

*Miracles of Mind: Exploring Non-Local Consciousness and Spiritual Healing* by Russell Targ and Jane Katra, Ph.D. Foreword by Larry Dossey, M.D. 325 pages. Illustrations and photographs. Bibliographical references and index. (New World Library: New York, 1998). ISBN: 1-57731-070-5. \$24.95 hardcover.

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"This book is about connecting to the universe and to each other through the use of our psychic abilities." Russell Targ and Jane Katra conveniently tell us in the first sentence of their first book together exactly what they intend.

All of Targ's books have been collaborations but, with this one, he seems to have found a truly congenial co-author. Although he is well-known in parapsychological circles, Dr. Katra may not be. She describes herself in her jacket bio as holding "a doctorate in public health education and has been a spiritual healer for more than 20 years. She has taught nutrition and health classes at the University of Oregon, and Therapeutic Touch at Lane Community College."

They lay the groundwork for their presentation by spending the first half of the book presenting a good overview of the entire remote sensing field and its history, including references to the obscure Upton Sinclair work, described in *Mental Radio*. Principally, though, the focus is on the government sponsored studies at the SRI parapsychology lab, conducted when Targ was a part of that team, and private work he has conducted subsequently. Much of this is well-known, not only from Targ's other co-authored books, *Mind Reach: Scientists Look at Psychic Abilities*, and *The Mind Race: Understanding and Using Psychic Abilities*, but from many other books and papers that have cited these often ground-breaking explorations. There is, however, something new here to add to the SRI record: recently declassified material which Targ and Katra present for the first time, although the experiments themselves happened 20 years or more ago.

They show this new work, using the convention of most RV research reports: the drawing made by the viewer, the verbal description and, then, a photograph of the target. In the process they tell the story of some truly impressive "hits". My particular favorite is the late Pat Price's description of a moveable crane at a Soviet R&D facility.

The purpose of all this is to educate the reader about anomalous cognition, but there is an unintended consequence achieved as well. One immediately sees there is no difference between a classified remote viewing session and its unclassified civilian brethren. Targ and Katra, without really having that as their purpose, thus provide a sense of proportion, and clear away some larger-than-life myths about the SRI work, for which everyone interested in the history of parapsychology should be grateful.

The second half of the book, focuses on recent research in what I have called Therapeutic Intent, the idea that the consciousness of one person can have a direct effect on the physical or mental well-being of another. They detail a selection of studies which have been carried out by many researchers working at a number of institutions, all of them suggesting that this effect has an objective reality. To their credit, they are careful to point out that the outcomes of these Therapeutic Intent studies are not so simple, nor so simply defined by statistics, as the remote viewing research.

Each of these sections -- remote sensing and Therapeutic Intent -- begins in the first person singular voice of one of the authors. Targ takes the remote sensing section, and Katra the second section on healing, and the voices in which they write reveal something important about each of them. Targ starts his chapter by telling us that he was greatly influenced by the late philosopher Alfred J. Ayer, while studying as a graduate student at Columbia. Already oriented towards physics, he found Ayer's dictum that if a thing can not be measured or verified, it can't be sensibly discussed, a suitable view for a young scientist.<sup>(1)</sup> He then goes on to describe how a series of psi events eventually forced him to rethink his materialist perspective while still holding on to his idea that these phenomena could be measured. Targ came to understand the psychic side of himself through his intellect.

Katra, who clearly has lived mostly following the impulses of her heart, begins her chapter by describing her turbulent emotions, and the pain of pounding headaches that drove her in a quest for healing, going into some detail to describe a trip she made to explore the world of Philippine healers and psychic surgeons.

Had they been sole authors, one suspects they would each have written very different books; Targ's more in the traditional dry parapsychology book model, Katra more in the New Age genre. Together, however, they have created a synthesis that is stronger than either alone was likely to have achieved, and it is

their attempt to integrate the Therapeutic Intent material with the statistically oriented remote sensing research that gives the book its flavor and human quality. If it does not rise to the level of literature it is, nonetheless, more accessible than many other books written by researchers on these subjects.

Having said all this, it is important to point out that while *Miracles of Mind* certainly recounts experiments and discusses formal research, that is not the authors' principal purpose. This is really a book about a substrate of "non-local" consciousness, which many, including Targ, Katra, and this reviewer -- to name three -- believe undergirds perceptual reality. The crux of the book's message is that each individual has access to this network for healing and information, as demonstrated by the experiments and stories recounted. It is a perspective which ought to be discussed, pro and con, within the parapsychological and consciousness research communities to a far greater degree than has been the case to date, and Targ and Katra are to be commended for this contribution.

1. Bohm, David, in Renee Weber. "Meaning as Being in the Implicate Order Philosophy of David Bohm: A Conversation." in B.J. Hiley and F. David Peat, eds. *Quantum Implications: Essays in Honor of David Bohm*. (Routledge: New York, 1987), p. 436.