

Arthur Oram

Arthur Oram (1916-2005), a leading member of the Society for Psychical Research, published experiments in telepathy and actively explored mediumship. His book *The System in Which We Live* (1998) seeks to reconcile paranormal phenomena with scientific methodology.

Life and Career

Arthur Talbot Oram was born on 27 June 1916 in Devizes, Wiltshire. He joined the RAF, then in 1942 left to work on financial investigations in industry for the Ministry of Aircraft Production, which involved extensive travel. His professional skills were notable in the field of accountancy and statistics. He was a management consultant for Unilever for many years and a member of the Royal Institution.

Psychical Research

Oram joined the [Society for Psychical Research](#) in 1946 and was co-opted to its governing council in 1953, where he served for ten years before resigning to focus on his management consultancy. He later returned, becoming honorary secretary in 1984 and then a vice-president.

He was a member of the Astrological Society and spent time collecting astrological data (unpublished).

ESP

Oram was intrigued by accounts of card-guessing experiments in JB Rhine's *Extra-Sensory Perception* (1934). He decided to try doing such experiments himself in his hotel room during long periods of travel in connection with his work. He carried out personal but formal testing and discovered significantly high scores in his guesses ($p = 0.00006$). He wrote-up his experiments in a paper and sent it to the magazine *Nature* which, to his surprise, published it.^{[1](#)}

Mediumship and Survival

Oram devoted considerable energy into the investigation of mediums. His wife had mediumistic abilities, and he believed she made contact with him after her death.^{[2](#)}

In his 1998 book *The System in Which We Live*, Oram discusses his belief in the existence of the mind as a separate entity and rejection of 'materialistic interpretations of the mind-body relationship [and] Cartesian dualism'.^{[3](#)} He discusses alleged communications from the dead, approving claims by Konstantin Raudive to have discovered a new channel of communication in so-called 'electronic voice phenomena' (EVP) and also defends Helen Duncan's mediumship. He argues that, 'Once we can all agree on the importance of the world of mind and its position in a set of dimensions utterly different from those of physics, we shall be on the most vital road to a fundamental understanding of our subject.'^{[4](#)}

Works

Books

The System in Which We Live (1998). Purley: Talbot Books.

Articles

Nature of time (1946). *Nature* 157, 556.

Review of *Studies in Extrasensory Perception*, by S.D. Kahn in *Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research* 25 (1953). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 37, 105-7.

An experiment with random numbers (1954). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 37, 369-77.

Hierarchical psi (1976). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 48, 301-5.

Two tests of survival after death: Report on negative results (with I. Stevenson & B. Markwick, 1989). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 55, 329-36.

The original Thouless two-word code (1996). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 61, 116-19.

Book Reviews

Harmonics in Astrology, by J.M. Addey (1977). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 49, 617-19.

The Spheres of Destiny, by M. Gauquelin (1980). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 50, 481-82.

Melvyn Willin

Literature

Carr, B. (2005). Obituary: Arthur Talbot Oram. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 69/4, 235-37.

Randall, J. (1999). Review of *The System in Which we Live*, by A. Oram. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 63, 316.

Oram, A. (2002). SPR members' Jubilee memories, ,ed. by G.L. Playfair. *Paranormal Review* 24, 4.

Endnotes

Footnotes

- [1](#). Oram (1946), 556.
- [2](#). Carr (2005), 235-37.

- [3.](#) Randall (1999).
- [4.](#) Oram (2002), 4.

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