

Twin Telepathy: The Psychic Connection by Guy Lyon Playfair. Vega, 2002. 160 pp. £8.99/\$9.95 (paper). ISBN 1-84333-686-3.

There are two themes in this slim volume. One is that twins provide especially good evidence for telepathy and the other is that this fact has been and continues to be ignored by parapsychology researchers. The first is not a new idea. Researchers have often simply assumed this to be the case based on a few anecdotes, but Playfair provides us with the most comprehensive survey of the anecdotes and the limited experimental evidence to date. The second theme is also true, but I am less sure that Playfair's arguments (and occasional harangues) are likely to change that. Ultimately the best case that can be made is that twins seem to be incrementally better than non-twins, but they do not provide a royal road to understanding telepathy. Most twins are not especially telepathic, and many non-twins are quite telepathic. While the lay reader (to whom this book is primarily aimed) will find ample information to confirm his or her suspicions about twins, the professional researcher is not likely to be persuaded that the study of twins will speed our understanding of how telepathy works.

There are 10 chapters in the book, most of which deal with twin telepathy as such, though there is much on telepathy and ESP research in general. There is the obligatory obeisance to quantum mechanics in the final chapter, which adds little to the general thesis. As one expects with Playfair's books, the research behind *Twin Telepathy* is formidable, and even if one is not persuaded by his arguments, his scholarship, coupled with the notes and bibliography, once again provides an invaluable contribution to the field.

Twin Telepathy is an easy and entertaining read for the layperson, but the professional as well will find much that he or she did not know about twins and telepathy in this book. I certainly did; perhaps others will, and they may be tempted to pick up the gauntlet that Playfair has thrown down before the research community.

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The Antipodes of the Mind: Charting the Phenomenology of the Ayahuasca Experience by Benny Shanon. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. 487 pp. £23.50 (paper). ISBN 0-19-925293-9.

The Antipodes of the Mind is a great book. It is a great book because it makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of consciousness through a detailed account of the phenomenology of experiences that occur during intoxication with the psychedelic ayahuasca.