

People in Parapsychology: XXVII. Stanley Krippner

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<http://www.parapsychology.org>

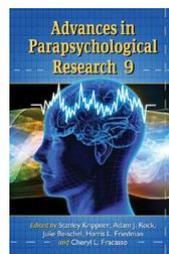
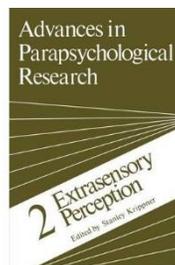
Perhaps no other psychologist in the world is identified so much with parapsychology than Stanley Krippner. <http://stanleykrippner.weebly.com/> He received his doctoral degree at Northwestern University in 1961 and is currently Professor of Psychology and Integrative Inquiry at Saybrook University. Stanley, who I first met in the late 1970s in California, is well known for many contributions to parapsychology, among them his studies of ESP in dreams. Another contribution is his series of anthologies containing detailed reviews of the literature, *Advances in Parapsychological Research* (for the last volume click here).

<https://carloalvarado.wordpress.com/2013/12/04/advances-in-parapsychological-research-vol-9/>

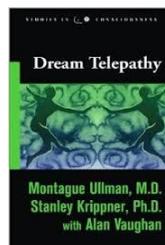


Dr. Stanley Krippner

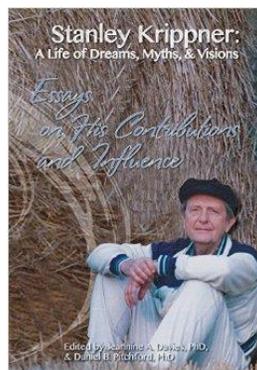
[Photo taken by Stuart Fischer]



Examples of his research on ESP and dreams in the laboratory include: **Krippner, S., & Persinger, M.** (1996). Evidence for enhanced congruence between dreams and distant target material during periods of decreased geomagnetic activity. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 10, 487-493; **Krippner, S., Honorton, C., & Ullman, M.** (1973). An experiment in dream telepathy with "The Grateful Dead". *Journal of the American Society of Psychosomatic Dentistry and Medicine*, 20, 9-17; **Krippner, S., Honorton, C., & Ullman, M.** (1972). A second precognitive dream study with Malcolm Bessent. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 66, 269-279; **Krippner, S., Honorton, C., Ullman, M., Masters, R.E.L., & Houston, J.** (1971). A long-distance "sensory bombardment" study of ESP in dreams. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 65, 468-475; **Krippner, S., & Ullman, M.** (1970). Telepathy and dreams: A controlled experiment with electroencephalogram-electro-oculogram monitoring. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 151, 394-403; Ullman, M., & **Krippner, S.** (1969). A laboratory approach to the nocturnal dimension of paranormal experience: Report of a confirmatory study using the REM monitoring technique. *Biological Psychiatry*, 1, 259-270; Ullman, M., **Krippner, S., & Feldstein, S.** (1966). Experimentally-induced telepathic dreams: Two studies using EEG-REM monitoring techniques. *International Journal of Parapsychology*, 8, 577-603.



His work covers many areas and topics, and it is not limited to parapsychology. This includes anthropology and various psychological topics, such as creativity, dissociation, dreams, hypnosis, psychotherapy, psychedelics, PTSD, and shamanism. An overview of his contributions appears in Jeannine A. Davies and Daniel B. Pitchford (Eds.), *Stanley Krippner: A Life of Dreams, Myths and Visions* (Colorado Springs, CO: University Professors Press, 2015).



Much information about Stanley appears in his web page (click here <http://stanleykrippner.weebly.com/>) and in the following autobiographical writings: (1975). *Song of the Siren: A Parapsychological Odyssey* (New York: Harper & Row; and (2013). My

parapsychological odyssey. In R. Pilkington (Ed.), *Men and Women of Parapsychology, Personal Reflections: Esprit Volume 2* (pp. 199-224; San Antonio, TX: Anomalist Books).

Over the years he has earned many awards. A few of the most recent ones are: Lifetime Achievement Award (International Network on Personal Meaning, 2014), Human Treasure Award (Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, 2013), Charles Honorton Integrative Contribution Award (Parapsychological Association, 2011), The Ways of Knowing Award: Exploring Culturally Based Healing Traditions and Practices (Life Science Foundation and the University of Minneapolis Center for Spirituality and Healing, 2008), Lifetime Achievement Award (International Association for the Study of Dreams, 2006), Award for Distinguished Contributions to Professional Hypnosis (American Psychological Association, Division 30 [Psychological Hypnosis], 2002), Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology (American Psychological Association, 2002), and Outstanding Career Award (Parapsychological Association, 1998).



Stanley receives the Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology (American Psychological Association, 2002) from Dr. Philip Zimbardo

Stanley is also known for helping many persons, something that is not mentioned often enough. This includes colleagues and students, among others. His contributions, thus, transcend academia, and include a real and quiet attempt to help his fellow human beings.

I encourage my readers to peruse Stanley's publications, as seen in the bibliography after the interview. Generally I present from 50 to 65 references in the interviews. Here I present more because Stanley has more publications than anyone else I have interviewed. I focus mainly on parapsychological topics, and related issues. Those of you wishing to see a longer list click here http://stanleykrippner.weebly.com/uploads/7/5/1/2/75124/sk_bibliography_07-2015.pdf

Interview

How did you get interested in parapsychology?

After meeting him when he spoke at the University of Wisconsin, J.B. Rhine invited me to visit the Duke University Parapsychology Laboratory and I was able to do so a few years later when I was working in the special education department of the Richmond, Virginia, Public Schools. He put me up at his home, introduced me to his wife and two daughters, and spent considerable time discussing psi research with me. Rhine also suggested I visit "Lady Wonder," a horse with alleged psychic powers who lived with her owner on a Virginia ranch. I reported that the horse gave remarkable answers on a huge typewriter, but it was obvious to me that she was responding

to cues from her owner. He also asked me to visit a young woman who possessed the alleged ability to read newspapers while blindfolded. I did so and immediately observed that the blindfold was not secure enough to prevent peeking.

When I became a graduate student at Northwestern University, I was able to invite Rhine to be the invited speaker at the annual Phi Delta Kappa banquet. This was an educational society, and there was no objection to the invitation. The psychology department objected to Rhine's appearance and the department chair ordered his faculty to boycott it. The one professor, Donald Campbell, who ignored the boycott expressed his reservations regarding psi research but was polite in doing so. He later was elected president of the American Psychological Association, and we remained friends until his death.

A fellow graduate student, Arthur Hastings, and I drove Rhine to Chicago for his next engagement, passing by my parents' farmhouse. It was a thrill to introduce them to Rhine who lived in a farmhouse himself, the one I visited several times over the years.

While at Northwestern University, Hastings and I arranged a meeting of graduate students interested in psi with Gardner Murphy after his seminar for the psychology department. Subsequently, Murphy, his wife, and I became close friends and colleagues.

I was still at Northwestern when Rhine asked me to check out a poltergeist case at nearby Gutenberg, Iowa. I asked Hastings to accompany me. After a day of interviews and observations, we concluded that the disturbances were engineered by a grandson who had been given the unpleasant task of taking care of his grandparents. His efforts were successful and they fled their home in terror. This episode became the topic of my first article reporting psi research. Hastings and I wrote about expectancy set and how it can lead to misinterpretations of easily explained phenomena.

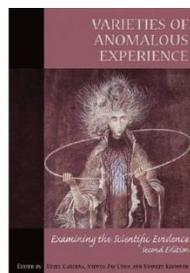
When the Parapsychological Association was formed, I became a Charter Member. By this time I was director of the Child Study Center at Kent State University, and I could have stayed there, received tenure, and retired happily. But the maintaining factor in my parapsychological interests kicked in. At a Parapsychological Association convention, I met Montague Ullman who had received a grant to study psi effects in dreams. Half a dozen prospects had turned down his offer to direct the laboratory and, perhaps in desperation, he asked me. I eagerly accepted and worked with Ullman at the Maimonides Medical Center for ten years -- until the funds ran out. We published dozens of articles (many co-authored with Charles Honorton). Ullman often referred to our partnership as a "dream relationship." In any event, this is what maintained my interest in psi research, which persists to this day.



What are your main interests in the field and how have you contributed to its development?

My interests in the field cover the waterfront. I need to keep informed because I have edited nine volumes of *Advances in Parapsychological Research*, which I would list as one of my “contributions.” Following a symposium on Kirlian photography and acupuncture, Plenum Press asked me if I would like to edit a yearbook on the topics. My own reaction to Kirlian photography was that it was best viewed as an art form, at least at that time, and I was not an expert on Traditional Chinese Medicine. So I created a spin that turned the offer into three volumes on psi research, featuring excellent literature reviews of PK, ESP, survival, and various other topics. After disappointing sales, Plenum Press was happy to turn the series over to McFarland, which has published the subsequent volumes. The series still does not make anyone any money but its preparation is now subsidized by Saybrook’s University’s Chair for the Study of Consciousness.

My most influential publication was *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*, co-edited with Etzel Cardeña and Steven Lynn, and published by the American Psychological Association, most recently in a second edition.



Of course, my major contribution to the field was my ten years directing research into anomalous dreams at Maimonides Medical Center. During that decade I authored or co-authored (usually with Montague Ullman and Charles Honorton) over one hundred articles, a monograph, and a popular book. I designed two precognitive dream experiments (with Malcolm Bessent as the sole participant), installing such safeguards as hiring graduate students from a local university to monitor dreams with no knowledge of the purpose of the experiment. When asked to comment on the psychic dream research by the *San Francisco Weekly*, arch-critic Ray Hyman commented, "There's no smoking gun to say they didn't have something," but added that no one has ever duplicated the “striking success” of the Maimonides dream lab. When Wikipedia trashed the Maimonides work, several friends attempted to insert Hyman’s comments into my entry but Wikipedia refused. Nor would Wikipedia admit James Randi's statement, in the same article, that “in this field...there are so many people who are prejudiced and biased. But I can depend on Stan. And I don't think he's biased at all.” Instead, Wikipedia featured an appraisal of the Maimonides work by C.E.M. Hansel that was not only biased but inaccurate.

On the positive side, I designed a 4-night experiment in an attempt to replicate Charles Tart's 1968 study with a "Ms. Z" who reported an OBE in which she correctly identified a five-digit number on a shelf in Tart’s sleep lab. My study eliminated all of the alternative explanations proposed by Tart, and on the fourth night, our participant reported an OBE in which he correctly

identified an image that had been placed on a similar shelf, but in a way in which nobody could have seen the image and passed on its identify by cuing or by telepathy.

Another contribution was to survey (with Michael Persinger) the dream telepathy "hits" and "misses" from the perspective of geomagnetic field activity; "hits" were significantly associated with "calm" nights, and "misses" with "stormy" nights. When the spontaneous precognitive dreams of psychic claimant Alan Vaughan were subjected to a similar analysis by James Spottiswoode and me, we found the same results. Later, I led a team that worked with the claimant medium Amyr Amiden in Brazil; his recurrent spontaneous PK was significantly associated with high geomagnetic activity as well as psychophysiological measures.

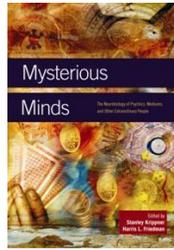
Finally, I have presented papers on psi research at half a dozen conventions of the American Psychological Association, and have stimulated research efforts on psi by students at Saybrook University and several other colleges and universities both here and abroad.

Why do you think that parapsychology is important?

Psi research is important for several reasons. Various meta-analyses of the data have demonstrated that the evidence for psi is overwhelming. At the very least, psi research may point out that statistical anomalies and/or experimenter effects are more profound than mainstream science suspects. In addition, surveys of spontaneous cases of psi-like experiences have found many links to personality traits but not to psychopathology. Our work at the Maimonides Medical Center was published in most of the US psychiatric journals, and modulated the earlier claim that claiming to dream about future events or other people's activities was a sure-fire marker of schizophrenia and other disorders.

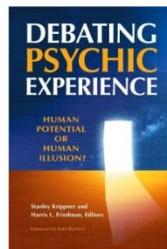
In addition, parapsychological researchers have pioneered novel methods of collecting and analyzing data about human (and non-human) behavior, and (in another innovative move) have published non-significant results in their journals. Hence, even if the psi hypothesis is eventually found to be unsubstantiated, our work has not been in vain.

But what if there is, indeed, a capacity for living organisms to engage in remote sensing and remote perturbation? For these traits to have persisted over time, they must have had a survival advantage, and I have turned to "costly signaling theory" (CST) to support this thesis. Psi could well have provided adaptive functioning, helping living creatures avoid danger, identify sources of support, and facilitate communication and cooperation. These signals are "costly" because they involve effort, energy, and time. Peacocks exhibit plumage during mating season, birds manifest warning calls, and bees perform elaborate dances to signal a source of nutrients. These behaviors are not easy to produce, and if they were faked, they would not carry accurate information that would confer survival benefits. From an evolutionary perspective, costly signals are inherently "honest" and promote species collaboration. Montague Ullman spoke of the "honesty" of dreams, and this lack of guile is due to the likelihood that REM sleep and its accompanying dreams were costly signals, psi-related dreams included. This topic is dealt with at length in the Postscript to the book *Mysterious Minds*, which I co-edited with Harris Friedman. It is also compatible with the "first sight" theory of James Carpenter, which I consider to be a major theoretical contribution.



Psi research is important for another reason, in that many debunkers have over-reacted whenever the topic is mentioned verbally or in print. Decades ago, James McConnell trained planaria to turn left or right, then fed them to untrained planaria that seemed to learn the skills more quickly than non-cannibal planaria. Other researchers reported that trained responses in rats could be transferred to untrained rats by peptides extracted from their brains. Attempts at replication fell short of confirming these neurobiological changes, the conformation of which would have led to major revisions in biological theory. The positive results were attributed to experimenter effects, methodological defects, and extrinsic influences -- but not to fraud and deliberate manipulation of the data, as has been asserted by debunkers of psi data.

The tendency of debunkers to go overboard when faced with positive results from parapsychological research is exemplified by the outrageous statements they have made concerning the Maimonides experiments. I took up each of these charges in the book *Debating Psychic Experiences* (also co-edited by Harris Friedman) finding that only one of them (lack of replicability) had any basis in fact. The psychology and sociology of debunkers, most of who have been well trained to engage in scientific pursuits, will make an important contribution to the literature on bias and "logic-tight compartments," especially by men and women who hold important positions in academic and research institutions.



In your view, what are the main problems in parapsychology today as a scientific field?

It is fairly easy to “round up the usual suspects” when discussing the major problems facing parapsychology’s attempt to enter the scientific mainstream. Parapsychology needs to be recognized as a legitimate disciplined inquiry (i.e., a science) and not, as Wikipedia claims, a “pseudoscience.” The “usual suspects” include underfunding, the lack of serious media coverage, and the paucity of accredited graduate schools allowing students to conduct psi-oriented research. Many of my colleagues would add the absence of replicable experiments to this list and

there is some degree of validity to this claim, but this issue plagues mainstream psychology (and many other sciences) as well, evidenced by articles in recent issues of *Science* and *Nature* on repeatability and falsifiability. A more serious problem is the prejudice parapsychologists encounter, even among scientists who should know better. But, as cognitive scientist Donald Hoffman revealed in a computer simulation study, organisms (including humans) evolved to produce “fitter” behavior, not to construct accurate representations. For mainstream scientists, those “fitter” behaviors often include attaining awards, tenure, and professional prestige—all of which trump the search for truth.

Sometimes I suspect that advances in other fields, such as physics, biology, and the neurosciences, will run across some data that cannot be explained by dominant paradigms. I can imagine these investigators saying, “Years ago, parapsychologists found much the same thing but their experiments were so poorly constructed and they made so many bizarre proposals that they were not taken seriously.” This is what happened when positive psychology garnered respect – and massive funding – from mainstream sources. Humanistic psychology is rarely mentioned in positive psychology’s articles and books. When this omission is brought up in open forums, the usual response is, “Yes, humanistic psychologists had some of the same ideas but these notions were not backed up by solid research and the leaders in this field were very ‘New Agey,’ not serious thinkers.” Neither of these assertions is correct, of course, but they continue to be cited.

There is some excellent work being done by sleep and dream researchers who have investigated ways in which one’s waking life experiences are reflected in the content of their dream reports. The research designs exist that would allow investigators to determine if some of these dream reports also matched future life experiences. If such experiments demonstrate that dreams can be premonitory, would parapsychologists get any credit for what we have done for decades in our studies of precognitive dreams? Parapsychologists have offered a number of viable theoretical hypotheses that would be of value to the social and behavioral sciences generally, yet most of them fall on deaf ears.

In the meantime, I have done my best to bring psi research to the attention of conventional psychologists. I have presented more psi-oriented papers than anyone at the annual conventions of the American Psychological Association, and chaired a symposium on parapsychology at an annual convention of the Association for Psychological Science. Psi is a complex phenomenon, one that will require a systems approach to comprehend. Parapsychology has become a transdisciplinary discipline, rather than a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary discipline. As a result, newcomers to the field have a massive amount of material from many fields of disciplined inquiry to study and comprehend before they can make their own contributions. This situation, by itself, may discourage interest in the field.

Can you mention some of your current projects?

In addition to my work with graduate students and my professional presentations, I am a frequent guest on podcasts, which gives me an opportunity to speak on behalf of parapsychology and associated topics. Along with several former Saybrook students, I am currently involved in a remote viewing study. The participants' judging is finished and one of them attained 19 "hits" and one "miss." He did his 'viewing' from Southeast Asia, where he had to pay close attention to the time framework. With one of another of my former students, I am co-editing a book on various approaches to clinical work with dreams, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder nightmares. My two co-authored books on PTSD (written with Saybrook graduates who are clinicians) have received better notices from mainstream reviewers than any of my books on parapsychology! I am also continuing my cross-cultural study of gender differences in dream content, using the method co-authored by my old friend Robert Van de Castle.

I am studying the recurring dreams of an assistant chaplain who dreams about soldiers who were killed in Afghanistan and Iraq; all were known personally by her colleague, another assistant chaplain, and contain specific names and locations that have been verified.

Before my memory deteriorates even further, I would like to do more autobiographical writing and set the record straight before Wikipedia corrupts it.



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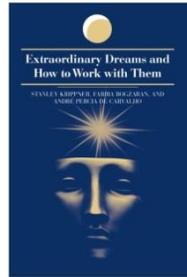
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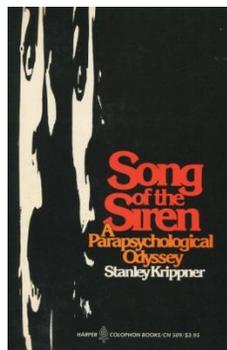
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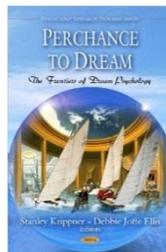
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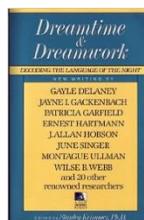
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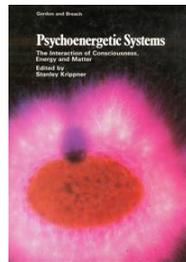
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