

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF PARAPSYCHOLOGY

PROCEEDINGS OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

HELD IN COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

AUGUST 25-27, 1976



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Edited by  
Betty Shapin and Lisette Coly

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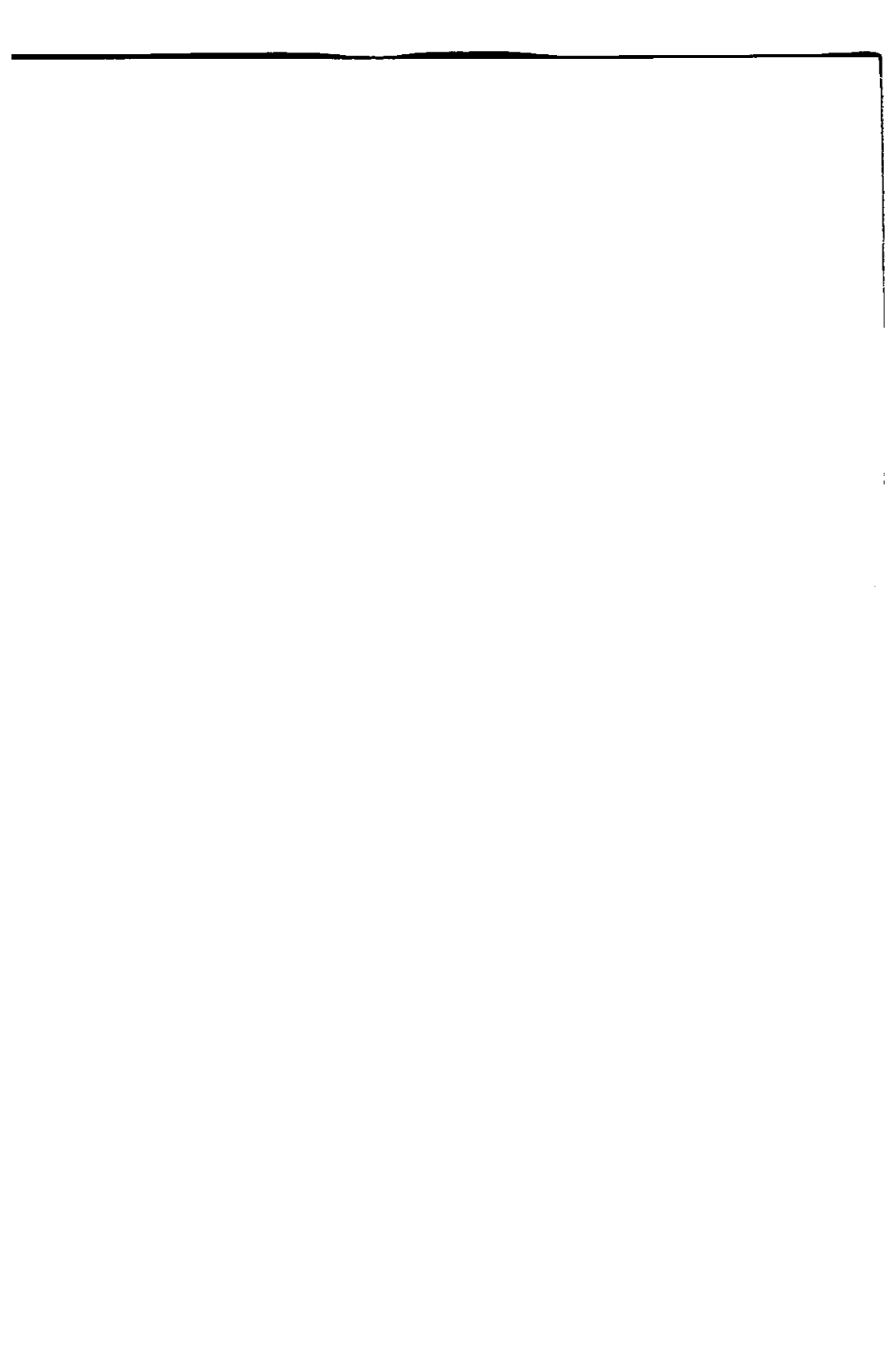
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## INTRODUCTION

ALLAN ANGOFF: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, I am Allan Angoff of the Parapsychology Foundation. For the officers and trustees, I call to order this Twenty-fifth Annual International Conference of the Parapsychology Foundation. For the next three days we shall address ourselves to the theme, "The Philosophy of Parapsychology."

We have assembled in the city of Copenhagen where, fifty-five years ago, this very month—this very day, in fact as it happens—in August, 1921, the first meeting of the International Organization for Psychic Research Congresses was held. The general secretary of this pioneering group was Mr. Carl Vett, a distinguished Danish industrialist of this city, for many years a leading figure in the Danish Society for Psychical Research. Mr. Vett worked closely with the London Society for Psychical Research, and with American organizations in this field. And indeed, during the First World War, when Denmark was a neutral, with psychic researchers on both sides of that conflict, he somehow managed to keep in touch with everyone. He was successful beyond all expectations—so much so that he followed up the Copenhagen Conference with meetings he planned during the next fifteen years in Warsaw, Paris, Athens, and Oslo.

At the Copenhagen Conference, coming so soon after the end of the war, when national tempers even among scientists were tense, some did not even want to attend a meeting with their former enemies in war. Mr. Vett deliberately went to the writings of statesmen and scientists of the former warring nations, to cite them on psychical research. For Britain, he went way back to the Victorian Prime Minister, William Gladstone, who had said of psychic research, "I consider it the most important subject in the world today." Then he noted Pierre Curie of France had, shortly before his death, spoken of psychic research as the most important of the sciences. And from Germany, he presented these words of Arthur Schopenhauer: "Psychic phenomena are, at least from a philosophical standpoint, by far the most important of all facts in human experience. There-

fore," continued Schopenhauer, "it is the duty of each scientist to bring himself to a fundamental knowledge of them."

Professor Charles Richet of France, then eighty years old, had been expected to preside at this first congress in Copenhagen fifty-five years ago, but illness did not permit this and he sent the following message: "Courage and energy are needed to oppose difficulties, but also the sarcasm and the disdain of all the enemies of free research. Do not let fear of such things embarrass you. The first duty of the scientist is to brave unpopularity, and to be in advance of an epoch means unpopularity. Do not cling to the clouds; confirm the facts—the facts with inexorable strength." That was Charles Richet of France.

Eileen Garrett, founder of this organization, the Parapsychology Foundation, was a warm friend of Carl Vett. She admired his international activities. When she established the Foundation twenty-five years ago, she continued, under the sponsorship of this new organization, the International Meetings begun by Mr. Vett. Eileen Garrett said, "Scientists were still isolated, and it was still essential to bring them together in international meetings such as this one in the Parapsychology Foundation series, so that, men and women from many lands could advance beyond an easy orthodoxy of thought and technique into the broader aspects of physics, chemistry, and biology, and to relate these fields of research to the human personality and the largely unknown extrasensory capacities it contains."

And so, ladies and gentlemen, we may well say that this meeting, this conference here in Copenhagen, carries on in a great tradition with which are associated Carl Vett, Eileen Garrett and their colleagues of those early pioneering congresses.

I'll pause for a moment now to introduce Mrs. Garrett's successor as president of the Foundation—Mrs. Eileen Coly.

**EILEEN COLY:** Ladies and gentlemen: It is a pleasure to welcome you all to this conference, and I am happy to also greet the many observers who have joined us this morning. We have a stimulating program ahead of us, so let us proceed without delay.