

he calls the *lingam* and, in this instance, is *not* egg-shaped, but egg-sized, and apparently oblong!¹ *This may all seem a very minor point to raise but surely accuracy when it comes to alleged 'psychic phenomena' is vital no matter how trivial it might first appear.* It may well be that Sai Baba has produced the *Lingam not only* as a phallic symbol, but also as an ovoid form (said to be the union of Shiva and Shakti). This would seem to be a fairer conclusion to this 'problem.'

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To the Editor,

Brian Inglis may be worried¹ that members accept accusations of fraud against mediums and investigators too readily; but I am concerned that they should not accept his generalizations to the contrary, without further scrutiny. Thus Inglis writes of Rudolf Lambert's 1954 account² of how Eugene Osty showed him photographic evidence of 'Eva C's fraudulence in Paris in 1927:

Lambert's uncorroborated charge was made at third hand, 30 years after the episode it purported to describe.

All of the individual elements of this statement are as misleading as the arithmetic.

The facts are briefly as follows. Dr. Osty succeeded Dr. Gustave Geley as director of the Paris *Institut Métapsychique*, following the latter's unexpected death in an aeroplane accident. Amongst Geley's effects, Osty discovered photographs taken during Geley's investigation of 'Eva C.' (*recte* Marthe Beraud), which indicated fraudulent manipulation of the supposed materialisations. Osty wished to publish his discovery, but was persuaded not to do so by Richet and Schrenck-Notzing, as well as by Jean Meyer, who financed the *Institut*. Lambert visited Paris in 1927 for the Third International Congress on Psychical Research, and was there shown the incriminating photographs by Osty, under a pledge of secrecy. However, later that year, Count Petrovo-Solovovo-Perovsky gave some account of the matter in the Brussels journal, *XXe. Siècle*; and in 1928 Carl von Klinckowstroem published further details³, provided *inter alia* by Père Mainage and Paul Heuzé. In the light of these revelations, Lambert himself published a guarded account⁴ in 1929, of which an excerpt⁵ was quoted—in translation—in Theodore Besterman's book, *Some Modern Mediums*, which appeared in 1930.

In 1954 Lambert decided to publish a full account²: but when Dr. Thouless complained⁶ of the (supposedly) belated character of Lambert's account, neither Lambert⁷ nor Besterman⁸, in their replies to Thouless, referred to their respective publications of 1929 and 1930. In a letter⁹ to me Lambert admitted that he had forgotten his 1929 publication, and since Besterman had neither

referred to it in his letter, nor in a long conversation they had had together in Geneva in April, 1956, he supposed that Besterman had done the same. Both Besterman⁸ and W. H. Salter¹⁰ have confirmed Lambert's version of events; indeed Osty showed Besterman the same photographs that he showed Lambert.

In the face of the evidence set out above, it is clearly unjustified for Inglis to claim, as he does (see above quotation) that Lambert's charges were:

- (a) 'uncorroborated'—they were corroborated by Besterman^{5,8}, and by Salter¹⁰ to mention but two.
- (b) 'at third hand'—Lambert's was a first-hand account of what Osty had shown him.
- (c) 'thirty years old'—Both Lambert and Besterman had published the same facts in 1929 and 1930 respectively.

Further, Inglis omits all mention of Richet's letter to Schrenck-Notzing¹¹ in which he admits that Osty had told him of finding Geley's photographs which indicated Eva's fraudulence. Nor does Inglis acknowledge the doubt which this episode casts upon Geley's competence and/or his integrity. I am happy to endorse Inglis' recommendation to study the case-histories of Geley and the rest; but such studies must be made with careful attention to detail. Thus when Geley writes of his investigation of Eva¹² he states:

Eva . . . had both her hands firmly held during the whole time by Mme. Bisson and myself; or, in some cases, I held both her hands. (p. 183).

When, however, the relevant photographs are examined in which both of Eva's hands are visible (*i.e.* Figs. 22, 23, 27, 34 and 38) only two (Figs. 22 and 38) show any hand control, and in each case, only one hand is held. Again, in Fig. 37 no rings are visible on Eva's right hand; yet in Fig. 38, said to be taken 'a moment later', this same hand is wearing two rings on separate fingers. Since his own photographs contradict Geley's written accounts of these seances, there seems to be an obvious answer to Inglis' question, 'Was (he) a dupe? or a liar?'

I am very surprised that Inglis should suggest that Fournier d'Albe should have pounced upon the chiffon-like materialization at Kathleen Goligher's seances. From Florence Cook to Helen Duncan, materialization mediums have claimed that unauthorized touching of a materialization can cause great harm (or even death) to the medium; so Inglis' suggestion would constitute a grave breach of mediumistic protocol, which in other contexts he would be the first to uphold. In any case, as Fournier d'Albe himself pointed out¹³, the Golighers' scrutiny of potential investigators had been very effective in obviating any attempt at 'seizing the "psychic structures".' (p. 48).

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Brian Inglis replies:

By 'corroboration' I meant of the actual charge, that Geley and Eva were in cahoots to defraud science and the public. I did not go into detail because I dealt with the whole subject in *Science and Parascience*; and I would bet anybody who takes Mr. Coleman's letter seriously to compare it with what I wrote about Osty, Besterman, Perovsky and the rest (pp. 239–42). Mr. Coleman, for example, complains that I 'omit all mention of Richet's letter'. He himself omits to explain that Richet specifically warned *against* the use of photographs to allege fraud, on the very reasonable ground—as anybody who studies the mass of evidence relating to Eva will have to admit—that photographs of materializations look bogus anyway. I have to admit that I was unaware that Lambert had written the earlier account, but as Lambert had forgotten it himself, this is perhaps not surprising. Otherwise I am content to leave the verdict to anybody who cares to compare the Coleman letter with my survey of the evidence.

On the other issue, Mr. Coleman justifies Fournier d'Albe's rejection of the Golighers' phenomena on the ground they prevented any seizure of the 'psychic structures'. Again, I dealt with this in *Science and Parascience* (pp. 62–6). Could Mr. Coleman now explain to us how the Golighers managed to deceive Barrett and Whately Smith (Whately Carington), who *were* allowed such seizures? Or were they, along with Mme. Bisson, Schrenck-Notzing, Geley, Richet, and all Eva's numerous other investigators, part of a vast conspiracy to deceive scientists and public alike? Because any systematic study of the evidence they presented leaves no possible doubt that, if there was fraud, they all must have been in it, up to their necks.

May I also beg Mr. Coleman, if he proposes to pursue his vendetta against the researchers into physical mediumship that at least does not damn them with the help of misleading comparisons? In his review of Arthur Berger's *Evidence of Life after Death* (July 1989) he dismisses the evidence which Geley, Richet, Sudre and others provided for the ability of Franek Kluski to materialise 'hands' at a distance, citing D. D. Home, Hereward Carrington and a 'Dr. Jamieson' as 'exposing the fraudulent manipulation' involved in this feat. Again, anybody who cares to look up the passages he cites and compare them with the accounts of Kluski's mediumship will find they are not remotely comparable; Geley & Co. knew that they must impose rigorous controls, and they clearly did.

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