

seen. Few Qigong texts have a bibliography or footnotes, so that it becomes impossible for the reader to check and validate information. This may be the typical Chinese format, but it is quite inadequate from a western viewpoint because there is neither the scientific security upon which to build nor sufficient experimental details for exact replication of the experiment. I applaud Cohen for clearly seeing this weakness in all the previous work, and for having gone “the extra miles” in trying to correct this deficiency in “The Way of Qigong.”

From a science of subtle energies viewpoint, it is crucial that this growing body of rich experimental data be communicated in a format that allows critical evaluation because it is clearly providing robust physical domain correlates of subtle domain activity in the vacuum.

Cohen provides a full and very readable description of Qigong basics and procedures for enhancing one’s healing potential as well as a graceful recitation of benefits and dangers of Qigong. He beautifully describes the Qigong lifestyle, and one feels that it is a description of his own life pattern. Clearly, his many years of disciplined practice have created such structural development in his subtle domain bodies that his consciousness dances the dance of life from a high perspective adding quality to everything he touches. Such “added value” is definitely apparent in this book, and I do not hesitate to strongly recommend it to anyone.

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Parapsychology, Philosophy and Spirituality: A Postmodern Exploration
by David Ray Griffin. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press,
1997, 327 pp., (pb).

The author, who is Professor of Theology at Claremont Graduate School, deplores the extent to which most scientists and, indeed, most theologians are content to ignore the evidence for the paranormal. Indeed, he confesses that “I myself was ignorant of the scientific study of these things until 1981,” and then very graciously mentions a book by this reviewer (Beloff, 1962) as having first alerted him to its importance. “The evidence for the genuineness of interactions that are now called paranormal,” he declares, “points to the need for a postmodern philosophy.”

I have never used the word “postmodern” myself, but I take it to signify that something is ripe for a change as we approach the new century. Here it suggests that the dominant materialist metaphysic has been discredited and should be replaced with a worldview that would embrace the paranormal.

Under the heading, “White Crows Abounding,” the author selects for our delectation some of the plums from the annals of psychical research. Then,

under the heading, “The Mind-Body Relation and the Possibility of Life after Death,” he criticizes the materialist-epiphenomenalist view of the mind-brain relationship, and defends a Whiteheadian type of dualism that would allow for a post-mortem existence. The next three chapters discuss some of the evidence for survival from “Mediumistic Messages,” cases of reincarnation and possession, and cases of post-mortem apparitions. He then looks at out-of-the-body and near-death experiences, defending the “extrasomatic” as against the “intrasomatic” interpretation favored by materialists such as Susan Blackmore.

Finally, there is a chapter, “Parapsychology and Postmortem Spirituality,” in which he defends his own brand of naturalistic theism against both supernaturalistic theism and atheism.

This is a hefty tome, and the reader must be prepared to be patient with an author who is so scrupulous that he rarely makes a statement without mentioning all the other statements that could be made on the question at issue. However, perseverance will be repaid since the author has much to say that is worth pondering and has clearly immersed himself in the relevant literature. That being said, I must take issue with him on two important topics on which we do not see eye-to-eye.

The first concerns precognition. Quoting a passage from the commonsense philosopher, Antony Flew, he roundly declares: “...the notion of precognition involves a self-contradiction and is therefore a logical *impossibility*” (author’s italics) or, as the author himself puts it: “If belief in paranormal influence really did entail acceptance of this “backward causation” then the worldview suggested by the evidence for parapsychology would be anti-scientific, even anti-rational” (p. 35). It is most unfortunate therefore that he does not quote from Bob Brier, whose book (Brier, 1974) he mentions in a footnote, who demonstrates convincingly that, despite Flew, there is nothing illogical in the idea of backward causation as implied in the concept of precognition. Thus one may say that A is a cause of B if B would not have occurred but for A. Normally, of course, A precedes B. The fact that with precognition A follows B makes it indeed paranormal but in no sense illogical. Furthermore, the idea that, if we were to allow for precognition, we would be acknowledging a deterministic universe in which nothing we can do will make any difference is unnecessary if we allow that precognition relates to a *conditional* future, not to some inexorable fate. Considering that the experimental evidence for pre-cognition is not much inferior to the experimental evidence for contemporaneous ESP (Honorton & Ferrari, 1989), parapsychologists will, I feel sure, be relieved that they will not now have to abandon this major category of *psi*.

My second quarrel with the author concerns his dismissal of Cartesian dualism in favor of what, following his mentor, Whitehead, he calls “panexperientialism.” Although the author believes firmly in mind-brain interaction as

Note: The Chapters 10-14 are really excellent and provide challenging material for those few who have professional positions which allow them to think freely to a new paradigm in physics.

against mind-brain identism, he believes that our brain-cells are themselves sentient, indeed that everything in the universe that qualifies as an “individual” is somehow sentient. This is, indeed, a hypothetical possibility that we should not overlook, and it has the special advantage of overcoming the “emergence problem,” the question of where in the course of evolution consciousness arises. Nevertheless, it imposes a heavy strain on our credulity. What sort of a mental life does a brain cell possess and, what goes on in the mind of an atom or a molecule that makes them different from either subatomic particles or mere aggregates like chairs and tables?

Yet the author is driven to embrace this weird panpsychism at whatever cost because, as he puts it “How can two things that are totally unlike be thought to interact causally with each other?” (p. 104) or, again “How could a ghost, conceived as a purely nonphysical entity, possibly interact with a body, understood as a machine composed of purely physical nuts and bolts?” (p. 105).

To this question this reviewer would like to pose a counter-question: By what law of logic or of science are we to infer that if two things have nothing in common they cannot interact? When Einstein proposed that the presence of matter could distort the space-time continuum, no one, as far as I know, objected that matter, space and time are distinct concepts that have nothing in common. Whether our volitions can or cannot affect our actions (as both author and reviewer maintain) is for us to decide on the basis of the evidence both normal and paranormal, it is not made any more comprehensible by postulating, as the author does, that our brain cells and our limbs are, in some peculiar sense, themselves mental.

So much for my criticism. But I hope readers of the JSE will get hold of a copy of David Griffin’s thought-provoking book and decide for themselves which of us is right or wrong on these fraught issues.

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High Strangeness: UFOs from 1960 through 1979. The UFO Encyclopedia, Volume 3, by Jerome Clark. Published by Omnigraphics, Inc., 1996, 777 pages, ISBN 1-55888-742-3, \$95.

High Strangeness is the third volume in Jerome Clark’s *The UFO Encyclopedia*. Clark, who is Editor of the *International UFO Reporter* (a publication of