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hypotheses—quite apart from their moral implications—are definitely questionable, at least from a scientific point of view. But it was probably appropriate that *Sphinx* express its opinion about teachings which use occult phenomenalism to draw such serious conclusions.

## BOOK REVIEWS

THE SEARCH FOR YESTERDAY: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR REINCARNATION by D. Scott Rogo. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1985. 241 pp. \$22.95. Paper, \$10.95.

In the quarter century since Ian Stevenson's 'The evidence for survival from claimed memories of former incarnations'<sup>1</sup> the evidence for reincarnation has increased faster than the evidence bearing upon perhaps any other topic in parapsychology. Stevenson himself has added what Alan Gauld has called 'the most important contribution to the study of spontaneous cases since *Phantasms of the Living*'<sup>2</sup>—some 70 meticulously detailed case reports culled from a collection of (presently) around 2,000—as well as several analytical articles that draw from the larger pool.

Stevenson has specialized in children's spontaneous cases, but others have reported adult spontaneous cases, and there have been many hypnotically-induced accounts, from both in and out of psychotherapy, as well as accounts of past-life memories emerging under the influence of psychoactive drugs, such as LSD and MDA. Given this huge new body of material, it is regrettable that so little attention has been paid to reincarnation by parapsychologists.

What commentary exists is widely scattered, and bears almost exclusively on two lines: the child cases of Stevenson, and the non-therapeutic hypnotic regression cases. Other lines of evidence—adult spontaneous cases, drug-induced cases, past-life therapy cases—have been almost entirely ignored.<sup>3</sup> A few (hostile) efforts to treat the range of evidence for reincarnation have been made from outside parapsychology, but *The Search for Yesterday* is the first book by a parapsychologist to tackle the problem.

As parapsychology, however, the book is disappointing. It is widely researched and lucidly written, and should be of considerable value to readers already persuaded of reincarnation, who desire a critical assessment of the evidence. I doubt, however, that readers agnostic or atheistic on the question will be much impressed. This has less to do with the cases Rogo cites or the conclusions he draws from them than with his casual documentation, uneven analysis and popular writing style. These things are unfortunate, because Rogo with this book has made a significant contribution to the commentary on reincarnation, and could have made an even greater one had he approached his task in a more scholarly manner.

<sup>1</sup> *JASPR*, 1960, 54, 51–71; 95–117.

<sup>2</sup> A. Gauld, Review of I. Stevenson, *Cases of the Reincarnation Type. Volume 4. Twelve Cases in Thailand and Burma*. *JASPR*, 1985, 79, 85.

<sup>3</sup> An exception is Gauld, in: *Mediumship and Survival*. London: Heinemann, 1982, pp. 163–187.

Apart from considering the range of evidence for reincarnation, Rogo provides a real service in identifying the few good hypnotic regression cases. Chapters are devoted to child cases, adult spontaneous cases, hypnotic regression cases, drug-induced cases, past-life therapy cases, xenoglossy, factors impinging on reportage and issues of interpretation. A final chapter, 'Reconceptualizing Reincarnation', develops Rogo's hypothesis of reincarnation. The book includes six or seven brief original accounts, chosen from 20 that Rogo gathered in the course of researching the book. There is a critical bibliography of books with past-life recall accounts.

The book suffers, however, from problems of emphasis. In terms of quality of material assessed, proportionately more space should have been given to Stevenson's child cases, and less to the hypnotic and other material. Stevenson's work is so far superior to any other in this area, and the body of evidence he has amassed is so intriguing, that the case for reincarnation rests largely upon it.

I find Rogo's judgements generally good, although I cannot quite see giving Chari the final say on the Mallika case,<sup>4</sup> and I would like to know why Rogo considers the Gretchen case of responsive xenoglossy to have 'all the earmarks of a hoax' (p. 227). He tells us that Stevenson endorsed this case, but he does not appear to realize that Stevenson investigated it as well, although Stevenson mentions his investigations in his introduction to Carroll Jay's *Gretchen, I Am*, and Jay describes them at length in the book. Moreover, Stevenson's preliminary report of the case appeared the year before Jay's book.<sup>5</sup> Had there not been the investigation, Rogo might have a point (albeit a debatable one)—but certainly a case that was gone into the extent this one was deserves more than such a glib dismissal.

There are a number of errors in this book, the first occurring in the opening paragraph, where it is stated that Edward Ryall's memories came to him only in adulthood. In fact, Ryall was speaking of a previous life as a child, and ceased only when instructed to do so by his father, upon that occasion when, as a boy, taken out to see Halley's Comet, he incautiously admitted to having seen it once before.<sup>6</sup>

Other errors are more important. Rogo portrays the Imad Elawar case as one of merged and divided rebirth, apparently believing that this is Stevenson's interpretation. In fact this is W. G. Roll's interpretation. Stevenson presented the case entirely differently in his original report, and both he and Matlock have

<sup>4</sup> The Mallika case is reported by Stevenson in *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*. 2nd ed. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1974, pp. 105–108. Chari claims that Mallika's parents and grandfather have disavowed the case. C. T. K. Chari, Introduction 1 to R. Reyna, *Reincarnation and Science*. New Delhi: Sterling, 1973, p. xi. Perhaps they have, but they were not the main witnesses to it, not having been present for any of Mallika's statements. The family of the past personality were the main witnesses, and their testimony stands.

<sup>5</sup> C. Jay, *Gretchen, I Am*. New York: Wyden Books, 1977; I. Stevenson, 'A preliminary report of a new case of responsive xenoglossy: The case of Gretchen', *JASPR*, 1976, 70, 65–77. Stevenson has since published a full report of the case, in: *Unlearned Language*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1984.

<sup>6</sup> E. W. Ryall, *Second Time Round*. Jersey: Spearman, 1974, pp. 33–34.

challenged the accuracy of Roll's view.<sup>7</sup> The issue is of some consequence, since Rogo (like Roll) uses the merged-and-divided-rebirth interpretation as a key element in his hypothesis of reincarnation.

Further, the assertion that 'Dr. Stevenson is just about the only researcher who has been coming across veridical cases' (p. 78) strikes me as extreme. Although the Brazilians Andrade and Ferreira are explicitly excluded from this statement, ignored are Pal, Story and Bayer, to name contemporaries only.<sup>8</sup> Many of the cases reported by these persons were later investigated and reported by Stevenson, and it is possible that the incidence of strong veridical cases is not as high as their proportion in Stevenson's published collection would lead us to expect and hope. But I doubt that the picture is as bleak as Rogo would have it, and a relatively low percentage of strong cases, more consistent with the historical rate of reportage,<sup>9</sup> might work in Stevenson's favor rather than against it.

Rogo appears to have what I will call a love-hate relationship with Stevenson, of which the above-quoted statement is a minor example. In places Rogo speaks admiringly of Stevenson, but he also includes an extended attack on him and his methods. Rogo's remarks seem to me largely gratuitous, and come close to backfiring. Rogo needs Stevenson, for Stevenson's work provides the basic evidence for reincarnation. If the charges Rogo makes are valid, then we cannot accept Stevenson's cases as presented, and the argument for reincarnation is weakened considerably—something Rogo does not seem to realize. However, Stevenson has given me more reason to respect his labors than Rogo has given me to think similarly of his (the original reports Rogo contributes are as poorly documented as are most of the cases in the popular literature he is forced to work with), and I do not think we have come to this.

*The Search for Yesterday* is not a bad book, judged as popular literature. It does provide a much-needed critical appraisal of the evidence for reincarnation. It is as parapsychology that it fails, and then not entirely. In drawing attention to the

<sup>7</sup> For Roll's interpretation, see: W. G. Roll, 'Where is Said Bouhamsy?', *Theta*, 1977, 5(3), 1-4; and W. G. Roll, 'Rebirth memories and personal identity: The case of Imad Elawar', *JASPR*, 1984, 78, 182-186. For counters to this interpretation, see: I. Stevenson, Correspondence, *JASPR*, 1984, 78, 186-189; and J. G. Matlock, 'Interpreting the case of Imad Elawar', *Theta*, in press.

<sup>8</sup> P. Pal, 'A case suggestive of reincarnation in West Bengal', *Indian Journal of parapsychology*, 1961-62, 3(3), 5-21; F. Story, *The Case for Rebirth*. In: F. Story, *Rebirth as Doctrine and Experience: Essays and Case Studies*. Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publishing Society, 1975; R. Bayer, in: R. Durant, *Totality Man*. London: Regency Press, 1968. Earlier researchers also reported cases of this type. See: H. F. Hall, *The Soul of a People*. 4th ed. London: Macmillan, 1909, pp. 290-308; and K. K. N. Sahay, *Reincarnation: Verified Cases of Rebirth After Death*. Bareilly: privately printed, ca. 1927.

<sup>9</sup> Gauld has pointed out that very few cases are reported from before the mid-nineteenth century, even in reincarnationalist cultures, and in sources that we should expect to find them. A. Gauld, Review of Ian Stevenson, *Cases of the Reincarnation Type. Volume 4. Twelve Cases in Thailand and Burma*. *JASPR*, 1985, 79, 82-83. F. W. H. Myers dismissed reincarnation on the basis of the evidence available to him at the turn of the twentieth century. F. W. H. Myers, *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*. Susy Smith, ed. New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1961, pp. 293-294. As late as 1960, Stevenson was able to find only 44 cases that stood up to scrutiny. I. Stevenson, 'The evidence for survival from claimed memories of former incarnations', *JASPR*, 1960, 54, 51-71; 95-117.

broad range of evidence for reincarnation, and in identifying the better hypnotic reports, Rogo has done a service to the field.

Arguably, the only evidence for reincarnation worth considering today is that advanced by Ian Stevenson. If so, this would be not because Stevenson has a monopoly on evidential cases, but because he investigates his cases more thoroughly and reports on them more fully than anyone else. Perhaps the best approach for parapsychologists to take to *The Search for Yesterday* is to treat it as an exploratory study. Certainly Rogo has succeeded in identifying areas of promise for reincarnation research. If more researchers of Stevenson's calibre will enter the field, we can expect to make faster progress in this vital area. And when we have a larger body and wider range of well-investigated, substantial cases, perhaps one of these researchers will undertake a more scholarly work on the subject.

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