

go to the grave heroically trying their best, but actually struggling with unconscious demons that they might have exorcised through psychoanalysis or other conventional therapies" (p. 450).

Appelbaum did not emerge from his explorations unchanged. He now acknowledges the roles of will, action, and self-responsibility more than he used to and incorporates breathing exercises, meditation, screaming, diet, and attention to the body in his therapeutic practice. Currently he has a grant from the Menninger Foundation to study psychic healing and is visiting healers in the far corners of the world. One can only hope that this project will be as successful as *Out in Inner Space* in its clarification of issues, description of processes, and production of useful syntheses.

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SEARCH FOR THE SOUL by Milbourne Christopher. New York: Crowell, 1979. Pp. 206, \$9.95, cloth.

Milbourne Christopher, professional stage magician and dabbler in psychic phenomena, has conjured up a book on life after death. On the jacket of the book we read: "An insider's report on the continuing quest by psychics and scientists for evidence of life after death." I am at a loss to see in what sense the word "insider" can reasonably be applied to Christopher. The word is usually employed to denote an expert of long and distinguished standing in a field. Apparently Christopher doesn't mind being featured as an "insider"—despite the fact he is not. I would not begin by calling attention to this were it not that *Search for the Soul* is for the most part a kind of masquerade.

Let us begin with the way the author defines the aim of his book: "This book offers an account of the efforts that have been made to see, isolate, and analyze the soul" (p. 7). Certainly no serious survival researcher since Myers's day would phrase the problem in such a crudely simplistic fashion. The verbs *see*, *isolate*, and *analyze* mark the author's gratuitous assumption that the *soul*—a term outmoded in scientific circles long ago—is some strange and elusive chemical compound. Another possibility, of course, would be that Christopher intends to analyze the *concept* of the soul; however, there is no sign of anything resembling philosophy in the text. Chapter titles make it clear what Christopher has in mind; e.g., "Weighers of Souls," "The

Shape of the Soul," "The Soul Through a Lens," "Dimensions of the Soul,"—topics obviously remote from the mainstream of survival research. Yet a good deal of the book fixates upon just these eccentric and unsophisticated attempts to "isolate" and "analyze" the soul. Working with such grossly mechanistic assumptions, it is an easy matter for Christopher to jeer at what he describes as the scientific "search for the soul." Unfortunately, he is unaware of the peculiar conceptual and methodological complexities in survival research.

The first chapter treats us to a two-page history of human beliefs about the soul. Christopher darts about ancient Greece and Rome, India, the Old Testament, modern spiritualism, Canadian Indians, Solomon Islanders, etc., in a few paragraphs. Here, for example, is what he has to say about the vast treasures and legacy of Hindu spirituality: "However, an early Hindu writer declared that the soul was as large as a thumb and could be found in the center of the body" (p. 2). And that's all he says about the Hindu doctrine of soul. This sort of flippant superficiality is characteristic of the book as a whole. There are no references—for instance, to this Hindu doctrine about the size and location of the soul. There is no way to check, confirm, or evaluate any of the author's assertions.

Christopher rarely quotes an author directly, but when he does, it is invariably to beef up his own, all-too-obvious, biased viewpoint. For instance, he quotes Gardner Murphy out of context: "Trained as a psychologist, and now in my sixties, I do not actually anticipate finding myself in existence after physical death" (p. 79). But one paragraph above Murphy writes: "Struggle though I may as a psychologist, for forty-five years, to try to find a 'naturalistic' and 'normal' way of handling this material, I cannot do this even when using all the information we have about human chicanery and all we have about the far-flung telepathic and clairvoyant abilities of some gifted sensitives. The case looks like communication with the deceased" (*Challenge of Psychical Research*, p. 273). Christopher has clearly misrepresented Murphy's views on survival. The innocent reader gets a false impression of what Murphy had to say about survival. This is particularly offensive in view of the fact that few people have written more searchingly on survival than Murphy.

Christopher virtually omits discussing or making reference to most of the classic work in the field. The bibliography has no entry for Myers, Piddington, Salter, Mrs. Sidgwick, Drayton Thomas, Hart, Broad, Ducasse, etc.—but it does contain nine irrelevant references to Christopher's stuff on magic.

The book contains much that is peripheral to the theme of life after death. Christopher rallies around the lurid and sensational episodes in the history of the subject—such as William Crookes's erotic capers with Florence Cook. It is obvious he wants to amuse and titillate the reader—a fact in tune with the author's customary professional activities. Another device employed to divert the reader from substantive issues is to spend an inordinate amount of time gossiping about the funds—such as the Kidd estate—allocated to recent survival research. Christopher seems to resent the fact that even these relatively paltry sums of money went into research on life after death (see, e.g. p. 94). He complains, for instance, that research into out-of-body states (conducted at the American Society for Psychical Research) has no bearing on the problem of life after death. Again Christopher swings wildly and misses the point. Strong evidence for paranormal out-of-body states would not “prove” survival; but it would count as a significant step toward making a case for it. Survival research is subtle, piecemeal, indirect—like a detective story full of tantalizing clues and lingering suspense. How callous nature must appear to Mr. Christopher, who wants the “soul” bagged and spread-eagled under a magnifying glass.

A few interesting pages in the book (pp. 69-71) consist of a lengthy quotation dating from 1876 concerning a case of resuscitation from clinical death. As usual no reference is given. The author comments at once: “The stories that near-death patients tell of their after-life experiences reflect their interests and backgrounds.” But the narration cited on the previous page contradicts this assertion at least three times. The experient, Mrs. Diana Powellson, states: “. . . The people were not what I expected to see. They were ordinary men and women. . . . I saw many bright spirits, but was very surprised that they had no wings. . . . I expected to meet Christ, but did not do so.” So blinded by his bias, Christopher cannot understand the written words staring him in the face. Magicians are fond of pointing out how easily academics and scientists are duped by illusions. I wish to underscore how this magician is the dupe of his own prejudice.

The book, anecdotal and planless, includes chapters on the mediumship of Mrs. Piper, out-of-body research, and reincarnation studies. Things are generally battered about by the hammer of Christopher's mind. Example: “The single question for the investigators was whether Mrs. Piper's information came from the spirit world or from a more material source” (p. 156). There is no explanation of “material source.” One gathers that fraud is thought to be the only

alternative to the survival hypothesis. Christopher fails to consider the third possibility, that Mrs. Piper's psi abilities (minus spirit intervention) account for the information.

In sum, I cannot recommend this book—except perhaps as a document illustrating what parapsychology need *not* fear from its critics. The close student of the subject will find it a waste of time. The beginner will be misled by the author's bias and superficiality.

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