

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

PARAPSYCHOLOGY FOUNDATION AND ANONYMOUS DONOR ENABLE P.R.F. TO EXPAND RESEARCH PROGRAM

Two grants will enable the Psychical Research Foundation to increase its research efforts in 1969. A grant from the Parapsychology Foundation, of which Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett is President (see *Theta* 22), will provide part-time support for four investigators as well as for secretarial and technical assistance and research instrumentation. A grant from an anonymous donor in part will supplement current income from the estate of Mr. Charles E. Ozanne, founder of the P.R.F., and in part will be used to obtain laboratory and office space.

The new members of the research team are Dr. John L. Artley, Professor of Electrical Engineering at Duke University, Dr. William T. Joines, Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering at Duke, Mr. Robert L. Morris, doctoral student in psychology at Duke, and Mr. John P. Stump, senior in psychology at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

The research activities of the group are planned and discussed at weekly seminars at the Duke School of Engineering. Other members of the P.R.F. seminar are Dr. John Altrocchi, Associate Professor of Medical Psychology, Dr. Donald S. Burdick, Associate Professor of Mathematics, and Miss Donna Cohen, senior in zoology.

Dr. Artley has collaborated in P.R.F. activities for several years. In 1968 a grant from the Parapsychology Foundation enabled him to report on the attenuation effect in two RSPK (poltergeist) cases at the convention of the Parapsychological Association at Freiburg University, Germany (see *Theta* 24). He has also been

co-investigator with Joines of a purported haunting case in Jacksonville, Florida, and with Joines and Stump of ostensible RSPK occurrences in Norfolk, Virginia (see *Theta* 20). Joines also made a study of a case in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (see *Theta* 23), and Stump was co-investigator with W. G. Roll of the "Olive Hill Poltergeist" in Kentucky, (to be described in a later issue of *Theta*). Mr. Morris and Mr. Stump were formerly affiliated with the Institute for Parapsychology in Durham, headed by Dr. J. B. Rhine; both have published articles on research in parapsychology. Miss Cohen has completed a computer study of ESP guessing patterns. Dr. Altrocchi has participated in the psychological studies of most of the mediums and RSPK ("poltergeist") agents studied by the P.R.F., and Dr. Burdick has aided in the statistical assessment of material. He was co-author with Roll of a paper dealing with the statistical assessment of mediumistic material at the convention of the Parapsychological Association in Germany. A longer version of this report will be published shortly in *The Journal of the American Society for Psychological Research*. All members of the group will continue their present positions or studies while participating in the P.R.F. research program.

With this increased working force, the Foundation plans to expand its research on survival, concentrating on the two areas where it has already been most active, RSPK phenomena and mediumship, and to initiate studies of the relations between neurophysiological states, changes of consciousness, and psychical abilities.

MANY VOICES: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A MEDIUM¹

By Eileen J. Garrett

Reviewed by Robert L. Morris

In the 1930's and 1940's, research laboratories such as that of Dr. J. B. Rhine at Duke, provided considerable evidence that psi abilities may be present to some degree in most, if not all, of us. As a result, later research de-emphasized intensive work with gifted individuals which had been going on at the societies for psychical research in favor of experiments involving many different "subjects." This shift from the idiographic approach to a more nomothetic one provided certain generalizable results but it had the unfortunate by-product of causing a progressive breakdown in mutual understanding between the scientific investigator and the gifted subject. Many would argue that a true understanding never has existed, not even in the early days of the British Society for Psychical Research, when intensive work with persons of professed mediumistic ability was flourishing.

In view of this lack of effective communication, one welcomes greatly any sincere attempt to improve the situation. Probably the most consistent and fruitful efforts in this direction have been those of Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett, a gifted sensitive whose talents have been verified by many. In addition to her psychic skills, Mrs. Garrett has served psychical research as an organizer and publisher (see *Theta* 22) and also as a skilled and effective writer. Her first book, published in 1939, was entitled *My Life as a Search for the Meaning of Mediumship*.²

Since then she has written and edited several other books, including an occasional piece of fiction under the pseudonym of Jean Lytle. Her most recent effort is *Many Voices: The Autobiography of a Medium*. It may be the most important book she has written since her first, especially with respect to her attempts to bridge the gap between scientist and sensitive.

Mrs. Garrett's account of her life is more than an autobiography; it is also a portrait of a far-ranging and intense per-

sonal philosophy. In *My Life*, much of the same autobiographical material is presented; the emphasis, however, is largely on the factual retelling of personal experiences with a fair degree of continuity. In *Many Voices*, the emphasis is more on giving the reader the emotional flavor surrounding the various discrete periods in Mrs. Garrett's life, and then portraying the impact that the experiences of each period were to have upon the ones that followed. For instance, her first chapter presents a vivid depiction of the ancient county Meath where she spent her early childhood, wandering among ruins and exploring the sites of legendary feats and practices which, though no longer performed, were often spoken of with great respect by those she came to trust. Her quick absorption into the lore of the countryside and her early emotional involvement with a credo in which death played an intimate and not altogether negative role, created a firm foundation for the experiences that followed. The doors to perception were opened wide at an early age and, from the start, provided a fundamental difference between this woman and those who remain outside the world of psychical experiences.

In subsequent chapters, her experiences as a young woman in London, her early marriage, her wartime travails, are all presented, not with great thoroughness, but with carefully designed impact upon the reader, such that a few key incidents speak for many more ordinary moments. Her introduction to science and its attempts to explore such incomprehensible abilities as her own are once again presented, perhaps with less detail here than elsewhere, but the reader is guided to see the development and maintenance of a remarkable degree of objectivity shown by Mrs. Garrett as she tries to understand her own subjective experiences and the reported experiences of those around her of what happens when she enters the trance state. She is very much aware of the evidence she has provided for the survival of personality after bodily death, and yet she is also aware of the uncertainty

intruded by the evidence of her own ESP prowess.

Few things can be stronger sources of motivation than uncertainty when certainty is desired. It is the moving force behind most scientific achievement, and it has moved Mrs. Garrett to the formation of the Parapsychology Foundation, an organization designed to support and maintain high quality research and interaction among capable minds from all disciplines, including other sensitives besides herself. Mrs. Garrett also developed several organs of publication, and her personal chronology of these events is presented in detail for the first time in *Many Voices*.

Towards the end of the book, Mrs. Garrett develops more fully her personal philosophy of life, some but not all of which has appeared before in print. Her language is only partly the neat and tidy language of science. She is describing personal feelings in a personal way, and it is here that the scientist must do his part in understanding the sensitive. Mrs. Garrett, the sensitive, has interacted with the scientist. She has tried to understand him and his need for objectivity and precision.

How can the scientist come forth enough to dwell in her world of personal experience, both past and present, and relate it to his own world? Such attempts at understanding are rarely perfect and can fail completely. Also, when dealing with such subjective material as another's thoughts, each person may react differently, may come away with a piece of comprehension unlike those of his scientific fellows. The great hope, of course, is that enough will try; for if enough try, some

will succeed. It is also to be hoped that other sensitives will come forth with similar efforts, told in their own words as much as possible, and that when they do so they will be met fairly by the researcher. Perhaps a publishable dialogue between the two points of view may result, one that would include people with perhaps not so much to say as the prolific Mrs. Garrett, but with a sincere desire to address themselves to some of the many important aspects of the issues at hand.

Before closing, one would like to inject a brief note of complaint. It would have been most exciting (at least for this reviewer) to hear in more detail of the personal interaction between Mrs. Garrett and some of the great thinkers in other fields whose names are very familiar to most of us, with whom she came in contact. In particular, Robert Graves and C. G. Jung come to mind. Surely the author of *The White Goddess* must have had some tremendous discussions with a woman such as Mrs. Garrett, who hails from the county of Meath itself. And Carl Jung, possibly the most complete and profound thinker we may ever have on the nature of the collective unconscious, must have had many questions to ask about Mrs. Garrett's experiences. Indeed, many subtle indications of the influences of both these men seem to appear from time to time throughout the book.

One cannot have everything, of course, and Mrs. Garrett has selected her experiences well and with forceful results. Thus the complaint is not a true complaint and perhaps will serve as an inducement for yet another work from the pen of a most enjoyable and relevant writer.

OUT-OF-THE-BODY EXPERIENCES¹

By Celia Green

Reviewed by Charles T. Tart²

Out-of-the-body experiences, or astral projections, as they are referred to in occult literature, have become a subject of increasing interest to psychical researchers in the last decade. Until recently the major available work on the topic was *The Projection of the Astral Body* by Sylvan J.

Muldoon and Hereward Carrington³. Today, a number of the classics have been reprinted and numerous new studies have appeared, both scientific and occult.

The latest book on the topic is by Celia Green. It is a *psychological* rather than a *parapsychological* study. By this I mean that the experience is treated as a basic one that human beings can have, and the

¹ New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968, 254 pp., \$5.95.

² New York: Quaga Press, 1939, 224 pp.

¹ Oxford: Institute of Psychophysical Research, 1968, £1-7-6.

² Dr. Tart is Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Davis, California.

³ London: Rider and Co., 1929, 242 pp.

primary investigatory question is, "What are the characteristics of the experience?" The reality of the experience or, more formally, whether a paranormal hypothesis is needed to explain it, is not dealt with.

The study is based on initial replies and questionnaires resulting from a radio and press appeal for firsthand accounts of out-of-the-body experiences, carried out in Britain in 1966. Some 400 replies were received, of which 326 were in response to the initial questionnaire. The book is a presentation of the percentages of cases from this population which show the standard features. The chapters deal with such topics as the effects of stress in inducing the experience, the perception of a second body (the parasomatic body, to use Miss Green's excellent term), viewing the physical body from an outside point of view, physical paralysis during the experience's onset or termination, and possible changes in intellectual processes during the experience. Some cases involving ostensible paranormal perception (ESP) or action (PK) are reported.

I particularly looked forward to reading Miss Green's book after her excellent article in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* (44, 1967, 111-130). My reaction, however, is mixed. On the one hand it is straightforwardly written and based on a good collection of cases, and so has the makings of a superior psychological study. On the other hand, I believe that Miss Green made some sort of compromise between writing a scientific monograph and writing a popular book, and the result is rather frustrating. If the book is intended for a general audience, it suffers from having virtually no introduction to the subject before plunging into the analyses, and it ends rather abruptly with no general summary or conclusions to bring things together for the reader who is not already informed in this rather specialized field.

If the book is intended for a scientific audience, many things have been left out that make the difference between a minor study and a major contribution to the psychological study of the experience. The lack of introductory material, review of the literature, and lack of conclusions mentioned above are still a shortcoming on the scientific level. More importantly, there are too many vague and unsupported statements about the outcome of the study, in which "quantity" words are used, such as, "most of," "majority," "seldom," and "characteristically" without specifying their meanings. A figure in parenthesis after each of these adjectives, when used, would have given precision without hurting readability. I find this particularly frustrating because I am analyzing several hundred out-of-the-body cases which I have collected in similar ways to Miss Green, but will not be able to compare my results with hers for lack of these data. Thus an important cross-cultural comparison between British and American experiencers cannot be made.

Further, a number of statements are made about certain experiential features being "characteristic" of some types of cases and not of others, but usually no statistical test has been carried out to see if this kind of statement is really valid.

Finally, I am disappointed because Miss Green could have done much more detailed and revealing analyses of her data than she has. The book is primarily a tabulation of how often feature A appears, how often feature B appears, etc. Correlational and factor analyses could easily have been used to get at similarities and differences in various features of out-of-the-body experiences with much greater subtlety and precision. Perhaps Miss Green is planning to do this in a more technical publication: I hope so.

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