

would lead. His initial plan was to present cases quoted in toto, with points of coincidence and recurrent patterns emphasized (p. 129). However, along the way, he noticed a number of commonalities between NAD experiences and OOBEs (out of body experiences), and this apparent relationship became the focus of the books.

By the concluding section of Vol. 2, Rogo affirms his belief that "transcendental music is but another characteristic of the OOBEE and is in no way independent of it, even when the relationship is vague" (p. 96). According to his content analysis, both experiences manifest during similar mental states, and the type of music heard (i.e., choral vs. instrumental or melodic music vs. music without a discernable melody) coincides with the type of OOBEE (natural vs. enforced) reported. Rogo's analysis also uncovers what he calls a "crescendo effect" in the majority of the collected cases, in which experiencers report the volume of mysterious music gradually being heard, rising to full power, and receding again.

As much as Rogo would like to say that his study was written without bias (Vol. 1 p. 129), one may suspect that his prior interest in OOBEEs as well as his choice of secondary sources might have tempered his conclusions. Additionally, a call for accounts of experiences concerning "astral music" (p. 27) is likely to elicit reports from out-of-body experiencers. Still, it is admirable that someone so young, without having yet completed a formal education, would not only have the initiative to collect reports about little understood or discussed phenomena, but also have something meaningful to say about them. Thanks to the re-release of these books, which were long out of print, interest in NAD experiences might be renewed, and D. Scott Rogo might not have the first and final word on them.

ANNALISA VENTOLA

Columbus, Ohio

publicparapsychology.blogspot.com

Poltergeists: Examining Mysteries of the Paranormal by Michael Clarkson.
Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 2006. 220 pp. \$14.95 (paper). ISBN 1-55407-159-3

The German word *poltergeist* (literally meaning "noisy spirit") has traditionally been used to both label and describe a short-lived series of anomalous physical phenomena primarily involving the movement of objects without any apparent force acting upon them, which occurs repeatedly and spontaneously (knocking and rapping sounds are sometimes reported, as well). Parapsychologists instead use the term recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis (RSPK) based on the observation that the phenomena tend to occur in the presence of a certain individual (called the agent) and are, therefore, thought to involve an invol-

untary form of mind-matter interaction on the macroscopic scale. The phenomena seem to symbolically reflect some aspect of the strained relationship often found between the agent and others within their surroundings, further suggesting a psychological aspect to the poltergeist (Roll, 1972/2004, 2003).

The apparently "mysterious" nature of the poltergeist has captivated the general public for years through various depictions in television, film, and the print media, leading the public to continually raise questions on whether poltergeists are genuinely anomalous or elaborately fraudulent. Michael Clarkson, an investigative journalist from Toronto, aims this book toward the general public in attempt to help give it better answers. Clarkson is a healthy skeptic, approaching his topic with caution (apparent in his frequent use of words such as "reportedly" and "allegedly"), but in a way that is also open enough to consider the available evidence for informed debate. He is also the author of four previous books on stress and fear management, two topics that also happen to tie-in rather closely with the psychology of the RSPK agent, thereby leading him to this "unconventional" topic.

The book is divided into six main sections. The first section, consisting of four chapters, summarizes the current issues and theories on poltergeist disturbances, and discusses the possibility of fraud. The second section describes two relatively obscure poltergeist cases, one of which Clarkson became familiar with while working as a reporter in the Niagara Falls area. The third section describes the Tina Resch case, investigated in 1984 by William Roll (Roll & Storey, 2004). Section four discusses poltergeist cases in the UK, including Enfield and Sauchie. The fifth section describes cases from other parts of the world, including the Rosenheim case and three notable cases also investigated by Roll (1972/2004): Seaford, Olive Hill, and Miami. The last section of the book briefly reviews cases of macroscopic psychokinesis, including mention of well-known subjects such as Nina Kulagina, D. D. Home, Uri Geller, and Matthew Manning. Clarkson also reviews ostensibly paranormal cases that received a great deal of publicity (such as "The Amityville Horror" case, the "Exorcist" case, and "The Entity" case), not all of which clearly involved RSPK. He also lists popular films dealing with the paranormal, most of which again are not clearly poltergeist-related.

In general, Clarkson's book is a step up from other popular books on poltergeists that have been written directly for the general public (e.g., Stander & Schmolling, 1996) in terms of the information it contains. It does not tend to confuse poltergeist phenomena with haunting phenomena, which differ from each other in several respects despite their apparent similarity on the surface (see the Appendix in Roll, 1972/2004), nor does it overemphasize the traditional discarnate agency approach to the poltergeist, a bygone notion that should well be left behind. It also discusses well-documented cases that have not been given adequate treatment or even any mention in other popular books, such as the Tina Resch case. Although labeling poltergeists as "paranormal" (as in the subtitle of the book) is a typical method used for drawing the popular reader's attention, the term is exceptionally broad

and may also evoke an impression of spookiness to the poltergeist that does not seem fitting given what is currently known about its nature. This is only a minor drawback and does not take away from the adequate introduction to the topic that the book provides to the popular reader. Those readers with a more scholarly interest in poltergeist phenomena should also read William Roll's (1972/2004) classic book *The Poltergeist*.

Some of the best evidence so far for an apparent interaction between mind and matter comes from the three-decade microscopic psychokinesis (PK) database with random event generators, though interpretation of some of this evidence is still under debate (Bosch, Steinkamp, & Boller, 2006; Jahn et al., 1997; Radin & Nelson, 1989, 2003; Radin, Nelson, Dobyns, & Houtkooper, 2006a, 2006b; Schub, 2006). Cases of recurrent spontaneous PK add another line of consideration to the mind-matter issue from a much larger, macroscopic scale. If the cases presented in Clarkson's book are what they seem to be, then they may give the general public some inkling of a possible relation between mind and matter that it seems parapsychologists are only just beginning to understand on many different scales.

BRYAN J. WILLIAMS

University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico
bwilliams74@hotmail.com

References

- Bosch, H., Steinkamp, F., & Boller, E. (2006). Examining psychokinesis: The interaction of human intention with random number generators—A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin* 132(4), July. pp. 497–523.
- Jahn, R. G., Dunne, B. J., Nelson, R. D., Dobyns, Y. H., & Bradish, G. J. (1997). Correlations of random binary sequences with pre-stated operator intention: A review of a 12-year program. *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 11.3, pp. 345–367.
- Radin, D. I., & Nelson, R. D. (1989). Evidence for consciousness-related anomalies in random physical systems. *Foundations of Physics* 19(12), December. pp. 1499–1514.
- Radin, D. I., & Nelson, R. D. (2003). A meta-analysis of mind-matter interaction experiments from 1959 to 2000. In W. B. Jonas & C. C. Crawford (Eds.) *Healing, Intention, and Energy Medicine: Science, Research Methods and Clinical Implications* (pp. 39–48). Edinburgh, UK: Churchill Livingstone.
- Radin, D., Nelson, R., Dobyns, Y., & Houtkooper, J. (2006a). Reexamining psychokinesis: Comment on Bosch, Steinkamp, and Boller (2006). *Psychological Bulletin* 132(4), July. pp. 529–532.
- Radin, D., Nelson, R., Dobyns, Y., & Houtkooper, J. (2006b). Assessing the evidence for mind-matter interaction effects. *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 20(3), Fall. pp. 361–374.
- Roll, W. G. (1972/2004). *The Poltergeist*. Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday, Inc. (Reprinted by Paraview Special Editions)
- Roll, W. G. (2003). Poltergeists, electromagnetism, and consciousness. *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 17(1), Spring. pp. 75–86.
- Roll, W. G., & Storey, V. (2004). *Unleashed—Of Poltergeists and Murder: The Curious Story of Tina Resch*. New York: Paraview Pocket Books.

- Schub, M. H. (2006). A critique of the parapsychological random number generator meta-analyses of Radin and Nelson. *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 20(3), Fall. pp. 402–419.
- Standar, P., & Schmolling, P. (1996). *Poltergeists and the Paranormal: Fact Beyond Fiction*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications.

Ghost Hunters: William James and the Search for Scientific Proof of Life After Death by Deborah Blum. Penguin Press, 2006. 384 pp. \$25.95. (hardcover). ISBN 1-594-200-904.

I have a good friend who earned his Ph.D. in chemistry from Harvard. He's a college dean and professor of oceanography at a name-brand U.S. university. He's authored textbooks in his field of research. In short, he's the very model of a modern, major-league scientist. He tolerates my membership in SSE, but has no interest himself in joining or reading my *JSE*. He doesn't believe in ghosts and scoffs at mediums who claim to contact the dead. He steadfastly refuses to look at any evidence offered to the contrary. To him, it's all unscientific bunkum.

He's also a practicing Catholic. In church every Sunday, he fervently recites a creed that affirms his belief in scientifically impossible phenomena—a virgin birth, the magical changing of bulk table wine into real blood. More to the point, he believes all people rise from the dead (along with their actual physical bodies), and he believes in the existence of an invisible world populated with angels, devils and demons who share it with his deceased grandmother and assorted others.

The contradiction eludes him, and frustrates me.

He believes in an afterlife but won't look for, or at, collected scientific evidence suggesting its reality. Compartmentalization is his solution to the triumph of science over traditional religion, a process that started with the Renaissance, accelerated in the Victorian age, and ended in dominance in the early 20th century. Reason rules unchallenged from Monday through Saturday, faith on Sunday. His disconnect epitomizes the uneasy accommodation existing today between faith and science. The two protagonists divide up territory like Mafiosi and try to avoid interfering in each others' business.

Harvard professor William James, the father of American psychology, together with a small band of exceptional, Nobel Award-winning European scientists and thinkers hoped to avoid this separate-boxes solution. They made a valiant attempt at the turn of the last century to produce scientific proof for religion's boldest assertion, which would allow faith and science to share a common, consensual reality. Their melancholy story is told with admirable skill by author and career science writer Deborah Blum in *Ghost Hunters: William James and the Search for Scientific Proof of Life After Death*.

Three years of serious research shine through these pages. A professor of science journalism at the University of Wisconsin, Blum read widely; worked with primary documents; focuses on the best evidence (mediums like Leonora