

consciousness with no ontological validity? In other words, one factor in inducing paranormal belief might be real psi, as suggested by the sheep-goat effect, which Irwin mentions (pp. 39-40) but does not explore the implications of. Of course this as a component of the model would not appeal at all to researchers of a sceptical bent, and so Irwin is probably wise to omit it as just a future possibility at this stage.

In short, I found this monograph to have paradigmatic status. It is admirably comprehensive (and thus a vital sourcebook for researchers) both in terms of empirical and theoretical work, with just the right amount of background in conventional psychology. It is full of suggestions and hypotheses for further research, and should serve as a wonderful stimulus to work in this area for many years to come.

REFERENCES

- Irwin, H. J. (1993). Belief in the paranormal: A review of the empirical literature. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 87, 1-39.
- Storm, L. (2008). Investigations of the *I Ching*: I. Relationships between psi, time perspective, paranormal belief and meaningfulness. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 8, 103-127.
- Thalbourne, M. A., & Delin, P. S. (1993). A new instrument for measuring the sheep-goat variable: Its psychometric properties and factor structure. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 59, 172-186.

—MICHAEL A. THALBOURNE

* * *

***Spirit Sisters*. Karina Machado. (2009). Sydney, Australia: Hachette Australia. 282 pages. ISBN 978-0-7336-2346-2 (pb). AUD\$32.99.**

This book by Sydney journalist, Karina Machado is not a scientific work nor does it claim to be but comes instead directly from the psychic experiences of over two hundred Australian women. Machado comprehensively covers a very broad range of women's parapsychological and life changing events. This broad spectrum includes the common apparitions of deceased loved ones including pets, haunted houses and

poltergiestery, precognitive and retrocognitive dreams, out of body experiences, spontaneous psycho-spiritual opening, doppelgangers, psychic assault, police officers being haunted by murder victims seeking help and so on—all quite remarkable stories.

For me there are some novel stories, one a woman being tucked into her bed blankets by a ghost whispering “Shhh, go to sleep now”; another woman being woken by a male ghost vigorously shaking her hand and very pleased to meet her before disappearing over her head through the wall. My work with the Australian Institute of Parapsychological Research (AIPR), publishers of this journal, has brought me into contact with nearly all the phenomena in Machado’s book and very familiar it is dealing with the enquiries from the general public. The two doppelganger cases are very unusual and interesting. One woman describes seeing a much younger self walk out of the home and pass her while sitting in her car driveway, who glances at her and walks right past and vanishes. A different woman reports face to face contact with her older self 22 years before the event. There is a chapter on benign and angelic encounters of being guided away from danger, the peace and comfort received during crises, and of accurate information about the future.

Machado describes Australia’s most famous haunted house, named Monte Cristo, where visitors can stay overnight. The owners of this old house make an income from this and don’t want the house to be cleared, and the ghosts who live there don’t want to give up their celebrity status—everyone is enjoying it too much.

I am pleased to see Karina Machado’s chapter on the dangers of unskilled young people dabbling with psychic games like the *Ouija* and séance room antics. In my experience this has led to early stages of some types of mental illness, particularly with teenagers who have not yet set strong ego boundaries. One such very frightening case describes what happened to a teen schoolgirl who was having two séances a day and got into serious trouble. I cannot stress enough how serious the dangers are.

Machado introduces the reader to the many different organisations in Australia, the AIPR included, with words from AIPR President Dr. Hannah Jenkins (University of Tasmania), and Dr. Lance Storm parapsychologist from Deakin University in Melbourne.

The author’s fascination with parapsychology began aged eight with ghostly happenings in the family home and amongst her relatives. Just like everyone who reads this style of book we already have our experiences, and we know psychic stuff is real, but we want to know more. The reader is left to decide for himself or herself.

Machado gives her book the obligatory balanced tone in the final chapter. Thankfully she avoids asking the Australian sceptics for their view, but she consulted Sydney scientist and ABC-TV broadcaster Paul Willis,

who is yet to be convinced and wields Ockham's razor to argue what *he* thinks is the simplest answer—Ah!, the consciously impaired will always be with us and we must be tolerant.

Psychiatrist Professor Warwick Middleton finds it astonishing that those patients with dissociative disorder will report psychic experiences and likewise that questions of a parapsychological nature are used in a questionnaire to help determine diagnosis.

I found only one typo in this book—my own paper on haunting and poltergeist (Tilley, 2002) in the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* is wrongly credited to Dr. Michael Thalbourne.

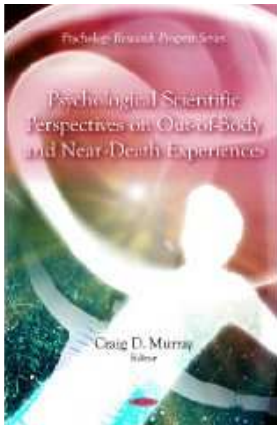
I recommend this book to anyone new to parapsychology. It is an enjoyable read, well researched, and worth the purchase price.

REFERENCES

- Tilley, R. (2002). Poltergeist disturbances and hauntings brought to a lasting successful conclusion. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 2, 127-160.

—ROBB TILLEY

* * *



***Psychological Scientific Perspectives on Out of Body and Near-Death Experiences.* Craig D. Murray (Ed.). (2009). New York: Nova Science Publishers Inc. ISBN-10: 1607417057 ISBN-13: 978-1607417057 (hb). AUD\$122.00.**

In recent years there has been a surge of scientific interest in the related phenomena of out-of-body (OBEs) and near-death experiences (NDEs). These experiences are altered states of consciousness in which the person may feel that their consciousness has become separated from the confines of their physical bodies. They may occur at mundane times, such as when on the verge of going to or waking from sleep, or at times of increased stress, such as during potentially life-