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The Science of Mediumship and the Evidence of Survival

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**The Science of Mediumship
and the
Evidence of Survival**

*A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Liberal Studies*

by

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This project is dedicated to

Nathan Jablonski

and

Richard S. Smith

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Science of Mediumship.....	11
The Case of Leonora E. Piper	33
The Case of Eusapia Palladino.....	45
My Personal Experience as a Seance Medium Specializing in Table Tipping.....	60
Cross-Correspondences	69
Reincarnation.....	87
Conclusion	113
BIBLIOGRAPHY	125

Introduction

On March 31, 1848, two little girls and their parents gathered in an upstairs bedroom in a cabin in Hydesville, New York, about thirty miles east of Rochester. This area of Wayne County is often referred to as the “Burned-Over District.” There was something about this area of western New York State that seemed to turn people into seers and mystics. It was called the “Burned-Over District” as wave upon wave of religious revival swept across the area (Burned-Over District 1).

This area became the birthplace of a great religion when Joseph Smith dug up the Book of Mormon on a hill near Palmyra. The Fox sisters, Margaret and Catherine (Kate), the two girls mentioned above, created a stir in sleepy little Hydesville in 1848, when they claimed to hear rapping from the next dimension. They followed their discovery by giving public demonstrations of their ability to communicate with the dead. From these modest origins, the modern role of the medium evolved and the new religion of Spiritualism was born (Burned-Over District 1).

The Skeptical Inquirer issue of July/August 2008 takes on this story to debunk it. Mr. Nickell, the writer, claims that quite early on, right after the incident of the rapping, several members of the University of Buffalo faculty studied the girls’ raps. They excluded “spiritual causation” and asserted that the raps were “produced by the action of the will, through voluntary action of the joints.” (Nickell 2).

Forty years after Spiritualism began; Margaret Fox Kane and Catherine Fox Jencken confessed that it had all been a trick. On Sunday, October 21, 1888, the sisters appeared at the Academy of Music in New York City. The mood was almost as rowdy as

it had been forty years earlier at Rochester's Corinthian Hall, when Maggie had appeared to prove the existence of Spiritualism (Stuart 298).

Maggie made her way to the stage, a black-robed, sharp-faced widow, "put on her glasses, curtsied to the audience and read slowly and in a voice trembling with emotion, her confession, said the *Herald* (Stuart 299)." "That I have been mainly instrumental in perpetrating the fraud of Spiritualism, many of you already know. It is the greatest sorrow of my life," Maggie admitted. "It is the late day now, but I am prepared to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God." (Stuart 299). She then stretched her hands towards heaven and said, "When I began this deception I was too young to know right from wrong. I hope God Almighty will forgive me and those who are silly enough to believe in Spiritualism" (Stuart 299). She then revealed all from the music hall stage. She explained how she had produced the rapping noises by slipping her foot from her shoe and snapping her toes (Nickell 2).

According to the *Herald*, "Three doctors knelt down, took hold of Mrs. Kane's big toe and assumed a grave air." After they agreed that they had heard rappings produced by Maggie's big toe, the trembling woman stood up so the audience could hear the sounds (Stuart 299). The moment was unforgettable. Here was the woman who had been the high priestess of the Spiritualist movement! "There was dead silence...she stood upon a little pine table with nothing on her feet but stockings. As she remained motionless, loud distinct rappings were heard now in the flies, now behind the scenes, now in the gallery" (Stuart 299-300).

No one seemed to question whether the raps produced by Maggie's toe were supplemented by other means: maybe one of the doctors had confederates in the audience

willing to mount the kind of symphony for which the spirits were famous. A reporter from the *New York Times* wrote of that evening that the noises increased from faint to loud, “traveling up the wall and along the roof of the academy” (Weisberg 244). Doctors of the time were right about the joints and muscles, ligaments and tendons of the human leg and foot. Properly manipulated they can be noisy. In a theater with good acoustics, audience members sitting at the back of the balcony can hear actors crack their joints. But exactly how much noise does the human body have to make to evoke a chorus of spirit voices (Weisberg 245)?

“Mrs. Kane became excited,” observed the *Herald*. “She clapped her hands, danced about and cried: -It’s a fraud! Spiritualism is a fraud from beginning to end! It’s all a trick! There is no truth in it” (Stuart 300)!

The Evening Post reported on the following day, “Mrs. Kane now locates the origin of Modern Spiritualism in her great toe” (Nickell 2). Margaret went on to state:

I think it is about time that the truth of this miserable subject “Spiritualism” should be brought out. It is now widespread all over the world, and unless it is put down it will do great evil. I was the first in the field and I have the right to expose it.

My sister Katie and myself were very young children when this horrible deception began. I was eight and just a year and a half older than she. We were very mischievous children and we wanted to terrify our dear mother, who was a very good woman and very easily frightened. At night when we were in bed, we used to tie an apple to a string and move it up and down, causing the apple to bump on the floor, or we would drop the apple on the floor, making a strange noise every time it would rebound. Mother listened to this for a time. She could not understand it and did not suspect us of being capable of a trick because we were *so young*.

At last she could stand it no longer and she called the neighbors in and told them about it. It was this that set us to discover the means of making the raps.

Margaret explained:

My sister Katie was the first one to discover that by swishing her fingers she could produce a certain noise with the knuckles and joints, and that the same effect could be made with the toes. Finding we could make raps with our feet-first with one foot and then with both-we practiced until we could do this easily when the room was dark (Nickell 2).

Margaret repeated her expose in other cities close to New York. However, John Mulholland explains, "It was expected that this would give her sufficient Income to live but she shortly discovered that while many people will pay to be humbugged few will pay to be educated" (Nickell 2).

A few days later, Maggie was visited by Joseph La Fumee, an old Spiritualist friend. La Fumee asked Maggie to rap for him. She agreed but could only produce raps near her feet-and not across the room. Puzzled, La Fumee asked her to try again. After all, if she could control the raps, he reasoned, why couldn't she make them echo throughout the parlor as before? Maggie refused, saying it was too hard. Was she simply too tired, or had her performance at the Academy of Music strained her feet so much that she could no longer create a reverberation? Or, as the spiritualist's would later argue, had the spirits abandoned Maggie because of her public condemnation of their existence? (Stuart 301).

By 1889, Maggie's financial situation had become desperate. Alcoholism had been a continuing problem and since her denunciation of Spiritualism she had no way to make a living. She realized she had made a mistake. Two spiritualist friends, Henry Newton and C.P. Sykes went to visit her at her home. What she said was so shocking-so contrary to the events at the Academy of Music-that the two listeners begged Maggie to repeat it before other witnesses (Stuart 307).

She agreed and November 16, 1889, little more than a year after her famous denunciation of Spiritualism, she appeared before the Newtons, their guests and a stenographer. According to a story in the *Banner of Light*, Maggie recanted her former condemnation of Spiritualism.

“For months past I have suffered unspeakable anguish and I now feel the most poignant regret for the ruinous course I was made to follow,” she began. “Those charges were false in every particular. I have no question in saying that” (Stuart 307).

Henry Newton asked her why she had confessed. She claimed several reasons. First, representatives of the Catholic Church in 1888 had insisted that she give up this “wicked work of the Devil” or conducting séances. It was never mentioned that she had an agreement with another priest that justified her need to support herself with Spiritualism. After all, was it proper for a Victorian lady to work to support herself (Stuart 308)?

Two, at that time Maggie was in dire need of money, and was apparently promised a great deal of money for her public appearance at the Academy. Those funds had either not been paid or were much less than expected. The promised national tour afterwards had not materialized either (Stuart 308).

Above all, Maggie wanted it understood by all, especially fellow Spiritualists that her denunciations at the Academy were all lies, that her faith in Spiritualism was even stronger than ever before. “When I made those dreadful statements I was not responsible for my words. Now that I have got rid of the terrible incubus which enthralled by every word and action, my belief in the philosophy and the phenomena...of Spiritualism is unshaken. Its genuineness is an incontrovertible fact,” she insisted (Stuart 308). “Would

to God that I could undo the injustice I did the cause of Spiritualism under the strong psychological influence of persons who were opposed to it," Maggie admitted, "I gave expression to utterances that had no foundation in fact and that would at the time throw discredit on the Spiritual phenomena" (Weisberg 245).

Her decision to recant, she said, was not of her own volition but was an impulse that came from her spirit guides. Asked if she was trying to take revenge on those that had promised her a profit for exposing Spiritualism, Maggie insisted that she only wanted to set the record straight. She did hope to take a national tour to promote Spiritualism, but also she needed to make some money. "My great ambition is to repair the wrong I have done," she said, "but you know that even a mortal instrument in the hands of Spirit must have a maintenance of life" (Weisberg 256).

The spirits did honour her mediumship. They remained powerful forces all her life. Far from leaving her because of her treachery, they sometimes rapped so loudly, they even woke her neighbors (Weisberg 256). It is appropriate at this point to address the term medium and the concept of mediumship, because the girls were mediums, just like our modern mediums like John Edward and Sylvia Brown, and like John and Sylvia, that's how Katie and Maggie made their living, in a Victorian world where women did not work. Mediumship was something a woman could do, in her own home, without going out into the "man's world" of business. Women could be mediums on the Spiritualist platform without disgracing themselves, because a man was always the chairperson leading the service, but the women were the ones who went into trance and spoke inspirationally, bring the message from the next dimension to the listeners in the audience.

Spiritualism began with the Fox sisters, as did mediumship as we know it today. The Spiritualist movement from its roots has been surrounded by controversy. As in the case of the Fox sisters, there are those, like Joe Nickell and the Skeptical Inquirer, who consider all this to be so much “smoke and mirrors”. But even among those who are convinced the phenomena are real, there are controversies about how best to explain these phenomena. In response to this debate, two hypotheses have arisen as to how mediumship works: survival or Super-psi. The purpose of this study is to make a judgment about the relative plausibility of these two hypotheses in light of a broad spectrum of evidence.

The word “medium” is derived from the Latin “medius” and broadly translated means “the middle” or “that which is between”. According to the Spirit Book, a medium is one who is able to act as a connection between this physical world and the world of the afterlife, to facilitate messages between the living and the dead (Buckland 249).

Mediumship may also be thought of as a faculty or a talent to be developed and unfolded, much like a musician who is born with a talent that is developed with study, practice and proper usage (Merrill 10). Mediumship is not a plaything to be handled like a toy for there are laws that govern mediumship and if played with, dangerous situations can result (Merrill 10).

As mediums began to develop in America and around the world, notably Great Britain, both Britain and America founded societies for Psychical Research, the British in 1882 and America in 1885. These societies were begun to investigate the claims of Spiritualism, specifically mediumship and the two competing theories of how it worked. The list of those who became interested in investigating how mediumship worked and the

scientific basis of it included some of the foremost scientific and scholarly names of the day. The list included such luminous names as William James, James H. Hyslop, Sir Oliver Lodge, William F. Barrett, Frederic Myers and Dr. Richard Hodgson. Several of these names will appear in another chapter, seemingly continuing their work after they passed over to the other side, from whence a group tried to make sure that we the living had plenty of evidence for survival after death with a method they felt would bypass and overtake the evidence for telepathy and super-psi.

William James was the brother of Henry James and the author of both *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and the American Society for Psychical Research Report on Mrs. Piper's Hodgson Control. He taught at Harvard and was considered the pre-eminent psychologist of his day. James H. Hyslop was a professor at Columbia University and a member of the ASPR. He was the first to connect psychology to psychic phenomena. Sir Oliver Lodge was a well-known SPR researcher and scientist, who did a great deal of work with radio waves before Marconi. He was chair of the physics department at University College, Liverpool. He became convinced of survival beyond bodily death through his study of his son Raymond's death and the subsequent communications received from Raymond. William F. Barrett was a founding member of the SPR and taught in Dublin at the Royal College of Science. He was a fellow of the Royal Society and followed Sir Oliver Lodge as the president of the SPR. Frederic Myers was British and taught at Trinity College, Cambridge. Myers coined the word "telepathy" to replace "thought transference" (Blum 121). Richard Hodgson was an Australian who graduated from the University of Melbourne with a law degree. He did his graduate work at St. John's College, Cambridge. His two great loves were nature and poetry (law wasn't

that exciting!) (Blum 83). Investigation into the science of mediumship did not stop with the work of the SPR. It has continued through the 20th century into the 21st.

Investigation into the scientific basis of mediumship has been greatly advanced by the work of Alan Gauld and his book, *Mediumship and Survival, A Century of Investigations*. In this book he reviews investigations from Leonora Piper to the present day. Robert Almeder's book, *Death and Personal Survival, The Evidence of Life After Death* covers several areas of evidence such as reincarnation and communication from the dead and ends by reviewing the evidence objectively. One of the most modern researchers into the scientific basis of mediumship is Dr. Stephen Braude, the chair of the Philosophy Department at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. His book, *Immortal Remains, the Evidence for Life After Death*, has become an invaluable tool in the research for this paper, as well Dr. Braude's availability on the phone. Raymond Martin of Union College writes of Braude's book, "Certainly one of the best assessments ever written for the evidence of human survival of bodily death" (Back cover-*Immortal Remains*).

There is also a website for skeptics which publish a magazine called the Skeptical Inquirer. In order to make a somewhat balanced presentation of material, several SI articles will be compared and contrasted with other evidence. The actual evidence of mediums and researchers will be juxtaposed against the skeptical writers, though the general question of the reality of the phenomena is not at issue in this study. It is assumed.

The purpose of the first part of this paper is to present various suggestions for diverse sources regarding mediumship from the beginnings of research in the 1860's to the present day. The second section of the paper is divided into several chapters exposing

the best cases of evidence for survival beyond bodily death, such as Mrs. Piper's trance mediumship with automatic writing, Palladino's physical mediumship, the cross-correspondence material in the first half of the 20th century and three reincarnation cases suggestive of survival-- plus my own training and experience as a professional mental and seance medium. The paper's last chapter draws conclusions from the evidence presented as to the basis of mediumship, and two main theories that attempt to explain the unusual phenomena presented here, the ESP-PSI theory and the survival theory. There are those who would dismiss all the evidence as just so much smoke and mirrors, but based on my experience and all the research and writing that has been done on the subject, I think that hypothesis can be left behind. The two competing hypotheses that are left are considered by the debunkers to be strange also. The intention of this paper is to show where the research has taken us, even though all the questions are not yet totally settled, and a lot of work remains to be done.

The Science of Mediumship

A medium is defined by the Random House Collegiate Dictionary as “a person serving, or conceived of as serving, as an instrument through which another personality or a supernatural agency manifests itself” (Urdong 831). Mediumship, like humour, comes in many styles and manifests itself in many ways. There are also many mediumistic “gifts” or ways that information is discerned or transmitted. It is appropriate to begin with some background so that the reader understands concepts and ideas as the paper progresses.

Most books written about Spiritualism by Spiritualists claim that Spiritualism is a Science, Philosophy and a Religion of continuous life. Continuous life, or survival or bodily death, is demonstrated through mediumship. Spiritualism says it is a science because “it investigates, analyzes, and classifies facts and manifestations demonstrated from the Spirit side of life” (Barnes Quest 3). Science is the classification of accurately observed facts. Spiritualism, with mediumship as its main tool, claims to rank as a science and the task of its adherents is to make good its claims. This can be accomplished only by making every observation of phenomena under strictly test conditions (Tuttle 108). The same statements might be made about mediumship. These facts and manifestations are demonstrated through the various facets of mental mediumship such as: clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience, clairgustience, omniscience, inspirational speaking and writing, psychometry and the various forms of healing, such as mental and laying-on-of-hands. The phases of physical mediumship include trumpet, levitation of objects and persons, materialization, dematerialization of matter, slate writing, automatic writing, magnetic and spiritual healing and Spirit photography (Barnes Quest 25).

The discussion which follows is not physics research. This is the attempt of several people throughout the history of modern mediumship to articulate the kind of world view, in light of which mediumship would seem to be natural. The fact that certain (as yet controversial) theories in physics resemble in some ways this world view leads this author to look forward to convergence about these views in the future.

The question might be asked, “Why must those in the Spirit side of life come through a medium rather than communicating directly with their loved ones on earth (Barnes Quest 21)? Peggy Barnes answers the question this way:

Could you send a telegram without the instruments? Can you pick music out of the air without your radio? The medium is the *instrument* through which those vibrations must come...It is just as sensible to say that there is no music or sound passing through the air because you are not able to hear it with you physical ear as it is to say that your Spirit mother cannot communicate because she is not able to do so with you directly.

Mediumship, in today’s world, is an established fact. There are several internationally prominent mediums such as Sylvia Brown, James van Praagh, John Edward, and George Anderson who attract huge audiences and command large fees for individual sessions. Mediumship seems to offer great evidence for survival after the death of the physical body. At this time there is no *absolute* proof that we, or some part of us, survive physical death. However, the scientific study of mediumship, begun in the 1880s with the Society for Psychical Research in England, has provided more and more evidence for survival and how mediumship works, but has also generated more debate about the two basic hypotheses, namely survival beyond bodily death or Super-psi. The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview and analysis of that research and to look at the scientific basis upon which mediumship rests beginning with established Spiritualist writers, and including some skeptical thought.

Peggy Barnes, a highly respected Spiritualist author, says that mediumship is controlled by natural law. Natural Law (Latin: *lex naturalis*) is a theory that posits the existence of a law whose content is set by nature and that therefore has validity everywhere (Wiki Natural 1). Natural Law theories have exercised a profound influence on the development of English common law, and have featured greatly in the philosophies of Thomas Aquinas, Francesco Suarez, Richard Hooker, Thomas Hobbes, Hugo Grotius, Samuel von Pufendorf, and John Locke. Because of the intersection between natural law and natural rights, it has been cited as a component in the United States Declaration of Independence.

Bruce McArthur, the author of *Your Life*, has made a study of Natural or Universal Law as found in the readings of Edgar Cayce, the American psychic. He says,

The Universal Laws are fundamental laws of mind and of spirit, of which most of us are not aware. They are not mind-control or positive-thinking techniques. They are, rather, the basic principles by which life operates. You and I experience daily-minute by minute, hour by hour- the results of the operation of universal laws in our lives. We normally don't associate these experiences with laws or realize they are governed by law.

Our cars, our telephones our television sets-everything operates in accord with the universal laws that apply to each. If it were not so, these instruments could not be designed to function reliably. Realize that the universal laws by which these devices operate have been in existences from the beginning of time. Humankind has only recently discovered them and learned how to put them to use.

According to McArthur the purpose of Universal law is:

These laws are not restrictive. They are truly laws created out of love which will produce every good in your life, if you choose to work with them in the right way. Not only are there laws governing everything at all levels-spiritual, mental, and physical-but they are guided, guarded, watched over, and kept in accord with divine love.

Natural or Universal law is important:

The Universal Laws of life are as important as the air we breathe or the food we eat. Yet these laws are little recognized or understood in today's world. Relatively few people know them, and even fewer try to apply them in their lives. The laws are rarely taught in our educational systems. Where they are set forth in the world's literature, they are seldom seen in their true significance and even less understood in their relation to life.

To try to live without understanding the Universal Laws is like your trying to drive a car without knowing how to control it. The results can be disastrous even though you may be trying hard to drive correctly. Likewise, if you do not understand the Universal Laws by which your life operates, you can end up in difficulty, chaos, pain, and confusion without understanding the reason.

To begin to learn and apply these laws beneficially, we need to come to an understanding of their basic nature. A universal law is not like the laws of a city, state, or nation. A universal law applies throughout the world and the universe. Most important, it applies to each one of us; to everyone we know and don't know, without exception and regardless of place, economic condition, color, or creed (McArthur 2-5).

Edgar Cayce himself, said in reading 2906-1,

To Spirit, to Spirit's Universal Laws, must all come: the nearer we apply those laws in keeping with divine love, the greater blessings to self, the greater may be the blessings of self upon others (McArthur 6).

Barnes says that the natural law of vibration is what controls all phases of mediumship. All things in the Universe are vibrating and their rate of vibration determines their nature. Each medium has a vibratory wave length and upon the strength of that medium, the conditions brought by the sitters and the knowledge of the laws of communication displayed by the manifesting Spirit, depends the entire success of the phenomena presented (Barnes Quest 22). As Cayce, said the nearer we or the medium draws to the Universal laws, the more blessings accrue. Another law, the Law of Attraction, governs all things, good attracting good, and evil attracting evil. This is a natural law and we cannot get away from it (Barnes Quest 21-22). Natural law is the

backbone of the functioning of mediumship, and is the functioning law of Nature or God (seeing God manifested in nature). The Divine Source set natural law into motion to govern all that had been created. It is immutable and unchangeable. There seems to be no instance where the Source has set aside that law in response to human appeal or for any other reason.

Emma Hardinge Britten (1823-1899) was an outstanding Spiritualist medium, author, lecturer and musician. She actually lived in Cassadaga at one point and played for services. She is the author of *Modern American Spiritualism from 1848 to 1868*. She describes mediumship in terms of a battery. In a battery, there are two plates, or poles, or copper and zinc representing the positive and the negative with a fluid in between that creates magnetism. This combination produces phenomena whether it be a tiny sound or a great force. Electricity is the tool of all functions of being.

Now, let's look at this battery in a new way.

Place the spiritual body of the medium as the copper, and spiritual body of the disembodied soul as the zinc, and the atmosphere as the solution between them, and your mediumistic battery is complete; and wherefore, if the simple forms of matter which man's mighty and controlling spirit can act upon; wherefore, if the subjects of the soul can thus be made to produce all the wondrous phenomena that re-create a world, and make man in truth the image of his Creator, with all the attributes and functions of the Infinite represented in his finality; wherefore, if man is thus gifted to act upon matter, shall not himself, the grandest of all magnets ; himself the microcosm of all lower forms of matter; himself only subject to God and the angels, - why shall not he form a better battery than any of the mere fragments of matter which are all combined within himself? He does so, and thus arranges and classifies the entire of the phenomena into the science of modern Spiritualism (Britten Philosophy 1).

Every atom of time in the vast ocean of human existence is fraught with change, insensible to you in time's flight, but marking itself in those wonderful results that elaborate the tiny nucleated cell into the superb structure of manhood. It is magic when you look at the two extremes; it is natural life when you behold the gradual process of growth. These changes are ever operating upon mediums, and the electric currents through which their phenomenal gifts are exercised are

constantly disturbed, now by the external, and now by the internal process of life (Britten Philosophy 2).

When the science of mind and the laws of the invisible world shall have become the subject of similar investigation, it will be found that between the natural and the spiritual body there is an inevitable rapport. It must be so, for the spiritual world is the soul of this natural world, and fills the space around us. It is the cup by which the Infinite Spirit lets down the draught of inspiration to this earth. It is formed of the kindred that he has wound around your souls, by the tendrils of affection; it is filled with the blossoms, leaves and branches that have all grown out of the primal root of the natural ties of earth. You cannot separate yourselves from the spirit-world (Britten Philosophy 3).

The science of mind, which up to this day has never been known or acknowledged as a science; the application of psychological art, which up to this century has appeared to be a vague and intangible thing, incapable of being reduced to a system, gives us the assurance that by the study of the spiritual body by an understanding of the laws of life-magnetism-and electricity-man shall be enabled to understand, and in this glorious knowledge use the power to control all these imponderable elements by the law of science (Britten Philosophy 4).

This is Emma's description of mediumship, how it works, how it affects us, and where the use of this type of intersection of science and philosophy might ultimately take us. This material is from an article published in the last half of the 19th century, and it is amazing how current and contemporary the language and conceptions seem to be.

So far, it has been suggested that mediumship is based on vibration and electromagnetism. We human beings actually produce an electronic field called by some the aura. We live in a sea of electro-magnetic vibration and as that field changes and interacts with other auric fields, it effects us. This pool of electromagnetic energy around an object or person allows energy exchange (Hunt 20). Could this pool of energy account for the telepathy and Super-psi theories of mediumship? Do we communicate thoughts, ideas and memories through this vibrating electro-magnetic soup?

According to Rev. Joseph Merrill, vibration means "an oscillation-motion" and the pulsating oscillation of electrical energy creates a wave length on which the spirit

functions when he/she wishes to contact the medium. Everything in this existence is held together by vibration, whether the object is inanimate, animate, or human. We are sustained on the earth plane by vibration and so are the spirit people sustained in the spirit world-by vibration (Merrill 14). This sustenance by vibration refers to the spiritual body to which Paul refers in his letters. It is believed by many religious traditions that all of us receive a spiritual etheric body when we cross over into the next dimension and that body, not being made of gross earthly material, vibrates at a much higher frequency which the medium must be able, like a radio, to tune into by raising his/her vibration through meditation and activating the centers of the right brain. The spirit world is created by the cohesion and adhesion of atoms much the same as the material world was created, and we would say that the cohesion and adhesion of etheric substances creates the spirit world and vibration holds it together (Merrill 14).

All of our sensations are due to the impact upon our sense organs of vibrations in some form. Variations in the strength and rapidity of these vibrations constitute the difference in our perceptions (Wallis 11). It is possible that there are conditions of vibratory energy that escape us. If we could develop finer senses, it could and would yield wonderful results and extend our power and knowledge. With our investigations of psychic sciences, we are coming into relation with forces, possibilities and personalities which amount to a spiritual revelation of the universe (Wallis 11).

When the Wallis's write about the ether, which would correspond to the fluid in the battery in Mrs. Britten's example, they say:

It is manifest that if an operator, by the concentration of his mental energies, can project his thought upon another individual who is thereafter able to reproduce the picture or the works thus thought of, there must be some medium of communication between the two. Hudson Tuttle well says: 'Whatever the

influence may be, it must pass across greater, or less distances to produce the effect observed. It cannot be transmitted across a void. It must have its own means of conduction.' If a sensitive can, as affirm and our own experience proves, bring himself, or be brought, *en rapport* with people, places, or things to the extent of merging himself for the time being into, and becoming identified with, them, there must be some subtle force or energy which makes such experiences possible. To quote Hudson Tuttle again: 'Admitting the fact of impressibility, the existence of a spirit-ether, universal, and all- permeating, if not demonstrated, is a theory towards which all related facts gather in cumulative evidence. Here we arrive at the philosophy of all psychological influence, whether received under the name of magnetism, hypnotism, mental influence, or spiritual impression. One law underlies and ramifies through all these diversified effects (Wallis 12-13).

Certainly telepathy is part of mediumship. Mediums connect to the minds of sitters and others in the universal mental field. Sir William Crookes, in his Presidential Address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, said:

If telepathy takes place we have two physical facts-the physical change in the brain of A, the suggester, and the analogous change in the brain of B, the recipient of the suggestion. Between these two physical events there must exist a train of physical causes.

Sir William argued that the connecting series of intermediate causes can only occur through an intervening medium, and he claimed that "with every fresh advance of knowledge it is shown that ether vibrations have powers and attributes abundantly equal to any demand-even to the transmission of thought' (Wallis 13).

Granting that such telepathic transference is scientifically demonstrated, it is assuredly a spiritual manifestation-one embodied spirit communicating with another; and if embodied spirits have this power, why not the so-called disembodies also (Wallis 13)?

Dr J.M. Peebles, the author of *Who Are These Spiritualists?* and a venerable 'spiritual pilgrim," says:

The universe is not dead. Every atom is afire with life. Inspiration is as eternal as the stars. Trances are in perfect harmony with psychic law. God is everywhere from sand to stars, to the suns that dot the immensities; and angels would speak as readily to God's living Americans as to His ancient Hebrews if the proper

conditions were given them. Open the doors of your souls, O mortals, and invite the good angels in; invite your loved ones, peopling the higher spheres, to come with their olive-leaf messages of love and truth and wisdom. The universe is one. Conscious spirit is infinite, and if, as science teaches, every undulating wave in its rhythmic motion impinges upon every other wave in the vast, all-embracing sea of universal life, who can set limits to the bounds of thought, or will, or spirit influence, either within or without the mortal body? Believed or not, this peerless universe is one grand whispering gallery, and we are surrounded, as the apostle taught, by a great “cloud of witnesses” – numberless multitudes – who delight under proper conditions to converse with earth’s foot-weary travelers, by impression inspiration, premonition, and wisdom. Precious fact, proving the perpetuity of intelligence, of love, and of law, beyond death’s portal (Wallis 14)!

Hudson Tuttle, the author of *Mediumship and its Laws* (1900) compares the brain of a medium to a star, which as a center throws off vibrations of different length, which are recognized as heat. He says:

As the radiant star is a center of light, so the brain is a center of radiant thought. The spirit using the brain as its instrument is the source and vortex of that energy sending out vibrations in every direction. The parallel is made completely by the analogous ethers, for as there is an ether of extreme tenuity for the explanation of the phenomena of the physical forces of light, heat, and electricity, there is a still more refined ether, which is the medium of psychic vibrations.

This principle, as simple and yet as sublime as that of gravitation, was first announced in “The Philosophy of Spirit and the Spirit World,” published in 1860. The spirit authors for the first time explicitly stated the theory of thought vibrations with diagrams, as the fundamental explanation of all that marvelous class of phenomena now known as thought transference, telepathy, etc. It is to the spiritual what the law of gravitation is in the physical world.

The existence of a universal spirit-ether was declared similar to that of light-ether. It was called “Zoether” in preference to nerve-aura or nervous fluid.

It is said: There must be a medium of communication, otherwise no influence could pass from one individual to another*****If an individual can influence another at a distance simply by an effort of his will, then it is self-evident that something passes from one to the other *****What is this something? Facts conflict with its being matter radiated from one individual to another as light was once supposed to be transmitted. On the other hand, all these phenomena show a striking relationship to light, heat and kindred agents, and whatever applies to one applies to all...As a luminous body is one capable of producing waves of light, a living being is capable of producing Zoethic waves. These waves are transmitted with greater rapidity than waves of light, their velocity being 250,000 miles per

second*****All brains throw off vibrations as all strings when extended give out waves of sound; and as the string must have a corresponding string to receive its vibrations, so the brain must have a harmonial other's brain to receive its vibrations (Tuttle 19-20).

Does this remind any reader of Michio Kaku's superstring theory? This theory says that the ultimate building blocks of nature consist of tiny vibrating strings! This theory is at this moment totally speculative, but the resonance, at least on the surface between Tuttle in 1900 and Kaku in 1995 is fascinating!

It is interesting to find that there is a trend of thought about the science of mediumship that begins with early Spiritualists such as Britten, Peebles and Tuttle and continues straight through to today's mediums and researchers. The older mediums speak of the law of vibration, that vibration and electromagnetism control the communication between minds, both of embodied and the disembodied.

In interviews with three practicing mediums at Cassadaga, Florida, I found certain themes recurring. The mediums interviewed are all working in the Cassadaga camp at this time. They are the Reverend Diane Davis, The Reverends Nick and Jean Sourant, and the Reverend Mary Rose Gray. All of these Spiritualist ministers have been "in the work" for thirty years or more. Two of them, Reverend Gray and Reverend Nick Sourant come from scientific background, with Reverend Gray having been a nurse and a massage therapist, while Reverend Sourant was an engineer for Martin-Marietta.

One very basic idea that surfaced in every interview was that everything is thought, energy and vibration. As previously stated, we live in a vibrating electro-magnetic soup. These vibrations and energies connect us to events, moments and other

energies. Mind fields interact on a vibrational level. In this way we are able to tap into a reservoir of information.

A second area spoken about by all the interviewees was the brain and its role. The brain is a tool. It functions according to the mind. The function of the left brain is the organizing, how we fit, the conscious critic, the ego. The function of the right brain is the connection with space around us and our relationship to that space. The right brain also creates a master collage of what this moment in time looks like, sounds like, tastes like, smells like and feels like. To our right mind, the moment of *now* is timeless and abundant (Taylor29-31). The right brain also controls intuition, imagination, and spirituality. Julian Jaynes postulates that ancient people did not think as we do today, and were therefore not conscious. They experienced auditory hallucinations-voices of the gods, such as we hear in the Old Testament and the Iliad, which, coming from the brain's right hemisphere, told a person what to do in circumstances of novelty or stress. Moses would hear God speaking to him, or one of the Iliad's heroes would hear a message from a god or goddess. This ancient mentality is called the bicameral mind. Jaynes says that catastrophe and cataclysm forced man to learn consciousness, that is to think as we do today, with a left brain orientation. Are some of the voices that mediums hear clairaudiently a residual function of that ancient right brain?

Could this be why spiritually oriented people such as Buddhists and Spiritualists, who spend a great deal of time in meditation, seem to have stronger intuitions and spiritual connections? Are they exercising a mental muscle that most people have let atrophy? Do they, through meditation, manage to quieten the ego and thereby effectively

silence the left brain in order to listen to the promptings of the right side? Is spirituality and mediumship a connection to or a return to the ancient bicameral mind?

In her book, *My Stroke of Insight*, Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor says,

I remember that first day of the stroke with terrific bitter-sweetness. In the absence of the normal functioning of my left orientation association area, my perception of my physical boundaries was no longer limited to where my skin met air. I felt like a genie liberated from its bottle. The energy of my spirit seemed to flow like a great whale gliding through a sea of silent euphoria. Finer than the finest of pleasures we can experience as physical beings, this absence of physical boundary was one of glorious bliss. As my consciousness dwelled in a flow of sweet tranquility, it was obvious to me that I would never be able to squeeze the enormosity of my spirit back inside this tiny cellular matrix (Taylor 67).

Is this a description of what a Buddhist would call Nirvana or enlightenment? Can we, through meditation, consciously choose and activate a right brain orientation? Is this where the intersecting vibratory mind fields meet and receive and exchange information? These are all intriguing questions.

Some of the most exciting research on the brain, the mind, mind fields and vibration is found in the Valerie Hunt's 1996 book, *Infinite Mind*. Dr. Hunt is an internationally recognized pioneer for her research of human energy fields and holds advanced degrees in psychology and physiological science from Columbia. She has been a professor at Columbia, University of Iowa and University of California at Los Angeles. She has found scientific evidence of individualized field signatures and subtle energetic happenings between people and within groups. Dr. Hunt is certainly a pioneer in this field and to the mind of this author somewhat of a maverick. However, she makes some observations that seem to resonate with the new directions of psychic research. In the next several paragraphs I shall summarize her ideas and findings as they relate to the science of mediumship.

When Margaret Mead was president of the Association of the Advancement of Science in 1969, she led the drive for the acceptance of parapsychology. She questioned “...whether we can find ways of studying these phenomena which will make them as acceptable as the stars and the chromosomes” (Hunt 10).

We can't explain life. But we do know that electrical activity is necessary for life. Most medical research has attempted to explain life in gross term like heart, muscle, or nerve electricity. The research into cells and fluids has not been as successful. More recent findings, however, come to the conclusion that all cells, even subatomic particles, contain electrical elements. The result is a growing belief that life is electromagnetic, and can't be explained just by mechanical or biochemical means (Hunt 19). These findings account for the electronic discharge seen by mediums and psychics called the aura. That discharge may behave like both waves and particles, interacting with other electronic fields. The auric energy field is unique. It operates continuously, while other systems such as the heart and muscle are on-and-off signals. This pool of electromagnetic energy around an object or a person allows energy exchange.

Many classical scientists feel threatened by the “softness” of mystical thought and its apparent unreality. However, many scientists find that the problem they have to deal with is that they must redefine themselves and their reality; the “truth” might have to expand to include experiences like visions, trances, and mental and physical mediumship. What seems to be happening is that scientists are learning to loosen their mental constraints about the nature of reality so they can explore “impossible” ideas and mystics are learning to ask deeper questions and articulate wisdom more clearly. Considering

impossible ideas, look at Kaku's book, *Physics of the Impossible*, where he postulates, for one thing, that teleportation will be common in another fifty years!

Right now, science is dealing with less than one half of human experience, that portion of experience that is called "real" because it can be objectively measured. Science can describe those laws that are repeatable and unchanging, but today's quantum physics has gone far beyond every postulate in basic mechanical science. We know that solid matter is indestructible, but when we go into the subatomic level, we sometimes cannot find the mass and particles seem essentially empty. There is a need to realize that both the wave and particle concepts are needed to fully represent reality (Hunt 38-41).

The proof of scientific documentation lies in replicating experiments and producing the same results. This is what makes measuring mediumship, both mental and physical so difficult. The researcher of the SPR tried for years to determine how mediumship, especially, physical mediumship, worked. Many sittings were held with Eusapia Palladino and D.D.Home in attempts to accomplish that object. Basically what was found was what happened, but not *how*, because it was extremely difficult to exactly replicate conditions and vibrations in every seance.

Psychology and psychiatry have considered man to be a machine with lower level ideas, drives both known and unknown, that led him in many directions. Science has told us a great deal about this lowest level of reality, but has given us little information about the higher levels.

Now we know that reality is infinitely more complex than science has ever imagined. With an extended concept of reality, we can hypothesize an open system-

where constant interactions and transactions take place back and forth between all systems-contrasting with the closed systems of the past (Hunt 46).

Scientists discovered, as they gave up their preconceived ideas about reality, an idea of the *oneness* of life. They saw that things moved without following the laws of mechanical motion. Things could move disjointedly, jumping effortlessly between two places. Mediumship works this way. There is a basic communication on the vibratory level that operates according to higher laws of vibration and electromagnetism. James Jeans, a mathematician, wrote that the universe began to look less like a machine and more like a thought system (Hunt 47).

Fields seem many times to be no longer connected to a substance, but to behaviours and thoughts. Rupert Sheldrake calls these fields' morphogenic fields. He believes that fields which have existed as a result of human lives still exist and have molded past events as they color what happens today. Could this be an explanation of what psychics and mediums call past lives or reincarnation?

The reality of the world lies in fields which interact with other fields of energy in dynamic chaos patterns that are always evolving to higher levels of complexity. This is an open system in which reality is tremendously complex. What we know as truth, intuition and consciousness all operate interdependently with matter, and they transform the matter as they are transformed by it. Therefore, a healthy body is no longer a set of organs, each operating in its own ways and contributing to the overall good. A healthy body is now a flowing, interactive electrodynamic energy system (Hunt 48-49).

A field is a flowing thing. It flows within itself, through it to other fields, and as an organized unit it also flows from one place to another. It carries an ultimate level of

information. Recently, we've been able to measure human fields and describe them as energy patterns, wave shapes, wave packages, or quanta. In the future we will be able to decode fields in other ways where relationships and patterns of happenings will not be looked on as cause and effect but a part of the transition. Dynamic fields participate as they select by attraction (Hunt 51). This remarkable paragraph for this writer contains a very accurate description of how mediumship works, as flowing fields, wave packages, containing information and working by the law of attraction, like attracts like. The human field does not just react or interact; it transacts because it dynamically makes choices. The use of the word dynamic by Ms. Hunt is telling to me, because dynamic intimates life or life force. With human fields we realize that energy, mind, and spirit are not really different things, only aspects of an expanded reality. This is what the mediums were referring to when they said to get "out of your mind".

The Institute of Noetic Sciences in *Scientific Positivism: the New Dualism* concluded that "...the ultimate stuff of the universe is consciousness" (Hunt 56). Ultimate reality is not contacted through the physical sense of the material world, but through deep intuition. Such an idea of matter emerging out of human consciousness is really foreign to our Western mind because we have no experience of altering matter by "will". However, there is growing evidence that in expanded consciousness, man has access to the primary reality of frequencies. Living is a transaction, and interaction with other force fields, with an element of choice. This is a domain beyond time, space, and mass where vibrations exist (Hunt 56-57). Here we have come full circle back to the experiences of spiritual mediums and teachers that everything is vibration and energy!

Jahn and Dunne, in their book *Margins of Reality: The Role of Consciousness in the Physical World* have postulated a geometry of reality, the wave nature of consciousness, and the quantum mechanics of experiences. The major hypothesis of this model is that reality encompassing all aspects of experience, expression and behaviour is constituted only at the interface between consciousness and its environment. It further presumes that the sole currency of any reality is information, which may flow in either direction. "...Consciousness may insert information into its environment as well as extract information from it" (Hunt 57). In a functional sense, information can be constituted by any array of stimuli that the consciousness is capable of sensing and reacting to. Some theorists are trying to recast quantum physics in terms of information theory (Hunt 57).

We are becoming aware that "the symbolic nature of physics...is now formulated in such a way as to make it almost self-evident that it is a partial aspect of something wider" (Hunt 57). Jahn and Dunne have quoted Charles' Third Law, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." "In science we do not explain things away, but we do get closer to the mystery." (Hunt 57). Science and mysticism cope with the same things – the broadest extension of reality. Both are processes of handling information, but each does it differently. One could view mysticism at one pole and science at the other, the two most important poles for understanding the universe (Hunt 57-58). I believe that with research such as that begun by the SPR, continued by researchers such as Valerie Hunt and Stephan Braude that we are getting closer to the mystery of communication of information manifested by mediumship.

Stephen Braude of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, has done what I consider to be outstanding research on the subject of mediumship and survival. He has

gone back to the beginning of the Spiritualist movement and looked at all the material available to the present day and has come up with two basic theories on the subject. Those general ideas are that (1) something of us survives the death experience and communicates or (2) what purports to be communication is actually telepathy with the living, dealing in memories. This is called the “Super-PSI” theory. In this theory the medium uses an array of psychic skills to facilitate what seems to be survival, but is really greatly enhanced telepathy.

When people look for evidence of survival, they look at cases of mediumship (or “channeling”), or cases of apparent reincarnation or familiar ghost stories. They look for evidence that someone’s distinctive personality continues to exist, even though that person’s body may no longer exist (Braude 1). If we decide that psychic abilities exist, then that greatly complicates our efforts to determine whether we survive death. We must then consider whether evidence suggesting postmortem survival is actually disguised psychic functioning among the living (Braude 2).

Whether we call it a soul, a mind, or possibly even a person, what in everyday life we care about in people is “the essential constituent of personality”, and we understand that to be “a series of mental states connected by continuity of character and memory” (Braude 6). It’s that psychological complex whose persistence is often sufficient for everyday acts of personal identification. And it’s that psychological complex whose persistence after death many desire or expect, and which survival cases seem to indicate (Braude 6).

Different types of knowledge can be shown in survival cases. Generally speaking, a case suggests survival because (a) some living person demonstrates knowledge closely

(if not uniquely) associated with a deceased person, and (b) we have good reason to believe that this knowledge wasn't obtained by ordinary means. These anomalous displays of knowledge tend to fall into two broad categories: the articulation of facts or items of information (often called "knowledge-*that*") and the manifestations of abilities or skills (usually considered a type of knowledge-*how*). In cases of the first sort, subjects provide pieces of information which couldn't have been obtained normally, but which would have been known to a deceased person apparently communication that information. Suppose that the medium tells me the location of a secret document known (normally) to no living person and known only previously to the deceased communicator. In cases suggesting knowledge-*how*, a living person exhibits an ability or skill never displayed by that person before, and perhaps one that was idiosyncratic to a deceased person. Suppose that the medium suddenly exhibits an unlearned ability associated with a deceased person, such as a particular sense of humour or the ability to play or compose music. The icing is on the cake when the abilities in question are radically discontinuous with the medium's other abilities—for example, a formerly tone deaf, uneducated, untrained medium begins to demonstrate the refined musical abilities of a deceased composer (Braude 9).

A good survival case should resist explanation in terms of a few obvious skeptical counter-hypotheses: namely, fraud, misreporting, malobservation, or hidden memories (cryptomnesia). Those can be called "the usual suspects" (Braude 10). Some anti-survivalists come up with more exotic counter-explanations. These explanations seem much more difficult to undermine and usually fall into two classes. The first class usually posits decidedly abnormal or rare processes, such as dissociative pathologies, rare

mnemonic gifts, extreme or unprecedented forms of savantism, or equally rare latent creative capacities. These can be called “The Unusual Suspects” (Braude 11).

The second type of explanations posits *psychic functioning among the living*. These are often called “super-psi” explanations, because they apparently require more refined and extensive psychic functioning than we discover in controlled laboratory studies. Parapsychologists disagree on what super-psi is and what super-psi explanations should look like and two views come out of this. The first is called the *multi-process* hypothesis, and treats super-psi as an organized collection of refined psychic tasks. For example, apparent mediumistic communications could be explained in terms of the medium’s beautifully timed and detailed ESP, either of the sitter’s thoughts, the thoughts of other relevant individuals, or of various pertinent physical states of affairs. Or, it could be explained in terms of the *sitter’s* ESP of some of these items, followed by telepathic influence on the medium (Braude 11). The second view of super-psi avoids the complexity of the first and is called the *magic wand* hypothesis. According to this idea, even the most refined psi requires nothing more than a wish or desire, as if the subject simply waved a magic wand to achieve the desired effect. So this hypothesis treats psychic functioning like other human achievements that seem oblivious to underlying complexity. For example, some subjects have been able to do remarkable things simply by willing them to happen (Braude 11).

Many people find both views of super-psi to be too incredible and they consider the magic-wand view to be the most incredible of all. Consequently, many dismiss super-psi explanations without much thought. (Braude 12).

Braude feels that most discussions of super-psi underestimate its subtlety and force. The most common form is to adopt the indefensible assumption that if super-psi occurred, we'd know it if we saw it. Braude calls this the *sore thumb* assumption; because it takes super psi to be the sort of thing that always stands out like a sore thumb (Braude 12). Some critics argue that we can reject super-psi because there's no evidence for *flagrant* super-psi. Their claim is that we have no evidence *at all* for super-psi.

If super-psi occurs, it might blend in with or be masked by an extensive network of surrounding normal events. There need not be an observable difference between paranormally produced events and normal events. Some effects do stand out like the proverbial sore thumb, such as object levitations. But other sorts of effects like unconsciously affecting the cycle of traffic lights, or aggravating a co-worker's migraine, could occur inconspicuously. Even these types of super-psi could get some attention if they persisted for an unusual length of time (Braude 13).

In fact, telepathic experiences are likely to be noticed only among people who know and communicate with each other. As music director of the Cassadaga church, I have often arrived at church with the hymn numbers and the solo for my vocalist picked in my mind, only to find that she had picked exactly the same hymns and the same solo. Are we communicating on a telepathic level? I think so.

Also, we need to assume that we are all psychic to some degree, and that psychic behaviour does not occur in isolation. It plays a role in life and may be driven by our deepest needs and fears, and it doesn't occur only when parapsychologists set out to look for it. For that reason, the super-psi hypothesis in its strongest form is really a *motivated-*

psi hypothesis. It puts the operation of psychic abilities in the services of some agent's genuine needs and interests.

One needs to remember that most scientific hypotheses are *not* compatible with *all* the data. Typically, scientific hypotheses allow us to generate quite specific predictions, and these enable us to falsify hypotheses. But neither the super-psi hypothesis *nor the survival hypothesis* enjoy that advantage. In fact, one of the most frustrating features of the topic of survival is that we seemingly must choose between two weakly falsifiable hypotheses: survival and super-psi. We know so little, not only about psi generally, but also about the plausible features of an afterlife, that we're unable to predict with any confidence at all what the data should look like. Generating testable hypotheses about survival evidence is simply not feasible (Braude 19). It comes to the point where choosing between the super-psi and survival hypotheses inevitably requires appealing to tentative arguments about plausibility. We're really kidding ourselves if we think we can decide for or against survival with a high degree of confidence. Where the evidence is taking research now is that the two theories are just about in balance, with a small bit more evidence for survival. We need to consider whether theoretical or pragmatic considerations help us tip the scales toward the survival hypotheses. That's what the conclusion of this paper will cover.

The Case of Leonora E. Piper

Probably no case of mediumship is stronger or more thoroughly documented than that of Mrs. Leonora E. Piper (1857-1950). Leonora Piper's mediumship began with a singular event in her garden when she was eight years old. She reports that she felt a stinging blow to her right ear followed by a long sibilant sound that eventually became a voice repeating the letter "S". This was followed by the words, "Aunt Sara, not dead, but with you still." Leonora, of course, was terrified. Her mother made a note of the day and time, and several weeks later it was confirmed that Leonora's Aunt Sara had died at that very hour on that very day (Melton 1-2).

A few weeks later, Leonora cried in the night that she could not sleep because of "the bright light in the room and all the faces in it," and "the bed won't stop rocking." Other than occasional occurrences like these, her childhood was reasonably normal (Melton 2).

At age twenty-two she married William Piper of Boston. Soon after her marriage, she began a friendship with Dr. J.R.Cocke, a blind professional clairvoyant who was attracting a great deal of attention with his medical diagnoses and cures. At their first meeting, Leonora went into a short trance, and at their next meeting, in a trance state, she walked across the room, sat at a table and began to write messages seeming to come from spirit entities. There were many important Bostonians who attended circles at Cocke's home and soon Leonora achieved a certain notoriety based on the remarkable accuracy of her messages. One member of the circle, Judge Frost of Cambridge received a written

message, which he claimed was the most remarkable he had ever received and it came from his son (Melton 2).

Leonora was not happy with her sudden popularity, and refused to see anyone other than family and intimate friends. But when William James' mother-in-law asked for a sitting, her request was granted. Her exposure and that of her daughter (i.e., James' wife), and what they related to James at home finally convinced him to see Mrs. Piper (1885). The object was to explain away her alleged talents. Just the opposite happened. His impression of her work and powers was so strong that he not only continued to see her, but over the next eighteen months he monitored her closely and controlled all her séance arrangements. James continued his interest in Mrs. Piper's mediumship over a twenty-five year period until his death in 1910 (Melton 2).

James wrote of Mrs. Piper in the 1890 Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research (vol 6, pt 17),

“And I repeat again what I said before, that, taking everything I know of Mrs. Piper into account, the result is to make me feel as absolutely certain as I am of any personal fact in the world that she knows things in her trances which she cannot possibly have heard in her waking state, and that the definite philosophy of her trances is yet to be found. The limitations of her trance information, its discontinuity and fitfulness, and its apparent inability to develop beyond a certain point, although they end by rousing one's moral and human impatience with the phenomenon, yet are, from a scientific point of view, amongst its most interesting peculiarities, since where there are limits there are conditions, and the discovery of these is always the beginning of an explanation. This is all I can tell you of Mrs. Piper. I wish it were more “Scientific”. But, valeat quantum! It is the best I can do” (James, Psychical Research 110).

One of William James' most famous statements about Mrs. Piper is as follows:

“If I may employ the language of the profession logic shop, a universal proposition can be made untrue by a particular instance. If you wish to upset the law that all crows are black, you must not seek to show that no crows are; it is enough if you prove one single crow to be white. My own white crow is Mrs.

Piper. In the trances of this medium, I cannot resist the conviction that knowledge appears which she has never gained by the ordinary waking use of her eyes and ears and wits. What the source of this knowledge may be I know not, have not a glimmer of an explanatory suggestion to make; but from admitting the fact of such knowledge, I can see no escape. So when I turn to the rest of the evidence, ghosts and all, I cannot carry with me the irreversibly negative bias of the rigorously scientific mind, with its presumption as to what the true order of nature ought to be. I feel as if, though the evidence be flimsy in spots, it may nevertheless collectively carry heavy weight. The rigorously scientific mind may, in truth, easily over shoot the mark. Science means, first of all, a certain dispassionate method. To suppose that it means a certain set of results that one should pin one's faith upon and hug forever is sadly to mistake its genius, and degrades the scientific body to the status of a sect" (James, *Psychical Research* 41).

It became James' conviction that, while in a state of trance, Piper was able to reveal knowledge that she could not have acquired through normal sensory channels. "Science, like life, feeds itself on its own ruins," he said. "New facts break old rules" (Leonora 2). This is evidence for the survival theory.

Mrs. Piper had a series of controls or control-personalities, since she worked primarily as a trance medium. These are recurrent and self-consistent characters who act as interpreters or intermediaries (or masters-of-ceremony) between sitters and communicators. Typically, they look after the medium's interests, but some controls belligerently assert their own self interest. Most controls are flagrantly artificial personalities (Braude 33).

When William James began his experiments with Mrs. Piper, a control, who claimed to be a French doctor named "Phinuit", was in control of the sittings. He gave the impression of being inherited from Dr. Cocke, for whom he had been a guide (Leonora 1). He was not Piper's first control. He was preceded by an Indian girl named "Chlorine." "Commodore Vanderbilt," "Longfellow," "Lorette PENCHINI," "J. Sebastian Bach," and "Mrs. Siddons," (the actress) were the next communicators (Leonora 1). Phinuit claimed

to have lived from 1790 to 1860. As Mrs. Piper slipped into trance, her voice would change into his-deep, rough, flavored with a country French accent. Her personality would change also, from eager-to-please to abrasive, from gentle to forceful (Blum 134). To remain honest, it must be stated that neither James nor his associates ever found any records showing the Dr. Phinuit had ever existed. Phinuit really did not speak very good French. When James, who was fluent in French, spoke, Phinuit seemed to retreat into silence (Blum 134). However, Phinuit remained Piper's principal control from 1884-1892. Phinuit's importance like most controls concerned the information he provided about other ostensible communicators (Blum 134).

James suspected that the control was a creation of Mrs. Piper's subconscious, a fascinating mental process that seemed to serve to buffer her from the strangeness of trance life. According to Stephen Braude, control personalities provide much ammunition for those opposed to survivalist interpretations of mediumship. Given their obvious artificiality, there can be little doubt that the medium constructed them subconsciously (Braude 33-34).

In the early days of her mediumship with Phinuit, Mrs. Piper, in trance, communicated by voice rather than by writing. As with many trance mediums, her entrance into the trance-state was attended by some troublesome convulsive movements and the lack of reaction to stimuli such as ammonia to the nose or a needle in the hand. When the Phinuit control did appear, Mrs. Piper's voice became deep and gruff, in total contrast to her normal voice. He also relied on slang and profanity that was not characteristic of Mrs. Piper. Towards the end of Phinuit's time as control (1892), Mrs. Piper communicated more by automatic writing than speech. During this transition

period, Phinuit sometimes communicated by voice, while another personality communicated through writing. As more of Mrs. Piper's controls communicated by writing, the onsets of her trances became more composed (Braude 57).

In 1892, a new communicator manifested and displaced Dr. Phinuit. This personality was extremely interesting. He was known as "G.P.", supposedly a certain George Pelham (or Pellew, both spellings appear), an acquaintance of Richard Hodgson, from whom more shall be heard later. Pelham had died accidentally fairly recently. The real George Pelham had attended one of Mrs. Piper's séances in 1887, but had been introduced under an assumed name, so it was virtually certain that Mrs. Piper never knew who he was. G.P. manifested in automatic writing (Braude 57).

G.P. was the principal control from 1892-1897, at which time Mrs. Piper came under the regular control of a band of "high spirits"; with names like "Rector" and "Doctor". The leader was a personality called "Imperator". With this band of spirits, the content of the sessions shifted away from evidential communication to lofty pretentious content with some journeys into pseudo-scientific conjecturing (Braude 57).

Richard Hodgson, one of the investigators, died in 1905. At this time a new communicator manifested through Mrs. Piper as a control, purporting to be Hodgson, and her sittings again contained much evidential material. There were also a series of complex communications called "cross-correspondences" in which Mrs. Piper had a part. This will be covered in a later chapter. Around 1909, Mrs. Piper's ability to enter a trance state declined obviously, and stopped altogether by 1911. This might have been due to some insensitive experiments conducted by Prof. Stanley Hall. However, Mrs. Piper did continue to manifest automatic writing after 1911.

Hodgson had moved to Boston in 1887 to take charge of the Piper case. He was an extremely careful and skeptical investigator. Also, he was very skilled in scrutinizing psychic phenomena and an expert in the detection of fraud (Braude 58). All sitters were introduced to Mrs. Piper under pseudonyms. He was especially observant at first sittings, realizing that as Mrs. Piper worked with clients, she had opportunity to learn more about them and their families. To be sure that Mrs. Piper was not gaining information from outside sources, he had detectives shadow her. His investigations proved that she was not gathering specifics about her clients in normal ways. Despite all his precautions, Mrs. Piper's séances continued to be very impressive (Braude 58). Hodgson wrote, "-there remained a large residuum of knowledge displayed in her trance state, which could not be accounted for except on the hypothesis that she had some supernatural power (Hodgson, 1898, p 285) (Braude 58).

Mrs. Piper was taken to England where she knew no one and "had only a slight knowledge of English affairs and English people" (Myers et al 1898-90 p438) (Braude 58-59). Many of her sitters were passers-through Cambridge at the time and all were given false names and she continued to produce impressive material.

The results of the investigations were extremely varied and interesting. Mrs. Piper convinced William James of the reality of ESP, though while he was impressed with apparent communications from his friend Hodgson, he stayed uncertain about the reality of survival. Hodgson, however before his death, had been so impressed by Mrs. Piper that he came to accept the reality of survival. To begin with, Hodgson had been of a mind against survival, but the G.P. communications changed his mind. Hodgson claimed that, if he should die while Mrs. Piper was still alive and functioning as a trance medium, he

would come back as her control and speak to his friends through her. He began to do this in 1905. Another skeptical investigator, Frank Podmore, wrote, “the impersonation, if it were an impersonation and not the actual G.P. manifesting through Mrs. Piper’s organism, was consistently and dramatically sustained” (Podmore 1910/1975 p180) (Braude 59). The G.P. communicator seemed to have intimate knowledge of Pelham/Pellew’s life. Nearly all of the sitters were startled by the realism of the G.P. persona, and some who had known Pelham/Pellew most intimately came to believe they were really communicating with their deceased friend. G.P. manifested a very systematic, coherent and personal set of memories that one would have expected of Pelham/Pellew. It was unlikely that Mrs. Piper could have successfully dramatized G.P., having only met him once and then under another name. Unlike Phinuit, G.P. was not demonstrably fictitious (Braude 59).

After 1905, when the “Hodgson control” took over, William James was intrigued and his investigation resulted in the “Report on Mrs. Piper’s Hodgson Control,” published in 1909. James studied the transcripts of some seventy-five sittings in which Hodgson was said to be the control. James felt that the Hodgson control could well be a fictitious entity created and dramatized by the subconscious mind of Mrs. Piper. He admitted that the Hodgson control showed many individuating personal characteristics and traits of Hodgson, but still felt that the evidence was not strong enough. As a result of several personal contacts between Hodgson and Mrs. Piper before his death, James felt she could be subconsciously dramatizing his personality and furnishing it with information acquired by ESP (Almeder 215-216). So at this point, even with Mrs. Piper there is seen a possibility of Super-psi.

Many people have criticized William James findings. They felt he overlooked important evidence that would have shown that Mrs. Piper communicated with deceased persons. During the period of the control of “G.P.” (1892-1905), Hodgson became convinced that Mrs. Piper was indeed controlled by a discarnate personality, while agreeing with James that Phinuit was a fictitious entity dramatized by Mrs. Piper. Later on there was some agreement that the Hodgson control might also be fictitious (Almeder 216).

Mrs. Piper is important in the history of psychical research for at least three reasons. One, she is the first to provide substantial evidence for the possession of some paranormal faculty. Two, the records of her case are unsurpassed in quality and detail. In fact, if all the papers in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* were collected, they would fill several large volumes. Three, she is one of the few mediums whose trance speech and writings have been subjected to a serious and extensive psychological analysis.

Sir Oliver Lodge, after a series of experiments with Mrs. Piper, told how the medium from Boston had completely convinced him, “...not only of human survival but also of the faculty possessed by disembodied spirits to communicate with people on earth” (Leonora 2).

Lodge’s report published in 1890 concluded:

- 1) That many of the facts given could not have been learnt even by a skilled detective.
- 2) That to learn others of them, although possible, would have needed an expenditure of money as well as of time which it seems impossible to suppose that Mrs. Piper could have met.
- 3) That her conduct has never given any ground whatsoever for supposing her capable of fraud or trickery. Few persons have been so long and so carefully

observed, and she has left on all observers the impression of thorough uprightness, candor and honesty.

Further he stated:

“That there is more than can be explained by any amount of either conscious or unconscious fraud – that the phenomenon is a genuine one, however it is to be explained – I now regard as absolutely certain; and I make the following two statements with the utmost confidence:

- 1) That Mrs. Piper’s attitude is not one of deception.
- 2) No conceivable deception on the part of Mrs. Piper can explain the facts (Leonora 5-6)

Professor James H. Hyslop attended séances with Mrs. Piper, arriving wearing a black mask that completely covered his face. He sat behind Mrs. Piper when she was entranced. During the entire proceeding he did not utter one word. In spite of these extreme conditions, Mrs. Piper mentioned Hyslop’s name several times during the séance and gave names of so many of his family members that it took him more than six months of correspondence with his kin in the small Ohio town where he was born to verify all the information told him during the sitting (Leonore 2).

When Mrs. Piper died in 1950, the majority of researchers who sat with her were more than willing to agree with William James statement, “I wish to certify here and now the presence of a supernatural knowledge, a knowledge the origin of which cannot be attribute to ordinary sources of information, that is, to our physical senses” (Leonora 2).

To document a reading by Mrs. Piper, I have included some pages of a sitting report done by a sitter. This report was written later by the mother, a Mrs. Sutton, receiving information from her recently deceased daughter, Katherine “Kakie”. This report is important for several reasons. In order to assess the super-PSI explanation of Mrs. Piper’s mediumship, it’s not enough to focus on specific “hits” or isolated segments.

It is also important to appreciate the character of the entire séance – the overall conversational “flow” and the way in which the density frequency of veridical material varies even in the best séances. The annotations in square brackets were supplied afterward by Mrs. Sutton. Those followed by an asterisk were added in 1897 (Braude 62-66) (See appendix A).

Braude says of Mrs. Piper that like any medium there are false statements and periods of rambling, etc. We should not overlook this, but not over inflate it either. To be as fair as possible to a survival hypothesis, we have to consider what might possibly disrupt or impede communication with the deceased. It’s not difficult to imagine that communicators face great obstacles in getting message across. The process itself (or channel of communication) might be imperfect at best – maybe like an irremediably noisy telephone connection (Braude 66). William James noted that much of the non-evidential material, “is more suggestive...of dreaminess and mind-wandering than it is of humbug” (Braude 66). But we must be aware of the possibility that communicating spirits are themselves in a dreamy or somnambulant state and not in full possession of their faculties” (Braude 66) Also, the medium may add another set of obstacles to the mix. After all, the spirits are attempting to communicate through a human filter and each filter is different. It would be like putting ten different types of pasta through ten different colanders and expecting the end result to look the same for all.

According to Gauld, in order to explain the material in Mrs. Piper’s sittings in terms of ESP, we would need to credit her with more than an impressive ability to extract unconscious memories and dispositions from the minds of the living. Also, we would have to give Mrs. Piper the ability to gain this material at the right times during the

sitting. All this might strain believability even for those adherents of the Super PSI-ESP theory. William James was also wary of over estimating the creativity which Super-PSI explanations would attribute to Mrs. Piper (Braude 69). William James found with Mrs. Piper that the material that came through her was truly extraordinary. James was constricted by his pragmatic philosophy and culture. After, all he was a Harvard professor. If he came out espousing her work as connecting with the spirit world, there might have been interesting ramifications for him in his life. But with her, he came closer to admitting survival than ever before. This author, having read much of William James, feels that James really knew that Mrs. Piper was reaching sources in the next dimension, but would not allow himself to say it. Mrs. Piper brought through material that she, in her normal waking state had no way of knowing. This evidence points strongly toward survival. See the reading in Appendix A. But when reading Appendix A, be aware that the notations were made by the mother of the little girl that is communicating. Besides looking like survival and making a strong case for survival, is the information being communicated sub-consciously from the mother to Mrs. Piper? This would create a super-psi scenario. But the psychic work that Mrs. Piper would have to have done would have been incredible. I feel the scales tip here towards survival, but only by a small bit. This supports the basic thesis of this study.

As the work with Mrs. Piper went on, it became clear that many of her phenomena could not be explained away in terms of the usual suspects. Fraud seemed easy to rule out and it became easy to rule out some other hypotheses such as a prodigious trance memory or a “grapevine” theory, wherein she gained information from a growing network of connected families in Boston. But when all this is taken together,

too much remains unexplained. The investigator Frank Podmore concluded that Mrs. Piper's accurate trance statements

are so numerous and so precise, and the possibility of leakage to Mrs. Piper through normal channels in many cases so effectually excluded, that it is impossible to doubt that we have here proof of a super normal agency of some kind – either telepathy by trance intelligence from the sitter or some kind of communication from the dead (Podmore 1910) (Braude 59).

The Case of Eusapia Palladino

Eusapia Palladino was born in Minerva-Murge, near Bari, Italy in 1854 and died in 1918. This little illiterate Italian woman caused quite a stir with her mediumship and is another instance, like Bernadette of Lourdes, of the lowly being used as an instrument to shatter the sophistry of the learned (Doyle ii 2). Her mediumship began to manifest itself around the age of fourteen.

Eusapia was orphaned by the time she was twelve. As a little girl, she heard raps on the furniture against which she was leaning, she saw eyes glaring at her in the darkness, and was frequently frightened in the night when invisible hands stripped off her bedclothes (Fodor 1). She moved to Naples and worked in a household where séances were held. At one point, she was persuaded to sit at a table and participate with others. It is reported that by the time ten minutes had passed, the table levitated, the chairs began to dance, the curtains in the room began to swell and glasses and bottles began to move about. This phenomenon is indicative of a physical or moving medium, an entirely different type of mediumship than trance and automatic writing. Each sitter was tested and it was decided that Eusapia was the medium. At this point, she was not really interested in the phenomena and only did further sittings to please her hosts and to prevent herself from being sent to a convent (Doyle ii 12). Eusapia refused to conform to life in the city. She had a stubborn streak that ran through her character, which often showed itself in her refusal to bathe, comb her hair or learn to read. It was not until she was twenty-two or twenty-three that her Spiritualist education began (Taylor 1).

Her real discovery and mediumistic education was due to Signor Camille Damiani, a noted Italian psychic investigator. His wife, a British lady, went to a seance in London. A “John Key” manifested at the seance and spoke of a powerful medium in Naples who was his reincarnated daughter. He gave her address, street and number. This “John Key” would be Eusapia’s guide during her whole career. Damiani went to the house and found Eusapia Palladino of whom he had never heard. This was 1872. Her development went quickly. In the first five or six years she devoted herself mainly to phenomena of movements without contact. This was followed by her famous spectral appearances, the phantom limbs so often noticed to issue from her body and materializations of full, but incomplete figures (Fodor 1). Even with Damiani’s help, Eusapia ended up virtually unknown outside of Naples. She might have lived her entire life as just an ordinary medium, had she not come to the attention of Ercole Chiaia, a doctor and occult buff. Acting somewhat like a manager, Chiaia published an open letter to the famed Italian psychiatrist and criminologist, Cesare Lombroso. In the letter, writing as if describing a patient, Dr. Chiaia gave a summary of Eusapia’s mediumistic abilities and in a serious way asked Lombroso’s help in determining whether or not she possessed some sort of new physical force. This letter turned out to be a major boost for Eusapia’s career, even though at that time Lombroso ignored the letter.

A section of the letter follows:

“The case I allude to is that of an invalid woman who belongs to the humblest class of society. She is nearly thirty years old and very ignorant; her appearance is neither fascinating nor endowed with the power which modern criminologists call irresistible; but when she wishes, be it by day or by night, she can divert a curious group for an hour or so with the most surprising phenomena. Either bound to a seat, or firmly held by the hands of the curious, she attracts to her the articles of furniture which surround her, lifts them up, hold them suspended in the air like Mahomet’s coffin, and makes them come down again with undulatory

movements, as if they were obeying her will. She increases their height or lessens it according to her pleasure. She raps or taps upon the walls, the ceiling, the floor, with fine rhythm and cadence. In response to the requests of the spectators something like flashes of electricity shoot forth from her body, and envelop her or enwrap the spectators of the marvelous scenes. She draws upon cards that you hold out, everything that you want-figures, signatures, numbers, sentences-by just stretching out her hand towards the indicated place.

If you place in the corner of the room a vessel containing a layer of soft clay, you find after some moments the imprint of a small or a large hand, the image of a face (front view or profile) from which a plaster cast can be taken. In this way portraits of a face at different angles have been preserved, and those who desire so to do can thus make serious and important studies.

This woman rises in the air, no matter what bands tie her down. She seems to lie upon the empty air, as on a couch, contrary to all laws of gravity; she plays on musical instruments – organs, bells, tambourines – as if they had been touched by her hands or moved by the breath of invisible gnomes. This woman at times can increase her stature by more than four inches.

She is like an India rubber doll, like an automaton of a new kind; she takes strange forms. How many legs and arms has she? We do not know. While her limbs are being held by incredulous spectators, we see other limbs coming into view, without her knowing where they come from. Her shoes are too small to fit these witch-feet of hers, and this particular circumstance gives rise to the suspicion of the intervention of mysterious power” (Fodor 2-3).

This letter is typical of her entire career. It describes incidents in the seance room that were common Spiritualist manifestations, along with happenings that were much more rare, and harder to explain. For example, what should one make of bowls of clay where handprints appeared, but were out of reach of the bound medium? And, what about the phantom feet and limbs that appeared and could not be explained? Palladino’s next thirty years became a history devoted to the reports of the investigative committees that tried to answer these and other questions asked about her (Taylor 2-3).

In 1891, Dr. Lombroso had two sittings with Eusapia in Naples. He was convinced and converted. He wrote: “I am filled with confusion and regret that I combated with so much persistence the possibility of the facts called Spiritualistic”

(Doyle ii 13). At the close of one seance, the lights had been turned up and the observers were discussing their impressions while Eusapia was still tied to the chair, about 18 inches in front of the curtain that formed her spirit cabinet. Suddenly, sounds were heard from the alcove behind her, the curtain began to swing and billow forward and then a small table emerged from behind it and began to slide across the floor toward the medium. Lombroso and his associates hurried into the cabinet, convinced that a confederate must be hiding inside, but it was empty, save for a few musical instruments. The observers were stumped and Lombroso dismissed any previous doubts that he had about Eusapia's abilities. He had no explanation for what he had seen (Taylor 3).

Dr. Lombroso's sittings in 1891 were followed by ten or more years of continuous investigation and testing in cities such as Naples, Rome, Warsaw, Paris, Cambridge in England and Geneva, Switzerland.

The report of the Milan committee in 1892 says the following:

It is impossible to count the number of times that a hand appeared and was touched by one of us. Suffice it to say that doubt was no longer possible. It was indeed a living human hand which we saw and touched, while at the same time the bust and arms of the medium remained visible, and her hands were held by those on either side of her.

Many phenomena occurred in the light supplied by two candles and an oil-lamp, and the same occurrences were witnessed in full light when the medium was in trance. Dr. Ochorowicz persuaded Eusapia to visit Warsaw in 1894, and the experiments there were in the presence of men and women eminent in scientific and philosophical circles. The record of these sittings says that partial and complete levitations of the table and many other physical phenomena were obtained. The levitations were obtained while both the medium's feet were visible in the light, and when her feet were tied and held by a sitter kneeling under the table (Doyle ii 16).

After the sittings at Professor Richet's house on the Ile Roubaud in 1894, Sir Oliver Lodge in the course of his report to the English Society for Psychical Research said:

However the facts are to be explained, the possibility of the facts I am constrained to admit. There is no further room in my mind for doubt. Any person without invincible prejudice who had had the same experience would have come to the same broad conclusion, viz.,: that things hitherto held impossible do actually occur...The result of my experience is to convince me that certain phenomena usually considered abnormal do belong to the order of nature, and, as a corollary from this, that these phenomena ought to be investigated and recorded by persons and societies interested in natural knowledge (Doyle ii 16-17).

The Milan committee included among its five members Dr. Charles Richet, a noted student of psychic phenomena and a winner of the 1913 Nobel Prize in Physiology and medicine. He would go on to publish several books about psychic phenomena and investigate other mediums during his career. The séances of the Milan committee provided the first reliable records of the manifestations of Palladino. They are also the first to make note of unexplained occurrences and something else that would shadow the medium's career: Eusapia cheated. This puts Eusapia into direct contrast with the previous chapter's Mrs. Piper in two ways: One, Mrs. Piper never had an evidence of fraud and two; Mrs. Piper was a trance/writing medium whereas Eusapia was very much a physical moving medium. From this point forward Eusapia will provide Spiritualism with controversy.

When Eusapia visited America in 1910, a reporter bluntly asked her if she had ever been caught tricking (or cheating). Here is Eusapia's frank reply: "Many times I have been told so. You see, it is like this. Some people are at the table who expect tricks- in fact, they want them. I am in trance. Nothing happens. They get impatient. They think

of tricks-nothing but tricks. They put their minds on the tricks, and –I- and I automatically respond. But it is not often. They merely will me to do them. That is all.” Doyle feels that even though this sounds like Eusapia adopting the way in which others had defended her, there is an element of truth in it, because the psychological side of mediumship is not well understood (Doyle ii 17-18). (See appendix B for a record of one of Palladino’s American sittings).

Lombroso made a thorough psychological study of Eusapia; included here is a statement from him:

Many are the crafty tricks she plays, both in the state of trance (unconsciously) and out of it—for example, freeing one of her two hand, held by the controllers, for the sake of moving objects near her; making touches; slowly lifting the legs of the table by means of one of her knees and one of her feet, and feigning to adjust her hair and then slyly pulling out one hair and putting it over the little balance tray of a letter-weigher in order to lower it. She was seen by Falofer, before her séances, furtively gathering flowers in a garden that she might feign them to be ‘apports’ by availing herself of the shrouding dark of the room (Fodor 4).

Concerning Eusapia’s cheating, even among her most supportive adherents, she took advantage of every lapse in attention or muscular relaxation on the part of those who were supposed to “control” her movements, in order to produce phenomena. Sometimes the tricks were clumsy and obvious, and at other times, subtle and clever. It seemed to make no difference to her that she might be exposed. Given the slightest opportunity, Eusapia cheated (Taylor 3).

One of Eusapia’s most common ploys was to convince the two people assigned to hold her arms that each had continued to keep contact with a separate limb, when actually one of them had transferred his hand to other arm. This was possible because Eusapia constantly moved about while in her trances, thrashing restlessly back and forth. In the course of the tossing her head and waving her arms, it took great skill on the part of the

handlers to be sure they were not controlling the same hand. Because of all the excitement, it was nearly impossible to decide whether or not Eusapia's feet were where they were supposed to be (Taylor 3). On the other hand, knowing that Eusapia could fake certain effects, was it possible for anyone (let alone a semiliterate peasant woman with no knowledge of applied mechanics) to bring about such happenings through trickery? This problem bothered the best scientific minds of Eusapia's day and they still bother us today (Taylor 3).

In a sitting with Howard Thurston, a renowned professional magician, Eusapia was observed lifting the table with her toe. Thurston had been taken to this seance by Hereward Carrington, an amateur conjurer and psychic investigator. When Eusapia lifted the table with her toe, Carrington shook his head and said, "Not good, Eusapia." Then she smiled and settled down in her chair, went into a light trance and soon produced a series of perfectly magnificent genuine levitations, which so convinced Thurston that he put a challenge in the papers the next day to anyone who could match the table levitations under the same conditions: \$1000! The challenge was never accepted. The reality was: The mischievous impish self of the medium was trying to "pull something", just for the fun, and when she saw she could not get away with it with impunity, she then produced the genuine article (the Medium 5). When Eusapia was accused of cheating, she did not deny it. During her visit to America, one investigator named Nicol mentions, "on one occasion she cried out in her Neapolitan dialect, 'Hold me tight or I'll cheat'" (The medium 5). Author Dr. Stephen Braude, in a telephone conversation with me said, "When she was the most tightly controlled, she was at her best-it should have been the opposite."

As the knowledge that Eusapia would resort to fraud gained wider audience, Flammarion (a French astronomer and writer on Spiritualism) made a statement that shines an interesting light on the problem:

She is frequently ill on the following day, sometimes even on the second day following, and is incapable of taking any nourishment without vomiting. One can readily conceive then, that when she is able to perform certain wonders without any expenditure of force and merely by a more or less skilful piece of deception, she prefers the second procedure to the first. It does not exhaust her at all, and may even amuse her. Let me remark, in the next place, that, during these experiments, she is generally in a half-awake condition which is somewhat similar to the hypnotic or somnambulistic sleep. Her fixed idea is to produce phenomena; and she produces them, no matter how (Fodor 7).

In the Paris sittings of 1905-1907, among the investigators were Monsieur and Madame Curie along with the future Nobel Laureate Charles Richet. Other members of the Curie's circle of scientist friends were Sir William Crookes and Pierre Curie's brother Jacques, a fervent believer in Spiritualism. On July 24, 1905, Pierre Curie reported to a friend, Louis Georges Gouy: "We have had a series of séances with Eusapia Palladino at the Society for Psychical Research"

It was very interesting, and really the phenomena that we saw appeared inexplicable as trickery-tables raised from all four legs, movements of objects from a distance, hands that pinch or caress you, luminous apparitions. All in a setting prepared by us with a small number of spectators all known to us and without a possible accomplice. The only trick possible is that which could result from an extraordinary facility of the medium as a magician. But how do you explain the phenomena when one is holding her hands and feet and when the light is sufficient so that one can see everything that happens" (Occultism 11)?

Pierre really wanted to enlist Gouy. Palladino would return in November and Pierre wrote, "I hope that we will be able to convince you of the reality of the phenomena or at least some of them" (Occultism 11). Marie Curie attended the séances, but did not seem to have been as intrigued as Pierre. Just five days before his death, Pierre wrote to Gouy

about his last seance with Palladino: “There is, in my opinion, a whole domain of entirely new facts and physical states in space of which we have no conception” (Occultism 12).

Charles Richet also participated in these séances and has left an account:

It took place at the Psychological Institute at Paris. There were present only Mme. Curie, Mme. X, a Polish friend of hers, and P. Courtier, the secretary of the Institute. Mm. Curie was Eusapia’s left, myself on her right, Mme. X, a little farther off, taking notes, and M. Courtier still farther, at the end of the table. Courtier had arranged a double curtain behind Eusapia; the light was weak but sufficient. On the table Mme. Curie’s hand holding Eusapia’s could be distinctly seen, likewise mine also holding the right hand...We saw the curtain billow out as if pushed by some large object...I asked to touch it...I felt the resistance and seized a real hand which I took in mine. Even through the curtain I could feel the fingers...I held it firmly and counted twenty-nine seconds, during all which time I had leisure to observe both of Eusapia’s hands on the table, to ask Mme. Curie if she was sure of her control...After the twenty-nine seconds I said, ‘I want something more, I want *uno anello* (a ring).’ At once the hand made me feel a ring...It seems hard to imagine a more convincing experiment...In this case there was not only the materialization of a hand, but also of a ring (Occultism 12).

At a series of séances held at Dr. Richet’s home in France in 1894, the entire group was aware of Eusapia’s tendency to cheat and they knew they needed to be on watch. In spite of this, they observed the cabinet curtain billowing when there was no breeze, they experienced repeated “Spirit touches” at times when all were certain that Eusapia could not have been responsible and saw and heard objects being moved around the seance room. One of these items was a melon weighing 15 pounds and having no stalk. Somehow it got from a chair behind Eusapia to being on top of the seance table (Taylor 4). As William James gave legitimacy to Mrs. Piper, Professor Richet gave the same to Eusapia (Blum 239).

Even if she had managed to get a hand free, it’s hard to guess how she could have handled an object as smooth as the melon, somehow moving it from the chair to the top of the table, in front of the eyes of a group of trained observers! So, how did it happen?

No one knows, now or then. As a result investigators came to realize the need for more extensive use of recording devices and photographs during the sittings. That way, the control of the medium and the happening of phenomena would be less subject to errors in human perception (Taylor 4).

The next series of sittings in England in the summer of 1895 are generally thought to be a disaster. Professor Sidgwick, one of the investigators, said nothing had been witnessed at Cambridge that could not be put down to trickery. F.W.H. Myers agreed about the Cambridge sittings, but said that the Paris sittings were more impressive (Taylor 4).

There was yet another problem with Eusapia, and another comparison to Mrs. Piper can be drawn. Mrs. Piper was a cultured, middle-class American woman. The committee liked her and approved of her behaviour. She liked them and was treated well by them. The climate in England was comparable to Boston.

Eusapia was an Italian, semi-literate, sensual, temperamental, from Naples. She was a warm blooded woman, hot in nature (Blum 201). She tended to wake up from trances hot, sweaty and aroused! Several times she tried climbing into the laps of the male sitters. In England, the men would stand in response, rather than take advantage (Blum 201)! Not only did Eusapia come out trances charged with sexual energy, but she seemed sometimes to shudder with pleasure while entranced! She said that upon occasion, the spirits brought her an invisible lover, and as she graphically described their encounter, a roguish grin would spread across her face (Blum 238). Sometimes it was like she made the very air sparkle-not just with erotic energy! During one of the Genoa séances, lights glittered over head looking like fireflies. At the end of the day, Eusapia

did not like the northern climate of England and the committee did not like her nature, so she was not treated with nearly the respect which was accorded to Mrs. Piper. A question that might be asked is, “Can the conditions and climate described above affect the outcome of the sittings?” and the answer has to be a resounding yes. Was Mrs. Piper’s success due, at least in part, to how she was perceived by the committee? What about Eusapia’s cheating and seeming lack of success? We may never really know for sure.

The sittings of 1901 in Genoa were carried out by Professor Enrico Morselli, who calculated that at least 75% of what happened in the sittings was genuinely paranormal. Professor Morselli noted no fewer than thirty-nine distinct types of phenomena occurring with Eusapia (Doyle ii 21-22). At the last Genoa seance in 1906-1907, Dr. Morselli came up with an effective test. Eusapia was tied to a couch with a broad band, the kind used in asylums to tie down maniacs. Morselli himself fastened the band as well as securing Eusapia’s wrists and ankles. After a small red electric lamp was lit, the table, which was free from all contact, moved from time to time. Small lights were seen as well as a spirit hand. One account says, “The phenomena were inexplicable considering that the position rendered movement on her part impossible” (Doyle ii 23).

Here are two accounts of convincing materializations produced by Eusapia. The first is by Dr. Joseph Venzano in the *Annals of Psychical Science* (Vol VI, p 164, Sept 1907). Light came from a candle, making the figure of Eusapia visible:

In spite of the dimness of the light I could distinctly *see* Madame Palladino and my fellow sitters. Suddenly I perceived that behind me was a form fairly tall, which was leaning its head on my left shoulder and sobbing violently, so that those present could hear the sobs: it kissed me repeatedly. I clearly perceived the outlines of this face, which touched my own, and I felt the very fine and abundant hair in contact with my left cheek, so that I could be quite sure that it was a woman. The table then began to move, and by typology gave the name of a close family connection who was known to no one present except myself. She had died

some time before, and on account of incompatibility of temperament there had been serious disagreements with her. I was so far from expecting this typological response that I at first thought this was a case of coincidence of name, but while I was mentally forming this reflection I felt a mouth, with warm breath, touch my left ear and whisper, *in a low voice in Genoese dialect*, a succession of sentences, the murmur of which was audible to the sitter. These sentences were broken by bursts of weeping, and their gist was repeatedly to implore pardon for injuries done to me, with a fullness of detail connected with family affairs which could only be known to the person in question. The phenomenon seemed so real that I felt compelled to reply to the excuses offered me with expressions of affection, and to ask pardon in my turn if any resentment of the wrongs referred to had been excessive. But I had scarcely uttered the first syllables when two hands, with exquisite delicacy, applied themselves to my lips and prevented my continuing. The form then said to me, "Thank you," embraced me, kissed me and disappeared (Doyle ii 23-24).

This statement from this sitting suggests that we are in the realm of survival, with both an ectoplasmic materialization and the figure touching, actually making physical contact with the sitters. This was the type of phenomena that made Eusapia famous!

The other incident occurred in Paris in 1898, at a sitting at which M. Flammarion was present, when M. Le Bocain addressed a materialized spirit in Arabic saying: "If it is really thou, Rosalie, who art in the midst of us, pull the hair on the back of my head three times in succession." About ten minutes later, and when M. Le Bocain had almost forgotten his request, he felt his hair pulled three separate times, just as he had desired. He says: "I certify this fact, which, besides, formed for me a most convincing proof of the presence of a familiar spirit close about us." He adds that it is hardly necessary to say that Eusapia knows no Arabic (Doyle 25).

Dr. Hereward Carrington speaks with no uncertain voice. Regarding Mrs. Sidgwick's opinion that it is useless to speculate whether the phenomena are Spiritualistic in character, or whether they represent "some unknown biological law," until the facts themselves have been established, he says: "I must say before I obtained my sittings I,

too, took Mrs. Sidgwick's view." And he continues: "My own sittings convinced me finally and conclusively that genuine phenomena *do* occur, and, that being the case, the question of their interpretation naturally looms before me...I think not only is the Spiritualistic hypothesis justified as a working theory, but it is, in fact, the only one capable of rationally explaining the facts" (Doyle ii 26-27).

The mediumship of Eusapia Palladino "... was similar to that of others in many ways, but she had the advantage of enlisting the attention of men of influence whose published accounts of her phenomena have had a weight not given to the utterances of less well known people. Eusapia was the means of demonstrating the reality of certain facts not accepted by orthodox science It is easier for the world to deny these facts than to explain them, and that is the course usually adopted" (Doyle ii 27).

Eusapia had a peculiar depression of her parietal bone, due; it is said, to some accident in her childhood. Such physical defects are very often associated with strong mediumship. Her nature was hysterical, impetuous and wayward, but she possessed some beautiful traits. Lombroso said of her that she had "a singular kindness of heart which leads her to lavish her gains upon the poor and upon infants in order to relieve their misfortunes, and which impels her to feel boundless pity for the old and the weak, and to lie awake at night thinking of them. The same goodness of heart drives her to protect animals that are being maltreated by sharply rebuking their cruel oppressors" (Doyle ii 29).

In 1918, Eusapia Palladino, the rotund, almost illiterate and coarse peasant from Naples, who delighted, confounded and disappointed so many investigators died. Surely she was investigated more than any others during this period and her feats still continue

to provoke controversy and debate. A final word on the matter comes from Everard Feilding, a founding member of the Royal Society for Psychical research, a complete skeptic until his meeting with Eusapia; after commenting on abandoning his skepticism, he declared: "I have seen hands and heads come forth, that from behind the curtain of an empty cabinet. I have been seized by living fingers...I have seen this extraordinary woman sitting visible outside the curtain, held hand and foot by my colleagues, immobile" (the Mediumship 6).

Could Eusapia Palladino have been "the real thing"? Was she truly a person who was able to harness that "unknown force"? Or was she merely a clever hoaxer who managed to turn the tables on scores of observers who she saw as her intellectual and social betters? Did this common peasant woman have the last laugh?

We may never really know for sure. With Eusapia we find evidence of messages and spirits being brought through in a material way, hence the sitters experience of feeling hands on their heads and phenomena of this type, so that gives some credence to the survival theory. We also find that she was influenced by the thought of those sitting with her, as in her statement on cheating, so she could have been using Super-psi. On top of that, there is the question of PK or psycho-kinesis.

Psycho-kinesis is the ability of the medium, using their own energy to move or distort objects. Was Eusapia using PK coming from herself, or was this a demonstration of spirit energy. Physical mediumship is a truly different world from mental-trance mediumship. The medium opens themselves to be used a channels for spirit energy to produce effects to prove survival. In the quote above, when the gentleman feels hands on his head, and a voice speaking to him and a figure kissing him, this is materialization.

Materialization happens when the spirits pull ectoplasm from the body of the medium to form hands, feet, faces, and even entire bodies that are identifiable by sight and sound. This type of physical phenomena is totally in the survival hypothesis area. If the curtains only billowed out, that might be PK. But when strings of ectoplasm, ending in knobby fingers reach the sitters and massage their back, it is something else entirely. This is manifestation coming through the medium, not originating with her. It is this kind of phenomena that points towards my final conclusion that even though the evidence for survival and Super-psi seems to be somewhat balanced, there is some evidence, such as with Eusapia, that tips the scales towards survival. Eusapia left us with one of the greatest unsolved mysteries of the heyday of the Spiritualist movement.

My Personal Experience as a Seance Medium Specializing in Table Tipping

This chapter is a personal statement about my experiences with physical phenomena as evidence in support of survival of bodily death. In previous chapters evidence has been presented from several well known mediums and researchers since the beginnings of Spiritualism in 1848. Here, I will present my own experience and evidence.

I began my training as a medium in 1991 and was certified in 1996. It seems strange to speak of training to be a medium. First, there are natural mediums who exhibit mediumistic behaviours from the time of childhood and there are those of us who for many various reasons shut off the spirit contacts that most of us have when we are little. These contacts are often called imaginary friends. I had two of them and one of them is still with me today, sixty-one years later. Due to our growth and development in this dimension, many times we are convinced by well-meaning family members that all this is our imagination, and the spirit friends go into the background of our lives, only to emerge again when needed. In 1991, after visiting Cassadaga for my first reading, I realized that I had found my religious and philosophical home and made the decision to become a medium and a minister. With that decision made, my contact with the world of Spirit was re-established and over the next five years I studied an established academic curriculum and demonstrated experientially that I indeed had made contact and that the spirits spoke to me and manifested through me. This was a process of re-opening and re-aligning the receptors in the brain and other parts of the body, to enable them to receive information. Part of our training was in physical mediumship, including, but not limited to: table-tipping. During training, our table-tipping was done with a card table! It was so light that

it skipped and danced all over the room! We experienced tipping, walking and temperature changes above and below the table. It was not until 2008, when a friend/fellow medium, Anita Evans began doing private séances that I began to actively study this genre.

Nandor Fodor described table-tipping or table-turning, as the “crudest form of communication with the subconscious self or with extraneous intelligences” (Buckland 399). Tables have been used since antiquity for purposes of divination. The use of tables is described in the work of Ammianus Marcellinus, the author of a history of the Roman Empire. Table-tipping became very popular with the advent of Spiritualism in the mid-nineteenth century. Tables are not the only medium of communication with the spirit world. Trumpets can be used also. A trumpet is an aluminum cone that the spirit can use to build a larynx and speak to the sitter. Spirits using the energies of the spirit world can cause the trumpet to levitate into the air and to bring messages to individual sitters. The energy would be indicative of survival and possibly the content of the message might rely on survival or super-psi, or both. That would have to be accounted for by the sitter that received the message. Other types of communications forms are over-shadowing of spirit, using ectoplasm to alter the shapes of hand, feet or faces of the medium. Ectoplasm is a white moisture substance that is exuded from the bodily orifices of the medium and is used by the spirits to construct faces, hand, feet, and sometimes a complete bodily materialization. Along with this comes trance, where the larynx of the medium is used by another entity to communicate. A voice tone and level change, as well as the use of language and sometimes xenoglossy(speaking in a language unknown to the medium in the waking state) also occurs. One of the attractions of table-tipping is that it can quite

literally be done anywhere and does not require a medium at the table. It need not be done in a darkened room. I have done it in broad daylight, in a room where three tables were working at the same time. As said before, tables are one type of device. It could be a bowl of water (called scrying), a trumpet, or other devices that spirit could use such as the levitation of a chair or a piano. D.D. Home, perhaps the most famous medium of all time, who performed for the Czar of Russia, levitated in a chair in front of several witnesses. Once in the air he went horizontal, went out a window, around the building, and came back in through another window, came back to the chair and returned to the original position on the floor! President Abraham Lincoln once attended a meeting with a moving medium (physical), a Mrs. Miller, and when she caused a grand piano to move, he sat on it and tried to hold it down without success (Maynard 52-53)!

Table-tipping originated in America when the Spiritualist movement began in the late 1840s and rapidly spread to Europe. One of the attractions was that there was no need for a professional medium. It could be done by any group of people in a private living room. Table-tipping became such a phenomenon that scientists could not ignore it and felt they had to explain it. Those around Michael Faraday (1791-1867) attempted to show that it was due to the unconscious muscular action of the people with their fingers on the table. While believing they were pressing down, their action was, in fact, oblique, causing the rotation of the table. The scientists even gave the force a name: ectenic force, but neglected to address the question of who or what was utilizing or directing this muscle power. How was the 'table' able to give answers, unknown to those present, to the questions asked (Buckland 400)? It is this type of phenomena that leads this author's thinking towards survival.

When table-tipping is done with a medium, especially a physical medium, the table may not only tip and turn, but also levitate. There are many photographs of such levitations taken in infrared light. Some photographs show the ectoplasmic rods that emerge from the medium to do the lifting. Ectoplasm is a term which comes from the Greek *ektos* and *plasma* meaning “exteriorized substance.” Professor Charles Richet coined the word in 1894. Ectoplasm has been described as the spiritual counterpart of protoplasm. It is a white substance that appears to stream out of the body of some mediums during a seance. It can come from any orifice, such as the ears, nose, eyes, mouth, nipples, vagina, or even from the navel. It can form itself into a materialized spirit, or part of a spirit (an arm, hand, or face, for example) in a materialization seance. It can also extrude from the medium’s body and extend to support a trumpet or a levitating table (Buckland 119).

Dr. Stephen Braude opens his book, *Immortal Remains*, with his own story of how he got initiated into the world of psychic phenomena through table-tipping. He says that what happened that afternoon with two friends “scared the hell out of me” (Braude ix). He observed his own table tilt up and down without visible assistance. As if that wasn’t enough, the table spelled out messages, using a rather cumbersome code. He claims that in spite of his resistance, he was convinced that the observed table movements were genuine.

As skeptical as Dr. Braude was, he was sure of certain things: First, the phenomena occurred in daylight, with ample opportunity to examine them closely as they occurred. Second, he was strongly motivated to discover that the table movements resulted from a hoax. He would have liked to believe his friends were playing a joke on

him. Third, the phenomena occurred in his home with his own table. It wasn't anyone's prop, and his friends had no opportunity to plant and conceal any apparatus capable of producing the phenomena. He was certain their fingers rested lightly on the top of the table. Furthermore, if one of the friends left the table for some reason, the table continued its movements and moved in a direction opposite to whatever pressure the remaining two sitters applied to the table. The table rose *under* their fingers, all fingers being visible, and Dr. Braude could clearly see that the table made no contact with any knees or legs. Sometimes when they stood beside the table, with only fingertips making contact, the table continued to move under their fingers. Dr. Braude claims this was a pivotal experience in his life. It was the beginning of his research concerning evidence of postmortem survival (Braude ix-x).

I've included all this introductory material to lay a foundation for the personal story or stories I'm about to tell and to offer these stories as some sort of survival evidence. Let me be frank. For much of the survival evidence, it's not clear what to say. Its not clear to what extent it can be explained away in terms of normal and abnormal processes among the living. Some evidence makes little sense, even if we accept postmortem survival. I believe, along with Dr. Braude that the evidence most strongly suggests the view that some aspects of our personality and personal consciousness, some significant chunk of our distinctive psychology, can survive the death of our bodies, at least for a time (Braude xi).

I participated in my first full-fledged seance sometime in early 2008. Up until then, as a Cassadaga trained medium, I had centered my activities in mental mediumship, a state in which the medium receives the information and sensations and relays them to a

sitter with words describing what is seen, the emotions felt and the message imparted. After my certification, I began to work some with physical mediumship and this work began in earnest when a medium from Cassadaga, Mrs. Anita Evans, received a call for a seance and asked me to work with her. Little did I know that this was an opening and opportunity for me work and grow as a physical medium. We began by smudging the seance room. Anita lives in a 4000 square foot mansion with a seance room with a built-in mediums cabinet. The house was built for two mediums around 1928 and the room was used extensively for seance work. Smudging involves burning sage and spreading the smoke throughout the room to cleanse, purify, and neutralize any negative energies that might be present. Next, we brought in fresh flowers to honor the spirits, and bowls of salt-water to ionize the air, and put on some very soft meditative music and closed the room, after having positioned the table and the chairs for that evening's event.

That evening's seance included four people plus the two of us. When we opened the room, we lit several candles for light. Even though it was dim, everything was clearly visible. We sat at the table, said an introductory prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer. All this was preceded by me giving an introductory lecture downstairs in the parlor, explaining to those new to séances what would happen and how to behave respectfully with the spirit presences. So we sat at the table, having done prayers, and each one of us gave the spirits permission to use our body, mind, and spirit energies to facilitate the communication during the seance. We then placed our fingertips, very lightly, spider-style on the table, and continued light conversations, laughter, jokes, silly songs and invited the spirits to join us.

The first clue to the spirits' presence may be rappings in the table itself, felt under the fingers. There were also rappings in the floor, walls and ceiling of the room. The energy growing in the table could be felt by all participants. And then, suddenly, it happened! The table began to move, on its own, with no interference from the sitters. The table might move towards one person and bow into their lap. At this point, the sitter might ask, "Spirit, is this for me?" If the answer is yes, the table continues to move; if no, the table momentarily stops and then moves on to another person, as if seeking the right person to whom the message must be delivered.

All questions to the table must be yes or no questions. The table cannot literally talk, but can respond in a yes or no fashion. No philosophical discussions with the table that just produces confusion. This happened during a paranormal group visit and the effects on the table and flow of information were quite mixed.

During the seance, the table goes to everyone at the table. It can tilt, bow, balance on two out of three legs (our tables have three legs), or, as in one seance, balance delicately on one leg and twirl like a ballerina! This is all done with spirit energy. This takes a great deal of hard work on the spirits' part. I would remind the reader of the film, "Ghost" and how hard Patrick Swayze's character had to work to move a penny! Some spirits are very highly developed on the other side and come through in very strong ways, with rambunctious movements of the table. My mother is one of those. She moves the table in a particularly muscular way, as though she's trying to levitate the table! Other spirits are less developed, and require other spirits to help them communicate.

On top of the table tipping/turning phenomena, there is the matter of raps. Raps are spirit noises produced by the spirits moving energy through a material medium. These

raps can be anything from snaps in the wood of the table, felt and heard by the sitters, to bangs and thumps in the walls, floor and ceiling of the seance room. In my first seance in the Snipes House in Cassadaga, we heard thumps and bangs from ceiling, walls, floor and windows. The windows actually shook. The only way for this to happen is for someone to hover outside the windows on the second floor of the house! To cause raps in the ceiling, floor and walls of the seance room would have taken much human planning and ingenuity as the outside of the seance room overlooks the grand staircase!

On the topic of survival, this must be attested to by the individual sitters. As they ask yes or no questions of the spirit coming through the table, the table supplies answers that would only make sense and have meaning to that particular sitter. Is this muscular action, the ectenic force? If it is, it would have to be coordinated among all the sitters and the mediums. This gets back to questions asked in the article on table-tipping in Buckland's *The Spirit Book*: Who or what is directing this muscle power? How was the "table" able to give answers, unknown to those present, to the questions asked (Buckland 400)? It is my personal experience that when evaluating the movements and behaviours of various tables that I have been in contact with personalities that have survived bodily death. The answers I have received to certain questions and the type of table response elicited was consistent with what I knew of the personalities of the communicators, especially for my mother. I also have had Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge and Dr. William James come through the table. These strong personalities moved the table in very individual ways, each showing great physical or mental strength (especially Sir Arthur who was a very large, strong man in life) and with very serious answers to my queries from Sir Oliver and Dr. James. I really feel that all these activities and

demonstrations of phenomena are indicative of survival because I and the other mediums go to the table with no agenda. We have never met the people we are serving before. We do not know whom they seek. We do not know who may come through for them or for us! As I mentioned before, I believe that William James and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle came for me because at the time I was doing research on both of them. The type of table movement, rather heavy in nature, seemed indicative of their natures. Could there be PSI at work here? If there was, we mediums were not doing it consciously or intentionally. Could a family of sitters be doing PSI between them? Certainly, and they probably were, as questions were asked and answer were given, they consistently reinforced each other, so I would suspect PSI between them, but not coming from the mediums.

Table-tipping has become a center of my mediumistic activity and is central in my work and communication with spirit and the spirits of the deceased members of my family. It gives me a physical way to be in touch as well as with mental mediumship. A personality of importance in the Spiritualist movement, Alfred Russell Wallace (who may be a distant relative) said that he was impressed by a table-tipping demonstration in which “a curious vibratory motion of the table commenced, almost like the shivering of a living animal, I could feel it up to my elbows” (Blum 39). This could precisely describe some of my experiences in the seance room. In my own experience, table-tipping has provided some of the most convincing evidence for survival beyond bodily death.

Cross-Correspondences

The Society for Psychical Research, over many years, devoted many hundreds of pages to the topic of “Cross-correspondences.” It has been suggested that the scheme originated with F.W.H. Myers on the other side as a method of communication that would eliminate the bugbear of so many psychic researches – telepathy from the living. It is at least a certainty that while he was on earth Myers had considered the project in a simpler form, namely, to get the same word or message through two mediums (Doyle ii 85).

A cross-correspondence occurs when spirit communication received through one medium is connected to communication received through another, different medium or mediums. The two or more mediums are usually located at some considerable distance apart and frequently are unaware of connecting messages. Discovering that connecting message involves a great deal of research on the part of a facilitator, or coordinator, who has to sift through all of the received information and has to be able to recognize the connections between the messages (Buckland 87).

The cross-correspondence of the SPR is in the main of a much more complicated character. In this, one script is not a mere reproduction of statements made in another; the scripts seem rather designed to represent different aspects of the same idea, and often the information in one is explanatory and complementary of that in another (Doyle ii 85).

Cross-correspondence was first discovered in 1876 (this is a questionable date) by Alice Johnson, a research officer of the SPR. The spirit of then deceased F.W.H. Myers suggested that cross-correspondence was originated by spirit to demonstrate that there

was no human telepathy at play. Cross-correspondences were found in groups as far apart as New York, London and Bombay. After the eminent Greek scholar and psychical researcher, Prof. A.W. Verrall passed over, an intricate Greek mosaic and literary puzzle called “The Ear of Dionysius” was transmitted as a cross-correspondence. It has been considered one of the most striking evidences of survival yet obtained.(Buckland 88).

Nandor Fodor states that Balfour’s paper (He was First Earl of Balfour, a researcher) on the Ear of Dionysius cross-correspondence, attributed to the discarnate minds of Professors Butcher and Verrall, which Balfour read before the SPR in November of 1916 “is a most constructive presentation of an excellent piece of evidence for survival” (Buckland 29).

Braude says that he does not share the opinion that cross-correspondences are the strongest evidence for survival. He writes about the crippling complexity of the material and why it is a problem. However, he does admit that the material is intriguing (Braude 95). With the complexity of the communication, the cross-correspondences act a great deal like Super-psi cases almost as much as they do like survival cases.

The cross-correspondences are a vast collection of apparently linked mediumistic messages that began in 1901 and lasted for thirty-one years. All the mediums were women and they were scattered widely around the globe. The main participants on this side were (a) Mrs. M. deG. Verrall, (b) her daughter, Helen (later Mrs. Salter), (c) Mrs. “Willett” (a.k.a. Mrs. Winifred Coombe-Tennant, (d) Mrs. “Holland” (Mrs. Fleming, the sister of Rudyard Kipling, and (e) Mrs. Piper (the only professional medium in the group. The principal participants on “the other side” were prominent founders of the SPR: Edmund Gurney, Henry Sidgwick, and F.W.H. Myers, who had died (respectively) in

1888, 1900, and 1901. The principal investigators of the scripts were leading members of the SPR: Alice Johnson, G.W. Balfour, Sir Oliver Lodge and Mrs. E.M. Sidgwick. The idea for these communications apparently originated with the communicators. The cross-correspondence material actually began to appear in mediumistic messages before anyone was aware of it (Braude 95).

According to Buckland's, *The Spirit Book*, cross-correspondence was first discovered in 1876 by Alice Johnson. The way Buckland words this particular paragraph (p 88) is misleading. It refers immediately to the "then-deceased F.W.H. Myers" suggesting that cross-correspondence originated by spirit to demonstrate that there was no human telepathy at play. My problem is with the dating. I feel this must be some sort of misprint, because Myers did not pass over until 1901. I could accept anything after 1888, with the death of Gurney, but not before. I have not been able, even with searches through case studies and searching online, to find anything to either verify or deny this date.

The cross-correspondence messages that have been studied are basically fragmentary and are liberally sprinkled with Greek and Latin phrases as well as having many suggestions of classical and literary sources. This rather disjointed quality, instead of taking away from the value of the scripts, was a much intended part of the alleged underlying plan. When the messages came through, in automatic writing, they were *supposed* to be meaningless on their own and also meaningless to the medium. But, when these scripts were put into the hands of investigators who were familiar with the personalities and interests of the communicators, the messages would show a design or pattern and hang together.

Podmore states why the design of these messages is significant:

How are we to get behind the secondary personality of the medium? We cannot...base our faith on the relation of intimate details known to no one but ourselves and the dead, for we can place no certain limits on the mysterious agency of telepathy. The only evidence that can satisfy us of the survival of an active and individual intelligence is evidence of the present activity of such intelligence (Braude 96).

Braude says that even if the cross-correspondences cases suggest guiding active intelligence, that intelligence may be one or more living persons (Braude 96). The cross-correspondences raise two crucial issues: (1) whether *anything* paranormal is going on, and (2) whether material that seems evidential can be linked causally to seeming postmortem communicators. This will be addressed later, but first some of what are considered to be exceptional cross-correspondence cases.

One of the most convincing cases for the validity of cross-correspondences came from what was designated as “The Palm Sunday Case” (Taylor Cross 1-2). This case covered more than thirty years. It is named for the death of one of the communicators, Mary Catherine Lyttleton, who was born in 1850. A young man from a prestigious family, Arthur James Balfour, was attracted to her when they met in 1870, and the subsequently fell in love and in 1875, Balfour declared his intention to propose. However, a tragic event changed all this. Mary Catherine died of typhus fever on March 21, 1875 – Palm Sunday, without ever having seen Arthur again.

The first communications in the Palm Sunday Case happened after the death of Frederic Myers, who died in 1901. Over several years, many messages came through various mediums in the form of automatic writing. Automatic writing occurs when writing is performed without control by the conscious mind. The operator uses the same muscles that would normally be used, but in no way tries to govern what is actually

written. The true “director” of the writing is believed to be a departed spirit trying to communicate (Buckland 436). Automatic writing is one form of automatism. Frederic Myers divided automatism into two main types: motor automatism (active) and sensory automatism (passive). Motor automatism is movement of the tongue, head or limbs without guidance of the conscious mind. Sensory automatism is the external presentation of information received clairvoyantly or clairaudiently. Many skeptics feel that this is really information that has been long suppressed or forgotten. However, there are many cases of automatists producing material totally foreign to themselves (Buckland 25). Automatic writing has been produced by such well known people as Victor Hugo, Goethe and William James (Buckland 437). This is what happened in the Palm Sunday Case and other cross-correspondence cases.

In 1903, automatic writing began to come through Alice Kipling Fleming and Helen Verrall, seeming to come from Myers. Alice and Helen have been mentioned before as members of this cross-correspondence group on this side. In 1908, Winifred Coombe-Tennant (later Mrs. Willett) also began to receive automatic writing scripts claiming also to be from Myers. All of the scripts were alike in that they were all fragmentary and filled with obscure and classical references. All these ladies had some mediumistic ability, but none of them knew of the Balfour-Lyttleton romance, or that it had been cut short by Mary Catherine’s death (Taylor cross 1-2).

Alice Fleming’s first script gave a message that contained the words, “Ah starry hope that didst arrive/But to be over cast.” The lines were from Edgar Allan Poe’s “To One in Paradise.” Investigators would later find significance in references to stars and hope and in the allusion to the moon – the light that overshadows the starry hope in Poe’s

poem. Alice, living in India, later received another message and this one contained quotations in which the word “hope” appeared twice (Taylor cross 2).

In 1907, the American medium, Mrs. Leonora Piper, was in England. This is thousands of miles from India. Remember that Mrs. Piper was primarily a trance medium. While she was in trance, she was asked to give a sign if a cross-correspondence was being attempted and the investigators suggested a triangle within a circle. Myers, from the other side, suggested a “star”. Another “star” message came to Mrs. Verrall and “star” became the theme of many messages that followed. On February 3, Mrs. Verrall received a script that had several drawings including a star and a crescent moon, accompanied by an exhortation that read: “The crescent moon, remember that and the star” (Taylor cross-2).

By February 11, Mrs. Piper was receiving more messages from Myers, and he wanted it to be clear that he had knowledge of the messages to other mediums. Through Mrs. Piper he discussed the message given to Mrs. Verrall: “I referred to Hope and Browning.” On February 17, the Browning theme came up again. The communicating spirit drew a star (through automatic writing and then wrote: “that was the sign she will understand when she gets it...no arts avail...and a star above it all...rats everywhere in Hamelin town...” The “Hamelin town” to which Myers was referring was apparently the Browning poem about the Pied Piper of Hamelin. It might have also been a pun on Mrs. Piper’s name. Myers love puns and anagrams, and the cross-correspondences are full of them (Taylor cross 2)!

Over many years, the SPR analyzed these cross-correspondences and agreed that a group of discarnate being was producing them. They were making some sense, but

remained in reality a puzzle. The SPR formed a committee that included Gerald Balfour (Arthur's younger brother); John Piddington; Alice Johnson; Sir Oliver Lodge and Eleanor Sidgwick. Their research seemed to point to a purpose for the communications. That purpose was the continuing personalities of Mary Catherine Lyttleton and Francis Balfour, one of Arthur's brothers who had died in 1882. In addition to Myers, Balfour and Lyttleton, other spirits seemed to be Henry Sidgwick and Edmund Gurney, both of whom had been friends of Myers and founders of the SPR (Taylor cross 2).

Although it was not realized right away, all the messages seemed to be aimed at Arthur. Many of the symbols had meaning only for him and concerned Lyttleton and her death. She was often referred to as the "Palm Maiden" and he as the "faithful knight." She was often identified by references to cockleshells or scallops, seemingly referring to the nursery rhyme *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary*. The Spirits did not seem in a hurry to reveal the solution to the puzzle – until Arthur got involved (Taylor cross 2).

Around 1911, Alice Fleming stopped receiving scripts, and Mrs. Willett's mediumship underwent a dramatic change. From the spirit side, David Gurney took control for a short while until succeeded by Francis Balfour. That same year, 1911, Mrs. Willett met Arthur Balfour and remembered feeling "very queer" when she shook his hand. Within several months, Lyttleton began to communicate directly with Mrs. Willett during trance states. It soon became clear that all of Lyttleton's efforts had a purpose: to reach Arthur Balfour and to tell him how much she loved him (Taylor cross 2-3).

By the time this material was coming through, Balfour was sixty-four years old and Mary Catherine had been on the other side for thirty-seven years. As years passed, Balfour accepted the idea that Mary was communicating with his. It was not until late in

his life when his health began to worsen that he became excited about the messages. By 1926, Balfour had pneumonia and his decline became irreversible. During one sitting he saw an apparition of a young woman with thick, beautiful hair. She told him that he was never alone, that her spirit was always with him and that she was “absolutely alive, and herself, unchanged’, on the other side (Taylor cross 3).

In October 1929, six months before Balfour died, Mary communicated that she was through trying to give evidence of survival after death and was now only interested in closeness with Arthur. She told the medium to “tell him that he gives me joy.” This made Balfour very happy, and when he died, friends reported that he seemed renewed (Taylor cross 3).

In many of the sittings, Mary was referred to as the “Palm Sunday Maiden.” This was, of course, a reference to Mary’s death, from typhus, on Palm Sunday, 1875. Arthur was a very private person. Very few people knew that he had been in love with Mary. At the time of death, Arthur and Mary’s sister, Lavinia, had decided to remember Mary in a very special and intimate way - a secret rendez-vous, each Palm Sunday, to remember Mary, involving a lock of her hair in a special reliquary that only the two of them knew about. However, the script writers on the other side knew about it too. (Coppens 2).

After Arthur’s death and after Mrs. Willett’s death, a Mrs. Cummins began to channel Mrs. Willett. Mrs. Willett spoke of how Mary had stayed in apparently a type of “waiting room” of the afterlife waiting for Arthur to arrive. “They tell me she remained waiting, waiting at the border for him, returned from the higher level, at what sacrifice! A world so tempting, beckoning but she ignored it. She put all that away from her to meet

an old man's soul. Therefore it need hardly be said that she was the first to meet A.J.B. when he came home to her [...] they have gone to that other level together" (Coppens 2).

What does one make of this case? Or, what can one make of it? In spite of the fact that the mediums involved knew nothing of a personal nature about the material they received, the final analysis revealed nothing that was not known to someone among the living. For this reason alone, there is the possibility that Super-psi cannot be ruled out. The participants believed they were communicating with spirits, but there was no absolute proof of this. Some of the material could have come from the minds of the mediums. This is especially possible with the references that were classical in nature. Margaret Verrall was a fine classical lecturer and very familiar with Greek and Latin (Taylor cross 3).

However, the messages do seem to reveal a network of personalities and it was the first case of its kind in the history of psychical research. There did seem to be a purpose to it and the symbols did seem to point to the "Palm Sunday" communications of Mary Lyttleton (Taylor cross 3).

Can love survive death? Is love the one bond that cannot be broken? If this case is authentic, the answer would seem to be yes. Mary gave many years to trying to contact Balfour, and her family later hest that she never realized how much she loved him until after death – when it was too late (Taylor cross 3).

After the conclusion of the study on this case over a period of some thirty years, interest in cross-correspondences seemed to wane. There has not been much study on it since, and no more material seemingly received. Maybe the other sided decided on more direct types of communication.

A fascinating coda to the Palm Sunday Case was continued by Jean Balfour, daughter-in-law of Gerald Balfour. She also did a great deal of work with the cross-correspondences and she became the official custodian of “a secret” in 1930 and kept that “secret” until her death in 1981. Her daughter, Lady Alison Kremer, contacted Archie Roy, the president of the SPR. Roy has written a book, *The Eager Dead* which focuses primarily on the cross-correspondences.

Many of the people involved in the unfolding events of the story in this part of the cross-correspondences were prominent men and women. They included a British Prime Minister, Arthur James Balfour, 1st Earl of Balfour, later Foreign Secretary, involved in the creation of the post-First World War League of Nations, creator of the Balfour Declaration that promised a Near East home for the Jewish people. His brother Gerald William Balfour, the statesman and philosopher and 2nd Earl, also played a major part in the story, as did their sister Eleanor Mildred Balfour, mathematician and one-time Principal of Newnham College, University of Cambridge. She became the wife of Professor Henry Sidgwick, who held the chair of Moral Philosophy in Cambridge University. He, too, was a major player (Roy xv-xvi).

Winifred Coombe-Tennant of Cadoxton Lodge, Wales, was likewise deeply involved. Appointed by the British Government to be first magistrate, a prison visitor, a member of the Eisteddfod, highly respected in the arts in Wales, broadcaster for the BBC, throughout her long life she successfully hid her other identity from the world behind her prominent professional activities. Only a very small band of people who also knew that identity, and resolutely kept the secret, could read the long obituary that appeared on

September 1, 1956 in *The Times* after her death, and note with satisfaction that what it did not include showed that they had been successful (Roy xvi).

One of her sons, Major Augustus Henry Coombe-Tennant, MC, Croix de Guerre, was paradoxically a key player but for a good part of his life did not know it, at best holding at times suspicions little stronger than those held by some of the curious on the fringes of the secret. A brilliant Cambridge University graduate, a Second World War hero, a post-war MI6 secret agent, and later a Benedictine monk and parish priest, only in the last part of his life did he learn the secret, although it is still debatable if he ever knew it in its entirety. In a real sense this story is in large part the story of Henry Coombe-Tennant, his life and the hopes a number of key players held for him (Roy xvi).

The chain of events in the story is stretched over many years, over a century at least, from 1875 to 1989. The events in the story would have had very little meaning to anyone who did not have access to the Kremer Archive. If one studies carefully the documents in this archive – letters, papers, memoranda, all previously kept from the public domain – one will get the full story. These papers were collected by Jean, Countess of Balfour, daughter-in-law of Gerald, 2nd Earl of Balfour. She had been made the official keeper of the secret in 1930 by those in the know. She was a woman of extreme discretion, dedication, high intelligence, sensitivity and perception, and she continued her work until her death in 1981. By that time, all the major players had made transition into the next world. Her daughter, Lady Alison Kremer, contacted the SPR's president, Archie Roy to write the story I'm about to present to you. If this story had been revealed at an earlier time, it would have created an unprecedented scandal: it is a story

of an adultery not only condoned by the “spirits” behind the cross-correspondences, but apparently arranged by them with the highest possible motives (Roy xii).

Archie Roy, of the SPR, was chosen to reveal to the reading public exactly what the secret was. In his introduction to *The Eager Dead*, Colin Wilson says, “As she (Mrs. Willett) Winifred Coombe-Tennant became more involved in mediumship, the ‘communicators’ made it known that they had in mind an interesting plan that involved Winifred. This was nothing less than that she should bear a child, a kind of ‘designer baby’, whose paternity should be, in effect, divided among the cross-correspondence group in particular, Edmund Gurney, a distinguished member of the SPR, who had died tragically (probably of asthma) in 1888 at the age of forty-one. Through his communications, Gurney had already told Winifred that he loved her” (Roy xiii). The actual physical father would be Gerald Balfour, Arthur’s younger brother.

Winifred and Gerald found themselves passionately attracted to each other and became lovers. The result was a son, Augustus, always known by his second name Henry. The plan was for Henry to become some sort of Messiah, an instrument of the spirits behind the scripts, who was destined to bring peace to the warring human race (Roy xiii). The script intelligence “seemed to be claiming an ability to influence the birth of children and the minds and characters of children yet born” (Coppens 3).

This was a bold, breathtaking scheme, an attempt by a group of spirits who could foresee the conflicts of the coming century, to bring a golden age. But it turns out that not even spirits are omniscient and the attempt failed. Henry never felt called upon to try to exert a major influence on his fellow man, and ended by becoming a Catholic priest and a Benedictine monk, where he seemed to find some rest and satisfaction (Roy xiii-xiv)

(Coppens 3). However, some of his closest friends wondered whether he was indeed not a success, that he had something of an angel that he seemed to be sexless person (Coppens 3).

The script intelligence stated before his birth: “You don’t realize that this coming child has been the result of immense work here and its object is to give you something to live for because we want you where you are and we want to reconcile you to staying there” (Coppens 3).

This story almost comes across as a tabloid story, but only in 1960 did part of the mystery become clear. To quote Archie Roy: “There has never been as many as a dozen people who have known the story in its main outline. Indeed for many decades all that a larger number of people knew was that there was some secret, the exact nature of which could not be pinned down” (Coppens 3).

It was only in the late 19th century that individuals became organized and seriously began to question whether they could prove the existence of the next dimension. It is obvious that investigators like Edmund Gurney and Frederic Myers tried their utmost to communicate with the living once dead. As early as 1874, Sidgwick, Myers, Gurney, and Arthur Balfour were investigating both physical and mental mediumship. When some of them made “transition” to the other side, if “something” of them did survive, it seems that they tried to do their utmost to prove from the other side that the other side existed. This is what the cross-correspondences are all about and what they attempt to do (Coppens 3).

Throughout the decades of correspondence, the dead were able to convey some information about what it felt like to be dead. Gurney communicated: “You never seem

to realize how little we know. I'm not – sometimes I know and can't get it through, but very often I don't know." Myers sent: "The nearest simile I can find to express the difficulties of sending a message – is that I appear to be standing behind a sheet of frosted glass – which blurs sight and deadens sound – dictating feebly – to a reluctant and very obtuse secretary. The feeling of terrible impotence burdens me – I am so powerless to tell what means so much – I cannot get into communications with those who would understand and believe me" (Coppens 3-4).

Other communications read:

It is for us a Gargantuan task the reaching back. It is only to those whose Hearts hold a welcome for us that we can come with any ease. The inner mind is very difficult to deal with from this side. We impress it with our message. We never impress the brain of the medium directly. That is out of the question. But the inner mind is like soft wax, it receives our thoughts, their whole content, but it must produce the works that clothe it. That is what makes cross-correspondence so very difficult (Coppens 4).

They also noted that

When an intruding stranger is driven by a powerful emotion of love, jealousy or hatred he appears to be able, through its power, to overcome all difficulties of transmission and to be able to convey verifiable facts (Coppens 4)

That may be why the Cross-correspondences were, in essence, a family affair.

The Cross-correspondences are a tremendous body of work. All the scripts and SPR reports constitute some 14,000 pages. At the end of the day what they "only" seemed to prove – both to those involved and those that have studied the documents – is that "something" survived. And of course, if something continues, the question that begs the answer is, what is that something?

Frederic Myers was one of the investigators involved in the "Palm Sunday Case" from the other side. Myers died in 1901. A few years before his death, he handed a sealed

envelope to Sir Oliver Lodge. It was to be kept sealed until some spirit purporting to be Myers should claim to repeat the message.

Two of Myers's best friends at Cambridge were Dr. Arthur Verrall, a classical scholar and his wife, Margaret, who lectured on the classics at Newnham College. After Myers's death, Margaret decided to try automatic writing, to see if she could reach Myers. Even though she was skeptical, she gave it a try. Her hand was soon scribbling away, but the messages were muddy and confused. Then one day a message came in poor Latin, signed "Myers". From that point on, the messages flowed freely. One of the messages read: "Myers sealed envelope left with Lodge (She had no knowledge of it)...It has in it the words from the *Symposium* about love bridging the chasm." The message was quickly taken to Lodge, who opened the envelope. He was disappointed as it contained nothing about Plato. It said: "If I can revisit any earthly scene, I should choose the Valley in the grounds of Hallsteads, Cumberland." Then someone remembered that Myers had referred to the *Symposium* – Plato's dialogue about love – in a privately printed book called *Fragment of an Inner Life*. It had been written as a memorial to Annie Marshall, wife of Myers's cousin, Walter, with whom Myers had been in love. Annie had committed suicide by throwing herself in the Ullswater and had lived in Hallsteads, Cumberland. So there *was* a connection between the sealed message and Plato's *Symposium* (Wilson 157).

In a moment of exasperation, Dr. William James suggested another explanation for the vagaries of "spirits":

I confess that at times I have been tempted to believe that the Creator has eternally intended this department of nature to remain *baffling*, to prompt our curiosities and hopes and suspicions all in equal measure, so that, although ghosts and clairvoyances and raps and messages from spirits...can never be fully

explained away, they can also never be susceptible of full corroboration (Wilson 158).

Or to put it another way, it looks as if the “spirits” have been ordered to provide just enough evidence to convince those who are willing to be convinced, but never enough to win over the skeptics. This notion might be called James Law. The evidence is plentiful and abundant, but it always leaves room for doubt (Wilson 159).

Taken as a whole, the cross-correspondences and Willett scripts are among the most convincing evidence that at this time exists for “life after death.” If someone is prepared to give weeks and months to study them, they prove beyond all reasonable doubt that Myers, Gurney and Sidgwick went on communicating after death. Why did they not use some straight forward suggestion that would be much simpler and more convincing to skeptics? The answer – if we accept James law – is that they were not out to make wholesale conversions. That kind of answer makes the skeptic simply shrug the whole thing off!

Myers was persistent from the other side. In November 1924, he made contact through an Irish medium named Geraldine Cummins. When she first tried automatic writing, she found that she was a natural medium. In these communications, Myers spoke of a book expressing his conviction that life after death had been proven beyond all doubt. Over a series of communications, some through a control, Myers was able to really get the idea across. The books that grew out of these transmissions – *The Road to Immortality* and *Beyond Human Personality* are fascinating or rubbish, depending on how it strikes the reader.

To reiterate, researcher and writer, Stephen Braude, does not agree that all this material proves survival. He says, “even if the cross-correspondences do suggest a

guiding intelligence, that intelligence might (at least in principle) be one or more living persons (Braude 96).

One way to address this issue would be to try simulating cross-correspondences by comparing pseudo-scripts written by outsiders. Mrs. Verrall tried just this sort of study. The resulting matches, while having followed all instructions, clearly lacked evidence of design or of a guiding intelligence behind the scenes (Braude 96).

The very best cases of cross-correspondences resist explanations in terms of normal or abnormal processes. In cases such as the “Palm Sunday Case” or some other outstanding cases, it seems clear that some sort of paranormal explanation is required, even if the scripts themselves aren’t impressive enough to allay all skeptical doubt. Sometimes, even if we can’t account for the scripts in terms of chance, or normal or abnormal processes, even the best cases don’t seem to demand survivalist explanations. They even seem to pose less of a challenge to the super-psi hypothesis than the individual careers of mediums like Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Leonard (Braude 98).

Also the obscure nature of the references and allusions purportedly masterminded by Myers and his friends cannot be underestimated. Most of this group on the other side were classical scholars (Myers, Gurney and Sidgwick) and two of the automatists (Mrs. and Miss Verrall) had known Myers and Sidgwick and were themselves classical scholars. So the frequent classical phrases and allusions suggest psi among the living as well as they do postmortem communication (Braude 98).

There is one aspect of the cross-correspondences that is troubling. Much of the thousands of pages of scripts is devoted to detailed and inconclusive debates about proper translation, interpretation and importance of the obscure allusions. To some, this weakens

the material. Even the best cross-correspondence cases seem to engender substantial concerns about their evidentiality (Braude 98-99).

Thouless, a Professor of Psychology of Religion commented: “The cross-correspondence technique was too elaborate. It seems to be the products of minds who realized the necessity for evidence but not the equal necessity for the value of evidence being easily assessed (Braude 99).

Another question posed by Dr. Braude is this: by what rational standard of evidence would anyone ever suppose that a cross-correspondence is evidentially superior to (say) a good mediumistic trance impersonation, or even just a good series of mediumistic messages providing *direct* indications of survival (Braude 99)? Braude feels that just because a communication form is difficult, it is not necessarily better.

According to survivalist interpretation, individuals on the other side put together an intricate, obscure cross-correspondence among different mediums over an extended period of time. If they can pull that off, could they not just as easily have given a single medium the same evidence in a way that was not so perplexing? Cross-correspondence seems to just multiply the obscurities and difficulties. Again, the cross-correspondence cases act like a Super-psi case, almost more than a survival case. Braude finds it hard to believe that people like Myers, Gurney and Sidgwick would fail in the next life to grasp this simple point about evidential strength – the simpler and more direct, the better (Braude 99). Cross-correspondence makes a very good case for survival. But remember James Law: it’s always more than enough to convince the believer, but never quite enough to convince the skeptic!

Reincarnation

Reincarnation, literally “to be made flesh again” (Wikipedia 1) is the rebirth of the spirit or soul in successive bodies. It was originally a Christian tenet which was rejected at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 CE. Reincarnation is very much part of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, and according to Benjamin Walker (*Man, Myth and Magic* article 1970), “is being increasingly adopted as an article of faith by a large number of people in other religious denominations” (Buckland 346). Author and paranormal researcher, Rosemary Ellen Guiley suggests that approximately two-thirds of today’s population “accepts some form of reincarnation or rebirth as a fundamental belief” (Buckland 346). What follows is a summary of the thought about reincarnation of many of the religious traditions. The purpose of this material is to give an unacquainted reader some background on the subject as they approach this chapter.

The belief has existed for thousands of years. The Orphics of ancient Greece carried the doctrine from the Pythagoreans that a soul returned in a number of incarnations, each time gaining in purity by living a good life. This would continue until there was total purity, at which time divinity would be achieved. This same idea is found in Wicca, whose practitioners believe that the spirit goes through a number of reincarnations, learning and experiencing in each until all things have been absorbed. Then the spirit becomes at one with the gods (Buckland 346).

This idea of a soul returning in different bodies has ancient roots beyond the Greeks. It is a central tenet of the majority of Indian religions, which believe that in lifetime after lifetime, the soul clothes itself in beauty and perfection, dropping all

negatives and biases and leaves the wheel of life with its constant repetitions, and merges with the Godhead. This happens in different forms in yoga, Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Jainism and Sikhism. The Buddhist concept of rebirth differs significantly from Hindu based traditions in that there is no unchanging “soul” or eternal self to reincarnate.

According to the Buddhist sutras, the Buddha taught a concept of rebirth that was distinct from that of any contemporary Indian teacher. The concept was consistent with the common notion of a sequence of related lives stretching over a very long time, but was constrained by two core Buddhist concepts: anatta, that there is no irreducible atman or self tying these lives together; and anicca, that all compounded things are subject to dissolution, including all the components of the human person and personality. At the death of one personality, a new one comes into being much as the flame of a dying candle can be used to light the flame of another (Wikipedia 2).

According to Buddhism, there is no permanent and unchanging self (identity), so there can be no transmigration in the strict sense. What is reborn is not the person. Instead one moment gives rise to another and this momentum continues even after death. Instead of a fixed entity, what is reborn is an “evolving consciousness” or “stream of consciousness”, whose quality has been conditioned by karma (Wikipedia 3).

When Carl Sagan asked the Dalai Lama what he would do if reincarnation (a fundamental tenet) was disproved definitively by science, the Dalai Lama answered: “If science can disprove reincarnation, Tibetan Buddhism would abandon reincarnation...but it’s going to be mighty hard to disprove reincarnation” (Wikipedia 3).

Hinduism says that the soul (atman) is immortal while the body is subject to birth and death. The Bhagavad-Gita states that: “worn out garments are shed by the body;

worn out bodies are shed by the dweller within the body. New bodies are donned by the dweller like garments (Wikipedia 3). The idea is that the soul reincarnates is linked to the concept of karma, recorded in the Upanishads, part of the larger Indian religious texts called the Vedas. Karma (action) is the sum of one's actions and the force that determines one's next reincarnation. When the cycles of birth and death come to an end, the person is said to have attained *Moksha* or liberation from the cycles of rebirth governed by karma (Wikipedia 3).

Daoism teaches "existence without limitation. Birth is not a beginning; death is not the end. There is continuity without a starting point. Existence without limitation is space. Continuity without a starting point is time. There is birth, there is death, there is issuing forth, there is entering in (Zhaungzi, 3rd century, Wikipedia 4).

Most mainstream Christian denominations reject reincarnation as it is considered a challenge to their basic tenets. Some churches allow their people to make up their own minds, due to a few Biblical references that survived the purging of texts that produced the Bible in the founding years of Christianity. Examples are Matthew 17.10-13, Matthew 11.10-14, and John 1.21. There is some evidence that some of the earliest Christian sects such as the Sethians and followers of Valentinus believed in reincarnation. Some fundamental Christian groups in the USA have denounced any belief in reincarnation as heretical, and they say that anything suggestive of it is a deception of the devil. There are some passages, such as Hebrew 9.27, that are interpreted as rejecting reincarnation or the possibility of return or contact with this earth plane for souls in heaven or hell (Wikipedia 5). There have been attempts to knit Christianity and reincarnation together, notably, *Reincarnation in Christianity* by Geddes MacGregor,

Christianity as Mystical Fact by Rudolf Steiner, and *The Case for Reincarnation* by Leslie D. Weatherhead. Some Christian denominations that support reincarnation are the Liberal Catholic Church, the Christian Spiritualist movement, the Rosicrucian, and the Unity Church (Wikipedia 5-6).

Reincarnation appeared in Jewish thought after the Talmud. The idea, called *gilgul*, became popular is found in much Yiddish literature among Ashkenazi Jews. Some cabbalists, in works from the 1200's to the 1500's supported the idea that human souls could end up being reincarnated into non-human bodies. Several rabbis from the 14th century rejected reincarnation. The belief is quite common in Orthodox Judaism, and there is a whole volume called *Sha'ar Ha'Gilgulim* (The Gate of Reincarnations), which describes the deep, complex laws of reincarnation. Some Orthodox prayer books have a nightly prayer for forgiveness of sins committed in this incarnation or a previous one, which is said with the *Shema* before sleep (Wikipedia 7).

The mainstream of Islam rejects the concept of reincarnation, but some Sufi groups claim the concept is mentioned in the *Holy Qur'an*: "How can you deny God, when you were dead and God gave you life? Then God will cause you to die, and then revive you, and then you will be returned to God" (Qur'an 2. 28) (Wikipedia 7). Some Sufi groups interpret this verse differently and there is some pro and con disagreement. Reincarnation has also been used to reconcile the Holy Qur'an's apparent identification of Miriam, the mother of Isa as the sister of Aaron and daughter of Amran, all who lived well before the first century CE. Another verse that may support reincarnation is Qur'an 3.27: "Thou (God) makest the night to pass into the day, and Thou makest the day to pass into the night, and Thou bringest forth the living from the dead and Thou bringest forth

the dead from the living, and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest without measure” (Wikipedia 7). Some verses of the *Holy Qur’an* that seem to discount the concept are Qur’an 2.154; 20.55; 71.17-18; 44.56; and 37.58-61.

Reincarnation is an intrinsic part of Native American traditions and also appears in Norse mythology in such texts as the *Poetic Edda*. The editor comments that the belief in reincarnation was common among the Vikings, but when the text was written in his (Christian) time, it was considered “old wives folly” (Wikipedia 8).

Reincarnation plays a part in the thinking of modern writers such as the Renaissance writer, Giordano Bruno, who was burned at the stake for his reincarnation teachings. Germans such as Goethe, and Schopenhauer mentioned the idea with respect. Herman Hesse, literary Nobel prize, 1946, expressed a viewpoint of “...reincarnation as a mode of expression for stability in the midst of flux” (Wikipedia 9). Reincarnation is an important idea to Rudolf Steiner, who founded the spiritual movement of Anthroposophy. The Theosophical Society was the first institution in modern times to spread the concept in the west. The American psychic, Edgar Cayce, taught reincarnation in purely human terms and Henry Ford was convinced that he had lived before as a soldier at Gettysburg. General George S. Patton was a staunch believer, saying that when he arrived in Sicily, he recognized landmarks from his past existence (Wikipedia 11).

In the religion of Spiritualism there is no fixed doctrine on the question of reincarnation. It is left to the individual’s beliefs and feelings. Spiritualists seem evenly split on whether or not they believe in it. Spiritualism is based on communication with the living on the other side and some groups can accept the return of discarnate spirits to

physical bodies. This return might be called an incarnation. Communicators have often said that their return is like getting into the living body and living again in that organism.

Hereward Carrington, in his book, *The Story of Psychic Science*, states the following:

One of the arguments advanced by those who believe in reincarnation is that, if the soul of man is immortal, and lives for all eternity in the future, it must have lived for all eternity in the past also – since it is inconceivable that the soul could thus have a definite beginning in time, and yet be immortal thereafter. However, this argument is by no means conclusive. We might conceive a billiard ball at rest, for example, and give it an initial push. Newton's 'First Law of Motion' tells us that 'every body continues in its state of rest or of uniform motion in a straight line, except in so far as it may be compelled by force to change that state.' Assuming no friction and no resistance, therefore, our billiard ball might continue its motion forever – yet it had a definite beginning (of its motion) at a certain time and place. Similarly, it might be contended, the soul of man might receive its initial push (at conception) and continue its existence forever thereafter. As to the inequalities and injustices of this life, there might be other explanations for these – or there might be *no* explanation!

Carrington follows by giving some information of various thoughts on reincarnation by various important figures in the Spiritualist movement:

What do alleged 'spirit communications' say upon this subject? Some of them state that reincarnation *is* a fact in nature; others assert that it is *not!* The early French school of spiritists, led by Allan Kardec, accepted reincarnation; the majority of British and American spiritists reject it. Andrew Jackson Davis, for example, was particularly bitter in his denunciation of this doctrine – contending that it was 'a magnificent mansion built upon the sand' (Carrington-Story 56-57).

He concludes by saying:

Naturally, the theory of reincarnation depends primarily upon the survival of the individual after death, and until *that* be proved, all arguments such as the above remain purely theoretical. Psychic and spiritualistic investigations merely endeavour to prove the survival of human consciousness after the destruction of the physical brain. When once *that* has been established, it will time enough to consider whether reincarnation is a fact. It is hardly necessary to say that the mechanist and the rationalist altogether reject this belief. The believer in survival, however, will doubtless find many points of interest in the theory of reincarnation well worth his serious consideration (Carrington – story 57).

Professor James H. Hyslop, in his book, *Contact with the Other World: The Latest Evidence as to Communication with the Dead*, states this opinion:

Reincarnation is not desirable, because it does not satisfy the only instinct that makes survival of any kind interesting, namely, the instinct to preserve the consciousness of personal identity. This is denied to the process until its end and that is never in sight! It is a form of the impulse towards self-preservation, which is fundamental to all the acquisitions of experience and character in this life. A future life must be the continuity of this consciousness or it is not a life to us at all (Hyslop 379).

Professor Hyslop gives his distillation of the ideas of Dr. William James on the subject of reincarnation:

It was this idea with which Professor James was playing when he tried to defend the possibility of immortality by the doctrine of *transmissive* functions of the brain. He did not call his theory reincarnation, for to do so would at once have discredited his view in the minds of scientists, if only because of associations and implications which he did not admit and which the theosophists hold. Professor James, instead of using the result of psychic research to prove survival after death, confined himself to physiological and psychological arguments, maintaining the materialistic view of the nature of consciousness. He admitted, with the materialist, that consciousness is a function of the brain. But, in order to avoid the materialist's conclusion he tried to distinguish between what he called *transmissive* and *productive* functions of the brain. He did not make the distinction very clear or tenable in relation to facts, but he used the idea consistently enough. By productive functions of the brain he meant such as are so organically connected with it that they perish when the body dies. He imagined that consciousness, however, might be a function that could be transmitted from the brain to some other structure, whether the transmission be conceived of as reincarnation with or without the retention of personal identity. He said nothing

about transmigration of the soul to other human bodies, and he probably would not have tolerated the idea. Neither did he say anything about the question whether any “spiritual” or “astral”, or ethereal organisms existed without any connection with a body. He left us to infer that they might be formed or created for the transmitted consciousness after death. But the notion of transmission is not necessary to spiritism. Consciousness either is now a function of the “spiritual body”, whether spatial or spaceless, or is so closely associated with such an organism that it goes with it at death, without the need of “transmission”. But to assume “transmission”, as Professor James did, is to assume that the “ethereal organism” is not now associated with consciousness, but awaits the reception of it when it has left the brain (Hyslop380-381).

The two quotes alone show the diversity of views that were in circulation by investigators around the turn of the 20th century. Professor Hyslop was one of the investigators that worked with Mrs. Piper and Eusapia Palladino, and Dr. William James was the foremost psychologist of his age and his work is still highly respected.

The most detailed collections of personal reports in favour of reincarnation have been published by the late Professor Ian Stevenson of the University of Virginia, in books such as *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation* and articles such as “Reincarnation and Biology: A Contribution to the etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects Volume I: “Birthmarks” and “Reincarnation and Biology: A Contribution to the Etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects Volume 2: Birth Defects and Other Anomalies” (Wikipedia 12).

Stevenson spent over forty years devoted to the study of children who have apparently spoken about a past life. In each case Professor Stevenson methodically documented the child’s statements. Then he identified the deceased person the child allegedly identified with, and verified the facts of the deceased person’s life that matched the child’s memory. He also matched birthmarks and birth defects to wounds and scars

on the deceased, verified by medical records such as autopsy photographs (Wikipedia 12).

Stevenson believed that his strict methods ruled out all possible “normal” explanations for children’s memories. Braude would ask us to consider telepathy, and reasons for encouragement from the child’s family or the family of the deceased. Also, it should be observed that a majority of Professor Stevenson’s cases originate in Eastern societies, where the dominant religious institutions permit and accept the concept of reincarnation (Wikipedia 12). From my reading of many cases from Stevenson, I have come to think that many of the cases, such as Bishen Chand, which will be discussed in this chapter, show strong evidence for survival. But one must also remember that the culture of India lends itself to this type of thinking. If an American child came to its parents claiming to have had a past life in Pittsburg, the parents would probably write it off to imagination and nothing further would be said. But in India, the families honour this type of behaviour and will try to verify the details. Is PSI involved? In certain family situations, probably so. So many people are so poor that if a case like this comes up and they can achieve certain notoriety and earn some money with it, they pursue it. Not all cases are like this. Bishen Chand’s case was an early-bird case, where the child started talking about the past at an early age. Less suggestive of survival and more suggestive of super-psi or fantasy is the Antonia case which was discovered in a mature American woman during hypnotic treatment for weight loss. Hypnotism opens the mind to creative imagining and seems to encourage fantasizing. When we consider the Antonia case, we might feel that the psi hypothesis offers some answers.

Many people have investigated reincarnation and come to the conclusion that it is a legitimate phenomenon, such as Peter Ramstes, Dr. Brian Weiss, author of *Many Lives, Many Masters*, Dr. Walter Semkiv, and others. Dr. Stevenson is published in many peer-reviewed journals (Wikipedia 12).

Some skeptics, like Paul Edwards, have studied these accounts and called them “anecdotal”. Philosophers like Robert Almeder have analyzed the criticisms of Edwards and others, and suggest that the gist of these arguments can be summarized as “we all know it can’t possibly be real, so therefore it isn’t real” – an argument from personal incredulity (Wikipedia 12).

The most obvious objection to reincarnations is that there is no evidence of a physical process by which someone could survive death and travel to another body. Researchers recognize this limitation. Some skeptics explain that evidence for reincarnation originates in selective thinking and the psychological phenomena of false memories, and thus cannot be counted as evidence. But some others, such as Dr. Carl Sagan, see need for more reincarnation research.

Before getting into some cases, let me set the stage by offering the late Dr. Ian Stevenson’s argument for reincarnation. Over the years, he has been one of the leading researchers in this field. Stevenson’s argument is that the belief in personal reincarnation offers the best available explanation for a large body of data that, until recently, has been generally ignored or rejected for various unacceptable reasons. This body of data exists in a number of case studies (which he describes in *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*) which share the following core features:

- (A) A young person, ages 3-9, claims to remember having lived an earlier life as a different person, and provides the parents with a detailed description of the alleged earlier life. This includes details that could be known only by the person that is claimed to be in the earlier life, and specific details on how death occurred.
- (B) The memory claims are of two types: (1) those that can be simply verified by available information and (2) those that can be verified but not by available information.
- (C) The person claiming to remember having lived a past life and present family members are interviewed. (Looking for involuntary and spontaneous memories).
- (D) Investigators independently confirm both the spontaneous and solicited memory claims. Past life family members are also interviewed and confront the subject who reminds them of nonpublic details of the past life.
- (E) The person claiming to remember a past life manifests certain skills (such as language, dialect or playing an instrument) that the person in the alleged earlier life had, but the person claiming to have lived the earlier life could not have acquired or learned in this life.
- (F) Deception, hoax, or fraud on the part of the person claiming the past life cannot be substantiated.

Stevenson's basic argument says that for cases with characteristics A through F the only available explanation that logically fits is belief in reincarnation (Almeder 2-5). Some of the most compelling evidence for reincarnation happens in cases that, as

described in Stevenson's ideal-typical characteristics, offer detailed memory claims substantiated by extant past-life family members. I offer this list of characteristics of a reincarnation case so the reader can focus their own ideas of the cases to follow. There are many cases that could be considered. Some are the Bishen Chand case; the Antonia case; and the extremely intriguing case of Jenny Cockell, an Englishwoman remembering a life as an Irish woman in a small village. These cases seem to run the gamut from being very evidential for survival to super-psi-ESP to fantasy. Fantasy is not a part of my consideration, as I look at the competition between the survival and Super-psi hypotheses, but the Cockell case demonstrates a further relationship between hypnotism and fantasizing, so it had to be mentioned as such. Also included is a rebuttal to the Cockell case by Joe Nickell, senior fellow researcher for the *Skeptical Inquirer*.

The case of Bishen Chand is a classic reincarnation case, and has many of the elements that make the best cases so intriguing. Many of the subject's statements were written down before they were verified; the subject's behaviour was often inappropriate to his age and socioeconomic setting; and the subject reportedly displayed abilities which he had not been taught but which were characteristic of the previous personality. Like many of the better cases, Bishen Chand's case comes from India (Braude 183),

Bishen Chand was born in Bareilly in 1921. At the age of ten months, when he was barely able to speak, he would try to say something like "Pilvit" or "Pilivit". When he was about one and a half years old, he began asking questions about the town of Pilibhit, about fifty miles from Bareilly. As his command of language got better, he began to speak of a previous life in Pilibhit. He said his name had been Laxmi Narain, and his uncle, a wealth landowner, was named Har Narain.

At about age four, Chand's father took Bishen and his brother to a wedding in a town beyond Pilibhit. On the return trip, when Pilibhit was announced, Bishen demanded to get off the train. Bishen cried when his father refused.

Sometime later, word of Bishen's behaviour reached a lawyer, K.K.N. Sahay, who was already investigating a reincarnation case involving his own son. After having interviewed Bishen, Sahay persuaded Bishen's father to visit Pilibhit to verify the claims. This was done on August 1, 1926. Arriving there Bishen correctly identified places and people and made statements about his former life in Pilibhit. Those statements corresponded correctly to the life of Laxmi Narain, who had died in 1918, two years before Bishen was born.

Sahay's report was published in 1927. From 1964-1971, Professor Ian Stevenson did several interviews with Bishen and surviving members of both families. All the additional interviews confirmed and supplemented the original material reported by Sahay.

Judging by Sahay's report, Bishen Chand was impressively accurate in his initial (early bird) statements as well as those made on the August 1 visit to Pilibhit. His statements as to caste, education, languages, housing, habits (such as girls and wine), and when asked for the name of his favourite prostitute, Bishen reluctantly named her correctly.

When interviewed by Laxmi Narain's mother, Bishen gave additional details that convinced her that he was Laxmi returned. The details involved some rotten food that he had refused to eat and the mother verified it.

When Bishen was given a pair of tablas (Indian drums) he immediately played them “with ease”. Tablas are very difficult to play well and Bishen had never seen them before. Two things to remember here: (1) we have no way of knowing how well “with ease” means or (2) if Laxmi Narain played drums with any degree of skill.

More impressive are the reports of linguistic competence, corresponding to Laxmi Narain’s competence in Urdu. Chand’s father reported that Bishen used two Urdu words that he had not been taught: one was the word for women’s quarters “masurate” and the other, a word for lock, “kafal”.

Bishen demonstrated some very adult behaviour similar to Laxmi Narain, such as drinking. Between the ages of 4-6, when caught drinking brandy, Bishen reportedly said, “I am used to drinking.” At the age five and a half, Bishen turned to his father one day and said, “Papa, why don’t you keep a mistress? You will have great pleasure from her.” During their first visit to Pilibhit, Bishen said to a police superintendent when asked about wife and children, “I had none; I was steeped in wine and women and never thought of marrying.”

If these reports are accurate, this case is very challenging for anti-survivalists. Bishen produced a long string of verified statements (many of them early-bird) along with various behaviours appropriate to the previous personality, but unusual for a young child. If the reports can be trusted, Bishen’s emotions on certain occasions square with the super-psi hypothesis. For example, at one point he wept *bitterly* over a situation. Weeping bitterly is clearly distinguishable from childlike crying. Only one of these types of crying is appropriate to an adult (Braude 183-187).

The Bishen Chand case is strong for the survival hypothesis for several reasons, and weak on the Super-psi side also for several reasons. Chand was an early bird case, where the memories began to surface spontaneously at an early age. His locations, family relationships, recognitions and partial xenoglossy were accurate. His family did not encourage him. The previous family did not know him or encourage him for money. This case has many hallmarks of survival and almost none of super-psi.

The Antonia case is an engrossing case. It's difficult to classify. On the surface it is an apparent case of reincarnation, with phenomena manifesting through hypnotic past-life regression, rather than spontaneous behaviour in childhood. Regression cases can be a problem. Many therapists use regression to trace the roots of behavioral problems, and they don't realize that hypnosis gives no guaranteed or reliable access to the truth. In fact, a large body of research has documented in depth that hypnosis often liberates a person's latent creativity and imagination (Braude). This problem will be seen also in the Jenny Cockell case.

The Antonia case is difficult to summarize because it is exceptionally rich in intriguing detail and cannot be analyzed without considering these details carefully. The subject's name is Laurel Dilman and her reported former life was investigated by psychotherapist Linda Tarazi. Laurel lived in the Chicago area and at the time of Tarazi's report she was married with two children.

In the mid-1970s Laurel investigated hypnosis for weight control and headaches. During her first round of sessions, she related former lives from several historical periods and locations. But the one that interested her most, and the one to which she kept returning, was that of a 16th century Spanish woman named Antonia. Between June 1977

and January 1978, Laurel had eight sessions. From June 1981 to March 1983, Tarazi conducted thirty-six sessions, all of which were taped and transcribed.

Tarazi initially felt that Laurel's regression was a fantasy (relate this observation to the Jenny Cockell case), because of the erotic elements, rooted in crytomnesia and the demand characteristics of hypnotic experiment (meaning that even under hypnosis, sitters feel they need to answer in certain ways). Tarazi found most of the facts mentioned by Laurel in history books and encyclopedias "albeit with some difficulty". Over time, as Laurel mentioned names and events, Tarazi discovered that Laurel was furnishing obscure information about the appropriate period and locale of Antonia's life. Tarazi continued to track down even more obscure and reliable sources. But, she was never able to find evidence of a person matching Antonia's description and history. There are many, many details to Antonia's story, much too lengthy to mention here.

However, as an investigator, Tarazi wondered if Antonia's story was true. She claimed that Antonia's narrative is correct for several hundred historical facts mentioned over fifty-four sessions. Many of these facts would be well known to a well-read person. Tarazi also mentions that fifty to sixty details of Spanish, English and Dutch history could be found in history books and encyclopedias. But, it hard to believe that someone could spontaneously relate all these facts without a substantial education in 16th century European history and a very good memory.

Tarazi furthermore states:

Another 25-30 highly specialized facts were located with much greater difficulty. Even though these are published in English, it was necessary to check the Chicago Public Library, Newberry Library, and several university libraries (Northwestern, Northeastern, Loyola, DePaul, University of Illinois, and University of Chicago) to verify them all. Examples include: Date of the first publication of the Edict of Faith on the Island of Hispaniola; Spanish laws governing shipping to the Indies;

types of ships used in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and details about them; dates and contents of the Spanish indexes of prohibited books and how they differed from the Roman Index; names of priests executed in England in 1581 and 1582, and the method of execution; and information about a college in Cuenca. Over a dozen facts did not seem to be published in English at all but only in Spanish. A few could only be found in the Municipal and others in the Diocesan Archives in Cuenca, Spain. (Braude 193).

Some of the facts were so obscure that Tarazi sent a questionnaire to nine professors at six of the largest universities in the Chicago area, asking them to rank the likelihood of a non-historian being able to find the information related by Antonia. Seven of the nine answered and the responses confirmed that Antonia was indeed supplying extremely recondite information.

Some of the information was fascinating. In two places, Laurel contradicted Spanish authorities and in both cases she was shown to be correct. At one point, she referred to a college in Cuenca, Spain. Tarazi found absolutely no record of this. Then a consultant from Northwestern University suggested that she phone Loyola University and when she did she was directed to an old seven-volume work in Spanish. In Volume 2, she found references to the founding of a college in Cuenca in the mid-16th century. Tarazi states, "Even a person who reads Spanish is not likely to wade through this tome unless involved in historical research" (Braude 194).

Even though no evidence was ever found that Antonia ever existed, Tarazi argued that if the story were true, it's highly unlikely that some crucial records were ever made, or that they survived. Her claims to be born on the island of Hispaniola and to have been baptized in a local church are examples of these types of records. It is also not likely that records of her marriage by an unofficial priest or her drowning would have been kept (Braude 190-195).

Alan Gauld, author of *Mediumship and Survival*, is suspicious of the evidential value of this case. Is it possible that Laurel once read (and forgot) an obscure, historical novel rich in accurate details of the period? Remember James' Law: there is always enough evidence to convince the believer, but never enough to convince the skeptics! Both Gauld's and Tarazi's search for such a book has been unsuccessful. Tarazi has investigated Laurel's background carefully, and has ruled out fraud or crytomnesia.

Braude is interested in the viability of a motivated super-psi explanation. What seems to matter is lack of evidence for the existence of Antonia and her uncle, a main character in her story. Braude credits Gauld with this research, in that it was Gauld that brought this particular concern to the surface and feels that we should be wary of treating this case as evidence of survival (Braude 196). But, considering the accuracy, abundance and obscurity of details, positing super-psi for this case can raise a problem (Braude 196).

Tarazi says this case was impressive from the start, both in specifics and the way they were revealed. During her sessions, Laurel resisted the pressure to give responses that her questioners believed to be correct or the answers they encouraged. Tarazi took Laurel's case to help her shed the Antonia fantasy.

Some of Laurel's emotions during her regressions were noteworthy. They strengthened the conviction that her responses were not artifacts of suggestion or hypnotic compliance. On one occasion, Laurel saw a building identified *incorrectly* by Spanish authorities as one housing the Inquisition Tribunal, and "she was stunned. Her mood changed. It never occurred to her to question authorities. In quiet resignation she said her whole story must have been imagination" (Braude 197). Later Tarazi found the obscure Spanish book, containing the correct information in the Newberry Library.

Laurel claimed to never have visited this library, which does not circulate books and keeps careful record of all visitors.

Tarazi used hypnosis to help Laurel let go of Antonia's story. Under hypnosis, she gave a suggestion for an end to Antonia's life, with a return to Spain and a healthy life there. The therapeutic strategy seemed to have worked as Laurel lost desire to have further sessions.

In this case there was not much evidence of xenoglossy (communicating in unlearned languages, seen also in the Bishen Chand case). Antonia/Laurel spoke no Spanish spontaneously and only a little Spanish or Latin responsively. Tarazi did note that Spanish speaking persons at the sessions said Antonia/Laurel pronounced Spanish names and words very well. More evidential though is the next statement: Antonia "recited prayers required by the Inquisition, in Latin, referred to special methods of making the sign of the cross, the *signo* and the *santiguado*, unknown to most Spanish-speaking priests today, and composed words and music to a song in Latin" (Braude 198). At the very least, that's not what one would expect of a person of German ancestry and a Lutheran or Methodist religious background (Braude 198).

This case seems very strong for the survival thesis, except for one large problem. This was not an early-bird case. This was a mature woman under treatment for weight loss. The memories were not spontaneous. But then consider the amazing amount of correct detail that Laurel communicated. Even when she was wrong she was right. In one case the authorities identified a building as used by the inquisition and she did not. She was stunned at the time and was later proven to be right. Could this be psi? Could Laurel have read, at some point in her life a Spanish novel with a great deal of detail and

embellished those ideas into memories? If so, she would have had to have read many obscure texts! Could she have been in psychic connection with those in the living that had that knowledge? That is always a possibility.

So, where do we end? This case could be used as evidence of survival of personality, and transmigration of personal memories, or a super-psi case of great psychic work, or maybe a case of obsession, where the subject retains control of the body, but the supposed intruding entity influences the mind, a sort of a parasitic relationship. Different researchers, as shown, have arrived at different conclusions, but even with all the differing opinions, the case is most engaging.

A more contemporary case is the case of Jenny Cockell, an English author from Northampton shire, who believes she is the reincarnation of a Mary Sutton, an Irish woman, who lived in the village of Malahide, near Dublin, and died in 1931. This case has received widespread attention. Not since the Bridey Murphy case of 1950 has a case been so well known. Jenny, who was born in 1953, in rural England, is now a wife, mother, and chiropodist. Her story has been told on “Unsolved Mysteries” and in her own book, *Across Time and Death: A Mother’s Search for her Past Life Children* (Nickell reincarnation 1).

From the time she was a child, Jenny Cockell has had dreams and memories of another person. That person’s name was Mary. That’s all she knew-no surname, location, anything. Over the years Jenny worked with these memories and dreams and finally went to Ireland where she located a village that seemed to fit (an important word) her memories. She also underwent hypnosis several times and actually retrieved wrong information.

Jenny describes herself as a “withdrawn and nervous child” and often awoke crying over her “memories of Mary’s death” and her expressed “fear for the children I left behind” (Cockell 1) (Nickell-rein 1). Jenny was a dreamer, and an unhappy childhood pushed her into herself. Her main company was two imaginary friends. She was classed as a slow learner in school because of her “dreamlike state of mind”, but it turned out later that she had a very high IQ and she earned a membership in Mensa, the “genius” society (Nickell 1-2).

When put under hypnosis, Jenny seemed to become Mary. “I cried as she cried”, she states; “I knew her pain as my own” (Cockell 33) (Nickell 2). While in the hypnotic state, Jenny seemed to be partly in the past and partly in the present. “Yet, I was Mary, and the past had become very real, I could smell the grass on the slopes outside a large farmhouse, and I breathed the fresh spring air.” Again,

As the questions were being asked and answered in this strange mechanical way, I seemed to be free to wander through the places I saw—tangible, vivid places. I felt the wind in my hair; I could touch and smell the air as though I were there” (Cockell 36-37) (Nickell 2).

The hypnosis did little to help in her quest to identify Mary or Mary’s family, leaving Jenny “almost where I was before the hypnosis started “(Cockell 69) (Nickell 2). She complained about “the lack of concrete details such as that forever elusive surname” (Cockell 70) (Nickell 2).

Jenny then turned to actual research, publishing an ad in the Mensa magazine, sending out form letters, etc. Eventually she found a village (Malahide), a road (Swords road), and finally a woman named Mary Sutton who roughly fit the target. The story ends with Jenny making contact with some of Mary’s surviving children, who are old enough to be her parents. Remember that Jenny was born more than thirty years after Mary’s

death. Some of these children are comfortable with the claimed reincarnation of their mother and participated with Jenny in a video which showed them exploring the ruins of their old cottage and exchanging memories of their life there (www.afterlife101.com). The children, being Roman Catholic, do not believe in reincarnation per se, but went on record as saying that somehow, their mother “speaks through” Jenny, and they verified details of her memories (Holmes 2).

On the other side of the coin, so to speak, is Joe Nickell, a senior research fellow for Skeptical Inquirer’s Committee for Skeptical Inquiry. He proceeds to analyze Jenny’s book and to totally debunk it. He begins by saying that even though the saga is undoubtedly sincere, it cannot withstand critical analysis. There is very little factual information with heavy reliance on dreams and hypnosis. Mary has no surname, and there are no names for husband or children. The village’s name and location are unknown and Jenny knew no dates, etc. (Nickell 3).

Nickell says that Jenny uses circular reasoning. She sent out inquiries that sought a village with certain sketchy requirements and when such a village was—not surprisingly—discovered, she adopted it as the one she was looking for. Obviously, if it had not fit, she would have looked further. This type of approach is like drawing a target around an arrow once it has struck something (Nickell 3).

Nickell also accuses Jenny of retrofitting (after-the-fact-matching). For example, when she made a sketch of a church in Malahide during hypnosis that was matched to St. Andrew’s, the sketch was simple, without details. St Andrew’s was not Mary’s church, but rather a church she often walked by (Nickell 3).

Nickell says that all through the book and story Jenny rationalizes errors and omissions. “A lot of remembering was in isolated fragments, and sometimes I would have difficulty making sense of them” (Cockell 6) (Nickell 3). When dealing with the name of the road Mary lived on, the name was *Swords Road*, not Salmons Road. Jenny notes that both begin with S and that the accuracy was “about as close as I usually got when trying to remember names” (Cockell 66) (Nickell 3). She concluded that “so little of what I remembered had stayed intact (Cockell 84) (Nickell 3). From what I have been told by some therapists who do regressions, this type of fragmentary evidence is quite common in past-life regressions. People see glimpses of information and have to piece it together. That is why when Nickell objects to Jenny’s picture of the church being a church that Mary walked by, rather than the one she attended; I accept that as a fragment of memory. Nickell feels that she’s wrong.

So, if Jenny’s story is not true, where did it come from? The best evidence says that these kinds of past life memories are not memories at all. These remembrances are made under hypnosis and are simply products of an invitation to fantasize. Robert Baker, in his book, *Hidden Memories: Voices and Visions from Within*, says:

For a long while it was believed that hypnosis provided the person hypnotized with abnormal or unusual abilities of recall. The ease with which hypnotized subjects would retrieve forgotten memories and relive early childhood experiences was astonishing. However, when the veridicality of such memories was examined, it was found that many of the memories were not only false, but they were even outright fabrications. Confabulations, i.e. making up stories to fill in memory gaps, seemed to be the norm rather than the exception. It seems. Literally, that using “Hypnosis” to revive or awaken a person’s past history somehow or other not only stimulates the person’s desire to recall and his memory processes, but it also opens the flood gates of his or her imagination (Nickell 4).

As to the genesis of “Mary”, Nickell says we must look to Jenny’s unhappy childhood and her consequent tendency to fantasize. When one analyzes her autobiographical statements, she shows many of the traits of a fantasy-prone personality. These are as follows: (1) she is an excellent hypnotic subject; (2) as a child she spent much time fantasizing; and (3) had imaginary playmates, as well as (4) a fantasy identity (i.e., “Mary”). In addition, (5) her imagined sensations are quite vivid and real to her; (6) she not only recalls but relives past experiences; (7) she also has had out-of-body-experiences; and (8) believes she has a variety of psychic abilities. Taken together, these traits are strong evidence of fantasy proneness.

Jenny herself admits that she was forever dreaming. She says, “my escape into the past grew as I grew, and it was like a little death in my own life, a death of part of me that replaced part of my life (Cockell 16) (Nickell 4) Nickell says that this is the admission of a classic fantasizer, whose need to retreat from an unpleasant reality led her to manufacture a reality—one that took on, in a manner of speaking, a life of its own (Nickell 4).

Although I said I was not going to engage the debunkers-who deny all phenomena-this is such a recent and well-known case, I wanted to give it exposure. A fantasy theory is not part of this study. I began the Cockell story thinking it was strong on memories that showed life to life survival, and I have ended by having to agree with Nickell that it is a fantasy produced by the creative freedom of hypnotism. I also have to agree that she used circuitous thinking, sketching a church in a very primitive way that might match many church buildings, or when searching for the town where Mary live, she sent out a letter with a description. If she had not found one town that matched, she

might have found another. Could she have also been drawing consciously or unconsciously on the memories of the living? This is also a possibility. Personally, I wanted this case to be a strong survival case and it just is not. At least I know what it isn't.

Stevenson says the argument for reincarnation can only be won by finding an *ideal case*, that is, one that meets the following conditions:

- (1) It is rich in verified memory claims not accountable in terms of clairvoyance, ESP (telepathy), or cryptomnesia.
- (2) It is attended by the presence of a complicated skill (such as speaking a foreign language or playing an instrument) that demonstrably could not have been learned by the subject in his or her present life.
- (3) It is attended by appropriate birthmarks corresponding to wounds received in the earlier life remembered by the subject, and the occurrence of the wounds in the previous life is independently verified.
- (4) It is a case wherein the memory claims are not very much diminished with age, nor do they need to be induced under hypnotic trance or regression.
- (5) It is a case in which the subject's identification with a past personality is recognized by the subject as continuous with his or her present personality rather than as substitutive of the present personality, and the identification is maintained over a long period of time – preferably into adulthood.
- (6) It is a case wherein the subject's identification with the past personality cannot be explained by the influence of parents or other persons.
- (7) It is a case wherein the subject, as a result of his or her identification with a past personality, manifests predictable emotional responses to specific events and persons remembered in the past life.
- (8) It is a case wherein the subject is recognized as the past person reincarnated, and accepted over a long period of time, by many extant family members or friends (who have nothing to gain by the recognition and acceptance) of the past personality. (Almeder 59).

All cases will not fit these requirements to become *ideal cases*. I have included this list of the characteristics of an ideal case so that by comparing the cases chosen in this chapter, the evidence is clearer as to which cases are closer to being genuine survival cases. Even in this short chapter on Reincarnation, none of the cases discussed are ideal cases. Bishen Chand might be considered to come the

closest. Reincarnation can be seen as tremendous evidence for survival beyond death and over time, across more than one death. It can also be seen as fantasizing, especially as hypnosis seems to release the creativity and imagination. It can also be looked at in terms like obsession or possession. However it is viewed, it is apparent that it tilts the scales towards the survivalist (Braude 216), particularly when one looks at the cumulative force of the best cases taken together.

Conclusion

The conclusion that I draw from my research into the science of mediumship and evidence of survival is that the evidence gives a reasonable basis for believing in personal survival after bodily death. The evidence does not support the belief that everyone survives death; but it does support clearly the belief that some do. At its very best, the evidence vindicates the belief that some individuals survive bodily death for a finite period of time. In this opinion, I draw on my own research and I agree with the findings of Dr. Stephen Braude.

I think the evidence presented in the chapters on Mrs. Piper, Ms. Palladino, seance mediumship, the Cross-Correspondences, and reincarnation puts us, at the end of the day, in a place where the confirmation for the two competing theories of survival and Super-psi is just about in balance (imagine the scales of justice) with a slight tilting of the scales towards the survivalists and away from the Super-psi hypothesis.

There is much room left for further research and hypothesizing. At least at the end of this research, I am able to say that mediumship is an established fact and that it rests on a viable scientific foundation which has been continuously researched and investigated since the last half of the 19th century, and the investigatory work continues to the present day.

Why did I arrive at this conclusion? I agree with Dr. Stephen Braude's reasoning. The survival hypothesis assumes as a fact that there is *one* primary source of information about an apparently communicating entity: namely that particular individual who has survived bodily death. In conflict with that thought, the Super-psi hypothesis *requires*

that there be multiple sources of information to verify the information at least for the best cases.

Many good cases are very challenging for the researcher, not only because of the *amount* of information that is given, or because the information had to be confirmed from multiple sources, but also because of the *consistency* of the information. Success for PSI requires avoiding or circumventing any deliberate obstacles such as material that is not verifiable from any living source. If that's correct, the consistency required by super-psi is more baffling than that required by the survivalists. The problem of multiple sources now becomes critical. The multiple links required by the super-psi hypothesis become more vulnerable to obstacles than the single link assumed by the survivalists. So the super-psi hypothesis may ultimately be more difficult to sustain in the face of the complexity of the evidence. Super-psi often suffers from something called *crippling complexity*. There are simply too many possibilities to explain. A simpler solution often seems more feasible.

The case of Mrs. Piper has several features that seem to stand out. First, William James called her his, "White Crow". He could find no evidence of fraud or any type of attempted deception with her. He and other investigators came away from sittings with her convinced that her sources were other-worldly. The evidence of survival with Mrs. Piper was very high and the super-psi was much less. Mrs. Piper provided detailed information that was not known many times to the sitter, who had to search to verify what she had told them. Also, she provided over the years much information for which she would have had to have intimate personal knowledge of the families and relationships of the people with whom she sat.

The sittings with Eusapia Palladino were of an entirely different order and type altogether. First, Eusapia was a physical medium who specialized in moving objects, using spirit energy and her own. This contrasted with Mrs. Piper, as she was primarily a trance-automatic writing medium. The Super-psi theory can come in with Eusapia, who unfortunately left a lasting impression as a cheat and a fraud. The overwhelming evidence shows that when Eusapia was really “on” she was amazing. However, she had that sense of, “the show must go on”. When the phenomena did not appear in the way she desired, she felt that the sitters must receive what they were paying for. Also, she said that as she sat, she received telepathically the expectation from the sitters that she would cheat, so she did. So we know she received information telepathically from the sitters. We could find some evidence of psi with Eusapia involving the spirits she brought through in a physical way. Was she picking up the desire of the sitters to be in communication with certain spirits? Quite possibly, but when a spirit touched a sitter, or kissed them, that is really strong evidence for survival.

Table-tipping séances seem to lean heavily towards survival. Faraday said that the tables turned because of “ectenic force”, that is the oblique muscular movement of the fingertips. There is no answer given as to what questions will be asked, how the table will respond by tipping, walking, bowing, or twirling on one or two legs. This seems to be an energy exchange between the sitters and those in the spirit world. Thinking along the lines of Valerie Hunt in *Infinite Mind*, table tipping could quite possibly be the interfacing of two mind fields, one mortal and one postmortem, because many times the medium at the table has not met the sitters until that sitting and knows nothing about them. The medium is only one person at the table. Is there not a greater possibility of

telepathy between sitters if it were a family? How interesting it might be if the sitters were all strangers to each other and the medium, meeting at the table for the first time! Besides that, it is the table being used as a medium of communication, not the medium. In fact, table-tipping is a type of communication wherein the sitters can go directly to the surviving consciousness without a medium. I would suspect Super-psi more at a table without a medium, with family members alone, than with a medium. Family members sitting at the seance table together have group memories that can reinforce each other and possibly affect the questions being asked, but the medium, meeting the family for the first time will not have that knowledge. It is quite possible that the medium might pick up on the group vibration and use it to bring through certain spirits, but it is just as possible with the family sitting alone as it is with a medium. The only influence the medium might have is to make the connection stronger. However, remember that Dr. Stephen Braude first met phenomena through a table in his own home, with friends, and confessed to being quite startled as to the information that was communicated and the manner in which it happened.

The Cross-correspondence cases are an intriguing group of messages that came through over a thirty years period of time. These messages make for fascinating speculation as to the two theories. According to the communicators, led by F.W.H. Myers, the purpose of these messages and the method by which they were communicated was to prove survival; not only of one personality, but of a group of personalities with interests and goals for those left behind. The messages were sent in fragments to several mediums at various locations around the globe, and the message had to be discerned in a way not unlike putting a puzzle together. Many researchers feel these messages make an

extremely good case for survival, while others feel that the Super-psi theory makes sense here. An interesting point can be made here for the Super-psi hypothesis. There was no information in any of the Cross-correspondence readings that was not known to several people scattered around the globe. Therefore this information can to my mind be used just as strongly for a Super-psi hypothesis as for survival. I can see both sides of the question. Again, as with my general conclusion, I feel the scales tip towards survival, even with the very complicated method used. Maybe this is because I simply want to see the information this way and that I empathize with F.W.H. Myers in his desire to communicate in such a way as to prove survival, and entirely missing the point!

The cases of reincarnation tend to run the gamut from being very good survival cases, to being possible Super-psi cases to really matching the format of a fantasy case, which is really beyond the realm of this study. The case of Bishen Chand seems to make the most sense as a survival case, as it seems meet much of the criteria of an ideal case. While the Antonia case is questionable in many ways, it contains much extremely interesting information. The Chand case was actual memories, locations and family members and situations that arose in an early bird type of format, while the Antonia case came up under hypnosis, and therefore could be false memories. But if they are false memories, obtained through some Super-psi connections, they are extremely detailed and factual! Again, what if she was drawing psychically on the knowledge of living people, such professors who had studied 16th century Spanish history in detail? Or, because of the source in hypnosis, were the memories a fantasy that grew details over time? To add to the speculation, when Laurel's doctor planted the suggestion that Antonia went back to Spain and lived a normal life and death, the memories seemed to dissipate and Laurel was

never troubled by them again. I would really like to see this as survival, because of the strong basis in detail, but for me, the memories arising under hypnosis skews the whole case.

To have meaning, any idea of survival in another dimension has to have as part of it consciousness, with memory and choices as main characteristics. With the physical body dead, the astral or spiritual body will not have much meaning without being on the deepest level connected to consciousness. Since it is the mind or consciousness whose survival we are considering, it should not come as a surprise that the “realms” of which consciousness exists are mind-dependent. Mediumship expresses itself often as mind-to-mind, or mind to universal mind.

Having arrived at the conclusion that the evidence favors survival, as a final step in my case before concluding, I should mention that there are some people for whom the survival hypothesis cannot be the preferred hypothesis because they hold that the whole notion of survival is conceptually incoherent. As a working medium, I have trouble with that approach, but it is part of the world view of many people.

There are several objections to any theory of survival that doesn't require physical bodies and against thoughts of mind-dependent realms. Some of these objections follow.

One regular argument against survival is that in the next world these experiences would be subjective, lacking any real physical basis. To begin with, the next world is what it is and cannot be changed or argued about because we'd rather have it another way. Even in a subjective experience, there might be elements of personal private experience. There might also be intersubjectivity influenced by the experiencers themselves. This is analogous to Werner Heisenberg's discovery that the very act of

investigating changes the object investigated (Becker 182). The absence of objectivity in the next world need not be an obstacle to the reality of the next world. If the dimension entered at death is an image projection of numerous minds in agreement together, there might be a feeling of material reality and intersubjectivity. I would reference the reader to the recent film *What Dreams May Come*. In this film, the hero dies and goes into the next dimension where he has a guide to help him get oriented. The hero questions the guide about the houses and clothes and bodies that he sees. The guide explains that none of these things are necessary in that dimension, but we create them from our spiritual mind to help us feel more comfortable in the new surroundings, and that in time we will drop them away, and become pure spirit. So the argument from the position of subjectivity does not keep other dimensions from existing, need not apply to the next world any more than to this world, and necessitates things desired which are not within reach in this world.

Another problem often raised is that people in the next dimension might be unidentifiable, since they would lack “real” bodies. I would submit to the reader that communication in the next dimension is mind-to-mind, and that bodies are an illusion. Again, reference *What Dreams May Come*. We can have a body if we need it, especially for the first amount of time in the new dimension while we get used to not needing all the ego indicators that the left brain supplied us with in the physical body. The difference in the next dimension is that the underlying essence of that life would be spiritual, not material. In the next dimension we might have real-seeming bodies and perceptions. These might be projections of the minds in those dimensions. Once we realize that perceivable bodies are possible in the next world, the problem of identification

disappears. To a medium, the spiritual body can appear as materialization and communication occurs on a mental level which is consistent with the change in the levels of consciousness.

A third problem is the claim that disembodied minds are possible after death, but that they do not constitute a person. If my mind survives, my mind is not me. But what if one continues to have experiences after the death of the body, such as looking down at the doctor working pronouncing one dead and what if one feels himself passing through a dark tunnel and arriving in some “heavenly” place, greeted by a relative. If that disembodied mind did some experimenting-moving, stopping, giving and receiving telepathic messages-that might demonstrate that this mind has a new existence that is decidedly mental and subjective in a way the physical earthly existence never was. One could choose two lines of reasoning:

1. I know the body I perceive now is not physical. I know that kind of physical body is very important to the definition of person. Therefore I am no longer a person-I am now a mind, spirit, fantasy or whatever (Becker 183).

2. I no longer have a physical body. But I still remember my previous self and experiences. I can still experience many things including quirks of personality. I was mistaken in thinking that bodies are important to selfhood. I still exist, even though I now do not have a material physical body.

One of these thoughts says we cannot survive bodily death, the other says we can.

Nothing has changed except the definition of the term *person*, and our capability to utilize that word for the new sort of existence which we experience in survival. The argument that we don't survive is really quite empty, because it tells us nothing about

what really happens. The question is not, does a physical person exist after death, but what are the similarities between what exists after death and what exists now (Becker 184).

On the other hand, death may embody the end of all personal limits and boundaries, without being the end of conscious experience altogether. This type of complete removal of the limitations of consciousness might lead to either a sense of union with a “collective unconscious” or to an “explosion” or expansion of consciousness into transpersonal states, or other states of disembodied consciousness. Remember Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor’s description of her experience of the cessation of her left brain functions after her stroke, leaving her in a beautiful place where she was in the total flow of the universe, resting in the right brain.

Speaking from available evidence, once again, I arrive at some tentative conclusions. Some people may be reborn into other human bodies. They may remember some elements of their former lives

Some people will survive in ethereal bodies after their physical bodies decay. To these people surviving in ethereal bodies, it will feel as if their locus of conscious thought and perception was released from their heads at death and that they are living in a permanent out-of-body experience (Becker 186).

Some people will find that they have passed into realms that are subjective and created by themselves in accordance with their desires and attitudes. These realms do not feel any less physical because they lack material substance. This type of model accounts for visions in meditation and on the deathbed.

Some people experience selfless transcendent (nirvanic) states. These states are superpersonal and we cannot go beyond this point in this discussion.

There is good evidence that some persons have survived death in the past and that some people now living will continue to have conscious personal experiences after bodily death. The philosopher C.J. Ducasse says: “The balance of the evidence so far obtained is on the side of the reality of survival, and in the best cases, of survival not merely of life on earth, but survival also of the most significant capacities of the human mind, and of the continuing exercise of thereof” (Becker 186).

My own experience as a Spiritualist medium for over twenty years leaves me at this point in my thinking. I gave an impromptu short reading to my mentor Prof, Dr. Cook, during one of our meetings. As I gave it, I analyzed it for him. Part of it came admittedly from Super-psi activity in which I received information psychically directly from him about one of his relatives. I also heard, in my head, a voice, other than my own, which I believed to be from that relative, telling me information and what to say to Dr. Cook. I believe mediumship fires on both of these pistons, as it were. Often when I start a reading, I hold my sitter’s hands and we pray together for the highest and best to come through. During this time I ask for the Divine Source to govern our proceedings and I literally receive a download of information from the sitter, much like tapping into a computer bank. When you add to the Super-psi ability the gifts of clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience, clairgustience and omniscience, you can get a picture of how a medium receives information. Remember, the difference between a medium and a psychic is that a medium does everything a psychic does plus the aspect of contacting the next dimension. Again, I find that there seems to be almost a balance between the

survival information and the Super-psi information, but I do feel that I receive more from the next dimension. That is my experience of working with these two theories.

Considering the research, writing and thought on the subject of survival versus Super-psi, it seems that some essential, purposeful, and distinctive chunk of our personal psychology can survive physical death (Braude 303). When all these are taken together, they point more strongly towards survival than toward the Super-psi theory. Taken as a whole body of work, the types of survival evidence form a reasonably coherent body of material. If we are willing to give credence to the existence of a community of surviving personalities, such as in the Cross-correspondences, it would be reasonable to suppose that their interests and ideas would be as diverse after bodily death as before. So it's not surprising that the survival evidence is quite varied and complex.

If I were to survive a terrible, normally fatal accident and then try to contact my friends, I suppose I would do it in several various ways, depending on my state of mind and access to certain types of communications. As far as survival evidence is concerned, if I take out from my case the eccentricities of every potentially surviving postmortem person, I would expect to find a mixture of types of evidence, or none at all. That seems to be what we observe.

So, at the end, we find the scales tilting slightly toward the survivalist hypothesis and away from Super-psi hypothesis. The question of personal survival is actually a question of the nature of personhood, and the relations of consciousness to reality and to the body with which it normally seems related. One in ten people might give us usable evidence about the nature of survival on their deathbeds-once in their lifetime (Becker 188). The probability that we survive bodily death doesn't make this earthly existence

any less important. Death is still a change from this earthly life and everything associated with this type of existence. It is up to each one of us to learn as much as possible, to do the best with what this life accords to us so that when we do make the change called death, we are ready to greet the next dimension, whatever it might be.

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