Preface from the Editor

There are many views about the use of past life regression and everyone is entitled to their point of view. To demonstrate our sincere belief in free speech, we are publishing the following article for our members to read and to feed back their reasoned arguments in either support or repudiation of the principles stated by this journalist. From my perspective, I don’t believe any of Mr Danzig’s assertions invalidates use of the therapy. My focus would be on client gains. What do you think? – Costa Lambris, declaring my position as a Past Life Therapy trainer.

Hypnotic Regression to Past Lives: Science or Fantasy?

Jon Danzig is an award winning medical journalist and member of the UK’s Medical Journalists Association. He was an investigative journalist and broadcaster on Roger Cook’s consumer programme at the BBC. More about Jon Danzig – www.look-hear.com/jondanzig.htm Email: jondanzig@aol.com

Dr. Brian Weiss is a psychiatrist and self-proclaimed “scientist” whose best-selling book, “Many Lives, Many Masters”, claims to have “scientifically proved” reincarnation by hypnotising one of his patients to past lives. His book has sold over 1.5 million copies with rave reviewers mostly giving ratings of 4 or 5 stars out of 5. I give the book zero stars. I believe it’s a sham, pretending to be a work of scientific discovery when it’s nothing of the sort. The book gives hypnotherapy, doctors and science, a bad name. The fact that so many readers, and even some hypnotherapists, believe that this book provides “evidence” for reincarnation shows that our education system has in many ways failed to
explain the principles and discipline
of science.

In his book, Dr. Weiss related the
stories under hypnosis of one of his
patients, “Catherine”, as she
apparently described her different
lives from past times.

My criticism of the book is that it
purports to be a work of scientific
discovery, when clearly it is not. As
a work of fiction, it’s quite
entertaining; but it is disingenuous
to describe the book as “scientific”,
and Dr. Weiss was censured by the
medical profession when his book
was first published.

Nevertheless, Dr. Weiss wrote, “I felt
the need to apply the scientific
method, which I had rigorously used
over the past fifteen years in my
research, to evaluate this most unusual
material emerging from Catherine’s
lips.” And yet, despite Dr. Weiss’s
eminent training as a “scientist”,
nowhere in the book did he apply any
scientific methods or protocols to
evaluate his claims properly.

I’ve now prepared a 3,500 word
dissection of this book; the link for
my forensic review appears at the
bottom of this article.

During my investigation, I found
multiple examples when Dr. Weiss
had the opportunity to apply strict,
impartial questioning of his patient,
Catherine, but for reasons unknown,
he chose not to.

For example, in one hypnosis
session, his patient described herself
as a 35-year-old German pilot in the
Second World War shot down in
France. As in all other claims by his
patient, no specific detail was
garnered by the questioning of Dr.
Weiss that could have proved
beyond doubt whether such a person
in a past life really existed; such as
what was the pilot’s full name and
rank and squadron?

In another hypnosis session, Dr.
Weiss wrote of Catherine, “She had
never heard of the Tibetan Book of
the Dead. Yet she was relating
similar experiences to those
described in these writings. This was
a proof of sorts.” This was surely
not a proof of anything. How could
Dr. Weiss ascertain that Catherine
had never heard of the Tibetan Book
of the Dead? His scientific training
should have taught him that it is
impossible to prove a negative. To
put forward this as proof of any sort,
again makes a mockery of true
scientific discovery.

In his book, Dr. Weiss explained to
the readers that his patient,
Catherine, could only reveal the date
of her past life during hypnosis if
she could “see or hear it.” During
one hypnosis session, Dr. Weiss
claimed that Catherine could
“vividly” see that, “The year is 1863
BC.” Yet this date could not have
existed at that time, so how could
Catherine possibly have seen it? It
makes a complete nonsense of
history to be able to “see” a date that
didn’t exist contemporaneously.

During another hypnosis session, the
patient Catherine is “regressed” to
an unknown date in history to a
town she thinks is called
“Brennington”. Dr. Weiss states,
“Here she (Catherine) said some
words I could not identify. Whether
they were Gaelic or not, I have no
idea.” It’s most peculiar that Dr.
Weiss had no idea what language (if
any) that his patient was speaking.
He stated that he had recorded the
hypnosis sessions, so surely it would
have been easy for him to identify
whether the words spoken by
Catherine were Gaelic or not. The
lack of precision, detail, or
questioning in Dr. Weiss’s writings
undermines his title of Doctor.

Dr. Weiss wrote in his book, “During
this entire process with Catherine, I
had been reluctant to discuss her
revelations with other professionals
. . . I had not shared this remarkable
information with others at all.” A
true scientist would insist on sharing
his data with other professionals to
discuss and verify. By not allowing
the data to be independently
scrutinised, we only have Dr. Weiss’s
word for what happened in private
between him and “Catherine” and we
only have his interpretations of
the results. This is simply not good
enough. No drug testing, no murder
trial, not even a newspaper story,
should ever rely upon one unverified
source as evidence.

How are we to know that this book
wasn’t simply a work of fiction? It
could have all been made up; only
first names have been used. Dr.
Weiss made no attempts to verify
the astounding claims made by his
patient, Catherine, who as far as I
can ascertain, has never come
forward to validate Dr. Weiss’s
account. Why not release the
recordings of the sessions with the
patient? Or at least, prove that the
patient really existed?

Of course, reincarnation is a
comforting idea for many people,
and no doubt that is why Dr. Weiss’s
book is so popular. But is it ethical
to use the stories told to him by his
patient as a platform to promote the
concept of past life regression, and
to do so using the pretence that it
represents scientific evidence?

“Faith” is the belief in something
that cannot be proved, and I respect those
of “faith”. However, Dr. Weiss’s
book claims to provide proof, but if
he had really managed to do that,
then we would not need faith.

To read my full analytical review of
the book, “Many Lives, Many
Masters” please go to:
http://www.goodreads.com/review/s
how/418986461

If you have any comments
you would like to share
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