to be read by a sufficient number of scholars. The inclusion of this chapter thus serves to draw attention to this model, and encourages the reader to explore its theoretical predictions. “Psychopraxia” derives from the terms “psyche” (meaning soul, mind, or self) and “praxis” (meaning to accomplish

or bring about). It is a valid attempt to unify mainstream psychology with parapsychology. In addition, the theory fuses the concepts of ESP and PK and argues that they are a unitary phenomenon. In the model, action occurs either endosomatically (in the body) or exosomatically (outside the body). Within the model, it is understood that the self is the common denominator of all experience and the source of action. Action will occur when there is a pro attitude, which can be a goal, wish, desire, intention, preference, or need, and it can be conscious or unconscious. There is a hierarchy of pro attitudes such that the one with dominance is the one that wins, and then the self adopts this attitude. The action will emerge. Storm discusses the similarities and differences between the model of psychopraxia and synchronicity and PMIR, and he suggests that psychopraxia is a valuable addition to parapsychology. He notes that the theory is ontologically neutral in terms of a model of the mind, it may provide a simplified understanding of psi, it is a more accurate description of psi, and it provides testable hypotheses for future research in this field. The existence of good theories with testable hypotheses may also help to strengthen the acceptability of the field to the mainstream.

The ganzfeld has long been touted as the *flagship* paradigm in parapsychology. This is intriguingly the case despite a lack of recent research using this methodology. The vast database which is in existence is a good resource for the application of statistical techniques and conceptual thinking concerning psi (in terms of both proof and process orientations). Tressoldi's chapter presents a clear summary of various approaches toward understanding the experimental outcomes. It appears to be the case that there is an effect (different from chance) irrespective of the way in which one ascertains experimental outcomes. For example, there is an effect that is different than what one might expect by chance when one applies a mainstream hypothesis-testing approach. Equally, Bayesian analysis suggests greater evidence in favor of the experimental hypothesis (that there is an anomaly) than the alternative model of the null hypothesis. Tressoldi notes that Bayesian approaches include some subjectivity in determining the prior probability and cites Utts's intriguing work whereby four different "priors" are compared (no prior information, an open-minded type of prior, a psi-believer prior, and a skeptical prior). Other Bayesian analyses suggest that there is a psi outcome that is not zero, even with an extremely conservative prior probability level. Additionally, the outcome is not just a substantial effect, but rather it is "extreme," because the value vastly exceeds the cutoff value for this level of effect. A third means of analyzing this database, via a new method of quantum modeling, also indicates a pattern supportive of the psi hypothesis for this database. Tressoldi concludes his chapter by noting the disparity between statistical findings and the lack of human acceptance of those findings. He also reminds the reader that these studies (and other work which finds that these studies are far superior to studies in the waking state and with forced-choice designs) are intriguing, and that altered states of consciousness are conducive to psi phenomena.

This theme is continued in the next chapter, in which Rock, Friedman, and Jamieson discuss the nature of the relationship between psi and altered states of consciousness (or altered states of phenomenology, as an alternative suggestion by the lead author with Krippner), with a focus on the ganzfeld state. Their chapter focuses on the possibility of applying Pekala's Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory (PCI) to the ganzfeld state to further understand which dimensions of consciousness may best predict psi performance. This would constitute a timely advance in understanding the specific aspects of "the ganzfeld state" that are more closely associated with psi.

A very promising research area in parapsychology is that psi may be better detected by unconscious measures. Edward Justin Modestino discusses physiological responses as unconscious psi. The idea of unconscious psi is not a new one in parapsychology; indeed, it is present in the writings of James, Myers, and Huxley. Here, psi information is present in the unconscious (the body) but is filtered from, or not accessible to, conscious awareness. Interestingly, this is also a major tenet of Carpenter's first sight model, that is, that psi processes are inherently unconscious. In Huxley's terminology, the brain serves as a reducing valve that prevents an overload of information from the larger mind (information held collectively). Modestino presents a review of research that has explored psi using a range of physiological measures. The review includes discussion of the presentiment effect (the observation that the body and brain respond *prior to* exposure to a stimulus), correlates of precognitive priming, and unconscious measurements of remote stimulation (i.e., studies which explore the physiology of a person who is in a different location than the target stimulus). Research findings indicate that there is clear evidence for psi using an array of measures of both the autonomic nervous system and the central nervous system. Such anomalies cannot be accounted for by response biases or artifacts and are another challenge for mainstream neuroscientists. Modestino also notes that this problem is compounded by the lack of a theory that might explain these anomalies.

In the penultimate chapter, David Feinstein discusses energy psychology—the study of physical and psychological changes that appear to occur following the application of procedures that are claimed to influence the

body's "energies" or "energy fields." These include tapping, thought field therapy, and acupuncture, among others. In this chapter, Feinstein focuses on "surrogate tapping" in particular. This is a method whereby the therapist acts as a surrogate for a client and engages in tapping certain acupoints while holding an intention for change (physical or emotional) in a client who may or may not be physically present. Intriguingly, this appears to facilitate changes in clients, irrespective of whether they are physically present or consciously know about the treatment. These findings are difficult to accommodate within normal models of mind-body interactions. Such models include the idea that acupoint pressure may be associated with reductions in levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which in turn influences brainwaves, the production of serotonin, and opioids, which have somatic effects. Feinstein himself has been an advocate of an amygdala deactivation model, which proposes that stimulating acupoints leads to deactivation of the activity of the amygdala and results in a reduction of threat arousal. The nonlocal observations in surrogate tapping are consistent with data on distant healing and DMILS in parapsychology and provide support for an anomalous process of information transfer, or psi.

In the final chapter, William Braud posthumously challenges the current discipline of parapsychology to expand its scope beyond the natural-science-inherited restrictions it has placed on itself. He notes the difference between two forms of parapsychology; parapsychologia versus parapsychosophia: parapsychologia refers to a *parapsychology of knowledge*, or parapsychology as driven by natural-science-informed approaches, whereas parapsychosophia refers to a complementary, more holistic approach toward knowledge, or a *parapsychology of wisdom*. Braud is a clear advocate for the inclusion of the latter. The chapter is a clearly written wakeup call for those working in this area, drawing attention to many ways in which certain ways of knowing and ways of doing research have been privileged throughout the history of the field. Braud proposes a conscious naming of eight such guiding assumptions that have (unconsciously) guided mainstream parapsychology to date. These are (a) the privileging of physical and material measures and domains, (b) nomothetic approaches toward knowledge, (c) so-called masculine approaches, (d) reductionist perspectives, (e) the need for psi to have some application, (f) the need for researchers to be objective and uninvolved, (g) restrictions in terms of what qualifies as science and the subject matter of that science and privilege in terms of what constitutes authority, and (h) the neglect of those people and approaches that do not have such "authority" in contributing knowledge and deciding what constitutes knowledge. By naming these assumptions, Braud proposes to stimulate some self-reflection with regards to how parapsychology wants to consciously proceed from now. Braud proposes a shift toward a more humane and experiential way of doing research in this area, which would include related phenomena of mystical and spiritual experiences, a shift toward more qualitative ways of doing research, and so forth. He proposes that there be inclusion of subjective experiences, idiographic or case study approaches, naturalistic and spontaneous events, and deep description and other forms of explanation (both applications and appreciations); the involvement of the investigator's perspective and experiences within the field of study (thus embracing subjectivity); exploration of the "dark places" in parapsychology—*where psi is not*, including the nature of psi-missing and the nature of subjective experiences, including the meaningfulness of these experiences, and the patterns surrounding psi performance and experiences that are not predicted and that do not necessarily impact the specified target event itself. Finally, Braud advocates a democratizing of research, thus succeeding in de-emphasizing "authoritarian and hierarchical structures in our field and in general" (p. 207). This includes research using approaches and materials that are available to members of the public and experiencers. By expanding parapsychology in this way, there may be wider scope for discovery and deeper understanding of these fascinating phenomena.

I would thoroughly recommend this book. As a selection of the current state of play in this field, I think these chapters are both informative and inspiring. It reminded me that this field is necessarily self-reflexive, self-critical, and constantly evolving.

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