

- Barrington, M. R., Stevenson, I., & Weaver, Z. (2005). *A World in a Grain of Sand: The Clairvoyance of Stefan Ossowiecki*. McFarland.
- Deonna, W. (1932). *De la Planète Mars en Terre Sainte: Art et Subconscient*. Paris: E. de Boccard.
- Gaskill, M. (2001). *Hellish Nell: Last of Britain's Witches*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Le Maléfan, P. (2002). Richet chasseur de fantômes: L'épisode de la Villa Carmen. In Bensaude-Vincent, B., & Blondel, C. (Eds.), *Des Savants Face à l'Occulte 1870–1940* (pp. 173–200). Paris: La Découverte.
- Mulacz, P. (1999). Eleonore Zugun: The re-evaluation of a historic RSPK case. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 63, 15–45.
- Ochorowicz, J. (1910). Les rayons rigides et les rayons XX: Études expérimentales. *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* 20, 97–105, 129–136, 172–178, 204–209, 225–231, 257–263, 295–302, 336344, 357–370.
- Randall, J. L. (2003). Francis Ward Monck and the problems of physical mediumship. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 67, 243–259.
- Shamdasani, H. (1994). Encountering Hélène: Théodore Floumoy and the genesis of subliminal psychology. In Floumoy, T., *From India to the Planet Mars: A Case of Multiple Personality with Imaginary Languages* (pp. xi–li). Princeton University Press.

La Ricerca Psicica: Fatti ed Evidenze degli Studi Parapsicologici [Psychical Research: Fact and Evidence in Parapsychological Studies] by Massimo Biondi. Rome: Il Minotauro, 2004. 142 pp. €18.00 (paper). ISBN 88-8073-076-2.

Massimo Biondi, an Italian physician and writer on medical and scientific topics, is known for his writings about a variety of parapsychological topics. Readers interested in Biondi's work may consult his autobiographical essay (<http://www.pflyceum.org/l20.html>), which presents a bibliography of his published work in parapsychology, including his historical study *Tavoli e Medium: Storia dello Spiritismo in Italia* (1988). The book reviewed here, *La Ricerca Psicica: Fatti ed Evidenze degli Studi Parapsicologici*, is a fine introduction to modern parapsychology.

In the first introductory chapter, Biondi discusses the phenomena studied by parapsychologists as well as such topics as terminology and the history of the field. He admits that after more than a hundred years of work, parapsychology remains a field in which "reliability and validity are not universally admitted" (p. 15). Parapsychological work, Biondi states, is "criticized in terms of methodological and ideological considerations, its own existence as a separate research area is questioned" (p. 15).

The book is an excellent introduction to modern parapsychology, and one that pays attention to case studies, experiments, and other aspects of the field. After the introduction, Biondi discusses parapsychological phenomena in several chapters, the first of which is about "anomalous cognition." He starts by discussing spontaneous cases, such as the case collections of ESP (extra-sensory perception) phenomena of Gurney, Myers, and Podmore, L. E. Rhine, and Sannwald. There are also sections in the chapter about precognitive and out-of-body experiences.

Biondi devotes later chapters to apparitions, poltergeists, healing, and non-recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis. The latter, a topic seldom discussed in

parapsychology books, includes physical effects corresponding to someone's death, such as the stopping of clocks.

The chapter about investigations and experiments focuses on both case studies and experimental work and includes different types of studies and approaches. The chapter on experimental findings is equally varied. In addition to classic topics, such as ESP cards, psi-missing, and decline and sheep-goat effects, the author discusses meta-analyses and geomagnetic correlates of ESP.

There are also chapters about parapsychological counseling, ethical aspects of parapsychology, and the social organization of the field. This includes research institutions, conventions journals, and the Italian parapsychological scene.

This book is well illustrated and includes many tables and graphs. For example, the chapter about apparitions has seven tables and the same number of figures. Some of the chapters have special sections separated from the text that elaborate on the topic in question. Some of these include discussions of spontaneous sensations of a sense of urgency, research on the Hampton Court haunting, conventional explanations of phenomena, dream ESP experiments, healing experiments, a case of precognitive dream, and a summary of the current situation of Italian parapsychology.

While comprehensive, the book does not cover all aspects of the field. Some omissions are discussions of theories as well as studies with mediums, near-death experiences, and reincarnation-type cases. I wish the author had included calls for references in the text. While he provides some references at the end of the book listed by chapter, readers unfamiliar with the literature will struggle to ascertain which references go with the information discussed in the text. Similarly, the source of the information presented in some tables and figures is not always indicated. But in fairness to the author, most of these omissions are intentional. Biondi informed me that the purpose of the book was to introduce parapsychology to a lay audience without theoretical interpretations and lists of reference sources to justify every point discussed in the text. Furthermore, the author did not include near-death experiences because in his opinion they are not part of parapsychology.

La Ricerca Psichica is one of the best introductions to modern parapsychology available today. Its clear and systematic presentation of information will provide a reliable guide to those interested in learning about the phenomena, research methods, and findings of modern parapsychology.

CARLOS S. ALVARADO

*Assistant Professor of Research in Psychiatric Medicine
Division of Perceptual Studies
Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences
University of Virginia Health System
P. O. Box 800152
Charlottesville, VA 22908
csa3m@virginia.edu*