

because (as Malkfan relates in Chapter 8) professor Richet had been sorry for being waylaid into a study of ectoplasms. After his retirement Capitaine Tizank published his reports under the title *L'Hôte Inconnu dans le Crime sans Cause*.

The editing of the book is excellent. It even includes an index, a rare treat in French publishing. Many readers will regret that the background of the authors is nowhere listed: such information would have helped in understanding the book's point of view. The overall writing follows a style that is scholarly without being ponderous or convoluted. Some passages do remain a bit obscure; witness this commentary on the impact of early psychical research on the definition of science:

If "la métapsychique" was a failure, this failure is the product of the construction of a frontier that defines more clearly the limits of the scientific field through a series of exclusions. This excluding process therefore had a counter-effect upon science and was accompanied by the creation of a tension inside the paradigm itself, always susceptible to relax itself for a recomposition. (p. 199)

Such tentative statements, awkwardly balanced between respectability and the temptation to confront the stalwarts of conservative "rationalism," lead only to more questions and are not especially helpful. No wonder, then, that the reader gets to the end of the book without a satisfactory definition of "L'Occulte." In spite of valiant efforts early in the volume to come to grips with definitions, terms such as "esotericism," "occultism" and "hermeticism" are sometimes used interchangeably, although they describe very different historical, physical and social phenomena. The problem of the possible relevance of occultism in science, and of the continuing confrontation within French science between students of the paranormal and their "rationalist" opponents, remains open for a new generation of experimental innovators to tackle.

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Unleashed: Of Poltergeists and Murder: The Curious Story of Tina Resch by William Roll, Ph.D., and Valerie Storey. Paraview Pocket Books, 2004. 309 pp. \$14.00 (paper). ISBN 0-7434-8294-8.

Unleashed is a captivating narrative of the highly publicized events surrounding Tina Resch, from the bizarre occurrences of apparent poltergeist activity in her Columbus, Ohio, home to the mysterious murder of her daughter less than six years later. These events had been previously documented in the form of newspaper articles and conference proceedings, as well as in a segment of *Unsolved Mysteries*. However, in this book, readers get a behind the scenes

look at the case through the eyes of William Roll, an Oxford-educated parapsychologist who acted as an investigator during the events of 1984 and as a friend during the tragedies that followed. With the assistance of creative writing teacher Valerie Storey, Roll's story takes on the tone of a novel, which readers will find easy to finish in just a few sittings and probably agree with the adage that truth is stranger than fiction.

The first half of the book is largely devoted to the flurry of unusual activity that took place over two weeks in the Resch home. The happenings began after Tina had an argument with her adoptive father, and ended when Roll and his assistant Kelly Powers left the home, taking Tina with them for further testing. There was a wide range of phenomena that took place in the home. Radios and TVs operated erratically (even while unplugged), the telephone lines became noisy, heavy furniture scooted to greet people, light switches flipped up and down without known human contact, and household objects flew about the house. During that brief period in the Resch home, flying objects had become mundane occurrences, while objects that stayed at rest became oddities. The events garnered the attention of many people in the community, including local religious leaders, journalists, and photographers, as well as the famous magician James Randi.

Roll and Powers arrived on the scene ten days after the events began, and immediately witnessed phenomena that could easily be attributed to trickery. It did not help matters that Tina was caught pulling over a lamp on camera during a press conference at the Resch home. However, after some time, Roll witnessed phenomena for himself that he took to be genuine, thus lending credence to some of the accounts of other observers. By the end of his investigation, he counted eighty-seven incidents that were vouched for by observers outside of the home, where he or other witnesses knew Tina's position and the location of the objects before they moved (p. 222).

Because of the frequency of the object movements, the book tends to become monotonous as the authors must constantly describe the "who, what, when, where, and why" of a multitude of similar incidents. Fortunately, the story does not end with those two weeks in the Resch home. Just as the narrative threatens to become tedious, the scene changes as Roll gains permission from Tina's parents to take her to North Carolina and later Florida for further study.

Previous to this development, readers might question Roll's motives. In the first half of *Unleashed*, it seems as if Tina is a mere subject in the investigator's eyes, but later Roll's actions quickly demonstrate that this was not the case. Tina was invited to participate in several parapsychological studies. Roll and his family opened their own home to the girl at the risk of having their own belongings destroyed. He also solicited the help of volunteer clinical psychologists to counsel Tina and get at the root of her apparent abilities, as well as the assistance of a medium who sought to help Tina bring her powers under conscious control. Overall, this was a well-rounded approach to the dual goal of helping a troubled teen and gathering information about her abilities.

It is not until the reader is through two-thirds of the book that Roll shares his ideas about the phenomena in a single, dizzying chapter. He attributes the phenomena to several overlapping triggers and causes: a stressful domestic environment, a geomagnetic storm, and the suggestion that Tina had a brain stem anomaly as well as a mild form of Tourette's Syndrome. In the end, Roll suspects that "Tina's RSPK (recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis) may have been a form of Tourette's where the tics and explosive behavior occurred outside of her body in the form of object movements and banging sounds" (p. 216). Because of the narrative tone of the book, Roll also enjoys the freedom to speculate on the mechanisms of psychokinesis and provides a short treatment on the possible physics behind the phenomena. Professionals and educated lay readers might find this chapter to be lacking the depth needed for such discussion, yet for the general reader, it might be too much. Attempting a chapter like this in a narrative is a difficult task, but the authors still manage to do it with grace.

The story picks up five years later when Tina, a wife and mother, calls Roll complaining of balls bouncing on their own; pieces of silverware bending in their drawer; and unexpected fires starting up in the bedroom, bathroom, and in her daughter Amber's crib. Afraid for her daughter and wanting to separate from her abusive husband, Tina moved to the same town as Roll in hopes of improving her life and giving her daughter a more promising future. Yet once again, she fell for the wrong man, and her daughter mysteriously died while under his supervision. In the end, Tina (now under the name Christina Boyer) was charged for her daughter's murder and agreed to a plea bargain. Despite Roll's many efforts to help her, she is now serving a life sentence for a crime that she maintains she did not commit.

Unleashed is a unique contribution to the literature on anomalous phenomena. Whereas many reports of case studies end when the investigators pack their bags, a much larger story is presented here. This book is not just about poltergeists and murder; it is also about the cooperation of professionals, the dynamics between witnesses and skeptics, and the friendship between a parapsychologist and his charge. Roll has investigated many landmark cases over the years, and while most professionals in the field of parapsychology are familiar with the details of these cases, the intricacies have been less accessible to the general public, simply by virtue of the extensive vocabulary required to understand them. It is my hope that Roll will be able to publish more books of this nature about his experiences in the field. Such writings are good for the science of parapsychology in terms of public scholarship, and likely to inspire the next generation of young scientists.

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