

Christianity. There is much here that is useful, but *PsychoBible* is not without flaws. Informed readers should expect to find some areas in which they will disagree with Dr. Favazza.

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European Cases of the Reincarnation Type, by Ian Stevenson, M.D. Jefferson, N.C., McFarland & Co., 2003, 278 pp., \$49.95.

This is an unusual book to be reviewed—unusual in that it is essentially a monograph that presents some of the results of Dr. Stevenson's lifelong researches into the evidence for reincarnation, and unusual in dealing with a topic—reincarnation—that is a very rare focus in psychiatric discussion, especially in these days of increased interest in neuropsychologic and molecular genetic approaches to complex human behaviors, including psychopathology. Accordingly, background information is warranted to show how this particular book fits into the study of human behavior and, by extension, psychiatry, and how this monograph from Dr. Stevenson's research career is a product of his lifelong interest in the paranormal—extrasensory experiences and kindred phenomena.

Ian Stevenson was born in Canada, the son of a Scottish lawyer and his wife, who had an interest in psychic phenomena. Stevenson studied medicine at St. Andrews in Scotland and at McGill in Montreal. During the late 1940s, early in his medical career, he did research in psychosomatic medicine at New York Hospital, where Dr. H.G. Wolffe led a group investigating effects of life stress and its concomitant emotion on patients' organ systems. Because of his discontent with the then current psychosomatic interpretations of his colleagues, Stevenson moved into psychoanalytic training in 1951, graduating from the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute in 1958. In 1957 he became a child psychiatrist at the University of Virginia Hospital at Charlottesville.

Early in his career at Charlottesville he became aware of the lack of scientific method behind Freudian psychoanalytic hypotheses such as the "assertion that a person's later character depends almost exclusively on the events of infancy" (1) and the lack of interest in other concepts of unconscious mental processes "current in the early 20th Century (including Pierre Janet, Morton Prince, William James, C.G. Jung, and FWH Myers)" (1). These dissatisfactions with the prevailing psychiatric interpretations of personality led Stevenson in the early 1950s to read systematically in the literature of theosophy and psychic research. He became more attracted to and involved with psychic research because of its approach to both spontaneous psychic phenomena and laboratory methods to demonstrate phenomena such as telepathy and clairvoyance. For a variety of reasons Stevenson chose the "study of psychic experience—those that occur spontaneously in everyday life" (1).

Stevenson's approach to the question of reincarnation was to evaluate the evidence for it and devise a protocol for the gathering of further evidence to delineate the phenomena of human behaviors, which suggested that some aspects of human personality might survive apparent death and manifest themselves in the living. Stevenson described his general approach (for which the book under review provides a specific example) as follows:

In the study of spontaneous paranormal phenomena we must usually interview and cross-question informants about events that have happened before we arrive on the scene. In principle, the methods are those that lawyers use in reconstructing a crime and historians use in understanding the past. Once we have the best account possible of the events in question, we consider one by one the alternative explanations and try to eliminate them until only the single most probable one remains. Then we try with further observations to confirm or reject the initially preferred explanation. In addition, we search through series of apparently similar phenomena for recurrent features that may provide clues to causative conditions and processes of occurrence. (1)

After careful review of available phenomena that had suggested the possibility of reincarnation, Stevenson, following the methodology of early psychic researchers (Gurney et al. in 1886 and Myers in 1903), devised a protocol for recovery and evaluation of memories of apparent previous lives, a process Stevenson described in 1977 (2). This paradigm for investigation focused on spontaneous cases suggestive of reincarnation that were described in young children. Why young children? Because young children should be less likely to be exposed to information about life details of a dead individual who is reincarnated.

A brief description of a typical case of the reincarnation type would show the following features: 1) Starting in years 2–4, the child spontaneously narrates details of a previous life. 2) Volume and clarity of statements from the child increase until ages 5–6, when the child talks less about them. 3) By age 8, remarks about previous life generally cease. 4) Unexpected behavior unusual for child but concordant with behavior of deceased person occur, e.g., phobias for guns or special interests and appetites. 5) In many cases the child has a birthmark or congenital deformity that corresponds in location and appearance to fatal wounds on the body of the previous personality. A high number of reincarnated personalities report violent death, which the child alludes to. 6) In some cultures the individual who "reincarnates" predicts his or her next incarnation and may appear in a dream to the expectant mother of the child to announce an intention to reincarnate in the baby. 7) After the age of 10 these child subjects usually develop normally.

Stevenson has followed this information-gathering protocol since the early days of his worldwide travels to investigate spontaneous cases suggestive of reincarnation, which have been published over the years as separate volumes covering different cultures and a book, now in its second edition, which summarizes his work to the present (3). The present monograph, *European Cases of the Reincarnation Type*, fits into this series of publications (4–8).

As the author states in his preface to this book, there are three purposes for the present publication: 1) To show that cases of the type described above occur in European cultures, where fewer individuals believe in reincarnation than in Asia. 2) To show that essential features of these cases are similar to those found in Asia, Africa, and Northwest North American native tribes. 3) To show that some of the cases reported provide evidence of information transmitted by means outside of normal communication—extrasensory perception being one

and reincarnation another. Stevenson also hopes that this book will stimulate the reporting and investigating of more cases of this type from Western cultures.

The purposes just described above explain very well the contents of the monograph under review. It is important to the concept of reincarnation or whatever the collection of behaviors and physical manifestations of reincarnation that there should be a substantial element of invariance in their manifestation. Focus on a syndrome of behaviors in childhood, when environmental or verbally acquired information from the culture is a less likely explanation of similarities between the child and the allegedly reincarnated person, is one approach to defining an elusive set of behaviors. Further evidence of invariance is to discover that vastly different cultures appear to share with very similar behavioral and physical manifestations in these phenomena—as in the case of birthmarks symbolizing injuries in the previous personality or the apparent high incidence of violent unexpected death in many of those who are reincarnated. This particular book discusses in great detail cases suggestive of reincarnation in Western European cultures and points out features similar to those reported from Asia, Africa, and North American Indian tribes. The similarities of cases from culture to culture suggest some organizing process—Stevenson proposes a paranormal process such as reincarnation or extrasensory perception. The quality and amount of information given by the child regarding the previous personality and its independence from usual cultural and environmental sources of this information are essential to the argument that the phenomena are uniquely caused—not coincidence and not by information provided by adults talking about a deceased individual.

In the general discussion of the book (p. 252), Stevenson states that the European cases presented in this book are “much weaker in evidence of a paranormal process than the cases found in Asia, especially in India and Sri Lanka.” He goes on to quote a study that examined 799 cases from six different countries and found that the European cases showed much lower scores for presence of a paranormal process involvement in the information available to the child.

The intensive study of these children has revealed several provocative findings, such as the apparent increase in death due to violence in those who reincarnate and the startling correspondence found between birth marks on the child and similar marks or distinguishing features present on the body of the reincarnated personality during their lifetime, such as wounds, injuries, and other stigmata. These physical types of findings are detailed in *Where Reincarnation and Biology Intersect* (9), but examples are present in the current monograph. Coincidences like these remind us that there remains a host of phenomena to be described and studied, as Dr. Stevenson has done for most of his research lifetime. The present book provides an introduction to an exciting range of such phenomena and furnishes an inspiring example of application of a painstaking protocol to sift facts from fancy. Ian Stevenson, now in his ninth decade, is looking forward to publishing a monograph on reincarnation type cases from the United States (personal communication), and one wishes him both the time and energy to continue this task.

References

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PSYCHOANALYSIS

Understanding Dissidence and Controversy in the History of Psychoanalysis, edited by Martin S. Bergmann. New York, Other Press, 2004, 396 pp., \$28.00 (paper).

We are very indebted to Martin Bergmann and the Other Press for the second in a series of conferences sponsored by the Psychoanalytic Research and Development Fund of New York. The first of these was titled *The Hartmann Era* (1), and the new one is of just as high a quality. What makes it even more remarkable is that although Bergmann presents a long and clear expository essay at the beginning and runs the symposium that follows later with a firm hand, this meeting was held on his 90th birthday!

The book itself is divided into four parts and is well done. The first part reviews a whole series of famous dissidents in the history of psychoanalysis, including Adler, Jung, Rank, Ferenczi, Horney, Reich, Rado, Klein, Fromm, Lacan, Kohut, Fairbairn, Winnicott, Bowlby, and other important individuals and symposia where controversy flared up. Bergmann manages to do this in 109 pages.

The second part contains contributions prepared by a number of prominent psychoanalysts, some of them my favorite authors. The contributions vary in quality and often contain a great deal of high-level speculation. Some authors write directly to the point, while others digress. There are seven prepared contributions, plus yet another article by Bergmann.

The third part consists of an open meeting held on February 14, 2003, Bergmann's 90th birthday. In this section the individuals who offered prepared contributions in the second section discuss with each other the problems of dissidence