

An Autobiography Supporting the Likelihood of Psi

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This autobiographical essay covers the first 168 pages in a two-purpose book: *Joyride to Infinity: A Scientific Study of the Doomsday Literature* (©2000, ISBN: 1-878465-35-X), of which the author and current publisher is R. A. McConnell.

How might a scientist who believes in psi convince an open-minded skeptic that psi (ESP, for example) might be a scientifically real phenomenon? Let us suppose that although the believer cannot produce visibly unmistakable psi upon demand, the skeptic has agreed to listen to the believer's arguments.

The believer has a threefold task. He must present evidence supporting the possibility of psi. He must show that he is technically competent to evaluate that evidence. And he must convince the skeptic that he is an honest believer.

I have written a book, titled *Joyride to Infinity*, intended to convince such a skeptic of the likelihood of psi, but before opening that book, I would like to take a moment to explain why it is difficult to find a skeptic who wants to think about psi.

In approaching the question of the reality of psi, the scientist skeptical of psi will reach two conclusions: (1) The *a priori* probability that psi occurs is so small as to make the extended attention needed for evaluating any evidence of psi not worth the effort. (2) The probability of finding a trustworthy believer-scientist to select evidence for psi that is worth examining is likewise so small as to make the effort of searching for such a believer-scientist not worthwhile. Thus, the skeptical scientist is faced with overcoming two problems, for both of which a successful resolution is unlikely if he chooses to follow the "committee process" that is customary in respected areas of science.

This is the logical impasse in which parapsychology has found itself almost from its beginning. I recognized this impasse early in my parapsychological career and decided to explore its finality by making a case for psi based upon my own activities, including showing that I was trustworthy.

As part of my proof to myself of the reality of psi, I successfully performed my own experiments and engaged in many of the other evidential activities considered relevant by leading parapsychologists. Examples include (1) participating with those leaders in their experiments, and (2) publishing papers supporting psi in peer-reviewed journals devoted to other areas of science.

To be believed as a witness for psi, I had to be technically competent in each of the fields from which I invoked evidence for psi, e.g., statistics and psychology. I believe I have demonstrated all the necessary technical competence within pages iv-164 of *Joyride to Infinity*.

To have a believable character, a scientist-who believes in psi must be compulsively meticulous and be intellectually honest. Throughout pages iv-164 of *Joyride to Infinity* I have provided many kinds of information showing that my character is such that I can be believed as a scientist who believes in psi. Moreover, this information is relatively easy to read. (I have not asked the skeptical scientist to read published evidence for psi from me or anyone else. It would be an unreasonable burden by me to ask the skeptic to evaluate evidence from outside his field of competence.)

If a reader is not otherwise convinced of the reality of psi, it might be worthwhile for him to examine *Joyride to Infinity*. Therefore, at this point I have inserted a page-by-page list of the contents of *Joyride to Infinity*, of which pages iv through 164 describe my relevant professional interests.

Page iv "Scope of the work".

Page v "Dedication".

Book 1, Part I: IN SEARCH OF REALITY

Page 1 (Chapter 1) "INTRODUCTION"

Page 5 (Chapter 2) "HOW I BECAME A PARAPSYCHOLOGIST"

Page 9 (Chapter 3) "OTHER LIFE INTERESTS"

Page 17 (Chapter 4) "MONEY FOR PARAPSYCHOLOGY AND WHAT IT TAKES TO GET IT"

Page 25 (Table) "Grants and Gifts, To and By, the University of Pittsburgh for Research in Psychological Physics' Under the Direction of Robert A. McConnell"

Page 26 (Chapter 5) "WHAT DID I ACCOMPLISH?" (as a parapsychologist)

Page 37 (Chapter 6) "ON PSI AND ITS ACCEPTANCE"

Page 37 "Beta Testing This Book."

Page 37 "The Scope of Laboratory Psi."

Page 40 "Stamping Out Heresy by Means of Contrived Controversy."

Page 42 "Eminent Physicists on Parapsychology."

Page 45 "Is Psychic Ability Inherited?"

Page 45 "Other Supporters of Parapsychology."

Page 49 (Chapter 7) "SPONTANEOUS PSI PHENOMENA"

Page 49 "The Classification of Psychics."

Page 50 "My Experience With Psychics."

Page 52 "On Being Secretly Psychic." (autobiography of a psychic)

Page 60 "Public Acknowledgments of Spontaneous Psi."

Page 61 "Making Sense of Spontaneous Psi."

Page 63 (Chapter 8) "ON THE REJECTION OF PSI"

Page 63 "Why Do Scientists Think at All?"

Page 65 "Modes of Scientific Thought."

Page 65 "Psi as a Cultural Challenge."

Page 68 "Bronowski's *Ascent of Man*."

Book 1, Part II: WISDOM FROM THE PAST

Page 73 (Chapter 9) "THE POLITICS OF A PARAPSYCHOLOGIST"

Page 73 "Is Parapsychology a Secular Religion?"

Page 74 "The Decline of the West."

Page 75 "The Mass Communication Media as the Evil Empire."

Page 76 "No Hiding Place for the Virtuous."

Page 77 "Reconciliation of the Two Cultures."

Page 78 "Student Unrest in the 1960s."

Page 79 "On the Academic Status of the ROTC."

Page 81 "How To Avoid Slovenly Teaching."

Page 83 (Chapter 10) "AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN OUR UNIVERSITIES"

Page 83 "History Revisited."

Page 86 "The 1972 Essay." (Pages 86-98, a scholarly analysis of affirmative action)

Book 1, Part III: GUIDANCE FOR THE FUTURE

Page 101 (Chapter 11) "*IS THE END NIGH?*" (Summary of Lyons, Moore, and Smith. 1995)

Page 101 "Epitome."

Page 102 "The Migration of Disease."

Page 103 "Affluence and Entropy."

Page 106 "The Sinful Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge."

Page 107 "Immigration, Pro and Con."
Page 108 "Dismantling Globalization."
Page 109 "Gloomy Thoughts on the Dismal Science."
Page 113 "On Free Trade and Its Consequences."
Page 117 "Is the End Nigh?"
Page 119 (Chapter 12) "WHY DO WOMEN HAVE BABIES?"
Page 120 "Why the [Benign] Demographic Transition Will Not Work."
Page 122 (Chapter 13) "FREE WILL: RELIGIOUS BELIEF OR EMPIRICAL FACT?"
Page 125 (Chapter 14) "ADMONITION"
Page 125 "Exponential Growth."
Page 125 "Mathematics as the Key to the Future."
Page 126 "Is There Hope?"
Page 127 "Farewell."

Book 1,Appendixes:

Page 129 (Appendix A) "MY ARCHIVED RECORDS"
Page 141 (Appendix B) "ON SCIENTIFIC BELIEFS"
Page 155 (Appendix C) "*FAR OUT IN THE NEW AGE*" (summary)
Page 158 (Appendix D) "ON SCIENTIFIC INVENTION"
Page 162 (Appendix E) "TENURE DECLINED"
Page 164 (Appendix F) "ON GRIEVING"

Book 2: REALITY AVOIDANCE BY SCIENTISTS AND OTHER INTELLIGENT PEOPLE
IN FACING FOUR CRISES OF THE 21st CENTURY

Page 167 "COMPENDIUM OF THE FUTURE"
Page 168 "GENETIC PREFACE"
Pages 173-410 (Annotated Bibliography)
Page 411 "HOW TO MISLEAD WITHOUT LYING"

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