

Radiant Minds: Everything You May Have Wanted to Know About Psi Phenomena but Didn't Know Who to Ask

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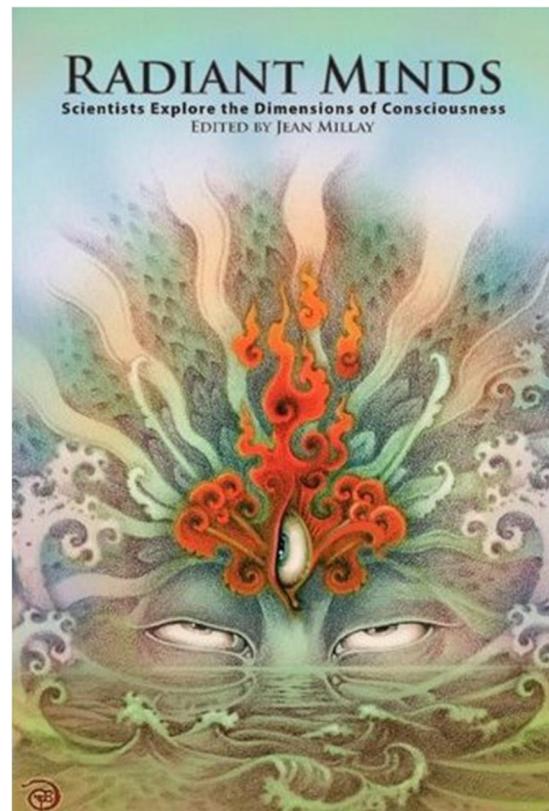
ABSTRACT

This article is a review of the book, *Radiant Minds: Scientists Explore the Dimensions of Consciousness* (2010, Millay, Ed.). *Radiant Minds* is a reissue of the anthology *Silver Threads: 25 Years of Parapsychology Research* (Kane, Millay, and Brown, 1993), with new data and articles added. It contains findings from experiments over several decades by scientists from the Parapsychology Research Group (PRG), a California-based network of scientists committed to understanding the dimensions of consciousness as well as psi and other anomalous phenomena. The book covers a broad selection of research into remote viewing, shamanic and other intentional healing, psychedelic experiences, anomalous dreams, chemical and physical explanations of psi phenomena, and more.

Key Words: consciousness, remote reviewing, shamanic healing, psychedelic experiences, psi phenomena, dimensions of perception and intention, parapsychology, physics, mind and brain body chemistry and electricity

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Is it possible that a new generation of seekers has reached maturity that did not experience the 1960's and 1970's? Throwing the gauntlet down to interest them in psi (parapsychological) research, Dr. Jean Millay has offered an encyclopedic collection of essays in *Radiant Minds: Scientists Explore the Dimensions of Consciousness* (2010). The book is actually a revised and updated version of an anthology originally compiled by the Parapsychology Research Group (PRG), *Silver Threads: 25 Years of Parapsychology Research* (1993). *Radiant Minds*, then, is an anthology of research on several parapsychological dimensions and activities as well as theoretical articles or recordings of talks endeavoring to explain them in the light of new developments in physics, philosophy, and mathematics.



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What is parapsychology or psi research? Psi phenomena are “usually defined as organism-environment and organism-organism interactions in which it appears that information or influence has occurred that cannot be explained by means of mainstream science’s understanding of sensory-motor channels” (Radin, 1997). These reports are *anomalous* because they appear to stand outside the mainstream scientific concepts of time, space, and force (Krippner, in Millay, 1999, p. xiii). Psi is often understood as extrasensory perception (ESP) and psychokinesis (PK), mediumistic activities and past-life reports, hands-on and remote healing, and out-of-body (OBE) and near-death experiences (NDEs) in which ESP or PK seems to play a role. Anomalous reports also have been reported from hallucinogenic, shamanic, or meditative voyages into non-ordinary modes of perception.

The PRG was a California-based scientific community dedicated to parapsychological research of all kinds. Founded in 1966, members (many of whom held posts at well-known universities) studied shamanism, remote viewing, healing by prayer, fire walking, anomalous dreams, hallucinogenic plant medicine, the effect of world events on random number generators, and much more.

In the book’s Foreword, Jeffrey Mishlove, the only person to ever get a doctoral degree in parapsychology from an accredited American university, laments the current decline of parapsychology research, commenting: “It’s very ironic then that as scientific parapsychology has shrunk in significance, popular interest in the field appears to be growing. This can be judged by the quantity of television and radio programs on the paranormal, as well as books written for the general public, websites, psychic hotlines, and feature films.” *Radiant Minds* is far more academic in tone than the popular culture offerings, being composed of well-documented research, replete with citations for further study, and biographies of the researchers.

Radiant Minds is divided into 11 sections, and a review of their titles gives a sense of the comprehensiveness of the contents: Dimensions of Perception; Dimensions of Intention; Belief systems are Evolving; Mind and Brain/Body Chemistry; Mind and Brain/Body Electricity;

Mathematical Models; Physics; Dimensions of Spirit; Dimensions of Consciousness; Education: Increasing Intelligence; and Reflections on Parapsychology. Articles range from philosophical and mathematical demonstrations of other realities to narrative stories of dramatic shamanic healings. It is not unusual to find a subheading such as “Insights into the Nature of Reality and the Need for a New Paradigm.”

Included in the offerings are stories of remote viewing experiences conducted by Russell Targ, founder of the PRG and its first president. Targ, a physicist who helped develop the laser, also headed the Stanford Research Institute’s (SRI) project on parapsychological research. Reporting on a series of remote viewing experiments conducted at SRI, Targ explained (p.14):

In our decade of research at SRI, throughout hundreds of experimental trials, we used no drugs, hypnosis, strobe lights, sensory deprivation, or meditative techniques, nor did we even require belief. In fact, to overcome the problem that Arthur Koestler called the “*Ink Fish (Octopus) Effect*,” in which a skeptic may view a clearly successful ESP demonstration one day and have doubts about its clarity—or even honesty—the next, we encouraged any willing skeptic to take part in a remote viewing experiment. We found that with patience and encouragement, almost anyone can experience remote viewing.

Targ described his role in the experiments as a “tour guide,” helping people to distinguish psychic noise from the actual reception of images the “senders” were sending him. The experiments were remarkably successful, indicating to Targ that the ability for remote viewing is “natural and innate.”

Report after fascinating report continues from this first one. In a spell-binding account, “The Mist Wolf,” Stephan Schwartz tells of Rolling Thunder, a Native American medicine man, healing a boy from a wound that wouldn’t heal:

Rolling Thunder begins a soft slow chant. I cannot make out the words, just the rhythm of the rising and falling sound. He begins making slow passes over the boy’s form using the wing and breast of the raven, slightly against the air pressure as his arm sweeps along—long graceful strokes.



It goes on monotonously. Everything else is silent. Suddenly, I notice that there is a white mist-like form taking shape around an in front of Rolling Thunder's body. ... Then it takes form, slowly at first, but as if gathering energy into itself it takes form. I can clearly see the smoke-like form is a wolf. Rolling Thunder moves as rhythmically as a clock. Sweep. Sweep. Flick. Sweep. Sweep. Flick.

After about thirty minutes the form begins to fade, first losing shape, then becoming increasingly insubstantial. ... Rolling Thunder straightens up, and stops. He makes a kind of gesture, and somehow we are released to come forward. The boy is very peaceful. ...

The wound is completely healed. (p. 429)

Quite in contrast to such narrative reports is the article on the eight-space metric, a scientific explanation by Elizabeth Rauscher and Russell Targ for how remote viewing may take place. A theory is explicated that includes the Prajnaparamita and Nagarjuna's four-logic, Maxwell equation, the work of Gerald Feinberg, and pages of equations beyond the understanding of this reviewer. Similarly, the essay, "*Quantum Reality and Consciousness*," by Nick Herbert (pp. 369-372), explores consciousness from a quantum theory perspective.

Many of the experiments described in *Radiant Minds* are attempts to demonstrate principles and effects of psi via experiments that have observable results. One such is Roger Nelson's Global Consciousness Project (<http://noosphere.princeton.edu/>). In this project, which is ongoing at the time of this writing, random number generators in areas all around the globe are continually generating either a 0 or a 1. However, in tracking these, when world-wide events occurred that apparently galvanized feeling around the globe (e.g., the death of Princess Diana) deviated from a random pattern. Nelson writes, "*One of the most intriguing possibilities for this project is that it may be capable of detecting faint glimmerings of global consciousness as a coalescing layer of intelligence for the earth—Teilhard de Chardin's Noosphere.*" Indeed, this intriguing project seems to illustrate that *something* very powerful occurs in such moments.

There are many notable experiments recorded in this volume. Millay, both the editor and a contributor to *Silver Threads* and

an author in her own right, has participated in many remote viewing experiments. In another book, *Multidimensional Mind: Remote Viewing in Hyperspace* (1999), Millay explored her own experiments in telepathy, remote viewing, and related topics. Committed to the belief that we live in a multidimensional universe and participate with multidimensional minds, in *Radiant Minds* she offered the report of a mediumistic message received from a colleague, Ruth-Inge Heinze, who had passed on (pp. 443-453). Heinze was a noted anthropologist and former president of the PRG, known for chairing a yearly international symposium on shamanism. Heinze also wrote a chapter for *Radiant Minds*, "Alternate States of Consciousness: Access to Other Realities" (pp. 178-188). Millay recorded two putative messages from Heinze, one shortly before her passing and one afterwards. Very sensitive to messages from beyond the here and now, Millay also reports that she experienced direct awareness of events happening at a distance while she was under the influence of LSD (pp. 218-226).

In 1999 the psychiatrist Elizabeth Targ and her colleagues conducted double blind experiments with HIV-positive AIDS patients in which they received prayers from people of varying faiths who prayed for them, each sending positive intentions according to their own tradition. She reported that by the end of the study, it had become so obvious which participants were the object of the prayers that even the participants knew. The project received wide publicity; Targ hoped that it would spark other experiments of a similar nature.

In 2004 the PRG was disbanded. By updating *Silver Threads* into *Radiant Minds*, Jean Millay has been able to bring the work of those who are, as she says, "continuing to explore the Great Mystery." A final reflection by Charles Tart (pp. 565-587) provides an invitation and encouragement to those who would like to join the field. Because several prominent researchers have left this earthly plane, Tart asks readers the question, who will take up the banner?

There is considerable contemporary research in neuroscience, including the role of mirror neurons in empathy and the changes in the brains of long-time meditators. Stanley Krippner and Harris Friedman's (2009)



anthology, *Mysterious Minds: The Neurobiology of Psychics, Mediums, and other Extraordinary People*, begins to record the application of the new technologies to the minds and brains of individuals who have had anomalous experiences. However, Krippner and Friedman include a caveat that the mind and the nature of which may indeed be more complex and “mysterious” than current neuroscience can explain. So that leaves us with two methods of discovery to explore: cutting edge but conventional “objective” science disciplines, and the “subjective,” experiential ways of knowing. Both approaches characterize parapsychology. *Radiant Minds: Scientists Explore the Dimensions of Consciousness* records the attempts of many scientists to bridge this division.

These scientists owe a great debt to Jean Millay for updating this very comprehensive volume of studies. To truly try to understand parapsychology one must take an overview of the book as a whole, for it explores cellular relationships; the immune system; shamanic demonstrations; telepathy and remote viewing; healing by prayer; and the relevance to psi studies as mathematics, biochemistry, electricity, quantum physics, and cosmology; dreams; psychedelic and medicinal plants; fire walking-in short, everything you might want to know about parapsychology.

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