

ings, the author does not pretend to exhaust all the possible variations.

Regardless of what direction might be involved, crossings invite moral judgements. The one making a movement leaves stability behind and may therefore be accused of hanging his coat according to the wind, of being a strange maverick or, in the worst case, a renegade who does not hesitate to sell out the most treasured values of a society. However, Swiderski does not judge his cases. He narrates the lives of his heroes (missionaries like de Nobili and Gützlaff; scholars like Doughty, Cushing, and David-Neel; artists like Gauguin; and various impostors) with much detail, but his main interest lies with what motivated their attempts to find a place in a world different from the one they were born into. Anthropologists studying other cultures seriously may feel uncomfortable about finding themselves placed in company with impostors and make-believers. However, I think that one of the points the book makes (rather in passing) is that the serious traveler between cultures may be dangerously close to the impostor. Both may in fact be sincere about their actions, but personal sincerity is only one part of the picture, the other being the assumptions of society. In this respect the author invites to a good deal of thinking that needs to cross ordinary mental horizons.

Swiderski's style and presentation should have made this book thoroughly enjoyable reading, but enjoyment is marred by a great number of typos and other mistakes that make understanding difficult. All of them could have been eliminated by a good proofreader. Other shortcomings concern some facts. To mention just one example, the island that the Dutch were ordered by the Japanese shogunate to use as their only place to live was not off Edo, but in the harbor of Nagasaki, more than a thousand kilometers away and out of sight of the shogun. In spite of such shortcomings the book invites thinking, because it brings together unusual lives in an unusual manner in order to make a point that is of concern to many of us.

Peter KNECHT

VIRTANEN, LEEA. "*That Must Have Been ESP!*" *An Examination of Psychic Experiences*. Translated by John Atkinson and Thomas Dubois. *Folklore Today*. Linda Dégh, General Editor. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990. xvii+169 pages. Paper US\$12.50; ISBN 0-253-36264-4. Cloth US\$27.50.

Leea Virtanen, who teaches Folklore at the University of Helsinki, has here gathered a batch of testimonials by Finns concerning what she calls "simultaneous experiences" (usually called telepathic occurrences). For an ordinary reader the interest of the book lies in the pathos of the material and in the peculiar richness of extrasensory experiences among Finns, particularly Carelian Finns, the same group whose singers have provided us with the traditional chants of the nation. A brief foreword by Linda Dégh points out the general contradictory attitude towards ESP: scepticism and belief, waves of occultist frenzy and of violent debunking alternate or overlap. The "scientific" investigation of occult phenomena seems to ignore the social, folkloric element that sustains them. Virtanen has bridged the gap and, according to Ms. Dégh, folklorists who accomplish this should be entitled to display their personal bias. In her preface Virtanen is quite outspoken:

Perhaps the answer is to be found in the theories of modern physics in which subatomic particles contain simultaneous information. Or is it rather, as some

philosophers have posited, that one is born to question the meaning of everything encountered, but is limited by the senses from comprehending the essence of being? (xvii)

Actually, I do not see how one can doubt the fact of telepathy after the forcefulness of such an extensive amount of research as that conducted and reviewed in this book. There are very few new insights, however; one still wonders what it might be that makes some people more open than others to this kind of experience. In this respect, no true advance has been made from the time of MYERS. Ms. Virtanen lays stress on the telepathic influence on REM sleep at the borderline between sleep and wakefulness. A slight dozing off will open the doors: an English girl gazes at a pond and feels that her brother is dead. Many similar premonitions are found in the Finnish material. Trance, also, is an opening onto telepathy, and Ms. Virtanen defines it as a state of consciousness in which the capacity for observations is reduced and suggestibility is increased—such as occurs in highway fatigue or in staring at a crystal ball.

What appears to be unprecedented is the wealth of evidence for folkloric strains, such as a death announced by angels singing or by voices telling that the deceased stands before God. In general it is noticeable that, notwithstanding the amount of information conveyed through the media nowadays, it is close human contacts and experiences that dominate the scene, and next to no trace is left of the general show paraded over television.

Elémire ZOLLA
Università di Roma "La Sapienza"
Rome

WHITE, DAVID GORDON. *Myths of the Dog-Man*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991. xiv+334 pages. Illustrations, selected bibliography, index. Paper £14.25 (UK and Eire), \$20.75 (except USA, Canada, Australia); ISBN 0-226-89509-2. Cloth £33.95 (UK and Eire), \$48.95 (except USA, Canada, Australia); ISBN 0-226-89508-4.

Do not be deceived by the title of this book into thinking that it is a narrow treatise on an arcane subject. David Gordon White's first book-length publication is an impressive and important cross-cultural study that has vast implications for history, religion, anthropology, folklore, and other fields. Relying on scripture, legend, archeology, and myth, White pieces together a fascinating pan-Asian picture that has its roots in a Central Asian vortex.

Myths of the Dog-Man continues the glorious tradition of cross-cultural studies exemplified by Georges Dumézil and Mircea Eliade. Perhaps the closest recent exemplar of this tradition in terms of its searching breadth is Bruce LINCOLN's *Priests, Warriors, and Cattle: A Study in the Ecology of Religions* (1981). The chief theoretical model for this book, however, is drawn from Jonathan Z. Smith, the historian of comparative religion who is concerned with how we adjust to chaos and otherness. White shows clearly that most of the Eurasian myths dealing with cynanthropic barbarians and monsters are really attempts to come to terms with those who are different from us. A more philosophical approach to many of the same questions may be found in Wilhelm HALBFASS's *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (1988).

The book is marred by occasional political preaching. Perhaps the most egregious