

Editorial: *ψυχή* Is a Woman

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The title of this editorial begins with the word *psyché*, an etymology for both *psychology* and *parapsychology*. The Greek word has been translated as *mind* or *soul*, as well as being the name of one of the characters in the myth of Cupid and Psyche in *The Metamorphoses* (also known as *The Golden Ass*), the Classical Roman novel of Apuleius, written in the second century AD. With some poetic license, the story of Psyche's travails partly resembles that of parapsychology. The beautiful (para) Psyche is prohibited by her divine husband Cupid (or *Eros*) to see him (he only visits at night and their interactions occur in darkness). When, despite his injunction, Psyche decides, candle in hand, to venture into the mystery while Cupid is asleep and look at his face, she discovers a beautiful young man but lets some candle wax fall on his shoulder (or a much more sensitive part in some accounts). She is summarily exiled and is tasked by the mother of Cupid, Venus, to complete four impossible tasks before she is accepted again. Her tasks are not that dissimilar from those facing parapsychology, which dared to investigate a forbidden realm to then be mostly exiled from mainstream science. Currently the field faces apparently insurmountable hurdles, being expected by some to produce far more convincing evidence than is required for other topics while simultaneously being impeded by lack of funding, recognition, and dogmatic journal editors (e.g., Cardeña, 2015).

To propose a simile is not the purpose of this editorial, though, but to highlight the at-times neglected contribution by women to the field (Alvarado, 1989). I encouraged Carlos Alvarado to write a profile of the extraordinary Eleanor Sidgwick, a foundational figure of psychical research and mathematical analyst for early endeavors of the field, besides being a Principal at Newham College in Cambridge. Some years ago, I found out about her in an authoritative treatise on the founders of psychical research (Gauld, 1968), and read some of her very lucid papers and monographs (e.g., Sidgwick, 1885; 1915). Her clear and sharp reasoning weighed very carefully the evidence for and against various phenomena before arriving to a position, a strategy that I wish many more pro- and anti-psi authors would follow. Yet, most accounts of the early days of psychical research emphasize the contributions of men such as her husband, Henry Sidgwick, Myers, James, and a few others while, and this will come as no surprise to many of my readers, neglecting or undervaluing the contributions by women.

Similarly, the attention paid to the landmark research on spontaneous events by Louisa E. Rhine (e.g., Rhine, L. E., 1977) pales in comparison to that paid to the experimental program of her husband Joseph Banks Rhine. And the list should be extended. Has the field fully acknowledged the essential early contributions of the "subjects" Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Leonard, and other women mediums/shamans? And where would the field be without the decades-long funding and organizational contribution of Eileen Garrett and her daughter and granddaughter through the Parapsychology Foundation? To these

should be added the extraordinary contributions on the psychology of psi by Gertrude Schmeidler (e.g., Schmeidler, 1958) and Rhea White (White, 1977), as well as leading analyses and research in our days by Julie Beischel (e.g., Beischel & Schwartz, 2007), Emily Williams Kelly (e.g., 2007), Antonia Mills (e.g., 2014), Julia Mossbridge (e.g., Mossbridge, Tressoldi, & Utts, 2012), Marilyn Schlitz (e.g., Schlitz, Wiseman, Watt, & Radin, 2006), Jessica Utts (e.g., 2015), Caroline Watt (e.g., 2016), and Nancy Zingrone (e.g., 1988), among others. Some of them participated in a Parapsychology Foundation meeting in 1991 dedicated to “Women in Parapsychology,” which also included two contributions by a dear friend, the one-of-a-kind anthropologist Ruth-Inge Heinze (Coly & White, 1994). Currently 40% of the Associate Editors of the *JP* are women, and this editorial is a small token of gratitude and acknowledgement to all women, past and present, in the field.

Besides the historical piece on Eleanor Sidgwick (and expect more historical reviews in future issues of the *JP*), this issue also contains the Abstracts from the 61st Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association, including reports of successful psi studies and analyses (obrigado and gracias to Everton de Oliveira Maraldi and Ramsés D’León Macías for sending the abstracts), an empirical paper by John Palmer on dissociation and psi (a link that is very complex but deserves further attention), and a research note by Ian Tierney, Caroline Watt, and Anna Flores proposing that a shortening of perceived time may predict psi performance. Stanley Krippner provides an obituary for the researcher Michael Persinger, who contributed studies on geomagnetic variables and psi performance, and is probably most famous for his “God’s helmet,” although the effects he reported seem to be at least partly due to experimenter effects (Granqvist et al., 2005). Rex Stanford, commissioned by the previous editor, offers a very thorough discussion of a book proposing a transcendent nature of the mind, and this issue also includes shorter reviews by Erlendur Haraldsson, Gerhard Mayer, and Tom Ruffles on books dealing with ostensible reincarnation, coincidences, and outstanding Icelandic and Polish mediums. The issue closes with a letter by Nancy Zingrone and Carlos Alvarado underlining the importance of knowing the history of the field. Enjoy!

Newsflash: As we were going to press we received the Call for Papers for the 62nd Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association in Paris, France (July 4-6th 2019), with an earlier-than-usual deadline of February 4th. See: https://parapsych.org/articles/0/464/2019_pa_convention_call_for_papers.aspx

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