

substantial arguments for positive metaphysical soil in Kant's pre-critical writings.

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Basic Research in Parapsychology by K. R. Rao. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001. 408 pp. \$39.95 (paper). ISBN 0-7864-1008-6.

Parapsychology is a difficult subject for the interested novice to become familiar with. Few university libraries subscribe to any of the main journals in the field (fewer still take all of them) and none of these periodicals is readily available through full-text subscription services such as Science Direct. Hopefully this latter will be addressed in time. The problem of availability is compounded by the discipline's natural inclination to the esoteric—which other subject would have as one of its principal outlets an annual convention Proceedings with a print run so small as to be virtually inaccessible to the general public?

Yet an increasing number of institutions are offering parapsychology courses as part of undergraduate curricula, so that there may be a growing demand for well-written and considered support materials that would encourage a balanced treatment of the evidence. A number of textbooks, such as Irwin's (1999) *Introduction to Parapsychology*, Radin's (1997) *The Conscious Universe*, and Broughton's (1991) *Parapsychology: The Controversial Science* represent admirable attempts to meet that demand, but of course these are necessarily general and can only serve as a substitute for access to original sources. Parapsychology certainly needs an anthology of key journal papers such as Dr K. R. Rao's *Basic Research in Parapsychology*, and this updated and expanded edition must be broadly welcomed.

The book has been substantially increased during revision; from 264 pages to 408, and from 16 chapters describing 15 papers to 19 chapters of 18 papers. The choice of material has also changed somewhat, with some empirical papers making way for summary reviews that allow the collection to cover yet more ground. Nevertheless, I admit that I do not envy Rao's task in reducing the achievements of an experimental science, which according to the author began with Rhine's arrival at Duke in 1927 (though others might place it much earlier) and has consisted of thousands of contributions, to a "representative" collection that takes up fewer than 20 chapters. Any manageable collection of papers must necessarily involve some tough decisions about what to include and what to leave out, and inevitably will not be to the taste of all readers. It would be churlish to point to the omission of one or other favourite paper. However, in

introducing the material Rao does set out his objectives for the book and it seems reasonable to give an assessment of how well these are met by this particular constellation of exemplary articles.

One aim of the book is to illustrate the diversity of procedures used in parapsychology, reflecting major trends and bringing the reader up to date with current approaches. According to the preface, the book is "addressed to those who wish to get to know the state of the art in experimental parapsychology and who desire to carry out an experiment on their own and are looking for viable experimental procedures and promising areas of research" (pp. 1–2). This is a very laudable aim. But why then are so many studies included that are so old? This gives the impression of a stagnant field, when if anything it could be claimed that parapsychology is too fashion conscious, as the vogue dictates that the most interesting or promising work is now with the Ganzfeld, now with DMILS, now with the psychomanteum, now with presentiment, and so on. Some of the papers in this collection can not really be considered to be especially cutting edge (though they may have been at the time), such as the classic Pearce-Pratt series and Fahler and Cadoret's study of hypnosis, both of which employed forced choice ESP tests that are rarely used today. Others do not seem practicable for the typical reader, such as Child's description of the Maimonides dream research programme and Schlitz and Wiseman's use of electrodermal activity to assess staring detection. There may generally be a trade-off between immediate practicability and state-of-the-artness that stymies Rao's hopes for the book, though exceptions in this collection might include Schlitz and Gruber's transcontinental remote viewing study and Rao, Dukhan and Rao's free response ESP tests with practitioners of yoga and meditation. Surprisingly, some of the papers in this collection offer too little detail of procedure to allow replication even where resources permit, such as Honorton's original Ganzfeld meta-analysis and Nelson and Radin's *very* brief overview of random event generator-based PK experiments (incidentally, it is not clear why this extended abstract was preferred to the fuller paper that subsequently was published in *Foundations of Physics*).

If the book is really intended as a how-to guide then I fear that it will struggle in competition with works by Rupert Sheldrake and Sue Blackmore who both have a gift for making academic findings accessible and for translating them into intuitive practical activities. These authors have benefited from not having to give a comprehensive treatment of their subject, but rather have the liberty of simply choosing what they think will be the most interesting strands of work to focus on. If, on the other hand, it is more important that *Basic Research in Parapsychology* constitutes a survey of the state of the art, then I fear that too many areas of current interest are missing; I might have expected to find representative studies of DMILS (as distinct from staring detection, which does feature), presentiment effects, clinical studies of distant healing, psychomanteum work, studies of brain states and psi, the Global Consciousness Project, recent tests of professional psychics and mediums, or PK in games, for example.

More broadly, it could be argued that if the book is truly to be a sampler of research in parapsychology, Rao needs to conceptualise research as consisting of more than just experimentation. One might have been led to expect such a broadening as the book changed title from its first to second editions, from "basic experiments" to "basic research," and Rao notes (p. 1) that he was concerned to "illustrate diverse procedures and broadly reflect the major trends of psi research". I would have therefore welcomed chapters that introduced spontaneous cases or discussed explanatory models of near death experiences, ostensible reincarnation, apparitional experiences (within and without the psychomanteum), and poltergeists. This can be done without having a negative effect upon academic credibility—see, for example, Houran and Lange's (2001) excellent *Hauntings and Poltergeists: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. I am sure that despite their methodological difficulties some reference to field work with psychics and mediums would be warranted. I would also have been interested in surveys of beliefs and experiences, in particular if they shed light on the social and psychological impact that these might have (see the recent interest in links with childhood trauma and with schizotypy, for example).

A major strength of the book is Rao's introductory chapter which admirably overviews the historical context for the research that is included and offers a framework rationale for the choice of articles. Interestingly this includes reference to early work of the SPR in England and of European researchers such as Janet, Richet and Fasiliev, although the parapsychology novice may be forgiven for concluding that it is now solely an American pursuit, since virtually all included papers were originally conducted in America and published in American journals (the exception is Rao's own paper, which can be found in the *Indian Journal of Parapsychology*). Has nothing of note been published in the *Journal and Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, the *European Journal of Parapsychology*, the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, the *Revue Métapsychique*, *Luce e Ombra*, or *Revista Argentina de Psicología Paranormal*, for example? It would have been useful to have an inkling of the international nature of parapsychology.

The introduction has been expanded to incorporate introductory material that in the first edition was to be found at the beginning of each chapter. This works well in terms of providing a more elegant synthesis of the research strands represented in the collected papers, but nevertheless seems to me to be a mistake. This is because it presumes that readers will read the book from start to finish or will be able to dip into the introduction prior to tackling any particular chapter. The best Readers in Psychology that I have used previously with undergraduates (such as Banyard & Grayson, 1996, Gross, 1999, and Hewstone, Manstead & Stroebe, 1997) take an opposing view, going to great lengths within each chapter to contextualise the work. Typically, they offer an initial background that identifies the impetus for the study or shows how innovative it may have been at the time (essentially arguing for the paper's

importance), and succeeds the study description with an account of what has happened since, whether the work has been replicated, how it has led to theory modification and so on. This kind of structure works better to emphasise the community of science and to illustrate the progressive nature of research—even in a field as underpopulated as parapsychology. Practically, they are easier for students to manage (or photocopy!). *Basic Research in Parapsychology* would benefit from being reorganised into such self-contained chapters that incorporate the editor's commentary and evaluation, along with recommended further reading for those sufficiently moved as to want to find out more or even replicate for themselves.

In conclusion, *Basic Research in Parapsychology* is a welcome second edition of a very worthwhile book that, despite limitations, does give a flavour of the range of experimental methods employed within parapsychology. It should prove to be a useful resource for those wishing to engage with original reports, particularly if used as a companion to a more traditional textbook introduction to the field.

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Alterations of Consciousness: An Empirical Analysis for Social Scientists by Imants Barušs. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2003. xii + 291 pp. \$39.95 (cloth). ISBN 1-557-989-931.

There is no denying that the current interest in consciousness has spilled over into the science behind altered states of consciousness. The American Psychological Association (APA) recently published a scholarly overview of the related area of anomalous experiences (Cardeña, Lynn, & Krippner, 2000), and