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## BOUNDLESS MIND: COMING OF AGE IN PARAPSYCHOLOGY

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We are alive at a remarkable time in human history. Never before have so many different worldviews, belief systems, and cultures come into contact, interfacing with each other. Just yesterday I was walking through the park a block away from this hotel in Freiburg, Germany. I observed a Chinese man doing his Qigong exercises in one corner. As I walked with my son a little further, I saw a Muslim couple praying; the man stood looking east toward Mecca while the woman stood toward the west. It was a stylized production of something deep and culturally symbolic—and clearly distinct from the Qigong practitioner moving by himself on the lawn a little further away. It was also distinct from the young German boy who was playing an American Indian as he raced past a Sikh man dressed in his turban.

In the past, when people of difference came together, the world was a big enough place that they could diverge to the furthest reaches of the planet. Today the world appears smaller and smaller, and our opportunities to escape that which is different from ourselves are becoming more and more limited. Instead, we find that people with different ontologies and epistemologies are having to come to terms with each other. As a civilization we are having to deal with the fact that life is more complicated and that the nature of reality is much more multifaceted than anything we had previously understood from the narrow focus of our own cultural filters.

As I think now about the convergence of worldviews, I am aware of the kinds of successes we have had as a result of our own Western model of reality. We have cloned a sheep named Dolly and invented a computerized chess champion named Deep Blue. We now have access to the world's wisdom traditions through the World Wide Web. What is happening as a result of all of these rich opportunities? On the one hand, we find ourselves in a period of confusion and conflict as people have to face contradictions and seemingly irreconcilable differences. On the other hand, we also face opportunities for the birthing of new forms of human experience. As we are poised at the beginning of the 21st century, it is an opportunity for parapsychologists to play

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a fundamental role in speaking to this global situation and to this historical moment. It is a time of opportunity for us.

When I think about the human genome project, for example, I think about the remarkable success of the materialist paradigm—of the physicalist paradigm—that allows us to create a book that maps the human genome. The implications and possibilities from that mapping leave many, many things ahead for us in terms of our ability to diagnose and treat disease, as well as to make changes in future life forms.

But there are many questions left unanswered through an exclusively physicalist model of reality. As we have cultivated this remarkable set of knowledge-based and reason-based skills, there are questions we are not answering. What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to have emotion? What does it mean to have motivation, intention, and attention? All of these first-person experiences that we think of as uniquely our own are not addressed within the strictly physical dimensions of reality. In parapsychology, although we often do not think about ourselves as metaphysicians, we are in a position to arbitrate between these two dimensions of experience: the physical dimensions of reality and the metaphysical dimensions of experience.

#### *Learning our ABCs*

As I frame my talk tonight, I recall the delightful Presidential Address by Dean Radin last year. Dean used “Green Eggs and Ham” as his metaphor for describing the state of the field (Radin, 2000). Following his lead, I suggest that we go back to thinking about our place in terms of the basics—our ABCs.

A stands for Action. I believe it is time for us to own our social responsibility as participants in this evolving story of human complexity. I believe we have something to do in transforming the world, such that it becomes a more holistic, integral, and life-affirming scenario for future generations.

B stands for Boldness. Here I would ask all of us to think about the ways in which we have been beaten down by our interest in parapsychology. Have you ever felt you needed to apologize for your interest, particularly when surrounded by mainstream scientists? It is time for us to acknowledge that we are addressing some of the fundamental issues of our time or anytime in human history.

C stands for Context. And that is “storying.” It behooves us to see our data as relevant to larger social and political issues. We must answer the “so what” question by touching people at the level of what is important to them and their lives. This leads me to the context for my own participation in psi research.

#### COMING OF AGE IN PARAPSYCHOLOGY

My experience in this field has given me the opportunity to work with the best minds across a variety of testing paradigms. Approaching this

from a first-person perspective allows me to identify some of the ideas that led me to conclude that psi research is relevant and timely.

My story begins in Detroit, Michigan, where I was born and raised. In many ways Detroit is the epitome of the materialist paradigm, a place where the mechanical worldview was perfected. But as a child I was always intrigued by the mystery—I think all children are. And children hear about it as something that, even as adults, we should not fear. I found that as my interest in the mystery developed, I was in good company. It was Albert Einstein who said, “The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious...the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science” (Einstein, 1954, p. 11).

Detroit was a city in crisis during the 1960s and 1970s. During the race riots of 1967, for example, my father was almost killed. The public schools were like a war zone. Fortunately, my parents owned a boat on Lake Sinclair, and this gave me ample time on weekends to spend in nature and away from the harsh realities of Detroit. During that time, I had the chance to develop magical thinking rather than the defeatist attitude that many of my peers developed.

There was something about the mysteries of consciousness that drew me, even as a child. My mother sometimes talked of her experiences with table-tilting. Then, as I was moving into junior high and high school, I had the opportunity to sit next to a guy who was interested in astral projection, and I thought “Wow! This is really far out! How interesting that somehow consciousness might be able to leave the body.” And coming from the Sixties and the *zeitgeist* of rebellion, it suddenly seemed to me there were other things beside the materialist model that may be important and may be powerful for understanding life.

It was a time when it was seen as our responsibility to question and challenge authority, question and challenge assumptions that were seen to limit our capacity to break out of a mold the industrialized worldview had created for us. It was a time when our culture yearned for something grander.

As an undergraduate at Wayne State University, I discovered Thomas Kuhn. The now famous social historian wrote about a victory of one paradigm over another involving a matter of faith in a given set of assumptions. Coming out of the Sixties and this rebellious impulse, there was a notion that somehow our reality and that thing called “scientific truth” were were not absolute or fixed. At Monteith College, Wayne State University, we took the curriculum articulated by Kuhn in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (T. S. Kuhn, 1970). We read the classics in the area of paradigm shifts, revolutions in thought, and changes in worldview. This was an inspiration to me, an opportunity to ground what seemed like a fairly groundless form of rebellion into something that had academic merit and intellectual satisfaction.

During this time, I began a mentorship with a psychophysicologist at Wayne State Medical School. We used to talk about the mysteries of the mind and the nature of human consciousness. Before I met this teacher, I had been focusing on the revolution that happened in geology about a

hundred years ago, the area of plate tectonics. Suddenly I was encouraged to think about consciousness and the fact that there are many more mysteries about human experience than the best of Western science has been able to define. I found myself in the middle of something that seemed more current and more timely than plate tectonics.

About this time I picked up a book by the astronaut Edgar Mitchell, *Psychic Exploration* (Mitchell, 1974). This book literally changed my life. I read it and became fascinated by the fact that there were serious scientists taking a serious look at the paranormal. Here was an opportunity to begin to think about a paradigm, in Thomas Kuhn's terms, that was not a hundred years ago but was current and alive. I then switched from geology to psychology.

I later came across the book *Mind-Reach* by Targ and Puthoff (1977). Here the authors claimed that everybody has ESP and that everybody can do these remarkable things like describe a circular building with a white dome at a great distance. There were many examples of this in their book and many claims within the book about the possibility that every person has these potentials.

This led me to begin exploring in the area of remote viewing. That summer I worked with a psychologist, Charlie Solley, doing informal experiments together. I learned a couple of things during this period of discovery. One happened when we brought in a "psychic" to be in one of our experiments. First, I served as the outbound person, and the psychic stayed in. When I came back, she described very little that matched with the description of the site where I was visiting, but Charlie named it pretty well. Then it was my turn to be the inbound investigator. This was the first time I had ever worked with a "subject." I was determined to be a good scientist. That involved objectivity and detachment and the kinds of things that we value as good scientists within the kind of physicalist, materialist model. The woman described a lot of things and I took careful notes. Charlie came back and listened to her description. He then said to me, "What were your impressions?" I said, "I didn't have any." After all, I was the experimenter. And he said "Well, you must have gotten something." I said, "Okay," and made a quick drawing. He got very excited. We went over to the building that served as the target site. The building was surrounded by a moat, the moat was surrounded by a fence, the fence was made up of these symbols, and etched in concrete on the side of the building was the symbol I had drawn. It was early in my exploration that I had to question the assumptions about objectivity and the way in which experimenters can remove themselves from that process of inquiry.

I was so excited about the field of parapsychology that I wrote to the American Society for Psychical Research. They had a directory of educational opportunities in the field of parapsychology. I had friends in southern California and learned that Robert Morris was teaching a course at the University of California, Irvine. I made my way to his class and had the opportunity to do my first formal remote viewing experiment under Bob's tutelage (Schlitz & Deacon, 1979). My goal was to test the hypothesis that unselected

people have psi abilities. I was one of the people whom Bob Morris inspired and taught about the nature of critical thinking and about being careful and rigorous about the questions we ask and the methods we use.

My main motivation in studying with Bob was to get to the Institute for Parapsychology for their Summer Study Program. I was certain that here I would get the skills I needed to become a revolutionary in a paradigm shift such as the ones Thomas Kuhn talked about. Having been accepted after applying twice, I had a wonderful time over that summer; anyone who has been through that program knows what an exceptional and life-changing experience it can be. It was for me—as were the next 3 years that I worked there as a research fellow.

I was the last person hired while J.B. and Louisa Rhine were alive. Both were people who represent the kind of bridgework we are called to in parapsychology. J.B. had been a divinity student who then studied biology. He was interested in exploring the interface between that transcendent or extended aspect of human experience and then grounding it within the context of rigorous scientific research. Louisa Rhine's interest in the mysteries of consciousness took the form of spontaneous case reports, again acting as a bridge person between that first-person experience of psi and the scientific laboratory work she inspired.

As we all know, their work was in the area of the forced-choice card-guessing experiments. I was much more interested in the free-response work. I believe I was the first person to do a formal free-response experiment at the Institute for Parapsychology. This was an opportunity for us to begin to think about moving beyond the limits of the restricted range of target response possibilities that we find in the forced-choice experiments and to begin to think about methodologies that might more closely match real-world experiences.

I did a replication of the remote viewing experiment with unselected subjects that I had done under Bob Morris's guidance (Schlitz, 1981). We found chance results, although in the predicted direction. This did not dissuade me. I turned my attention back to the role of the experimenter. Maybe there was something about the fact that we chose this as a career path that would make us good subjects.

About this time I met Elmer Gruber. Together we did the transcontinental remote viewing experiment that had the largest effect size in the remote viewing literature (Schlitz & Gruber, 1980). Both Hans Bender and K. Ramakrishna Rao were the people to whom we sent our data; they were the crossover people to help control for fraud. This again led me to think that experimenters might be a rich source of psi—leading me further from the study of unselected people.

I became interested in the area of healing research. While at the Institute for Parapsychology, I conducted a replication of the Watkins and Watkins study involving the resuscitation of anesthetized mice (Schlitz, 1982). After matching pairs of mice, we set them on adjacent photocells with video cameras above each mouse. A random decision determined which video camera would be activated. The goal was to see if a person in a distant

room could accelerate the resuscitation rate of the selected mouse on the video monitor, as compared with the control mouse. I had the pleasure of working with Jim Davis, Jim Kennedy, Jo-Marie Haight, Kanthamani and Rao, Debbi Weiner, Jim Carpenter, John Hartwell, Richard Broughton, and others who walked the halls of the Institute in the early 1980s.

In one formal study, K. Ramakrishna Rao and I did an experimenter competition study (Rao, Sargent, & Schlitz, 1983). Once again, it looked like the experimenters were stronger as sources in these kinds of experiments than any of the subjects we worked with in the pilot studies.

The interest in psi and healing led me in 1982 to move from Durham, North Carolina, to San Antonio, Texas. Working at the Mind Science Foundation with William Braud, who pioneered the area of allobiofeedback or biological psychokinesis, we developed an experimental model for studying psychic healing in the laboratory. Over a series of many studies, we again explored the difference between selected and unselected subjects, finding the experimenters to be some of our best performers (Braud & Schlitz, 1983; Braud, Schlitz, Collins, & Klitch, 1984; Schlitz & Braud, 1985). Now referred to as DMILS, for direct mental interactions between living systems, the work was important for helping bring parapsychology into rapprochement with socially relevant issues. As Michael Creighton told us in his dinner address to the Parapsychological Association, maybe a decade ago, "You will never be accepted until you do things that are relevant, until people say 'I get it, I get why this is important.'"

As I engaged in this research, I became increasingly aware of the rich nature of qualitative experience. With our nearly exclusive focus on statistical outcomes, parapsychologists sometimes miss all the messy stuff that is the richness of human experience. I felt like we were missing something. But how do we maintain the rigor while opening ourselves up to broader possibilities? With these thoughts, I turned to anthropology, where for over a hundred years researchers have been mapping experience and the sharing of consciousness. This led to a PhD in medical anthropology at the University of Texas, Austin. More important, it started me on a wonderful journey working with healers from a variety of different cultures. From such people I have learned much about the metaphysical dimensions of how healing operates.

Around 1986 I had the great delight of working with Chuck Honorton. Together we did a ganzfeld study among music, dance, and drama students at the Juilliard School of the Performing Arts (Schlitz & Honorton, 1992). As it turns out, this was the last experiment conducted at the Psychophysical Research Laboratory, the last formal experiment that Chuck ever did, and the strongest effect size in the ganzfeld literature. This study was driven by the hunch that creative populations who engaged in the training of attention and intention might produce the strongest results. It seemed to be the case. We found a similar result in a study I later did with Helmut Schmidt (H. Schmidt & Schlitz, 1989), in which our highest scorers were people who had meditation or martial arts training. This is an area I hope to pursue in the future.

In 1992 the Mind Science Foundation decided to discontinue their in-house research program. This left me in this wonderfully challenging situation. I had not finished my PhD, I was just out of a job, and my relationship was on the skids. I remember Dick Bierman asking me in the August PA conference in 1992: "Well, what are you going to do with your life?" I did not know. And what I said at the time was: "Whatever it is, I hope it's something I can't perceive from this vantage point."

In fact, within the week, Ed May offered me a job at the Cognitive Sciences Laboratory at Science Applications International Corporation. This was the government-sponsored CIA-DIA (Central Intelligence Agency-Defense Intelligence Agency) program, which has now been largely declassified. It gave me the opportunity to see some of the data that had been collected by the government and to conduct two remote-staring experiments with Stephen LaBerge (Schlitz & LaBerge, 1994, 1997). In these experiments we put a video camera on one person, communicated their image via closed-circuit television, and then instructed a healer to influence the distant person's physiology. In these studies, we found an increase in autonomic nervous system activity during the staring as compared with the control conditions.

Later I worked with Richard Wiseman, who had done several remote-staring experiments and reported chance results. We decided to conduct a formal experiment together (Wiseman & Schlitz, 1997). In this experiment we did everything identically: the same randomization procedure, the same equipment, the same laboratory, the same subject population. Everything was identical except that I worked with half of the subjects and Richard worked with the other half. We both replicated our original findings. This said to me, again, that there was something important about the intentionality of the experimenter and something wrong with the whole notion of objectivity and detachment.

At the same time that I worked with Ed May and Stephen LaBerge, I also held a postdoctoral fellowship in the psychology department at Stanford University. My PhD research had been about the discourse of power relations in the context of healing. I thought about taking the methodology that I developed in my dissertation research. I proposed to do a discourse analysis of controversial science, looking specifically at the skeptic/proponent debate in parapsychology. By examining the nature of the discourse and the claims to rationality that both sides of the debate make, it seems parapsychologists are much closer than we might think to what is considered to be the opposition. I found, in fact, that if you look at the kinds of claims people are making, the self-proclaimed skeptics will say that their purpose is to help cultivate truth and to dispel people of false beliefs (Schlitz, 1993a, 1993b, 1994). And if you then look at what the parapsychologists are saying, they say "We're here to help people understand the nature of reality. We're out to seek truth." My point is that we are skeptics in the Greek sense meaning open-minded. It was a term to be contrasted with dogmatist. Skeptics from this frame are people who challenge assumptions and try to develop a more coherent model of the

nature of reality. To be skeptical in this way is a profound advantage, especially in a field like ours.

#### EVALUATING THE CURRENT SCENE

So, where am I now? My work is striving toward an integral model. Like we find in the writings of Ken Wilber, who was influenced by Sri Aurobindo: the notion is that we must embrace the first-, second-, and third-person perspectives to understand the fullness of consciousness. The first person is my interiority, my subjectivity, that nature of experience that makes me uniquely me; the second person tells me that I am not uniquely me, that I am embedded in a social context that often shapes the things that I think are uniquely me; and the third person is that aspect of experience which is the "it"—the data that we all talk about.

The analysis I did at Stanford on the skeptic/proponent debate found that while people use "it" language to justify their beliefs, it really comes down to "I" (Schlitz, 1993a, 1993b, 1994). It may be that I had an experience, or that I know somebody whom I trust who had an experience. But it is important that we recognize that even the "it" and the "I" are grounded in the "we," and that we share a certain worldview that structures our perceptions. I now find myself working with a model that integrates the various perspectives.

Today I direct the research program at the Institute of Noetic Sciences. We have about 40 projects on various aspects of consciousness. A number of them fall into the area of parapsychology, although I almost never use that word. It is not because the people in my orbit do not like parapsychology but because they do not think this is where the action is. I have found it valuable to restore what we do so that we can create relevant contexts for sharing our work and for getting the funding that we need.

*Noetic* is an ancient Greek word to describe direct experience. William James (James & Perry, 1912) used it to describe states of insight unplumbed by the discursive intellect involving illuminations and revelations that, while inarticulate, are full of significance and importance. As a rule, James noted, they carry with them a peculiar sense of authority.

I was recruited to the Institute of Noetic Sciences in 1993. It felt like coming full circle to the organization started by Edgar Mitchell, who wrote the book that started me on this whole expedition. It has been in many ways like coming home.

#### ONWARD TO THE FUTURE

How does all this relate to the issue of parapsychology and where we are going as a field? Clearly, there are many possible futures. There are also many possible ways to evaluate our success.



### *Participation in the Field of Parapsychology*

If we define the field as members of the Parapsychological Association (PA), we have not grown much throughout our history. However, there is a tremendous amount of action happening outside of the PA by people whom we had never heard of and who had never heard of us. In particular, I would say that there are many people now doing research in mainstream medical centers on distant healing, for example, and who are now publishing in mainstream medical journals. Randolph Byrd, for example, conducted the first clinical distant healing study (Byrd, 1988). He studied patients in a cardiology unit, randomizing them to a distant prayer group and a standard care group. He found that the people who received distant prayer or intention recovered better and had fewer medical complications than the standard care group alone. This project was picked out and replicated by a team under the direction of W. S. Harris, who again found that the group who received distant intentionality did better than the controls (Harris et al., 1999).

Elisabeth Targ has just published a study in the *Western Journal of Medicine* (Sicher, Targ, Moore, & Smith, 1998) looking at the effect of distant healing on patients with HIV. She did two studies, both yielding significant results for distant healing. Again, the group who received the distant intentionality seemed to have better outcomes on a variety of different health outcome measures.

I had the pleasure of convening several meetings in which we invited scientists from mainstream medical centers who were interested in or actually doing clinical outcome studies involving distant intentionality. We had about 50 people at the first meeting, representing some 20 medical centers. At the second meeting, we had over 100 people. This is not something that is only happening here within our ranks but has moved very much into the mainstream community.

### *Global Outreach*

In terms of global community, it seems to me that there is reason to feel optimism about the hot spots across the world. Right at this moment, there is a study looking at distant Qigong on cell growth in Beijing, China, by a molecular geneticist named Garret Yount. There are studies going on in South America, Africa, Indonesia, India, and in almost every country in Europe. There is reason to feel optimistic that our kind of work is catching on throughout the globe.

The Internet also provides an important indicator of global community. I look at the PDL, and several other discussion groups that are going on, linking people in a variety of different countries and time zones in an ongoing dialogue. Roger Nelson's project creating a global "EEG" study is a very exciting and novel approach to experimental research (Nelson, 2001). It is also a way of developing community and some kind of fraternity across the globe in these various settings.

*Quality of the Science*

How have we improved our ability to capture the kind of phenomena that we are looking for? Parapsychologists have always tried their best to create standards that are exceptionally good and that can withstand the scrutiny of critical or negatively oriented reviewers. But if you look at something like the study that Rupert Sheldrake did comparing the use of randomized double-blind protocols in a variety of different academic fields—biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, and medicine—the group that stood out in terms of their standards and their commitment to what is considered the gold standard in Western science—the use of the randomized double-blind protocol—was parapsychology (Sheldrake, 1994). We stood out as the group who did the best quality of research. And with contributions by new members of our community, such as Stefan Schmidt, we are able to improve the quality of our science (S. Schmidt & Walach, 2000). I think the more we subject ourselves to that kind of scrutiny, the higher the quality will be.

*Theory Building*

Again, we have not solved the problem. We do not know how to predict psi. At the same time I would say that we have made progress. Walter Von Lucadou, Fotini Pallikari, Dick Bierman, and James Spottiswoode—all of these people within our community who are very able, very capable theoreticians, are attempting to understand the complexities of psi and to develop predictive models that might help us to harness and capture the phenomena we are studying. There are people outside our field to whom we should pay attention. There are people like Stuart Kaufman from the Santa Fe Institute, famous for his work in complexity theory, deeply interested in this topic. I just had a delightful week with Ralph Abraham from the University of California, Santa Cruz; he is somebody who is bright and interested in helping us work on this problem. We have got Walter Freeman, professor emeritus from Berkeley, who in his book, *Societies of Brains: A Study in the Neuroscience of Love and Hate*, mentions parapsychology in the appendix (Freeman, 1995). Henry Stapp, a world-class physicist, is also pursuing this work. And there are others. In terms of theory development, we may not be there yet, but as we build bridges and reach out to people within the mainstream, we increase the likelihood that we will be able to come up with a breakthrough.

*Research Centers*

Much is happening in different labs around the world. We have had the opportunity to hear some from the Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene, which represents an important development here in Germany. Mario Varvoglis is resurrecting the Institut Métapsychique International program in Paris. Dean Radin has moved from the Integral Institute to create the Boundary Institute, funded by people from the dot-com world. These are people in Silicon Valley who

have unlimited resources financially and who are just testing the waters with us. This is an exciting opportunity. There is Dick Bierman's work at Starlab. While he is not totally coming out as a parapsychologist in this work, I think he is on the edges pursuing his psi research and presentiment data wherever he can.

I am building a lab right now in partnership with the California Pacific Medical Center. Elisabeth Targ and I are joint directors of this program. California Pacific Medical Center is a mainstream medical center and one of the oldest hospitals in the United States. On their invitation, we are now building what we hope will be a leading center for distant healing and subtle energies research within the context of a mainstream medical center.

Ruth Reinsel just told me about the Neuroscience Laboratory that she just started. There are other programs that represent mainstream medical centers, programs, people that we have never heard of. There are distant healing research projects going on at Duke, Scripps, Harvard, California Pacific Medical Center, University of California, Irvine, and University of California, San Francisco. It is happening. And it is time for us to pay attention and look at the way in which there is currency and context in these studies, and to show that the application of some of our work is important within the clinical context.

#### *Publications and Conferences*

On the negative side, there was a recent survey reported at the American Psychological Association which found that in the mid-1980s reference to parapsychology occurred in about 67% of the psychology textbooks for the introductory level. In the last decade, it has gone down to about 50% (Roig, Icochea, & Cuzzucoli, 1991). The authors report that parapsychology research, once one of the most sought after courses at St. John's, is not even given anymore. Roig and his colleagues argue that interest in the paranormal in the general public has not waned, but interest in parapsychological research has.

On the positive side, there is a new introductory textbook on psychology in the United Kingdom that is doing extremely well. There was the International Congress of Psychology in Stockholm. The University of Arizona at Tucson Consciousness Conference has an ongoing interest in our field, with several parapsychology presentations at the last conference. This conference is a forum for doing bridgework between the kind of behaviorist or physicalist programs in consciousness studies and more transpersonal approaches. From this conference, Ed May and I had the opportunity to publish a chapter on parapsychology that came out in the last year through MIT Press. This is all in the last year (Schlitz & May, 1998).

A program called "Closer to Truth" was started by Robert Kuhn, a lawyer who is interested in the furthest reaches of consciousness. Parapsychology is one of his major areas of interest. It started with a television program creating debates about controversial topics in the area of consciousness. He then moved from creating a 52-part television series to a book that is now published by McGraw-Hill (R. L. Kuhn, 2000). He also

created a Web program in which people ranging from Nobel laureates to neuroscientists to philosophers are debating the data for parapsychology and other anomalies.

Cardena, Lynn, and Krippner's (2000) book, *Variety of Anomalous Experiences*, which was just published by the American Psychological Association, included a chapter on parapsychology. There is a lot happening in the area of publications and conferences that I cannot even begin to touch.

### *Education*

All of us should take our hats off to Bob Morris. I think he is doing more than anybody else to fuel the field by bringing new, innovative talent through the program at the University of Edinburgh. In the United Kingdom alone, 50 PhDs have been graduated in the area of parapsychology (Carr, 2000). In the United States, we have programs like Saybrook, the California Institute of Integral Studies, the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology—all of them producing new PhDs.

### *Career Opportunities*

Again, we find that 20 of the graduates from the University of Edinburgh have now obtained permanent academic positions. In the United States, I would say that the whole area of alternative medicine is exploding. I now have the opportunity to serve on a congressionally appointed committee at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). I was selected because of my interest in parapsychology, not in spite of it. Because of the groundswell of interest in alternative and complementary medicine, all of the major medical centers in the United States are developing programs. They have to do research to complement the clinical applications. They are interested in psi research because we have rigorous methodological programs to look at the interface between the physical and the metaphysical. Members of the complementary and alternative medicine community find this inspiring and encouraging, and there are job possibilities there if you can begin to package and create a context that shows the relevance of what we are doing.

### *Integration Into the Mainstream*

In addition to work at the NIH, in the past year I have talked to Harvard Medical School, Stanford Medical School, and the Mayo Clinic. These are programs that were once completely resistant to this kind of work. Today they are beginning to open the door to us in new ways. I would say that our ability to penetrate the mainstream is really beginning to work.

### *Funding*

The big question: Funding is always the problem for everybody who is trying to do work in a marginal area—again I will say that NIH is a bright star within the United States. Elisabeth Targ has just received two

major grants to do distant healing research. Garret Yount just received a grant from NIH, and Leanna Standish and I received a grant to do a study looking at brainwave synchronization between two people at a distance.

We have got the Parrott-Warrick—stellar advances that are happening there in terms of bringing funding into the field. The Parapsychology Foundation is now offering a new grant. It has been a good friend to this field for a long time, not giving major funding but enough to keep a lot of people, including myself, from going on the dole. The Bial Foundation in Portugal has been an important source for funding in recent years. The Fetzer Institute has put money into a large project on psi. Laurence Rockefeller is now funding a project that we are doing on distant healing.

### CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, I do want to remind us of where we began—the ABCs stand for Action, Boldness, and Context.

#### *Action*

It is important to speak to socially relevant issues. It is important for us to recognize that what we are doing is fundamentally vital. As I talked about converging worldviews and the fact that we are in a time of global transition, I think it is important for us to recognize that we are between stories. The old story is not working anymore, and we can see that. Modern medicine, for example, is in crisis. And at the same time, the new story has not been born yet. We are in this transitional, liminal phase, of waiting to see what are the appropriate questions to be asking about human possibility and about the human condition. And we have a role to play in formulating those questions, if not answering them ultimately, in terms of our ability to make links and to actually resolve some of the questions before us.

#### *Boldness*

When I talk about paradigm and I talk about Thomas Kuhn, it all may sound a little old or a little like Pollyanna. It is not. The questions we are asking are really the most important things: What is life? What is consciousness? What is our capacity as human beings to become something more? Is there a new story that is not about a strictly physical, reductionist, separate, objective world out there, but one in which we are fundamental actors in the evolutionary process? If we can be bold enough to own our responsibility, we may be bold enough to recognize that we are conscious participants in an evolving universe.

#### *Context*

We need to story our work in a way that is more relevant. We can do a remarkable job of putting anyone to sleep over our findings. We need to wake up to the fact that it is really interesting. If we create the context for

understanding psi research, both in terms of politics and in terms of the social implications, I think the whole field will move forward. Whether we call it parapsychology or distant intentionality or consciousness studies or alternative medicine or applied epistemology—whatever we choose to call it—we are making a difference in the world.

Finally, I want to remind us of where we started, which is in the mystery. We should embrace it and our dance with the ineffable. Our goal is to begin to understand and to play with mystery in a more active way. As I was preparing this talk, my son got sick. I was going through a baby book, and I came across this quote in *The Well Baby Book* (Samuels & Samuels, 1991): “Young children often see and point out to their parents objects or persons that the parents can’t see. Such images may be imaginary or real. The existence of real psychic phenomena has been demonstrated in parapsychological experiments over the past 30 years” (p. 224).

The paradigm is shifting, whether we want to go with it or not. I am reminded of Max Planck’s infamous quote, “A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it” (Planck & Laue, 1949, pp. 33-34). The paradigm is changing, and it is our job to act as bridge makers to something bigger and something more inclusive of the fullness and the richness of the human condition.

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