

A BULLETIN FOR RESEARCH ON THE PROBLEM OF SURVIVAL AFTER BODILY DEATH
PUBLISHED BY THE PSYCHICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC., EDITED BY W. G. ROLL

LALSINGH HARRIBANCE, "MEDIUM IN RESIDENCE"

Judith Klein

When I came to work for the PRF, my first assignment was to help in experiments with the "medium in residence," Lalsingh (Sean) Harribance. Sean is thirty-one years old and a native of Trinidad, the West Indies. He was brought up in the Hindu faith, but converted to Christianity when he was twenty-six and has used Sean as his first name since then. While in Trinidad, he was employed as a cashier for the Public Transport Service Corporation.

Sean became well-known on the island at an early age for giving "readings" to people in which he told them about themselves and advised them about their problems. He often gave readings to support charitable organizations, such as churches and hospitals. He did not accept money for these readings because he felt—and still feels—that he has been given a spiritual gift to help people. Sometimes he gave readings to people whom he had not met by using their photographs or names as a "contact."

Sean was brought to the attention of parapsychologists by Mr. Hamlyn Dukhan, Vice Principal of Mausica Teacher's College, Arima, Trinidad, and Executive Director of the Psychological Society of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Dukhan tested Sean in Trinidad, using ESP cards and concealed photographs of people. In exploratory tests, Sean successfully guessed the sexes of rows of concealed photographs. He was not as good with the ESP cards.

On the basis of these tests, in 1969 Sean was invited to the Institute for Parapsychology in Durham, N. C. by Dr. J. B. Rhine. At the completion of the program and as Sean was preparing to return to

Trinidad, he offered to take part in experiments at the PRF. The PRF tested Sean from February 11 until April 1, 1969, when he returned to Trinidad.

Many different procedures were tried but the best results were with male-female cards similar to those he used in Trinidad. In these experiments, conducted by John Stump, William Roll and Muriel Roll, Sean proved that his psychical abilities could function not only in face-to-face readings but also under controlled conditions.

Sean was invited to the PRF for a year of experimentation. He arrived in August of 1969, and work with him was renewed. This time a series of tests were planned around Sean's ability to "read" people. William Roll, Robert Morris, Muriel Roll and I were the experimenters. Two series were done: in one, ten men cooperated as target persons (TPs) and in the other, ten women. There were two experimenters during each session, one with Sean, the other with the TP. Sean knew nothing about the TPs, except their sex, and the experimenter who was with Sean did not know which TP would be involved in any given session. To help avoid the possibility that Sean might be reading the experimenters instead of the TPs, the experimenters and the TPs were always of the opposite sex. For instance, when a male TP arrived at the PRF library, he would be met by me. I took a polaroid photograph of him and asked him to outline a personal problem, about which he would like Sean's advice, on a card which I then placed in an opaque envelope (as a further "contact"

this also contained a piece of hair from the TP). Then I brought the TP to the other building in which Sean and Muriel were. They were in a small room in the back of the building. The undeveloped photo, in its original black opaque casing, and the sealed envelope with the written problem were left on a table in an anteroom. After the TP and I had entered a front room, Muriel picked up the envelopes and brought them to Sean. In Muriel's presence (and without opening the envelopes) he spoke his impressions about the TP into a tape recorder. After the tests, all ten protocols of each sex were transcribed. Each TP later received the ten pertaining to his or her sex, and was asked to choose which protocol they thought was theirs. The overall results turned out to be statistically significant, as did the results for women alone. To discover if Sean was particularly successful on special topics, another member of the PRF group, Jacqueline Damgaard, made a "content analysis" of his statements. This showed that Sean was particularly successful in describing the appearance of the TPs, their family life (in the case of male TPs) and emotional attachments (in the case of females).

Occasionally in his readings, Sean has the impression of seeing "spirits" whom he believes to be deceased persons connected with the TP. As our work with Sean progresses, we hope to develop this aspect of his ESP abilities. In the past, psychical researchers have speculated that the surviving personalities which seem to communicate through a medium are constructs of his own beliefs, perhaps interacting with the hopes of the bereaved and fed by the medium's ESP of the TP's memories and other sources of information about a deceased relative or friend. Recently we have extended the work with Sean to include psychological testing both of him and of the TPs. This should help us determine whether the "spirits" exist independently and will also, we hope, indicate the type of TP who succeeds best with him.

We did not abandon the card experiments when we found that Sean did well in experimentally controlled readings. We tried to direct them in ways that would tell us more about what it is a psychic or medium responds to when he receives impressions in his readings about living or deceased individuals. In particular we were interested in the nature of the "contact."

Both in his readings and card tests Sean uses photographs. To see whether Sean did better with certain of the photographs, we planned another series of card tests. These were done in April, 1970. The targets were the same ten photos we had used before, five of men and five of women, cut from a yearbook and pasted on cards. They were numbered 1-10. While Sean was in one room, I placed the cards in a row face-up in the adjacent room. In previous tests the cards had been covered by a blanket and Sean had made his responses standing in front of them. This time Sean remained in the other room while he made his responses. In 1000 trials he produced 622 hits where 500 is expected, a very high score indeed; the odds are 100,000,000,000 to one against chance! Another series was planned, this time placing the cards facing downwards, thus making it a clairvoyance test. The score of 677 was even better than before. It was so high that if the entire population of the world, three and a half billion people, were each to take this test 500 times, perhaps one person might achieve the same result by chance!

The photograph on which Sean scored best in the first series was one of the five on which he did best in the second series and the card with the lowest score was the same in both. But in general, Sean's ESP was spread over most of the cards. Why does Sean do so well with this set of photographs? Is it something about these ten people or is there a special quality about the cards themselves which stimulate his ESP? To help answer these questions and thereby learn something about the

nature of "psychometric" objects in general, we have begun a series of tests where we compare the original ten cards with photographic copies made either of cardboard or metal.

Sean is unusual among psychics in that he not only is willing to participate in scientific testing but considers it his main mission in life. It was therefore easy for us to persuade him to take part in a study of his brain waves at the time he participates in an ESP test. Parapsychologists have for a long time hoped to get a hint about the psychological or neurological states conducive to psychic receptivity. They have been especially interested in the alpha wave, a fairly slow brain wave which often accompanies states of relaxed awareness of the type that is sometimes produced by meditation.

Bob Morris and Bill Roll designed a study to find out if Sean shows more of this pattern while he is using his ESP. Bob and Geoffrey Wheeler, a Duke undergraduate who has assisted in the PRF work, took turns as technician on the EEG, while I again handled the cards. Sean achieved a very strong score again, comparable to his earlier results. The series also showed that Sean's alpha production was related to his ESP success, suggesting that his state of mind is indeed important for his ESP results.

The completed experiments with Sean were reported at the 1969 and 1970 conventions of the Parapsychological Association and also at the convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Chicago, December 27, 1970. An article giving a detailed account of some of the tests was published in the October, 1970 issue of the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*. Others will appear in the same publication.

In February this year, Sean's personal life was greatly enhanced by his marriage to a nursing student at Duke, Christine Comyn. Chris and Sean plan to make their home in Durham.

PSI FACTORS IN CREATIVITY¹

Edited by Allan Angoff and Betty Shapin

Reviewed by Stanley Krippner²

This volume is another in the highly stimulating series which record the proceedings of the Parapsychology Foundation's yearly conferences. As usual, a distinguished array of parapsychologists and non-parapsychologists were brought together to present papers on a theme topic and to engage in an interchange of ideas. In this instance, the topic was psi factors in creativity.

Among the non-parapsychological papers of special interest are those by Yu-Kuang Chu ("Oriental Views on Creativity") and Patricia Mangione ("Some Observations on the Experience of Painting"). Several papers by non-parapsychologists discuss parapsychological issues, e.g., "On the Domestication of Magic" by Frank G. Jennings, "The Writer's Secret Collaborator" by Jerre Mangione, and "No Word is an Island: Some Thoughts on the 'Creativity' of Verbal Automatism" by Kenneth Burke. These papers suggest that psi factors may play an important role in the unconscious and preconscious determinants of the creative process. Burke states that "human beings may at times draw upon kinds of 'energy' . . . not generally recognized" and Jerre Mangione admits that "magic and superstition are an essential aspect of the writer's temperament."

Papers addressed directly to the question of parapsychological issues were read by Henry Margenau, Arthur E. H. Bleksley, Austin C. Towle, W. Grey Walter, Emilio Servadio, Eugenio Gaddini and Joost A. M. Meerloo. Gaddini's presentation, in which creative, dream, and psi processes are compared, is especially provocative, while Servadio stresses the importance of preconscious activity in both creativity and psi. George Rochberg, in discussing some of the papers, suggests the possibility of "collective emergences,"

¹*Proceedings of an International Conference Held at Le Ploil, St. Paul de Vence, France*. New York: Parapsychology Foundation, 1970, 220 pp.

²Dr. Krippner is Director of the Dream Laboratory, Department of Psychiatry, Maimonides Hospital, Brooklyn, New York.

which may have a psi factor, in historical periods of great creativity.

The greatest disappointment as one reads this excellent collection of papers is the almost total neglect of the experimental literature. The research involving creativity and psi by such parapsychologists as Anderson, Honorton and Moss is completely ignored. The magnificent theoretical articles by Gardner Murphy are never discussed. Furthermore, the significant research work in creativity by Getzels, Jackson, Taylor and Torrance is not touched upon. One wonders if the participants are simply uninformed as to those studies or if the bias against experimental approaches to these subtle events is so strong as to leave the data unmentioned. In any event, the omission of experimental approaches to creativity and psi factors represents a serious flaw in an otherwise valuable book.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE DEAD¹

Edited by **Martin Ebon**

Reviewed by **Donna L. Cohen²**

Survival is an unanswered philosophical and scientific problem which has stimulated the thinking of men through history. Martin Ebon has assembled in this volume an intriguing collection of case material in the area of survival research from the files of the Society for Psychical Research in London and the American Society for Psychical Research in New York. The contributions speak for themselves and pose the classic question to any open-minded reader on the possibilities and implications of survival after death. Most of the case histories are reasonably well-written and represent a sufficiently broad spectrum of individual experiences.

Ebon includes an account of Patience Worth contributed by Kasper Yost, sup-

¹New York: New American Library, Inc., 1968, 211 pp., \$4.95.

²Miss Cohen is a graduate student in psychology at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles (see THETA 25, 26).

ported by lengthy transcripts of free verbal response. There is also an account of the location of a photograph by Sir Oliver Lodge, a visit with Arthur Ford by Sherwood Eddy, and many others. Throughout the book, the sources are usually adequately documented, although it would be helpful to cite the locations of various tape recordings, video tapes and similar documents or references. Also, it would be valuable to have a concise introduction to each of the contributors with an address where possible.

A controlled approach to mediumship or communication with the discarnate is difficult to design, and the researcher can both wonder in fascination at the spontaneous cases and ask legitimate questions about the recorded data. Martin Ebon admits in his thoughtful introduction that his immediate goal is not to attempt an analysis of these phenomena. But for the advancement of parapsychology, we must go beyond a simple volume of anecdotal stories and attempt to gain some closure in adapting insights from the spontaneous data to an experimental-clinical method. Ebon's presentation thoroughly drives home the necessity to look at this area, and the challenge lies ahead for all of us.

PRF WORK REPORTED AT AAAS SYMPOSIUM

During the convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Chicago, December, 1970, a symposium was devoted to the topic, "Current Research at Seven Centers of Parapsychological Research in the U. S." The panelists included Dr. J. G. Pratt, PRF President, and Dr. Robert L. Morris, PRF Research Associate and Postdoctoral Fellow in Psychiatry at Duke. In his discussion of the work at the Psychical Research Foundation, Morris outlined field investigations of poltergeist and haunting cases and recent experiments with Lalsingh Harribance.

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