

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 IN EUROPE

While in Europe to attend the seventh annual convention of the Parapsychological Association at Oxford University (THETA 7) W. G. Roll visited European parapsychology centers and participated in some research projects.

THE SAURAR POLTERGEIST

In March, 1964, a series of unexplained disturbances took place in northern Iceland on a small sheep farm occupied by Gudmundur Einarsson, his wife, and two grown children. At first the family attributed the disturbances to earthquake tremors. When it was noticed that only certain objects in the house were affected and none on neighboring farms, the family concluded they were due to psychical causes, perhaps involving the spirits of drowned seamen.

Roll visited the farm at the end of May in the company of Rev. S. Vikingur, President of the Icelandic Society for Psychical Research. The phenomena had ceased by then but it was still possible to obtain a fairly full picture of the case.

The central object of the disturbances was a four-foot, oval-shaped, wooden table standing by a window between the beds of Einarsson and his wife. It was reported that on several occasions this table had moved into the center of the room. To prevent this, the family finally placed it in the middle of the room, with a chair between it and the window. As soon as they left a crash was heard and the chair was found lying on the floor at the other side of the table. Several other events were said to have occurred. For instance, the kitchen cupboard and table moved and a metal tray repeatedly flew from its shelf.

The events seemed to be closely associated with the mother. At one time when she was away from the farm for about a week they ceased, only to resume shortly after her return. In the course of the inter-

views it became clear that there are conflicts in the family. The wife wishes to leave the farm: she and her husband are getting old and life on the farm is harsh and isolated, particularly during the winter. Einarsson and his son, on the other hand, prefer to remain. The case resembles others studied by the P.R.F. where the disturbances seemed to be associated with suppressed aggressions.

"SPIRIT VOICES" OF FRIEDRISCH JÜRGENSEN

In collaboration with Professor Hans Bender of Freiburg University, Roll investigated the phenomena of the Swedish painter, Friedrich Jürgensen. The occurrences, which have been widely discussed in the Swedish and European papers, consist of auditory effects, mostly words or phrases, which Jürgensen receives on his radio or tape recorder and which he usually identifies as the voices of deceased friends or associates.

Several radio and acoustic experts are reported to have witnessed the phenomena. Mr. K. Stensson of the Swedish Broadcasting Company, whom Roll later contacted, examined the Jürgensen property for hidden transmitters but had found none and was at a loss for an explanation. Dr. Bender thought it might conceivably be a case of so-called "direct voice mediumship," a form of PK where auditory phenomena are produced outside the body of a subject.

It was decided first to conduct an exploratory investigation and then, if the results warranted it, a controlled investigation at a physics laboratory in Germany. Accordingly, in the beginning of July, Roll spent two days with Jürgensen in his home, south of Stockholm. The voices are obtained over a standard radio receiver. A tape recorder is turned on whenever Jürgensen thinks he hears a voice. One

voice which is recurrent is associated with a female personality who identifies herself as "Lena." She instructs him how to obtain clear receptions and acts as a kind of mediumistic "control." However, Jürgensen rejects the idea that he is a medium. He maintains that anyone can receive the voices and has correspondence from people in Sweden who claim to have heard them on their own radio sets.

Some of the "messages," Roll thought, were probably normal radio disturbances interpreted by a fertile imagination. Without a control radio and tape recorder it is difficult to evaluate them. Jürgensen uses another method which allows better conditions of observation. A conversation between a group of people is recorded by tape. When it is played back, Jürgensen claims that voices, additional to those spoken, are sometimes heard. There were several sessions of this type with Roll present. On one occasion when the tape was played back a male voice seemed to say the Swedish word "berätta" (tell or relate) which no one recalled hearing in the preceding discussion. There were four other similar effects. Attempts were made to set up experimental conditions by introducing a control microphone and tape recorder but the equipment was not suitable for scientific testing.

Though the possibility of normal explanations could not be ruled out, Roll found the phenomena sufficiently interesting to recommend continuing the research under improved conditions.

In August a series of tests was carried out at the German Institute for Field Physics in Northeim, Germany. Professor Hans Bender and Roll supervised them assisted by Geir Vilhjalmsón, an Icelandic student at Freiburg University, Bertold Heim, Director of the Institute, and three other physicists. The experimental apparatus included control radios and microphones. In addition to the usual indefinite effects, on the first day of testing the words "fertig machen" ("finish up") were heard on the experimental tape but not on the control. The experimental arrangement was then changed and directional microphones installed to locate the source of the sounds. No other effects were as clear and no definite conclusions could be drawn. It was agreed that the tests should be resumed later at Jürgensen's home in Sweden.

CONTACTS IN ENGLAND

Aside from the P.A. convention which afforded the main opportunity for meeting English colleagues, at Oxford Roll visited Professor H. H. Price, Vice President of the Psychical Research Foundation. Also at Oxford, he saw Professor E. R. Dodds, a member of the P.R.F. Advisory Committee. At Cambridge he visited its two other English members, Professor C. D. Broad and Dr. R. H. Thouless. On the same trip he also saw Dr. George Owen who had just completed a book on poltergeists (*Can We Explain the Poltergeist?* New York: Helix Press, 1964; to be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of THETA).

To establish contacts with mediums Roll visited the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain and attended part of the annual convention of the Churches Fellowship for Psychical Study. At the College for Psychic Science a session which was arranged on his behalf with Douglas Johnson gave good results.

SOME CONTINENTAL CENTERS

In Holland, at the University of Utrecht, Roll visited the Parapsychology Institute directed by Professor W. H. C. Tenhaeff. Tenhaeff's research centers on the personality structures of sensitives. He has found that they are most successful in receiving ESP impressions from persons who psychologically resemble them. At present, his main subject is Werner Tholen with whom a session was arranged for Roll. In Amsterdam he consulted on mediumistic research with Drs. J. T. Barendregt and Jan Kappers.

In Belgium Roll discussed the possibility of establishing a center with Dr. Jean Dierkens, a psychiatrist who is engaged in a theta research project. He also attended a telepathy experiment arranged by the Belgian Commissioner of Atomic Energy, Jacques Errera, for Belgian scientists.

In Switzerland Roll saw Dr. C. A. Meier, former head of the Jung Institute, who is engaged in a study of ESP phenomena during psychoanalytic sessions. Roll also met Dr. Hans Naegeli, President of the Swiss S.P.R., who described two recent Swiss poltergeist cases he has investigated.

In Germany Roll visited the Institute for Parapsychology at Freiburg University which is headed by Professor Hans Bender.

One of the research projects they are currently engaged in is an examination of the claims of astrologers. The Institute also conducts investigations of RSPK cases and sensitives. One of these is Arthur Orlop who was highly successful in exploratory tests with Roll.

SCANDINAVIAN PARAPSYCHOLOGY

Of the Nordic countries, popular interest in ostensible psychical phenomena is nowhere greater than in Iceland. This is partially due to encouragement by the clergy. Roll met the Dean of Reykjavik Cathedral, Dr. Jon Auduns, who is the former President of the Icelandic S.P.R., and addressed a meeting of the Icelandic Psychological Association. Several psychologists, including Dr. Simon Agustsson, the Professor of Psychology at Reykjavik University, expressed interest in cooperating in scientific studies of psychical phenomena in Iceland.

Among present-day mediums, Lara Agustsdottir and Halfsteinn Björnsson are the most renowned. Roll had exploratory sessions with them and two other mediums, assisted by Rev. Vikingur and Geir Vilhjalmsón, two of the mediums producing evidence of psychical abilities.

In Denmark Roll visited Mr. Aage Slomann, President of the Danish S.P.R., and Dr. Preben Plum, Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Copenhagen, known for his exposure of the Danish medium, Anne Melloni. Roll also met Dr. Franz Fromm, Professor of the Psychology Department at Copenhagen University, and addressed one of his classes. After the talk a group of students expressed an interest in forming a research unit at the University and Dr. Fromm offered to be its advisor.

Roll saw five mediums in Denmark, including Einar Nielsen. Though still active in spiritualistic circles, Nielsen has lost his alleged materialization powers.

In Norway Roll visited Dr. Harald Schjelderup, Professor of Psychology at Oslo University and addressed a meeting at the Department. Also present were Dr. Georg Hygen, Professor of Biology and President of the Norwegian S.P.R., and other members of the faculty interested in encouraging parapsychology in Norway.

In Sweden Roll saw Mrs. Eva Hellström, founder and secretary of the Swedish S.P.R., and Mr. Martin Johnson of the Psychology Department at Lund University, who is initiating a parapsychological research program there. Roll also met Mr. Rolf Carlsson, Secretary General of the International Spiritualist Federation. Mr. Carlsson welcomes cooperation with scientific groups but complains of a dearth of good mediums.

Together with Martin Johnson, Roll visited two mediums, one of whom, Mrs. Helga Braconnier, has occasionally assisted the Swedish police. She produced some striking evidence of psi under informal conditions.

SYMPOSIUM ON "WHAT NEXT IN SURVIVAL RESEARCH?" (V)

This is the fifth and final installment of abstracts of invited contributions and comments on the papers. Papers submitted by readers will appear in later issues of THETA. A selection of the papers is being printed in full in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, beginning with the April, 1965, issue.

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH C. T. K. CHARI

Dr. Chari, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology at Madras Christian College, India, outlines three approaches to the survival question. (1) A socio-cultural study of apparent evidence for survival, to determine the extent cultural and religious beliefs affect it. India, Chari suggests, is particularly suited for such a study because so many cultures and religions are represented there. He has noted that reincarnation cases vary in northern and southern India and are also different from Indian cases of mediumistic communications. (2) Chari urges parapsychologists to combine quantitative statistical methods with "those qualitative and non-experimental features which are peculiar to personal and social realities" and which emerge in ostensible theta communications. Psychological and linguistic attempts to recognize "personality styles" by mathematical analyses of speech and

writing may provide guidelines. (3) Thirdly, Chari says, a comprehensive theory of paranormal cognition is needed to determine the relations between apparent evidence of survival and the psi abilities of the subject. He advances a concept of "General Psychometric ESP" to cover a number of phenomena that are otherwise explained by a theta hypothesis. Chari is not advocating a form of "omniscient super-ESP:" special skills or technical knowledge which the subject did not obtain through normal means may indicate survival. As illustrations he mentions the cross correspondences and cases of responsive xenoglossy where the subject, supposedly under the influence of a discarnate communicator or a previous incarnation of his own life, demonstrates knowledge of a language with which he is ordinarily unfamiliar.

SURVEY OF LEONARD MEDIUMSHIP BY SUZY SMITH

In the opinion of many, psychical research in England reached a zenith in the first third of the century with its studies of several highly gifted mediums. Mrs. Gladys Leonard, now in her eighties, is the last living of these. In *The Mediumship of Mrs. Leonard* (University Books, New Hyde Park, New York, 1964, \$7.50) Suzy Smith covers the highlights of the research with Mrs. Leonard. She begins with a sketch of the medium, from her psychical experiences in childhood to her discovery by such investigators as Sir Oliver Lodge and Rev. Charles D. Thomas. Others were John Thomas (no relation), whose Ph.D. thesis at Duke University was based in part on work with Mrs. Leonard, and William Brown, the Oxford psychologist. Brown thought the material she produced for him was strongly suggestive of survival.

The bulk of the Leonard data was col-

lected by Rev. Charles D. Thomas. In his "book tests" Thomas obtained evidence that the ostensible communicators were able to pick out passages from books no one at the experimental session was familiar with, but which were significant for the communicators, for instance, as referring to some activity they had engaged in when alive. This was later extended to the precognitive "newspaper tests" in which the medium produced material from papers before the type had been set. Since telepathy from the living was excluded, Thomas cited the findings as evidence for survival. It is now generally accepted that such instances of clairvoyance or precognition could be accomplished by a gifted ESP subject without assistance from theta agents.

There are examples of the paradoxes of mediumistic material as when a supposedly dead communicator turns out to be still alive, and there is an interesting series of excerpts in which the communicators describe the nature of their ESP interaction with the medium. Then there is a chapter on the puzzling "direct voice" phenomenon where they were actually heard speaking at some distance from the medium.

Perhaps the most direct attack on the survival problem was Whately Carington's use of word association tests to distinguish the personalities of medium, "control," and alleged theta agents. It appeared that the control was an aspect of Mrs. Leonard's personality while two of the communicators showed no such relationship. Moreover they gave similar responses through another medium. While this did not prove survival, it opened up a promising avenue of research which has yet to be fully explored.

This book will be a valuable addition to the library of the student of the survival problem.

THETA is issued quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter.

The subscription price for one year is \$1.50 (£0-10-0), for two years \$2.00 (£0-15-0).

THETA, College Station, Durham, N. C. 27708, U.S.A.

Editor: W. G. Roll. ©THETA 1965

Second-class postage paid at Durham, North Carolina