

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

PARAPSYCHOLOGISTS MEET IN NEW YORK CITY

The ninth annual convention of the Parapsychological Association convened at the Barbizon-Plaza Hotel, New York City, September 8-10, 1966. Several new and challenging research adventures were described. Among them, a report on two years' testing by Dr. Jule Eisenbud, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Colorado, Denver, of a subject, Mr. Ted Serios, who apparently can produce images on photographic film without known means; and a pilot study by Dr. Ian Stevenson, Chairman of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry at the University of Virginia, of the practices of "psychic surgeons" in the Philippines. The papers which touched on the theta problem are reported below.

DEATHBED OBSERVATIONS

Karlis Osis

Dr. Osis, Director of Research at the American Society for Psychical Research, outlined the results of his second survey of deathbed experiences.¹ The aim of his studies is to determine whether there are behavior patterns related to survival among dying patients. The present survey was designed mainly to verify or disprove the observations made previously. Questionnaires were sent to 5,000 physicians and nurses, of whom 1,005 replied. The 14,878 observations which concerned this study were analysed by computer.

Two early investigators, Sir W. F. Barrett and Dr. J. H. Hyslop, found that the hallucinations of dying persons often consisted of visions of their dead relatives or friends. This was confirmed by Osis' surveys: in both, more than half of the hallucinations represented deceased persons. The second survey also verified Barrett's and Hyslop's hypothesis that the hallucinations usually are apparition-like: the

figures are seen in the room by the patient with his perception of the normal surroundings intact. Two-thirds of the reported hallucinations were this type.

The purposes expressed by the apparitions of the dead were related to the patient's survival. For instance, the patient thought they had come to greet him or take him to another world. This affected the attitude toward death of more than half of the patients, usually leaving them in a more serene mood. When the apparitions represented living people, they did not express a survival purpose and, as a rule, did not influence the patient's attitude. The hallucinatory experiences occurred predominantly in patients who were not under heavy sedation, who did not have an illness normally producing hallucinations, and who had clear consciousness to the end.

A STATISTICAL STUDY OF A "HAUNTED HOUSE"

Thelma Moss

Mrs. Moss, a graduate student in psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles, described an investigation of "haunting" phenomena in the Los Angeles home of Mr. Joe Hyams and Miss Elke Sommer (Mrs. Hyams).¹ In addition to the family's experiences, several visitors to the home who knew nothing about the events, reported seeing an apparition of a male figure. Following the methods developed by Dr. G. R. Schmeidler (see THETA 11), a floor plan of the house was prepared as well as check lists containing physical descriptions of males, types of activities, and personality traits. The persons who had seen the "ghost" were asked to indicate its locations on the floor plan and to describe it by filling in the three check lists. Six mediums or sensitives were independently taken through

¹The first was published under the title, "Deathbed Observations by Physicians and Nurses," *Parapsychological Monographs*, No. 3, Parapsychology Foundation, Inc., 1961.

¹Mr. Hyams' account of these disturbances appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, July 2, 1966, pp. 28-31.

the house and filled in the floor plans and check lists. Eight persons acted as a control group by answering the questions according to their ideas of a male ghost.

There was no clear correlation between the places in the house which the witnesses and the mediums thought were most haunted. But, for the check list descriptions of the ghost on which the witnesses agreed, three of the six sensitives had similar impressions, two of them giving odds against chance of more than ten thousand to one. Only one of the eight control subjects showed a significant correlation (odds of twenty to one) with the witnesses' descriptions.

BRAIN WAVE PATTERNS DURING AN OUT-OF-THE-BODY EXPERIENCE

Charles T. Tart

Dr. Tart, who has returned to California as Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of California at Davis, presented a second study of physiological aspects of out-of-the-body experiences (see THETA 11 for the first). The subject was a middle-aged man who claimed he had had several hundred such experiences.

His electroencephalogram (EEG), heart rate (HR), and rapid eye movements (REM's) were recorded on seven occasions during which he went to sleep and attempted to have an out-of-the-body experience. He reported difficulty in adapting to the electrodes on most nights, and only on the next to last night did he report getting out of his body. During this experience he had the impression, which turned out to be correct, that the technician had left the recording room and was in the hallway with a visitor. However, the subject said he was unable to control his movements well enough to read a target number placed on a shelf near the ceiling. His EEG at the approximate time of the experience was like stage-two sleep except that there were several bursts of very high voltage theta waves (13c.p.s. 150 uV), and spindling at two frequencies (13 and 17 c.p.s.). There were no REM's at this time, and HR was normal. A regular clinical EEG taken earlier showed no abnormalities. The subject's unusual subjective experience thus correlated with a distinct and unusual EEG pattern. However, the pattern did not resemble that of the female subject reported on last year.

THE "OAKLAND POLTERGEIST"

Arthur Hastings

Mr. Hastings, a member of the Department of Speech at Stanford University, California, described a series of apparent RSPK phenomena which took place in June, 1964, in the office of a court-reporting firm in Oakland, California. On the basis of interviews with the six persons who occupied this office, it appeared that three of the four clusters of movements of office equipment, etc., could not have been caused by normal physical means. The phenomena occurred in the presence of a young man. The final series was probably due to his direct intervention. He eventually was accused by the police and made a confession of guilt which he later repudiated.

Several members of the office were given psychological tests. These included the California Personality Inventory, the Thematic Apperception Test, an adjective check list, and a psychiatric interview. Psychologically, the six persons comprised a family unit. These relationships, interacting with the office tasks, produced strong tensions. The young man who seemed to be the focus of the events was socially compliant, strongly repressive, and did not cope directly with his feelings. The poltergeist events can be viewed as acts to express needs which he could not express directly.

PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF TWO MEDIUMS

W. G. Roll

The purpose of the tests was to find methods and subjects suitable for theta research and to explore the function of psychometric objects. Two mediums, Mrs. Irene Hughes and Mr. Herbert Beyer, participated in three types of experiments (see THETA 12). Fourteen persons acted as target persons (TP's). Mrs. Hughes gave her best results in the token object matching trials while Mr. Beyer did best in the free response and Identikit tests.

In the matching trials, a psychometric object which the TP had brought to the session was matched with two kinds of other objects: a metal key belonging to the TP which was placed in a box and randomized with five other boxes containing new keys, and a card that the TP had carried on his person in a polyethylene

bag which had been randomized with five other cards. It was expected that the scoring would be higher on keys than on cards since the keys were in the TP's possession for a longer period of time. On the basis of the psychological studies, it was expected that the female medium would do better with male TP's than with females and that the opposite would be true of the male medium. Mrs. Hughes scored higher on keys than on cards in the matching trials and also higher with males than with females. Conversely, Mr. Beyer, in the free response and Identikit trials, scored higher with females than males. Two predictions did not work out, namely that Mrs. Hughes would do best with the Identikit procedure and that the matching scores would be indicative of results in the free response tests.

PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF TWO MEDIUMS

O. Lee Trick

Dr. Trick, a Resident in Psychiatry at Duke University, gave the results of the psychological examinations of Mrs. Hughes and Mr. Beyer. His evaluation was oriented toward understanding their basic personality makeup as well as the role that mediumship plays in their lives. An attempt also was made to predict some of the parapsychological results on the basis of the psychological studies (see previous report). Rorschach testing and interpreta-

PARAPSYCHOLOGISTS MEET ABROAD

The Summer and Fall of 1966 were the occasions of interesting parapsychological conferences in Europe and Asia.

SURVIVAL CONFERENCE IN LONDON

The Parapsychology Foundation, Inc. of New York City has served an important function in parapsychology by promoting meetings on various topics, mostly in Europe. This year, it arranged no less than two conferences dealing with survival, in London¹ and in Saint Paul de Vence, southern France. The London conference was held June 17-19. In her welcoming address, Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett, President of the Foundation, expressed skepticism whether "proof of survival can be obtained on the basis of the traditional methods of the conventional sciences." Professor H. H. Price, Emeritus Professor of Logic

tion were performed by Dr. Carl Eisdorfer; the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventories were evaluated by Dr. John Altrocchi; and the psychiatric interviews were conducted by Dr. Trick.

In both subjects, psychological mechanisms were found which showed more than average dependence on environmental feedback. The practice of mediumship may express needs which are related to this kind of field dependence. A suggestion of field dependence in mediums has also appeared in the work of Drs. Hans Bender, G. R. Schmeidler, and W. H. C. Tenhaeff. The inclusion in future work of the Rod and Frame or the Embedded Figure tests is suggested for determining whether field dependence, as a perceptual mode, is a common denominator in gifted subjects.

PSYCHOLOGISTS HEAR PARAPSYCHOLOGISTS

At a meeting of the American Psychological Association in New York City, September 2-6, Drs. Montague Ullman and Stanley Krippner and Mr. Sol Feldstein described their telepathy experiments with dreaming subjects at Maimonides Hospital, Brooklyn. Dr. J. B. Rhine, presenting a paper in a symposium on human potentialities, concluded that parapsychology may have practical uses, but its main value lies in what it reveals about human nature. Dr. Gardner Murphy also participated in the symposium.

at Oxford and Vice-President of the Psychical Research Foundation, said that the survival question is one to be solved by empirical research rather than philosophical speculation. Mr. W. H. Salter, former president of the Society for Psychical Research, London, reviewed the early studies of the Society, in many of which he had taken part. Mr. Douglas Johnson, recently returned from a period of testing at the Psychical Research Foundation, discussed the survival question from the point of view of the medium. His impressions when in contact with deceased personalities are subjectively different from ESP experiences that involve living people. In the former, there is "an outward impact which to me

¹The account of the London conference is from the *Newsletter of the Parapsychology Foundation, Inc.*, Vol. 13, No. 4, July-August, 1966. The report on the conference in Saint Paul de Vence is not yet available.

feels electrical." Dr. Emilio Servadio, the Italian psychiatrist and parapsychologist, said that studies of memory and identity might be relevant to survival research. Professor E. R. Dodds, Emeritus Professor of Greek at Oxford, suggested that the problem of telepathy is tied to the problem of survival and that the solution to the latter may depend on our understanding of telepathy. Other conference participants were Dr. Hans Bender, the German parapsychologist, Dr. H. C. Berendt, head of a parapsychological group in Israel, and many more.

INDIAN SEMINAR ON PARAPSYCHOLOGY

A conference on parapsychology took place June 20-23 at Andhra University, Waltair, India, arranged by Dr. K. Ramakrishna Rao. Dr. Rao is in the process of forming a parapsychological center at Andhra. The topics, which ranged from ESP card tests to the question of reincarnation, indicated that Indian parapsychology is off to a vigorous start. Many distinguished Indian scholars and scientists attended, as well as two visitors from abroad, Dr. J. G. Pratt of the University of Virginia and President of the Psychical Research Foundation, and Dr. Milan Ryzl of Prague, Czechoslovakia.

RUSSIAN CONFERENCE ON PARAPSYCHOLOGY²

On August 12-13, 1966, a parapsychological conference took place in Moscow. The meetings were organized by the Bio-Information section of the Scientific Technical Society for Radio Technology and Electrical Information Technique. The Society is sponsored by the government and disposes over a laboratory in the Moscow Polytechnical Museum. By "Bio-Infirma-

tion" is meant telepathy, the psi phenomenon on which Soviet researchers concentrate, though they are also interested in psychokinesis and precognition. The group has about 300 members, many of them psychiatrists, psychologists, and engineers. Its directors are Professor Kogan and Mr. E. K. Naumov. In addition to Dr. Bender, the foreign visitors included Professor Remy Chauvin, the French zoologist and parapsychologist, Dr. George Lozanov of Sofia, Bulgaria, and Mr. Geir Vilhjalmsson, a medical student at Freiburg University and assistant to Dr. Bender.

Mr. Naumov described a successful telepathy experiment with a Russian sensitive, carried out over a distance of 3200 kilometers. Dr. Lozanov announced the creation in Sofia of a state-supported Institute of Suggestibility with a section for parapsychology. Dr. Bender talked about a poltergeist case in Bremen, and a Russian participant related that a similar case took place in the neighborhood of Moscow during the 1930's. Professor Chauvin told about his experiments where he studied the effect on ESP of various physical conditions, such as screens of different materials, and his PK tests with radioactive materials and Geiger counters.

Dr. Bender also conferred with members of the telepathy laboratory at Leningrad University. The head of this group is Professor Pavel J. Gulyaev. The experiments started by the late founder of the laboratory, Professor L. L. Vasiliev, are continued by his assistant, Mr. V. A. Doroshenko. In these, attempts are made to awaken hypnotized subjects by telepathy. Personal friends of the subjects are selected as agents, and the electroencephalograph is used to determine whether the subjects respond.

²The report on this meeting was supplied by Dr. Hans Bender in a privately circulated manuscript dated August 31, 1966.

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