

El Hongo Mistico!

THE MYSTICAL MUSHROOM

By FREDERICK SWAIN

"PRIMITIVE religious rituals have always fascinated me, and I have sought them out in my travels whenever possible. A few years ago I heard of the discovery of a new hallucinogenic mushroom in Mexico by the mycologist, R. Gordon Wasson. The religious rituals woven around the mushroom captured my imagination. I decided to investigate at the first opportunity. It was not till last fall that **the** opportunity suddenly came. I found myself in Mexico hunting for this mushroom, unfortunately with little knowledge of its nature, other than the meagre information that it produces strange visions when eaten. I knew also that this species of mushroom grows in the mountains of southern Mexico, and that there is a Curandera (or Shaman) in the village of Huautla de Jimenez who performs religious mushroom rituals.

I went to Mexico City with the hope of obtaining more detailed information before continuing on to the mountains. But those who might have knowledge of the mushroom at the University of Mexico were on vacation. A professor who had experimented with it at the Institute of Anthropology was in Europe. I could not find anyone who had even heard of the mushroom. So I was forced to start out alone by bus to the

village, which I located on a map, in the Sierra Mazatec range in the state of Oaxaca.

After a long day's ride we arrived at the town of Tehuacan, where I had to give up my bus for a broken-down outmoded public carrier, loaded with vegetables and chickens as well as people, which took us to the village of Teotitlan in the foothills of the Sierra Mazatec. From that point on there were no regular transportation facilities. If you have ever travelled in the remote areas of southern Mexico you may appreciate the difficulties I encountered. In Teotitlan there was not anyone who spoke a word of English, and I speak no Spanish. By sign language I located a room in an inn, if such it could be called. The sheets on the sagging bed had been used, so I slept on top of the covers with my clothes on.

The following morning I began the frustrating ordeal of arranging transportation into **the** mountains. The few people who had **jeeps** showed no interest and refused to take me. The only one who showed concern over my problem was a young girl. She spent the entire day leading me from one person to another, to no avail. At one point she did arrange to rent a horse for me at 250 pesos, which amounts to twenty

TOMORROW

dollars. I should have been able to buy the nag for that. But in any case the man decided not to rent the horse after all. The following day the girl arranged with the postmaster to drive me into the mountains in his jeep. He told me by sign language I should be ready at seven o'clock that evening. I could not understand why he wanted to start on such a difficult journey at night; however I was there at seven sharp. By this time it didn't surprise me that he too had changed his mind. I tried as best I could to convince him he should take me in the morning, but he indicated he had to work the following day.

The next morning, purely by chance, I was walking the streets ready to call the whole thing off when the postmaster appeared, ready to go. He had extra cans of gasoline and two other Mexicans in the back of his jeep. I climbed aboard and off we rode in a cloud of dust. There the girl was, waving and smiling at me, with the sun glistening on her lovely gold teeth. Her feeling for me was obvious and I was grateful to her.

Soon I learned why it was so difficult to get transportation into the mountains. The paths were narrow and were forever winding upwards, around and over mountains in hairpin turns with drops over the side of the road, 1,000 feet, straight down. Moreover, no one had bothered to inform me that over twenty landslides blocked the route due to the rains. No one had penetrated the mountains for twenty-five days. Huautla de Jimenez had been sealed off from the world.

We of course were the first ones through, but we worked hard for the distinction. The smaller landslides we dug through with shovels. For some we waited while crews of local mountain Indians dug through for us. Others we skirted by building logs and stones out over the edge of the cliff, then gingerly inching the jeep around with only a few inches clearance.

At home in Boston I am considered a reckless driver. But Mexican drivers cannot be imagined by Bostonians. I can assure you I held my breath more than once on this trip. We would sometimes take only a few inches clearance at full speed. The driver would not even blink an eye.

Mexicans are fearless in an automobile. But they are good drivers. I have never seen an accident, though I expected them, time and again.

Precipitation was heavy. There were always clouds below and above us. It rained every afternoon. On the map Huautla de Jimenez looked less than fifty miles. But due to the winding roads it was well over a hundred. Finally, late at night we arrived caked with mud and dead tired. The postmaster arranged rooms for us. I must say they were better than the ones in Teotitlan.

The following day I walked through the village to familiarize myself with the surroundings. We were near the highest peak in the Sierra Mazatec. I don't know the altitude, but it seemed around 10,000. This was it. From here there was no place to go, only a few trails leading to the isolated huts of poor Mazatecs. It seemed we were on top of the world. Beautiful and strange trees were everywhere. The village was on the side of the mountain, with valleys below and the mountain peak above. As far as the eye could see in every direction there was nothing but mountain peaks, with the cloud covered sky as a backdrop. The air was clean and cool from the rain and the altitude. I loved Huautla de Jimenez very much.

The Mazatecs, of course, guessed I had come for the mushroom. Why else would a Gringo come to Huautla? No one would ever have heard of Huautla de Jimenez except for the mushroom. It struck them as very humorous. When they saw me coming they would shape their hands in the form of a mushroom and pretend they were eating it. Then they would laugh and slap their knees and throw their arms hilariously around each other. Soon I was the joke of the town. Most of the women and children did not laugh, however, since they were afraid of me. Still other enterprising Mazatecs tried as best they could to separate me from my money. But I did not have very much and I held my own against them. Most of the Mazatecs of this region do not even speak Spanish. I understand Mazateca has four dialects and is not related to any other Indian language. However, I was very fortunate in finding a girl who spoke a little broken English which she learned in a

school.

Soon I learned the name of the Curandera who performs the mushroom ritual, Santa Maria Sabina. The Mazatecs pointed to the top of the peak where she lived, overlooking the village. I asked one of the boys to lead me to her house. But he felt too lazy that day for such a long climb and wanted twenty pesos. That seemed like too much money for such a small boy. I decided to find my own way and started up the side of the mountain, following the trails. Now and then I would stop and ask directions, calling out the name of Santa Maria Sabina. The women would run into their huts and close the door. The men would stare at me, while some would point the way. Finally, with my heart pounding from the climb, I reached a point near the top where Mazatecs came out to greet me. They announced that here was the house of Santa Maria Sabina.

Santa Maria Sabina

The hut was only one room, with a dirt floor, thatched roof and mud walls. The household consisted of Santa Maria as the head, three men who were her sons, three women, and numerous children, all living in the same draughty room. They all slept, ate and lived on the floor. There was a wood fire in the centre without a chimney. The smoke escaped through the sides of the wall, which had many holes and gaps, where mud had fallen away. The damp and chilly wind came from below, up the side of the mountain, over the ridge, through the walls of the hut, and out the other side. No one was ever really warm during the rainy season. The food was unclean and the water was bad. How these poor people managed to survive under such conditions was a mystery to me. However, it was their way of life and they were well adjusted to it. I naturally ignored these external factors. Otherwise I would never have come to know them well or understand their religion. I had come to eat their mushroom. I approached them with warm-hearted friendliness for which I was well rewarded. At first they were slightly suspicious of me, but other Americans had been there before. Gradually they became quite friendly.

Santa Maria Sabina was about sixty-five years

of age and looked much like any other Mazatec woman. She was humble, reserved and worked hard at the daily chores with the other women. But I knew she was famed among the Mazatecs as a Shaman. As I watched her closely, it could be seen she had wisdom in her dark eyes, sunk deep behind her high wrinkled cheekbones. She had composure and a quiet contentment which added to her maturity.

I drew from my pocket a picture of a hallucinogenic mushroom. The Latin name is *Psilocybe Mexicana Heim*. The Mazatec Indians call it Teonanacatl, meaning "God's flesh". Her eyes brightened and she talked about the mushroom. After watching me closely for a few minutes, Santa Maria indicated she would have the mushroom ritual that night for my benefit. Since nothing more could be said, I went outside and lay under a tree to rest and wait for the night, while the fog rolled up from below and surrounded me.

When night came I re-entered the hut and sat close to the fire, while the household ate their dinner. They of course offered me some, and I accepted a little watery soup and some tortillas. It is very easy for a North American to get dysentery. In fact, I did end up with it before I finished the trip. At that time I had not had water for four days and I was not to have any for another week when I returned to the plains below. As a substitute I drank beer and bottled soda pop. For food I ate only tortillas, beans and sometimes a little soup.

When their meal was finished, the straw mats were unrolled and the children were put to bed. The women lovingly caressed the children till they fell asleep. Then the three women went to bed, leaving only Santa Maria, the three sons and myself.

In one corner of the hut an altar had been set up, with two long candles and a glass vigil in the centre, surrounded by bouquets of flowers. A straw mat was spread before the altar and Santa Maria sat on it crosslegged, motioning for me to sit beside her. The three men sat behind us. The candles were lit. Then she pulled a large bowl of freshly picked mushrooms from under the altar.

The heads of the mushrooms were brown and

rather small, about an inch in diameter. The stems were long and white. She carefully examined the mushrooms, then deposited six in each of three cups which she gave to the three men behind us. She then gave me a cup with ten mushrooms. I was glad to see I got more than six. She then took ten for herself. The mushrooms still had dirt on them from the fields and they had been handled a great deal. I tried to say they should be washed, but no one understood me. So what could I do? I ate them, dirt and all.

Each of us took five to ten minutes to eat the mushrooms. No sooner had we eaten them, then the three men behind us began vomiting and spitting. I was surprised to learn this is what everyone is supposed to do. There was a large pan placed to the side of us for that purpose. They all indicated I too should throw up. But I felt no nausea. I didn't feel like it. So I declined the offer. This surprised them and they discussed the matter among themselves. I felt fine, about the same as before I ate the mushrooms. I also felt slightly superior that I did not have to throw up. I noticed Santa Maria did not throw up either.

I asked for more mushrooms, feeling that if I should not have more, Santa Maria would have the good sense not to give them to me. She's supposed to be able to look at you and tell how many you should eat. She looked me in the eye a moment. Then she put eight more mushrooms in my cup. I had eaten five of these when one of the Mazatecs behind us realized how many mushrooms I was eating. He excitedly tapped me on the shoulder, wanting to know the number I had eaten. I counted out fifteen on my fingers. He slapped the side of his head with his hand, as though he were going to fall over. Then the three began saying No! No! No!, meaning I had eaten too many. No one, absolutely no one, eats fifteen of these particular mushrooms, other than Santa Maria. They were really afraid for me. With this information I carefully set aside the other three and did not eat them. But Santa Maria remained undisturbed and said nothing. This was comforting. She sat quietly facing the altar and began chanting. She sang the chants like a canticle with rich vibrant and tender tones.

Within half an hour the mushrooms began to take effect. First there were vivid flashing colours. Then a clammy chill came over me and I began shaking. This did not upset me greatly. I expected the mushroom to have some toxic effect. I did not intend to let a few cold chills interfere with the experience, after having come so far. I pulled my collar tight around my neck and sat there, shaking. My joints began to stiffen a little. But then, within fifteen minutes, these toxic effects subsided and I felt wonderful. All the fatigue of the day left me. I felt strong and light of body. My back straightened, and I never felt better. I relaxed and began to meditate on the colours.

The chanting was fascinating, in a rising and falling crescendo. The notes had a crisp freshness about them which carried authority. Intricate art motifs appeared in vivid colours with a predominance of light blue. But there were also greens and reds in various shades. The motifs unfolded in a long panoramic view. Then they formed a spiral and we travelled down the spiral. Our sense of sound was heightened and we heard distant music.

Of course I cannot be certain, but it seemed to me all five of us were having the same experience. Our consciousness changed many times during the night. It seemed we all changed together. I attribute this to the control Santa Maria exerted over us. The various states of consciousness seemed to vary with the rhythm of her chants. If she changed her timing, **our** visions changed with it.

The motifs subsided and our surroundings were immediately transformed into a new scene. There was a light warm red glow which engulfed us. Then there appeared before us dancing celestial eagle gods, with all their plumage. The vision was not blurred or uncertain. The lines and colours were so sharply focused that it seemed much more real than anything I normally see with my eyes. The dancers were accompanied by a sensitive, ethereal music with a background of drums. The timing was fast, but soft. The eagle gods were exceedingly graceful, fully absorbed in their dancing. They became ecstatic. We too became absorbed with them. It was wonderful.

One thing bothered me. Where was the hut, the altar, the damp ground and the sleeping people? The candles on the altar had been extinguished to heighten the experience. My curiosity aroused, I took a match from my pocket and lit it to look around. Everything seemed to be in order. As I put my mind on the hut it came into focus. But the vision of the dancers also remained. Somehow the two worlds seemed to intermingle. If I concentrated on the hut, it was predominate. But if I concentrated on the vision of the dancers, my awareness of the hut receded. Or if I wished I could maintain a balance of the two. I seemed to have control of my will and intellect. I was able to point my mind in any direction I wished. However, I felt my mind in turn was influenced by the emotional content of the visions, much in the same manner that emotions influence the mind in normal circumstances.

I then turned the match towards Santa Maria. What a surprise! She seemed transfigured. Her eyes shone with a glow that seemed to light up her head. She looked thirty years younger. There was not a wrinkle in her face. Her skin was light, clear and almost translucent. Here, at night, she was master of another world, the world of the mushroom. She was regal, absorbed in ecstasy. What a contrast *to* her miserable existence during the day. She was then a humble, unbelievably poor Mazatec. At night she was a queen in her strange mythological realm. I blew out the match and returned to my vision with enthusiasm.

The dancing soon came to an end and the music stopped. The eagle gods vanished. A new scene quickly took shape. I found all five of us sitting a few yards apart from each other in a semi-circle. We were in the centre of a vast, endless desert. We were merely sitting in silence, each absorbed in his own thoughts. I found my own mind grappling with the nature of reality. I felt somehow I was on the verge of a discovery, a new realization which I couldn't quite put my finger on. It was an eerie feeling. Time stood still. Gradually the feeling came that we had been sitting there an extremely long time. In fact, it seemed we had always been sitting there. Then instinctively a name came to me from the

recesses of my mind, as though I had always known it, the "Land of Eternal Waiting". Yes, it was clear to me that we were waiting there eternally. What we were waiting for I don't know, but we were definitely waiting.

The memory of my past life began to dim. When was it I lived my life on earth? It seemed many years ago, if I had lived there at all. I began to worry. Would this never end? I certainly didn't wish to remain here forever. What were we waiting for? I was losing my identity. I felt it might be a hypnotic spell. I tried to arouse my memory by recalling the name of my father and close friends. At first the names were dim, out of some distant past. But with effort they returned quite clearly. Still I felt I had lost contact with life on earth. I was really worried. Perhaps I had died from mushroom poisoning without realizing it, long ago. How could I know for sure? Perhaps I really was in the Land of Eternal Waiting.

Silence

Silence had become a part of me. It seemed years since I had spoken. But I roused myself and forced myself *to* speak. To my surprise the Mazatecs answered in English. I swear it. This really was hard for me to believe. It shook me up a bit. There was some kind of telepathic communication between us. We could understand one another, each in his own language. I was later told it sounded to them that I spoke in Mazateca.

They answered, "Yes, we really are in the Land of Eternal Waiting. This is reality. This is your true abode. Your life on earth never really happened. It was only a dream. You have been sitting here with us all along. You have been dreaming a very long time. Now you are awakening from your dream. You are coming back to reality. We belong here together. This alone is real."

What they were saying seemed strangely true. At first I wouldn't admit it, but I felt this was more real than anything I had ever experienced. Was it really possible? Yes! I concluded, it was possible. This was reality. All else was unreal. I was awakening from a dream. A veil had been lifted. The past was shattered. I kept scratching

my head. Wow!

We talked a long while on the subtle nature of reality. They explained it to me with patience and kindness. Normally the Mazatecs are a simple childlike people, absorbed in their struggle for existence. During the day I never detected a tendency for intellectual pursuits. But here in the night with their mushroom, they were concerned with nothing else. They were highly articulate and presented their views with wisdom and insight. They thoroughly convinced me. Finally, we returned to silence.

But still something disturbed me as I sat there. My mind began working overtime. If I were dead to the world, I might as well make the best of it. I figured if I really had died many years ago, my family and friends were probably dead also by this time. True, I was in rapport with these people and I really seemed to belong with them. But, I would be damned if I would continue sitting there throughout eternity. Is that all there is to do? How foolish can you be? This might be reality, but it was senseless, purposeless. I felt like a fool. I began to get mad, really hot.

I turned to them and shouted, "You're all crazy, and so am I. We're all mad, stark raving mad. We can't sit here like this forever. We're absolutely crazy!" They all politely nodded their heads in agreement and understanding. "Yes! We are all crazy. However, this is reality none the less. There is reality even in madness." They had an irrefutable answer for everything. I was finding out even more of the truth, too much of the truth. They tried to soothe me. But I would not be soothed.

I announced I was leaving, there and then, though I didn't know where to go. Only the endless desert lay before me. I stood up to walk away. But my legs were like rubber. I was so wobbly I couldn't take a step. This made me even more furious. I felt I was being tricked.

Under the influence of the mushroom, one's power of concentration is far more pronounced than normally. You become deeply absorbed in whatever you may be thinking. There is no external distraction. You can glue your mind on one thought or one emotion and hold it there as long as you wish, indefinitely if need be. Whatever you do is emotionally intense.

The situation called for drastic action. I really had to get away if I were going to maintain any sort of emotional balance. I threw back my head and willed myself out of that place by sheer force of concentration. It was as though an explosive charge inside of me ignited. I exploded upwards like a rocket, instantaneously, straight up through the sky. The others followed me, as though they were sucked up by the vacuum created by my ascent.

I emerged in some delicate ethereal upper region of space. I found myself standing, calm, collected and free. I was immediately master of myself and my surroundings. The realization quickly came that everything is a state of mind. I am free and master of myself if I will myself so. I am whatever I believe myself to be, if my belief is strong enough. My mind was released from its previous struggle. I felt strength, like a giant. I felt like a god. Yes, this was It, the real moment of truth.

The Mazatecs sat down crosslegged beside each other, while I remained standing deeply absorbed in my realizations. They looked at me and chanted, "Santos, Santos, Santos" in unison. This distracted me slightly from my thoughts. I said "What? What's that? Santos? Who is Santos? Am I Santos?" They answered, "Yes, you are Santos. Now you are coming to know your true self."

They waited a moment for this to sink in. Well, I really began to feel like Santos, whoever he is. I became totally identified with a mental image of Santos which took shape in my mind. It was accompanied by a feeling of ecstasy. I seemed to move automatically, guided not by my will, but by my emotions. My emotions overflowed. I felt a Divine rhythm beat in the core of my heart. To express these feelings, I rose on one foot, light as a feather, and turned slowly on my toes. I was not in the least wobbly. I now had perfect physical control. I began to do the eagle dance. I danced with my arms and torso more than my feet. Then I began to chant in Mazateca, and I moved and swayed to the rhythm of my own chanting. It all came about as naturally as breathing the air.

The dance did not take place only in my mind. I really did do the eagle dance with my physical

body. At one point I became vaguely aware I was dancing in the mud hut. I could sense and even see many people crowding into the hut. Other Mazatecs in the area were apparently pushing in to watch me, I could see them if I wished, or I could be lost from them in my dance of ecstasy. Their presence did not disturb me as it normally would. I quickly became re-absorbed in my dancing and my identity as Santos, oblivious to all else.

I don't know how long I danced. Somewhere along the way my chanting changed into a song, all in Mazateca. Now normally there is nothing at all unusual about my voice. It is quite ordinary. But in that state of consciousness, tones came out of my throat which are unimaginable to me, long, sweet, beautiful, exotic tones. The notes flowed out with strength and power, without effort. It is hard to believe, but it did happen. It really did.

The following day I was told my voice carried through the valley below and was heard all over Huautla de Jimenez. Everyone in the surrounding area heard me. Those in the immediate vicinity came crowding into the hut to watch. It must have been quite a performance. As I write this account, I sort of drift off and relive the whole thing.

When my wonderful lovely songs came to an end, I began to lose my feeling of godhood. I changed completely. I became a child. I did not particularly want to be a child, but I became one nevertheless. I felt like a child and acted like one. Finally I lay on the floor like a child crying for its mother. Not its earthly mother, but some kind of Divine Godly mother.

After lying on the floor for some time, I began to return to my normal state of consciousness. The effects of the mushroom then wore off rather quickly. The visions ceased. The transition took perhaps twenty minutes. The only thing which remained was the emotional impact of the experience. My surroundings lost the vivid colours. Everything looked disgustingly normal. I then stood up rather sheepishly, tried to look nonchalant, and lit a cigarette. It was four o'clock in the morning. I had been under the influence of the mushroom for seven hours. Apparently about two hours longer than the Mazatecs, due

to the larger quantity I had eaten. Perhaps my experience was more intense than theirs for the same reason. I was not the least tired. Physically, I felt in excellent condition. In fact, I then carried on a full day of activity without any fatigue. I could not detect any ill effect or any form of hangover from the use of the mushroom.

Initiation as a Mazatec

At daybreak, Santa Maria initiated me as a Mazatec. Not as an honorary one, but as an honest-to-goodness Mazatec. She rubbed a green earthy substance into my arms, chanted, and proclaimed me her son. But we could no longer communicate with one another by words, only sign language.

As I descended into the village that day, I found the attitude of the population towards me quite different than the day before. No one made fun of me. Everyone came to me and tried to talk. They would then talk among themselves about me. They would point at me, then put their arms around me. Obviously, they felt I was someone special when it came to eating mushrooms. Even prices came down. Cigarettes were cheaper. Food, beer and the few other items I bought were all a little less than the day before. Yes indeed, these were my people.

After a few days I had to leave Huautla, though I wanted to stay on. I was running short of money and I didn't want to impose on the Mazatecs. The food and lack of good water was beginning to tell on my health. I had no blankets and no equipment. I didn't seem to be of much use in their workaday world. All I was good for was eating mushrooms. And they were running out of mushrooms. So I had to leave, with of course, reluctance.

I don't recommend the mushroom to anyone, even though they are physically harmless. They are not a narcotic. They are not habit-forming. It is not possible to develop a physiological craving for them. The mushroom season lasts four months, from June to September. The other eight months the Indians do not miss them and go about their normal life. But many people would be terrified at the loss of identity caused by the mushroom. One American I know of became hysterical with fear. Some experience

TOMORROW

adverse psychological effects and go through horrifying ordeals. Even some Indians are afraid to eat the mushroom. Most people do not even want these states of consciousness. Then even at best, how many people can make a trip to Huautla de Jimenez in the Sierra Mazatec?

But each person responds differently, according to his temperament and psychological make-up. For those who are psychologically attuned to this sort of thing and who seek the hidden depths of the unconscious mind, the possibilities of exploration are unlimited. The variations are endless. One can enter mythological realms and mental worlds undreamed of. I should also add that if one gives spiritual meaning to these experiences, such as the Indians do, the results are far more significant than for one who merely sits down, eats the mushroom and waits to see what happens.

Of course, many people criticize the use of the mushroom as barbaric and primitive. Some consider these states of mind psychopathic. Of course, I agree that if someone did the eagle dance on Tremont Street in Boston it would be psychopathic. But to do the eagle dance in the dead of night in Huautla de Jimenez is the most normal thing in the world. What we consider psychopathic depends entirely on our social conditioning. I don't feel a moral obligation to remain true to the social structure of New England. I much prefer to identify myself with the Mazatecs.

The question also arises as to whether the mushroom creates a pseudo-transcendental consciousness. I don't think the mushroom creates anything. Visions and states of consciousness

cannot rise out of the inert chemicals contained within the mushroom. These experiences can only be produced from within the mind. And the mind can only produce what it contains. The mushroom can only act as a releasing agent through its chemical components. I have not studied any scientific papers on the *Psilocybe Mexicana Heim*. I can only analyse the mushroom from my own unscientific experience with it. My experience was not intellectual, but emotional. Each person must try it for himself if he wishes to pass judgment.

If anyone can have these experiences without recourse to the mushroom, fine and good. Certainly such visions would be far more desirable if they could be experienced without the help of a chemical releasing agent. The mushroom has its limitations. I certainly do not wish to be dependent on a mushroom for my spiritual life. Its value lies in that it can open up for the first time in vivid panorama that which previously lay hidden and unknown. It can make us deeply aware of our own mystic nature in a way that would not otherwise be possible.

Sometimes, even now, I think perhaps Santa Maria was right when we were sitting in the "Land of Eternal Waiting". Maybe I am still sitting there, dreaming. Perhaps I have only resumed my dream of living in this world. Perhaps my being here is only the product of my imagination. How can I really know? Can we ever be really sure of anything? But if all is a dream, I must say the dream I like best is the one where I shoot up through the sky and become Santos. Man, that's really living.

A BOOK REVIEW

A Critical Examination of the Belief in a Life After Death, By C. J. Ducasse. (Charles C. Thomas, \$8.75.)

ALUCID attempt to present with the utmost impartiality the best scientific, religious and philosophical thought on the concept of life after death. Dr. Ducasse, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Brown University, discusses spiritualism, hypnosis, extrasensory perception and mediumistic communications, along with such figures as F. W. H. Myers, Madame Blavatsky, Leonore Piper, Daniel Dunglas Home, David Hume, C. D. Broad, Edgar Cayce, and many other men and move-

ments pertinent even indirectly to any discussion of survival. Despite its relatively modest size, this is a remarkably comprehensive volume, sufficiently encyclopaedic in scope to remain a useful handbook for the novice as well as the student. Chapter XX, "The Doctrine of Reincarnation in the History of Thought", appeared originally in the *International Journal of Parapsychology*.

ALLAN ANGOFF