

stream view for decades. "It's because I was torn between two utterly incompatible views that I am finally able to render my own verdict" (p. 15).

Many Scientific Explorers will empathize with Sobran's remarks about first encountering the unorthodox claims. "I entered a bizarre world of colorful people, totally unlike the academic world I'd known before"; "a great deal of the heretical literature is outlandish" (p. 2). "The bulk of the anti-Stratfordian literature has been produced by a few amateur scholars and a great many eccentrics" (p. 4). "Fallings-out among different anti-Stratfordian sects, or divisions within them, are common" (p. 3). While the unorthodox are prone to "the almost unavoidable errors of isolation from a stabilizing mainstream" (p. 6), the mainstream is marked by "the inability to acknowledge even the possibility of reasonable doubt" (p. 14).

I found this an enjoyable book, and offer this retrospective review as a useful companion to Diana Price's demonstration that the man from Stratford was not William Shakespeare, the author.

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Astrology in the Year Zero by Garry Phillipson. London: Flare Publications, 2000. 272 pp. £15.99 (paper). ISBN 0-9530261-9-1.

In *Astrology in the Year Zero*, Garry Phillipson takes the reader on a guided tour of the astrological world via interviews conducted between 1996 and 2000 with thirty-three of the world's leading western astrologers and researchers. However, this is not the "seven countries in seven days, look at the sights through the window of the bus" tour. This is an immersion experience led by an anthropologist who knows the language, culture, and mores of the natives. Furthermore, he has picked some of the most interesting and articulate members of the astrological community and knows how to elicit their ideas and perspectives on a complex topic. Rather than presenting long individual interviews, Phillipson structures the book around topics that he illuminates with excerpts from the interviews. The book presumes no prior knowledge of astrology. Although the astrologers sometimes speak in the terminology of their discipline, Phillipson provides an appendix that outlines the astrological chart, defining the astronomy behind the calculation of a horoscope and the various astrological terms. He also provides footnotes defining particular terms for the reader as appropriate.

Phillipson has the eclectic background needed to write this book. He graduated

from the University of East Anglia with honors in Philosophy but became dissatisfied with western approaches to philosophy. He then studied astrology, Buddhist philosophy, and the philosophical basis of astrology and obviously has the depth of knowledge needed to delve into the nuances of the subject and ask questions that elicit the most thoughtful answers from his subjects.

He starts by introducing us to the astrological world with several of the astrologers talking about how they became interested in astrology. This is a fascinating approach in any discipline, and one that we rarely see. What motivates people to become architects, nurses, or lawyers? Astrologers are human and are "typical" in many respects, yet what drew them to devote their lives to studying a subject that is maligned throughout much of the western world? We find that every astrologer had his or her unique moment of encountering astrology, but one theme that runs through them is curiosity about the world, a desire to know how it works, and an urge to understand. Yet these astrologers often made the conscious decision to reject the standard scientific worldview as unsatisfactory, choosing instead to pursue paths that are at cross purposes with the scientific worldview.

In the west, when most people think of astrology, they think of "Sun-sign" astrology—the daily horoscope column in the newspaper. Phillipson reveals the range of perspectives among astrologers about Sun-sign columns, providing the first glimpse into the fact that this community is not homogenous. Astrologers are divided on the topic of Sun-sign astrology. Many regard it as a gross simplification that contributes to a negative image of astrology among the public. Others see it as a way to introduce the public to natal astrology, perhaps piquing interest in consulting an astrologer. Furthermore, among astrologers who write Sun-sign columns, there is a range of astrological techniques, and several of the astrologers discuss their rationale for using their preferred techniques.

The next stop on the tour is an interesting choice. Rather than discussing natal astrology, the progression that many people make from Sun-sign astrology, Phillipson interviews several astrologers who specialize in business or financial astrology; they use astrology to advise clients on timing for business deals or predicting stock price movements for investment purposes. In contrast to vague Sun-sign descriptions, business and financial astrology require precision, and the outcomes can be measured in tangible (monetary) terms. However, I found the chapter somewhat unsatisfactory, as it merely presents a series of anecdotes, without sufficient technical detail to permit a reader who is conversant in astrology to evaluate the methods. For the reader who is looking to see if there is something to astrology, this chapter is not likely to provide convincing evidence.

Chapters five through seven address the areas where most practicing astrologers spend the majority of their time: with individual clients. In particular, chapter five gives a good overview of the three most common types of work with clients: character analysis, forecasting trends in clients' lives, and answering specific questions from clients (e.g., "when will I get married?"). Different

techniques are used for each type of question. In this chapter, the astrologers present more abstract reflections that provide insight on their practices. Many astrologers function as therapists; in fact, some are also trained, licensed therapists. They discuss how astrology allows them to quickly gain an understanding and empathy for the client that often takes months or years of standard therapy.

In these chapters, we begin to gain insight into the astrologers' worldviews, the symbolic—rather than physically causal—assumptions held by most of them about how astrology works and the clash of these worldviews with the dominant materialist worldview. This leads into chapter eight, in which many of the astrologers discuss their doubts about astrology. None of these astrologers claim that astrological interpretation is "exact" in any sense and many have had the experience of getting a "right" reading from the wrong chart. A client is thrilled with the insightful reading, and later informs the astrologer that he had the wrong data—the client was actually born in a different year. These experiences produce a "crisis of faith" among many astrologers and some of the astrologers actually stopped practicing. For others, they find these experiences humbling but they take solace: "the stars impel, they don't compel."

Chapter eight provides the transition to two chapters on research into astrology, chapters nine and ten, which may be of most interest to readers of this journal. Phillipson approached Geoffrey Dean, who is well-known in astrological research circles, to organize the material on research. Dean, a former astrologer who experienced a crisis of faith, and Arthur Mather, another disillusioned astrologer, compiled scientific evidence for and against astrology published in *Recent Advances in Natal Astrology: A Critical Review 1900–1976* (Dean & Mather, 1977). For these two chapters, Dean assembled a panel of researchers including Mather; Ivan Kelly, chair of CSICOP's Astrology Subcommittee; Rudolf Smit, a former astrologer and editor of *Correlation*, the peer reviewed journal of astrological research published by the Astrological Association of Great Britain; and Suitbert Ertel, Professor Emeritus of psychology who has done extensive investigations of the Gauquelin planetary effects (Ertel & Irving, 1996).

For these chapters, Dean coordinated the answers of the panel to the questions. The result is a change of tone in these two chapters—they present a monolithic perspective that is allegedly shared by all of the researchers, rather than a comparison and contrast of subtle differences among participants as is presented in the previous chapters. There is little nuance here. Reading these chapters leaves the impression that these researchers have seen (or done) all of the research and the results are unanimous: "the chance of a positive result strong enough to overturn the present predominantly negative evidence seems remote" (p. 165). Dean's treatment of this material is especially one-sided when it comes to the most scientifically interesting results: the Gauquelins' research and its durability under the most severe attempts to find flaws in the methods. There is a one-sentence nod to Ertel's extensive validation of the Gauquelins' findings, immediately followed by Dean's unproven conjecture that the results are due to parental tampering:

Research by one of us (Ertel) has found that, despite some deficiencies, the basic findings withstand rigorous tests . . . Research by another of us (Dean) has found that they may have an ordinary explanation, hitherto unsuspected, in which case it would be premature to conclude that they are relevant to astrology. Real yes, relevant perhaps not. The reason is a simple one—the Gauquelin data show evidence of manipulation by parents. For example there is a consistent deficit of births on the 13th. But if parents can manipulate dates then why not hours and thus planetary risings and culminations? So the Gauquelin findings might be due to parents, not planets. (p. 144)

Ertel has refuted this explanation for the Gauquelin results over several articles in *Correlation* and has thoroughly deconstructed Dean's thesis on his web site (Ertel, 2003). Yet it is presented here without further discussion, as if to imply that there is no need to concern ourselves with astrology's most persistent white crow.

This monolithic perspective also comes with a rather condescending tone that often infantilizes astrologers. (e.g., "What we do is no different to [sic] what astrologers do in that we both make observations. But we are more careful. In fact, hugely more careful." p. 131; "The only thing that might persuade astrologers to disbelieve in astrology is the informed critical mind . . ." p. 136; "The single most important factor in helping astrologers be careful might be an improvement in their general education." p. 158.) Readers who are familiar with organized skeptics' attacks on anomalies research in other areas may recognize the rhetoric of true belief in that which "science knows" and the thinly disguised *ad hominem* attack on their ignorant opponents.

The negative tone of the research chapters provides a springboard for Phillipson's last two chapters. In chapter eleven, the astrologers respond to the criticisms and we find that they are not as uneducated as implied by the researchers. Some were trained as scientists prior to becoming astrologers and are well aware of shortcomings in much of the research that has been conducted by scientists who are ignorant of astrology. Many are aware of the tactics of organized skeptics and know that a veil of open-mindedness is often a cloak for prejudice against astrology. They also know that no scientific research is conducted without bias. Phillipson draws on the work of Henry Bauer (1994) to point out that objectivity and open-mindedness in science are illusions, and he acknowledges the discomfort that humans (be they astrologers or scientists) have with saying "we do not know."

The final chapter, "What is Astrology—Science or Magic?" brings the fact that we do not know into sharper relief. Some astrologers see astrology as an infant "science," in the sense of science as a rational way of understanding. Other astrologers see astrology as symbolic, or magic, much like the I Ching. The mind of the astrologer is a critical component and the "objective" planets alone are not sufficient; it takes the human mind to derive *meaning* from the astrological symbolism. Phillipson sums this up as a conflict between a mechanistic worldview and an organismic worldview and leaves us with the conclusion that "those who believe in astrology find

their belief supported by experience; those who doubt find their doubts confirmed" (p. 196).

If one is interested in studying astrology as an anomaly, then one needs to engage with the community of astrologers at some level, either in person or at least through reading books. While it is possible to learn astrology through books, it is through interaction with astrologers that one gains the understanding necessary to investigate astrology. If you are seeking definite answers about astrology (i.e., is it true or false?), this book is not likely to satisfy. However, if you are seeking a look inside the astrological culture and worldview, then climb aboard; *Astrology in the Year Zero* is a fascinating tour.

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Immortal Remains: The Evidence for Life after Death by Stephen E. Braude. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003. 352 pp. \$24.95 (paper). ISBN 0-7425-1472-2.

Within the pages of *Immortal Remains: The Evidence for Life after Death*, Stephen Braude, professor and chair of the philosophy department at the University of Maryland, discusses rival hypotheses in light of the evidence suggesting survival. Using some of the best cases from the vast literature on mediumship, reincarnation, possession, hauntings, out of body experiences (OBEs), near death experiences, apparitions, and transplant cases, he teases apart those occasions when it might be more appropriate to attribute postmortem survival rather than unusual capacities of the living to the phenomena presented. At the same time, he demonstrates just how difficult it is to rule out super-psi explanations with the same material. After carefully weighing the evidence, Braude concludes "with little assurance but with some justification, that the evidence provides a reasonable basis for believing in