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Psypioneer would like to extend its best wishes to all its readers and contributors for the festive season and the coming New Year



GREAT LOSS TO SURVIVAL RESEARCH



The funeral of Denise Iredell, chair of the Survival Joint Research Committee, took place at Putney Vale crematorium on 26 November 2009. Dennis Bury (secretary) and Peter Hallson represented the Trust, and David Ellis the SPR council.

Denise (19 August 1926 - 8 November 2009) was the last link between the College of Psychic Studies (formerly LSA) and the 1930s. Her mother Muriel Hankey had worked for both CPS and earlier for an unconnected body with a similar name, the British College of Psychic Science founded in 1920. Denise was a childhood playmate of the Fodors' daughter. Another lifelong friend was Eileen [Coly], daughter of Eileen Garrett; Mrs Coly revisited Denise not long ago.

The backroom work of Denise is little known. She was once in the 1950s acting editor of LIGHT during the illness of an editor. She organised the 1958 CPS survival conference, and still used the souvenir propelling pencil. Late in life, her clear voice and memory led to her appearance in a TV documentary about Helen Duncan. Like her mother, Denise was also a dedicated transcriber of séance records.

Denise was one of the first private donors to the Psypioneer project in 2000. Her long experience however was priceless, not least when she was able to draw also on things her mother told her - that telephone tapping for example, had been authorised in the investigation of the flower medium, Hilda Lewis, or of a certain titled psychic lady who liked to be double barrelled by name "Mummy thought she was a megalomaniac."

LP.

EARLY SURVIVAL RESEARCH, IS IT STILL RELEVANT

[**Note by Psypioneer:** - This was a “Tate” lecture by Leslie Price to the SPR in London on 2 October 2008, now printed with minor changes. “Tate” lectures on survival matters are held at both SPR and CPS under the terms of a bequest.]

There are five lessons which I want to suggest we can learn from early survival research. But I have to begin with a shock disclosure. Our society, the SPR, was formed as you know in 1882. This lecture is concerned with the years before that, when there was a good deal of survival research in progress, from various standpoints. At the end of the talk I shall reveal the name of a person involved in the foundation of the SPR who is not named on the SPR web site.

Lesson One is that **we cannot assume that even the basic facts of those times are already established by historians.** Sometimes they never have been, and sometimes they have been forgotten. Take the Fox Sisters who are remembered by Spiritualists the world over each year on 31 March, for establishing a certain form of communication at Hydesville, New York State. Some could not tell you how many Fox sisters there were, but none can say for certainty how old they were – and as any student of poltergeist phenomena knows, the ages of young people around phenomena are very pertinent.¹ The Australian Spiritualist historian Lis Warwood is shortly to publish additional census returns about the Fox family.²

And sometimes what is apparently known is actually not known at all. Charles B. Rosna is a name attributed a peddler who communicated at Hydesville. But when Paul Gaunt examined a number of early accounts of those events, he found that initially there was no name, only initials, which varied. There was even a tradition of a second peddler in the area; and of the missing peddler turning up alive!³

Modern study of these events can conveniently start with Barbara Weisberg’s biography “Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism” (2004).⁴

She returned to the first accounts gathered by an attorney a fortnight after the outbreak, since fully reprinted in Psypioneer April 2005⁵

¹ *Are the Ages of the Fox Sisters important?* - Psypioneer Volume 4, No.8 pages 193-195: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.8August08..pdf>

² *The Fox Sisters: Riddle of the Records* - Psypioneer Volume 4, No.9 pages 118-195: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.9September08..pdf>

³ *What is known of the Hydesville peddler ?*- Psypioneer Volume 1, No.9 pages 82-94: - http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP9.pdf

⁴ For information on this book and its author, use our search engine key word - Barbara Weisberg www.woodlandway.org —Psypioneer Journals.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had written in his “History of Spiritualism”:

“The author has in vain attempted to get an original copy of the pamphlet, “A Report of the Mysterious Noises heard in the House of Mr. John D. Fox,” published at Canandaigua, New York, but he has been presented with a facsimile of the original, and it is his considered opinion that the fact of human survival and power of communication was definitely proved to any mind capable of weighing evidence from the day of the appearance of that document.”

That is perhaps overstating the matter, but many later writers, both for and against the Hydesville phenomena, including Podmore, have managed to write about them without ever reading Lewis, and one must question their conclusions accordingly. What about the fishermen? What about the river? They are in Lewis, and at the very least need thought.

There many cases in psychical research where the witnesses are not interviewed for many a day. By his interviews, Lewis was certainly a pioneer of psychical research, but there was one notable omission in the statements by witnesses. The actual Fox sisters seem to have been below his radar. He appears not to have interviewed them, or even learned their names. How different history might have been if he had done so!

Our second lesson may seem surprising. **The main current of survival research in those years does not run through the Fox sisters.** There’s a clue on the first volume of Podmore’s “Modern Spiritualism” – all those chapters leading from mesmerism to Andrew Jackson Davis. I’d like to formally call Podmore as witness. When his book appeared in 1902, it was greeted in the SPR Proceedings as the most important book contribution since “Phantasms of the Living” in 1887. But I want to go back to our Proceedings in 1899. Mrs Piper, the Boston medium, had been producing good survival evidence without precedent. Podmore responded, as you would expect, with some critical comments. But he had to agree that the Piper case was the best evidence, better even than certain names of the past.

So which names did he mention? Andrew Jackson Davis, the seer of Poughkeepsie.

“And I am not aware that Davis' claims to the possession of information supernormally acquired have ever been substantiated in concrete cases.”

How about Swedenborg then?

“Some few instances, indeed, are alleged in which Swedenborg clairvoyantly became aware of events at a distance; but it would scarcely be profitable at the present time to inquire into the sufficiency of the evidence.”

What about Stainton Moses, the medium for “Spirit Teachings”?

⁵ A report of the Mysterious Noises heard in the house of Mr. John D. Fox... - Pspioneer Volume 1, No.12 entire issue: - www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP12.pdf

“As regards Stainton Moses, the case seems to me quite clear. Practically all the particulars which his “spirits” furnished were names, dates, and other concrete facts, such as could have been culled from the daily papers, published biographies, and conversations with his friends. In fact there could be no difficulty in accounting for the whole of these communications, with two exceptions, on the hypothesis that they merely reproduced facts already present in his subconscious memory.”

The Fox sisters were not even mentioned. So having drawn a near blank from both the United States and Britain, to which country did Podmore turn. Well, how about Germany?

“Again, there were many German ecstasies in the first few decades of the present century, of whom the Seeress of Prevorst may be taken as the type, whose delineation of the spiritual spheres, journeys to the moon and the interstellar spaces, and the like, fill many closely printed volumes. But here, again, evidence for terrestrial clairvoyance, though not altogether wanting, is hardly sufficient to call in itself for serious consideration.”

Does anyone know the correct answer?

It is France. Podmore first discusses Alexis Didier, who has featured in our Journal in recent years.⁶ He does not feel able to dismiss him as a possible parallel to Mrs. Piper. But his favourite case is someone else. Let me quote a couple of paragraphs from Podmore in that 1899 Proceedings paper.

“Our next seer is of a different type, and presents, so far as I am aware, as close a parallel as any in later spiritualistic literature to the American clairvoyante. Alphonse Cahagnet describes himself as a simple ouvrier. He was, in fact, as we learn from an authoritative account of him in the *Journal du Magnétisme*, originally a journeyman cabinet-maker, and subsequently took up the trade of restoring old furniture. In January, 1848, he published at Paris the first volume of his *Arcanes de la vie - future dévoilés* in which he gave an account of communications received through eight somnambules, which purported to proceed from thirty-six persons of various stations, who had died at different epochs, some of them more than two centuries previously. The séances had extended over some years. This first volume contained “revelations” of the usual post-Swedenborgian kind about the constitution of the spirit spheres, the occupations of the deceased, the bliss of the after life, and so on, together with more personal messages from deceased friends of those persons whom Cahagnet admitted to witness the manifestations. But there is little or nothing to show that the so-called communications, did not emanate exclusively from the imagination of the medium, and we are dependent solely upon Cahagnet's good faith and competence for the accuracy of the reports given.

⁶ Briefly also in *Nineteenth-Century Articles about Mesmerism: A Selected Bibliography* - Carlos S. Alvarado - *Psypioneer* Volume 3, No. 12 page 278: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.12December07..pdf> Also *Biography of Books* - Carlos S. Alvarado - *Psypioneer* Volume 3, No. 5 page 114: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.5May07..pdf>

“Cahagnet appears, however, to have been a man of quite unusual sincerity and teachableness. The criticisms on his earlier work showed him where the evidence was defective; and in the later séances described in his second volume, which was published in January, 1849, he appears to have done his utmost to establish the authenticity of the alleged spirit communications by procuring, wherever possible, the written attestations of the other persons present. The medium in all these later sittings was a young woman named Adèle Maginot, whom he had known for many years. A natural somnambulist from her childhood, she had allowed Cahagnet to “magnetise” her, in order that he might put a stop to the spontaneous attacks which were impairing her health. He soon found her an excellent clairvoyante, especially for the diagnosis and cure of diseases. In the later séances, however, which took place in the spring and summer of 1848, Adèle was chiefly consulted by persons who wished for interviews with deceased friends. Cahagnet drew up a statement of the communications made at each of these sittings, and asked the sitters to sign the statement, indicating how far the particulars given were true or false. These statements, with the signed attestations, are published.”

You won't be surprised that Podmore was not satisfied with the survival evidence in this case, but he had to admit that paranormal knowledge was shown. But this research was going in France without reference to events in the United States - note those dates, 1848, and 1849. Perhaps it offered a better way to obtain survival material than Spiritualism, though there is of course more than a little overlap in methods with Spiritualism.

You will be surprised, I think, that no one has mentioned Cahagnet in SPR publications since the First World War, except for the library catalogue, and a passing mention in a 1970 book review. I don't mean that it is ignored in all books – Alan Gauld, for example, has a brief account in his “History of Hypnotism”. But the only significant journal treatment appears to be:

Anderson, Rodger I. “Cahagnet's Contribution to Psychical Research.” *Theta* 12, no. 4 (1983): 74.

But is it right for Podmore to write off all Anglo-Saxon work prior to Mrs Piper? There is certainly some valuable testimony in the Report of the Dialectical Society of their 1869-70 investigation, last reprinted in 2001.

Much material on early American Spiritualism was made available by Dr John Buescher through his web site www.spirithistory.com, though sadly this has now closed. In 2004, he published an important study “The Other Side of Salvation - Spiritualism and Nineteenth Century Religious Experience” (Boston, Skinner House Books.) which unfortunately was not reviewed in JSPR. The sub-title was not entirely accurate. The book is a detailed account of a large number of Unitarian and Universalist persons, many of them ministers, who were involved in early Spiritualism. It's written in an easy style underpinned with a considerable scholarship about American Spiritualism. The Fox sisters do not appear in the first seventy pages, but there is much about other personalities who contributed serious thought to the new movement – Samuel Brittan, for example, or John Bovee Dods. Inevitably the explanations of mediumship are

discussed, but because he had no Unitarian/Universalist link the chief survival researcher of early American Spiritualism does not feature.

Who was this, you may ask, this chief survival researcher? It was Robert Hare, the chemist, who developed the high temperature blow-pipe and a voltaic battery having large plates, used for producing rapid and powerful combustion, called a deflagrator. His reward for all this has been almost total obscurity among survival researchers. One exception has been Rodger Anderson, author of the Cahagnet paper mentioned earlier. Here's an abstract of his 1990 paper in JASPR.

“ANDERSON, R. I. (1990). Robert Hare's contribution to psychical research.
Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 84, 235-262.

Despite repeated calls for scientific investigation, spiritualism in the U.S. received only scant attention from professional academics until 1853, when the chemist Dr. Robert Hare (1781-1858) decided to expose the delusion. For this purpose he invented a number of ingenious devices designed to prevent imposture, but his experiments, contrary to his expectations, convinced him that the phenomena were genuine and due to the action of spirits. Hare then assembled an authoritative body of spirit teachings by accepting only those communications that passed the test of his various apparatuses, which he considered proof against chicanery and unconscious interference by the medium. After some 2 years' work, Hare publicly announced his conclusions to the delight of the spiritualists and the utter dismay of his academic fellows, who promptly branded him a dupe and fanatic. Although psychical researchers have also criticized Hare's work, identifying numerous critical flaws, the record of his investigations still marks a real advance in the scientific study of mediumship.— Author's abstract”

Anderson's assessment of Hare's contribution is itself a valuable contribution to survival research. It deserves to be widely known, but won't be until JASPR is available on Lexscien in electronic form. I can only echo Anderson's conclusion

“However imperfect the record of his investigations when judged by today's standards or those of his own, Hare remains the first scientist of distinction to report positive results in testing for paranormal phenomena by instrumental means. The machines he built for that purpose, crude as they may appear when compared with modern electronic equipment, still stand as the first standards erected by science on the uncertain shores of the unknown”(p.258)

This has brought me to the third of my five lessons today from early survival research. I should like to further illustrate it from British examples, but the third lesson is **“Survival research is a struggle to improve equipment and experimental design.”**

Against whom do we struggle? Well, sometimes (and only sometimes) it is against spurious phenomena, but always it is against the uncertainty which results from limitations in the control and descriptions of research conditions.

Let me illustrate this from the career of Anna Eva Fay, “The Indescribable Phenomenon” as she was called (this is also the title of the recent biography of her by Barry H. Wiley,⁷ the first honorary lady associate of the Magic Circle. She was tested by William Crookes. Crookes had Fay hold two electrodes in an electrical circuit connected with a galvanometer in an adjoining room, which indicated any variation in the medium’s grip. A variety of phenomena occurred. Crookes was convinced that his electrical control was not broken. An account of the experiment was published in the *Medium* (March 12, 1875). But it is now generally thought the control was broken. The matter was much discussed in the furor after the publication of Trevor Hall’s book “The Spiritualists” (1962) which had argued that Crookes was a party to deception in his Spiritualist investigations. C. Stephenson in particular had replicated Cromwell Varley’s electrical test with Florence Cook, and considered briefly the Crookes-Fay test. The point I want to make from this case is that a piece of equipment, which in its time was a valuable advance, may not later be found conclusive in ruling out normal means.

Related to this, and illustrated once more in the case of Crookes is the question of detail. A new biography of Crookes by William Brock,⁸ the science historian, has underlined this by giving much attention to his survival research and (incidentally) acquits Crookes of fraud himself. We have to frankly admit that Crookes does not provide enough detail about his investigations, and in some cases the evidence has been destroyed. When Mr and Mrs Crookes and friends had a sitting with Florence Cook, for example, and there were many such sittings, we generally cannot say exactly who was present, where the servants were (including the lab assistant of Crookes), where the Crookes children were, or the other members of the Cook family. We have great difficulty in reconstructing what photos were taken by whom of the sittings. Some relevant letters were destroyed by the heirs of Crookes.

But as we read these old cases from before the SPR, we learn of some important factors. Listen for example to Serjeant Cox about 1875, quoted in *Psypioneer*, August 2006. Cox was a prime mover in the Psychological Society, publisher of the *Psychological Review*, which had Cox lived longer, might have continued as an alternative focus to the SPR for research into Spiritualism.

“I am satisfied that a large amount of fraud has been and still is practised. Some of it is, doubtless, deliberately planned and executed. But some is, I think, done while the medium is in a state of somnambulism, and therefore unconscious. As all familiar with the phenomena of somnambulism are aware, the patient acts to perfection any part suggested to his mind, but wholly without self-perception at the time, or memory afterwards.

It would be foolish, I suggest, to omit this factor in séances today. Mediums in dark séances sometimes do not know what they are doing. The careful conditions which wise investigators prefer, protect the medium as well as the sitter. Note incidentally the early use of the term

⁷ For information on this book and its author, use our *Psypioneer* search engine key word - Barry Wiley www.woodlandway.org —*Psypioneer Journals*

⁸ *William Crookes: A Major Reconsideration* - *Psypioneer* Volume 4, No. 7 pages 176 -177: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.7July08..pdf> See also *William Crookes Biography* – Comments by Barry Wiley – *Psypioneer* Volume 5, No. 2 pages 39 – 42: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.2February09..pdf>

“unconscious” in the letter of Cox. There is also as Cox noted, deliberate fraud, for example with materialised spirits that were not spirits. Cox quoted a letter from one lady medium to another.

“She informs her friend that she comes to the séance prepared with a dress that is easily taken off with a little practice. She says it may be done in two or three minutes. She wears two shifts (probably for warmth). She brings a muslin veil of thin material (she gives its name, which I forget). It is carried in her drawers! It can be compressed into a small space, although when spread it covers the whole person. A pocket-handkerchief pinned round the head keeps back the hair. She states that she takes off all her clothes except the two shifts, and is covered by the veil. The gown is spread carefully upon the sofa over the pillows. In this array she comes out. She makes very merry with the spiritualists whom she thus gulls, and her language about them is anything but complimentary.”

I can well understand how Mr and Mrs Crookes decided about 1876 that further investigation of mediums was not for them. Fortunately we have today a variety of instrumental means which can protect all concerned from such malpractices. Although it falls outside my time frame today, infra red was a helpful instrumental step. First came infra red photography which was being used at the International Institute for Psychical Investigation in the 1930s (also at BCPS and even in a private home - the Muriel Hankey household.). After the Second World War came infra red viewing at séances, in which Dr Donald West, happily still with us, was a pioneer. [One of our members, Lew Sutton, is gathering material on the history of infra red in our subject.] Nowadays there are far more sensitive measures, such as thermal imaging.

Before leaving the Victorian séance room, may I briefly turn to another kind of hanky panky. We should always remember that dalliance between investigator and medium happens. Professor Archie Roy in “The Eager Dead”⁹ has shown how even a former SPR president, Gerald Balfour was not immune to the charms of Mrs Coombe-Tennant, despite the fact that he was a Conservative and she was a Liberal; young Henry C-T was the result. What a researcher says about a medium may be influenced by such sentiment. I have a theory that one of the factors that turned Frank Podmore, once on the committee of the British National Association of Spiritualists, into such a sceptic was that he had relationships with male mediums who told him something of their methods.

For my fourth lesson, it is good to turn to a more positive matter. The whole field owes a great debt to Dr Carlos Alvarado¹⁰ for his contributions on how the history of our subject can fertilise research today. It is now a quarter of a century since his first paper on this theme in our journal “Historical perspective in parapsychology: some practical considerations” (JSPR June 1982), though in a letter in 1981, he cites both Cox (see above) and Kardec, whom I mention below. Alvarado drew attention to problems which are still us, such as the common lack of historical continuity - this results in misconceptions.

⁹ *The Eager Researcher?* – *Psypioneer* Volume 4, No. 6 pages 141 – 144: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.6June08..pdf>

¹⁰ Dr Carlos Alvarado - For information on his many contributions to *Psypioneer*, use our search engine key word – Alvarado www.woodlandway.org – *Psypioneer Journals*.

Some writers believe, for example, that the first parapsychology laboratory was that of Dr J.B. Rhine at Duke University in the 1930s, but actually Harry Price had created a national laboratory of psychical research in London in 1926 - Alvarado also draws attention to a short lived Dutch laboratory of Floris Jansen established in 1907.

The complete body of Dr Alvarado's historical work, spread over a number of journals, but not least in JSRP and the more recent Psypioneer, will repay careful study by survival researchers. It exemplifies my fourth lesson which is **Study history, to avoid repeating it**. Ironically, I suspect that some of his own papers (which are yet to be collected in one volume) have suffered from this neglect. Consider for example, his JSRP January 1987 paper "Observations of luminous phenomena around the human body" which is almost a mini-treatise in twenty pages. He reviews anomalous human luminous phenomena around mediums, mystics and saints, and dying persons among others. His findings are therefore of importance to researchers into survival, religion and near-death, not least for their inter-disciplinary perspective. Incidentally, the SPR library has an up-to-date checklist of his historical papers.

The years from 1848 to 1882, our focus today, were productive of several theoretical frameworks to understand survival evidence. We generally acknowledge of course that the later subliminal perspective of F. W. H. Myers is the normative one for placing survival evidence in context, but my fifth lesson is **we should not forget the older metaphysical systems**. I am a member of the Survival Joint Research Committee, a UK group founded in 1963, and still engaged in research, which sought to bring together persons of different frameworks – Dr Vernon Harrison for example who was influenced by Theosophy, Paul Beard the foremost Spiritualist thinker, Dick Sheargold, an early pioneer of electronic voice phenomena, and other SPR colleagues. The much improved relations between different parties in recent decades are very welcome.

Actually, my first metaphysical example is not so old at all. It was about 1857 that Allan Kardec (real name Rivail) published "The Mediums' Book"¹¹ which collated information in response to questions put to mediums. The numerical impact of this book must be considered much greater than similar works in the Anglo-Saxon world like the "Spirit Teachings" of Stainton Moses or before that, A.J. Davis "Nature's Divine Revelations."

SPR member Steve Hume has noted:¹²

"Rivail's [i.e. Kardec's] most significant achievement was to develop a systematic method of scrutinising mediumistic communications of a philosophical nature that resulted in a consistent body of teachings to suit all needs. The egalitarian nature of the message conveyed naturally attracted the support of the poor by offering comfort and hope; whereas the scientific aspects of the teachings, especially those which gave explanations for the nature of spirit phenomena, interested the more educated and sceptical, many of whom could have been repelled by anything less so early in the movement's history. The end result was a view of spirit communication that has made

¹¹ Allan Kardec - For information on this book and its author, use our search engine key word - Kardec www.woodlandway.org —Psypioneer Journals

¹² See: [-http://www.geae.inf.br/en/articles/hume.html](http://www.geae.inf.br/en/articles/hume.html)

considerable inroads into establishment thinking in a country [i.e. Brazil] that will doubtless come to play a more central part in world affairs in years to come. It is also a fact that 'Spiritism', which is also popular in Mexico and other Latin American countries, is slowly but steadily establishing footholds elsewhere, particularly in the USA where there are now 40 Spiritist centres under the recently formed Spiritist Council of the USA."

Unfortunately there is no proper biography of Kardec, and in particular no full evaluation of the criticism made of his sources by Anglo-Saxon Spiritualists. Perhaps that will change soon, following the paper about Kardec at this year's SPR/PA conference by Dr Alexander Moreira-Almeida. (Psypioneer has since reprinted much of the 1875 Aksakov controversy about Kardec's mediums.)

My second metaphysical example was being explicated quite rapidly just around the time the SPR was formed. I refer to Modern Theosophy as expressed by Madame Blavatsky and her teachers, such as Eliphas Levi. Theosophy made a radical criticism of supposed evidence of survival through mediums, attributing the phenomena to astral shells, elementals and the like. In particular, there was some scathing comment on mediumship in Blavatsky's "Isis Unveiled" (1877), in Judge "Ocean of Theosophy" and in letters attributed to the Mahatmas. Myers did not remain in Theosophy after the Hodgson report of 1885, but William Crookes did. Our centenary president, Arthur Ellison was also Theosophical in outlook.

Incidentally, although Henry Olcott (first T.S. president from 1875-1907), was not a metaphysician, and from 1853- 1874 was a Spiritualist, his residence in India from 1879 and his later travels, were eventually to turn him into an important pioneer of comparative psychical research, able to speak with experience of US mediums, Indian fakirs and French hypnotic subjects.

Thirdly there were some subtle responses from the Christian side, then the dominant public belief in the UK. In "Modern Spiritualism", Podmore makes merry with some of the pamphleteering which went on during the 1853 table turning craze.

"After ascertaining that his interlocutor was a departed spirit, who expected in the course of ten years to be bound with Satan and all his crew and cast into the abyss, Mr. Gillson proceeds with his catechism as follows: "I then asked, 'Where are Satan's headquarters? Are they in England?' There was a slight movement. "Are they in France?' A violent movement." 'Are they in Spain?' Similar agitation. "Are they at Rome?' The table seemed literally frantic."

But among the pamphlets (there are a few not widely known in Lambeth Palace library) is some insightful work, aware of the human origin of much of the material, and also well versed in the relevant biblical accounts of the paranormal. Perhaps I may add one other comment made in 1864, without the paranormal being in mind.

"Also, besides the hosts of evil spirits, I considered there was a middle race, [daimonia], neither in heaven, nor in hell; partially fallen, capricious, wayward; noble

or crafty, benevolent or malicious, as the case might be. They gave a sort of inspiration or intelligence to races, nations, and classes of men. Hence the action of bodies politic and associations, which is so different often from that of the individuals who compose them. Hence the character and the instinct of states and governments, of religious communities and communions. I thought they were inhabited by unseen intelligences. My preference of the Personal to the Abstract would naturally lead me to this view. I thought it countenanced by the mention of “the Prince of Persia” in the Prophet Daniel; and I think I considered that it was of such intermediate beings that the Apocalypse spoke, when it introduced “the Angels of the Seven Churches.” ”

In case you have not guessed this is J.H. Newman in his “Apologia” looking back to about 1830. We shall be hearing much of him in the months ahead, though I am not aware at present of how he responded to the psychic wave of the mid-19th century.

My final metaphysical example is what Bret Carroll has called “Spiritualist republicanism” (“Spiritualism in Antebellum America” Indiana University Press, 1997). This was primarily an American creation, based on communications through mediums, which expressed the values of the new movement. It certainly owed something to Swedenborg, and much to Andrew Jackson Davis. One might be tempted to call it democratic, and similar to plebeian Spiritualism in the UK, except that sometimes, as in the outlook of Hare, there was a marked emphasis on social control, even in the life after death; moreover in the Confederate States, race was often seen differently by the spirits. Spiritualist republicanism was hostile to orthodox religion, but optimistic about the potential of science - it had a marked evolutionary perspective. We can see this, for example, in the 1860 lectures of Emma Hardinge, recently republished by Psypioneer.¹³

There are two obvious objections to my commendation of these older metaphysical systems. The first is that they do not actually result in any practical experimentation. Can we point, for example, to any valuable survival research which employs a Kardecist framework. Or, for all the Theosophical talk of adepts, have they produced one elemental for our attention in the séance room? From the time of George Henry Felt, who raised such hopes in 1875, I fear not.

My second objection, which certainly has some force, is that the metaphysical systems are sometimes of all too human origin, the effusion of the unconscious and the speculation of the unenlightened intellect. There are very few people today who would look to the Harmonial Philosophy of the young A.J. Davis for a perspective on mediumship - indeed even the thoughtful works on the significance of mediumship of the only a generation ago by our SPR colleague and survival researcher Paul Beard, are becoming forgotten.

Nevertheless, I do believe that these older metaphysical systems have lessons for us, that a work such as “Higher Aspects of Spiritualism”, which Stainton Moses put together from papers in 1880 in response to a crisis caused by the seizing at a séance of the former Florence Cook, can throw light on how mediumship works today.

¹³ Republished by Psypioneer; see Books for Sale in every issue. For further information on this book, use our search engine key words –Six Lectures: - www.woodlandway.org —Psypioneer Journals

It would not be right to end these remarks without paying tribute to the Spiritualist journalist Edmund Dawson Rogers, without whom we would not be here today. It was his idea to form a society devoted to psychical research, thus bringing to an end, early in 1882, the prehistoric times with which I have been concerned.¹⁴

“Professor W.F. Barrett was spending the night with me at my residence in Finchley, and we sat up to a late hour while he recounted some of his psychical experiences. In the course of his narration he mentioned the fact that so long ago as 1876 he read a paper to the British Association at Glasgow, principally on the subject of thought transference, and had urged the formation of a committee to investigate the subject, together with that of psychic phenomena and so-called Spiritualistic manifestations, which had been tested by Sir William Crookes.

“Nothing had come of this suggestion, however, and he had made other attempts, with a like result, to induce scientific and literary men of influence to look into the subject without prejudice.

“I suggested that a society should be started on lines which would be likely to attract some of the best minds which had hitherto held aloof from the pursuit of the enquiry. Professor Barrett approved of the suggestion, and called a conference of a few friends which was held in the rooms of the British National Association in January, 1882.

“At that meeting Mr Stainton Moses, Mr C.C. Massey, Mr F.W.H. Myers, Mr. J.G. Romanes, myself, and others were present. A committee was appointed to formulate a plan, and it presented its report to an adjourned conference in February, 1882, when the society was definitely constituted.

“The first Council comprised Mr Stainton Moses and myself, with some other well-known Spiritualists, including Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, Dr Wyld, Mr Alexander Calder, and Mr Desmond Fitzgerald.”¹⁵

Roger also paid for the printed circulars calling that meeting, and employed the shorthand writers. He persuaded Stainton Moses to support the project. But it was not enough, a century later to get his name on to the SPR web site, where it is currently said it was founded by a group of prominent scholars - it used to say “Cambridge scholars” until it was pointed that William Barrett, the co-founder, was not from Cambridge but Dublin.

The case of Dawson Rogers, and his Spiritualist colleagues who were significant in the founding of the SPR reminds us that history contains a few inconvenient truths, one of which is that psychical research and indeed survival research, was not the invention of the SPR. We have

¹⁴ SPR was Conceived by Spiritualist – Psypioneer Volume 1, No. 1 - http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PPI.pdf See also - Grave of W. S. Moses & SPR Officers and Council for 1882 – Psypioneer Volume 4, No. 10 pages 231 – 238: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.10October08..pdf>

¹⁵ “Life and experiences of Edmund Dawson Rogers, Spiritualist and Journalist; reprinted from ‘Light’, London, Office of ‘Light’ 1910.

much to learn from our ancestors, and there is an outstanding opportunity to do so, as complete books from the nineteenth century appear on line, available free to all. (Dr Alvarado has alerted me, for example, to the presence on line of both the Hare book and Cahagnet in translation.)

To summarise my five lessons:

- 1) We cannot assume that even the basic facts of those times are already established by historians.
- 2) The main current of survival research in those years does not run through the Fox sisters.
- 3) Survival research is a struggle to improve equipment and experimental design.
- 4) Study history, to avoid repeating it
- 5) We should not forget the older metaphysical systems.

Early survival research is indeed still relevant, and our society remains the leading clearing house for that research and its implications.*

LESLIE PRICE

* Additional note (2009). Some readers may be surprised to read in Psypioneer this acknowledgment of the premier position for the study of pioneers of the SPR. They may recall, however, that the Society has been collecting and publishing pioneer material since 1882, and that their Journal, Proceedings and magazine (Paranormal Review) are available to SPR members on line; over 125 years of material! In just one issue of JSPR (October 2009) we find such papers as Fotini Pallikari “ Angelos Tanagras, the 1935 Oslo International Parapsychology Congress and the Telekinesis of Cleio”; Renaud Evrard “ Rene Sudre (1880-1968): The Metapsychist’s Quill” and Angelica A. Silva de Almeida and Alexander Moreira-Almeida “Inacio Ferreira: Institutionalizing the Integration of Medicine and Paranormal Phenomena.” Psypioneer of course has its own distinctive work streams, about which I hope to write in a future issue.

LP...

THE CHALLENGE OF WHITE EAGLE

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The White Eagle Lodge is a leading New Age organisation based in the UK. Although it is by origin a hybrid Theosophical//Spiritualist body, it now has more members in the UK than the TS, and publishes more books than the SNU.

The Lodge has received little historical attention, though there was a useful introduction “The White Eagle Inheritance” (1984) by adherent Ingrid Lind. Technically it is what sociologists call a cult (a term applied to the Spiritualist Movement as a whole by the sympathetic sociologist, G.K. Nelson, in “Spiritualism and Society”).<sup>16</sup> Moreover, leadership has been always based in the founding family, although without the traumas associated with some other cults such as Summit Lighthouse (see “The End of El Morya” Psypioneer March 2009).<sup>17</sup>

The Lodge began with the mediumship of Grace Cooke, supported by her second husband Ivan Cooke; her guide was an entity of uncertain origin called White Eagle. (see Psypioneer September 2004.)<sup>18</sup> Like his contemporaries Silver Birch and Red Cloud, he did not profess to be just a Red Indian.

To some extent the Lodge emerged out of the Polaire Brotherhood, about which there is little available in English. The Brotherhood was involved in the 1931 Conan Doyle communications through a circle around Grace Cooke. The successive published editions of these communications have provided an invaluable background to those early days circa 1930, and have used the surviving WEL archival material of correspondence with the Doyle family.

Some other valuable historical material can be found in shorter books by Grace and Ivan Cooke. But in 1986, a grandson, Colum Hayward edited “The Story of White Eagle Lodge”<sup>19</sup> and this has now been updated as “The White Eagle Lodge Story”. The account is well written, delightfully illustrated and interesting. It is not concerned to examine in detail parapsychological questions such as the identity of White Eagle, or why the 1938-9 “No War” prophecies were delivered, though that question is not evaded.

Nor is it a biography of the founders - at one point we learn incidentally about their time in Australia (p.90) but neither this, nor their first meeting with each other, is covered. (Their lives would be a good subject for another book!).

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<sup>16</sup> *Spiritualism and Society* by Geoffrey K. Nelson Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1969

<sup>17</sup> *The end of El Morya* by Paul Johnson Volume 5, No.3 pages 79 – 84: -  
<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.3March09..pdf>

<sup>18</sup> *The Final Conan Doyle Mystery* by Leslie Price Volume 1, No5 pages 33 – 36: -  
[http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP5.pdf](http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP5.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> *The Story of the White Eagle Lodge* The White Eagle Publishing Trust, Hampshire, England October 1986 £3.95: -  
[http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP5.pdf](http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP5.pdf)

But there are several reasons why this official history is important:

- 1) we cannot write a reliable history of Spiritualism in the twentieth century without including the WEL. Indeed the Lodge has some claim to be continuing the work of Arthur Conan Doyle.
- 2) the Lodge is one of a number of organisations (NFSH is another, as is the T.S. ) which grew out of a Spiritualist background into a wider mission.
- 3) WEL has also been involved in what we might call ecumenical Spiritualist activities – membership of Council of Spiritualists and the like.
- 4) we receive a different perspective on certain individuals already known from elsewhere. Paul Beard, for example, is remembered by many as president of the College of Psychic Studies.<sup>20</sup> But he was before and after that, a worker for WEL. Indeed, it may be that WEL comes closest as an organisation today to actualising the kind of role in relation to mediumship that Beard championed in his books.

To mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Arthur Conan Doyle, WEL in May 2009 organised a conference at Liss, where they also launched a commemorative book. “The View” edited by Dave Patrick. The scope of this 288 page collection of papers is wide. It is natural to find in it papers on healing, because that has always been a central concern of WEL. There is a retelling of the 1931 ACD messages; and a first account in print of some remarkable book tests, involving ACD books, which have come to Roger Straughan. More about these in Psypioneer soon, as we await a dramatic new book.<sup>21</sup>

Among several papers dealing with 2012 is one by Errol Weiner which uses Alice Bailey material. This is especially interesting as it may have seemed to some readers that this DK work was focused on the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and therefore somewhat passé. In another important essay Colum Hayward explores the meaning of brotherhood, a concept central to the Theosophical Movement but sometimes forgotten there. But what distinguishes this collection is the attention given to management and business leadership. This may seem a wordly matter, yet of course high values are limited in impact if they are not translated into effective action. As historians we can see that all too often there has been poor management in psychic groups, though there may be forces beyond our ken taking their toll here, as George Hansen has pointed out.<sup>22</sup> Where is the true legacy of Conan Doyle today? These books will help us answer the question.<sup>23</sup>

LESLIE PRICE

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<sup>20</sup> College of Psychic Studies (CPS) see: - <http://www.collegeofpsychicstudies.co.uk/>

<sup>21</sup> “A Study in Survival – Conan Doyle Solves the Final Problem” by Roger Straughan. O Books 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009:- [http://www.o-books.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=631](http://www.o-books.com/product_info.php?products_id=631)  
For O-Books – the alternative see: - [http://www.o-books.com/obookssite/obooks/about\\_us](http://www.o-books.com/obookssite/obooks/about_us)

<sup>22</sup>The Trickster and the Paranormal - George P. Hanson see: - <http://www.tricksterbook.com/>

<sup>23</sup> The White Eagle Publishing Trust see: - <http://www.whiteaglepublishing.org/>



## Profile of a medium

[Below <sup>24</sup> holds some information on the early life of Grace Cooke, it is most interesting to note the relationship between Cooke and Edward Walter Wallis <sup>25</sup> (died January 11<sup>th</sup> 1914). Wallis was closely associated with James Morse, which may explain the young Grace's early public debut with Morse in 1901c Both Morse and Wallis worked towards the formation of 'National Spiritualism' becoming founder members of the now Spiritualists' National Union (SNU).

In the New Year we will publish a lecture given to the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA) on January 11<sup>th</sup> 1912, by Edward Wallis – *Interesting Incidents during Forty Years of Mediumship*. Ed.]

# GRACE COOKE

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SHE is celebrating two jubilees. It is 60 years since Grace Cooke, one of Britain's greatest mediums, first entered the Spiritualistic movement. It is 25 years since the White Eagle Lodge was founded in London by her much loved guide whose name it bears.

Young Grace had to fight no parental prejudices regarding Spiritualism or her mediumship. Her mother died when she was seven. Two years later, through Annie Boddington, a London pioneer medium, she returned with evidence that not only established her identity but caused her husband to abandon his religious orthodoxy. He threw himself energetically into Spiritualism.

Family give service

Names of revered pioneers—she has lived to become one—figure in Grace Cooke's story. She is related to E. W. Wallis, who once edited *Two Worlds*. ²⁶ Aged nine, she made her public debut by reciting at a meeting presided over by J. J. Morse, who also edited this journal. At 21 Grace, a young mother, gave her first public clairvoyance at a Spiritualist church in a London suburb.

She had to push the pram with her baby and leave it outside in charge of a friend. That baby is now healing secretary of White Eagle Lodge. Indeed, every member of the family plays an active part—her husband, an affinity if ever there was one, both married daughters and their husbands. Of her four grandchildren, Grace says, "They will soon be coming in to the work, too."

²⁴ *The Two Worlds* May 1961 No. 3808, pages 225 – 6

²⁵ See also Mrs Wallis – *Woman Who was a Medium for Fifty-Two Years* Volume 2, No. 6 pages 127 – 130: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.6June06.pdf>

²⁶ Wallis took over full editorship of *The Two Worlds* - 1892 – 1899. Just after this he became editor of *Light*. In the new year, *Psypioneer* will continue *Editorship of Light* which we started in October issue, pages 316 – 324: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.10.October09..pdf>

For 20 years Grace was an itinerant medium on Sundays and many weekdays on Spiritualist platforms all over Britain. Those were the difficult days when the subject was unpopular and not respectable. They provided a solid foundation for her splendid mediumship.

It was a spirit message White Eagle gave Mrs. Ethel Miller ²⁷ which led her to found Edinburgh Psychic College. ²⁸ It was a spirit message from White Eagle that caused Grace and her husband Ivan to start a church in Kenton, Middlesex—White Eagle has often called himself “the builder of churches.” And it was in this church that Laurence Cowen, then a theatrical impresario, was so captivated by a trance address he heard from a youthful Meurig Morris that he launched her into a highly publicised campaign that took her all over Britain and South Africa.

White Eagle is the inspiring spirit genius behind the lodge’s activities which have ever spreading ramifications. All the Cookes, because of experience, have implicit faith in his guidance. Evidence of it is to be seen in the Kensington premises which he chose during the blitz—they were bought with faith, funds being almost non-existent – and the Newlands (Hampshire) training centre where supporters have paid off the mortgage as part of the silver jubilee celebrations.

The Lodge also owes its existence to some remarkable spirit communications from Conan Doyle. This, one of Spiritualism's most fascinating stories, involved co-operation with a French occult group of whom Grace had never heard. Sir Arthur’s messages are described in one of 23 books, all attractively produced, by the Lodge through its own publishing trust. This is also responsible for many booklets and their own Journal.

There are daughter lodges meeting publicly in Britain, Australia, South Africa and the USA. There are groups, lone healers who tune in at prearranged times and “outer brothers,” who unite in concentrated thought power to provide healing, strength and guidance in specific cases. Healing for long has been an important and rewarding labour.

Trance teaching, to spread brotherhood ideals, is given through Grace. At Newlands, used also as a retreat, she helps to develop mediums largely through meditation, insisting always on a strictly vegetarian regime. Newlands, described to her beforehand by “W.E.” as they all call him, is a constant hive of activity. A recent Lodge venture is the Eaglets, aged from 13 to 35, whose contribution to the silver jubilee was a cheque for £200 raised by their own efforts.

Who is White Eagle? He is said to be a reincarnated soul who has manifested three distinct personalities. He has given excellent evidence of identity as a North American Indian. He confirmed a message he gave to a woman in London by materialising as an Iroquois Indian, in full regalia, when she was later present at a Frank Decker séance in New York. Then there is the

²⁷ *Mrs. Miller’s Gift* - see Volume 3, No. 10 pages 224 – 228: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.10October07..pdf>

²⁸ *Mrs. Millers Gift Book Review & The Opening of the Edinburgh Psychic Centre College and Library* - see Volume 4, No. 1 pages 1 – 6: - <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08..pdf>

fascinating story of how he revealed, unknown to Grace, that his portrait had been painted by an artist.

Several guides, who comprise the White Brotherhood, say that their Red Indian manifestation is a "medium," just as are their earthly instruments. In one book Grace describes what she believes are the Mayan incarnations of White Eagle, as a chief in the Andes, and herself 10,000 years ago. In the past few years, another White Eagle facet has been revealed, said to be this time functioning through a Tibetan sage in the Himalayas. All this touches the profound mystery of individuality, as distinct from personality, which cannot altogether be solved by earthly minds.

It is noteworthy that the Lodge's success has been achieved despite, or because of, its stress on philosophy rather than phenomena. The lodge is a charitable and religious trust, administered on a non-profit basis. Grace turned over everything she had acquired, properties and their contents, without any compensation.

Not all the remarkable happenings in which this radiant, serene and benign woman, "mother" to an ever increasing "adopted" family all over the world, has figured, can be made public. It was not till years later that Grace revealed she was the medium for a stream of personal and private spirit messages from his wife that she sent to Ramsay MacDonald when he was Prime Minister of Britain. Though not a Spiritualist, the Premier expressed his appreciation and interest and requested that he should be sent all of them.

A booklet commemorating the Lodge's 21st birthday, contained this tribute to Grace: "Only those close to her can realise the rigid self-discipline, devotion and self-sacrifice which she has brought to the work. No personal sorrow, anxiety or physical disability has been allowed to stand in the way of her constant service." The long White Eagle and Grace Cooke partnership has brought inestimable benefits to thousands of people.





TWO WORLDS AS AN AID TO RESEARCH

Readers will know that we emphasised recently the importance not only of the Emma Hardinge Britten web site in general, but the particular significance of the appearance there of the early volumes of Two Worlds. (These are soon to be transferred to a new Spiritualist newspaper web site – more details in a later issue.)

It goes without saying that the newspaper contains much information about Emma, the first editor. But it is also an invaluable aid to the study of many other pioneers of the day. We illustrate this with some examples:

J. J. Morse

In Two Worlds 6 April 1888, p.292 there is a review of J. J. Morse's "Practical Occultism". The reviewer, (almost certainly EHB) takes him to task for his title. Perhaps it reminded her of disagreeable Theosophical matters – or maybe she felt she, and not Morse, was the authority on occultism.

Here in England, we tend to think 'a British medium and a British book', but this is incorrect. The British Library has the so-called Second Edition issued by Two Worlds Publishing Co in 1920, and the 1956 Spiritualist Press edition – both British. But the Library of Congress has somehow acquired a good range of Morse publications, many of UK origin. They include the 1888 edition published by Carrier Dove in San Francisco, where Morse then was, and which TW reviewed in 1888. Also a 1904 Banner of Light edition. Thus it would appear that the first two printings of Morse's classic treatise were American, after which there were two UK printings.

Robert James Lees

The medium and healer R. J. Lees is the subject of a web site created by Stephen Butt, whose paper on Georgiana Eagle will be remembered by our readers. Separating fact and fiction in Lees' has taken time. What for example was his role in the 1888 Jack the Ripper case?

Each issue of Two Worlds carried several pages entitled "Chronicle of Societary Work." This detail, especially of routine meetings at Northern Spiritualist groups, proved tedious to some readers. But consider an entry in the chronicle for 13 January 1888:

"COLNE. - Mr. E. W. Wallis delivered two stirring lectures here on Sunday to moderately large audiences. The effects of the recent visit of Mr. Ashcroft are manifest in the determination of the local friends to form a society (the meetings hitherto have been managed by Burnley workers), and everywhere there is a strong desire to obtain information and investigate. Mr. Ashcroft retired discredited; the people were disgusted with his tactics, and would have broken his lantern but for the generous interference of Mr. Lees, who endeavoured to restore order.

The following testimonials to Mr. Lees' healing have been supplied; others are promised, but in some of the best cases the patients are afraid of the persecution which would follow a public avowal. Much good has been done in this direction. Ellen Sugden, Essex Street, Colne, testifies that she was troubled with swellings in the body and indigestion of long standing, and after a few passes from Mr. R. J. Lees she was entirely relieved from the swelling, and can eat almost anything without feeling the least inconvenience. Mrs. Greenwood, Selden Street, suffered for a long time from acute pains in the head. Been under medical treatment but no better, visited Mr. Lees twice, who laid his hand upon her head, and made a few passes on each occasion. She is now completely free from pain, and has been ever since. She was treated about three weeks since."

This is one of a number of early reports (some in LIGHT also), of Lees active in the North, at one time in actual association with Rev. T. Ashcroft, an anti-Spiritualist minister. We hope to carry an article about this by Stephen Butt shortly.

F.W. Myers

The distinguished SPR thinker needs no introduction. In TW 23 March 1888 there was a detailed report of a lecture by him, which began:

HALLUCINATIONS AND APPARITIONS

“PROFESSOR F. W. H. MYERS, Cambridge, gave a lecture in the Tennant Hall, Leeds, recently, on the subject of "Hallucinations and Apparitions." The Rev. Cecil Hook, president of the All Souls' Young Men's Society, under whose auspices the lecture was given, occupied the chair, and there was a large audience. The chairman remarked that the lecturer's subject was one that must be of interest to all of them, inasmuch as it was connected with the spiritual state of mankind, and would perhaps give them some idea as to whether matters which in a sense they knew to be true were provable by facts. Professor Myers said there was more method in dealing with the subject of hallucinations and apparitions than might at first be supposed.”

However, TW took exception to the lecture, and it was sharply criticised by “Sirius”, a person whose identity may vary. Trevor Hamilton, biographer of Myers, kindly read the TW report, and then consulted the diary of Myers. He writes:

“On Tuesday 28/2/1888 Myers inspected a school and then travelled to Leeds for the lecture. Returned on Wednesday to Cambridge and his Leckhampton House home. The account of the lecture and the comments by Sirius represent a fascinating clash of culture and methodologies. For Myers, this was the first time in the history of the world that anyone had examined these matters properly in a scientific fashion. For Sirius, this statement was an example of his academic arrogance and lack of direct experience. How, for example, could he possibly state that the communications of local ghosts were of no value?

“What Sirius (for all his 'occult' knowledge) failed to appreciate was that Myers and his colleagues were trying to take the intellectual establishment head on and challenge two key enlightenment assumptions: firstly, that the seeing of ghosts was the product of mental and/or physical disease and that such hallucinations were never seen by people in good physical and mental health; and secondly, that there was no scientific evidence for the existence of such phenomena. This meant they had to be ruthless in challenging superstition (hence the dismissive attitude to local ghosts - Myers, I think, was really referring to legends about haunted houses here) and they had to pile up good evidence. Hence the reference to the detailed survey on which *Phantasms of the Living* was based.

“Myers and his colleagues, therefore, clashed with both the scientific world (what you are doing isn't science even if you think it is) and the Spiritualist community (we have direct, personal experience and you have only academic and documentary evidence). Some of Sirius's points were unfair to Myers. He, personally, had probably

as much, if not more, experience of sitting with mediums than many Spiritualists. He had the money to pay for the most famous mediums and probably had around a thousand sittings by the time of his death. What he did not have much access to was private circles (because of the general suspicion, in such circles, of the SPR).”

The TW report then is useful evidence in studying how the SPR tried to get their message across to the public, and how they had misunderstandings with some Spiritualists.

Finally, what does Marc Demarest, curator of the Britten site, www.ehbritten.org/ think? He told Pspioneer:

“For me – as a researcher interested in Modern Spiritualism generally as opposed to Emma specifically – Two Worlds has four standing components I find incredibly useful:

1. recordings of the doings of the local societies and their forthcoming events/engagements. You can construct detailed “on the ground” chronologies of people's travels, doings and lectures from these.
2. the periodic “list of mediums and speakers”
3. the yearly census of societies. It is partial, and extrapolation is dangerous, but it is self-reported raw data which is in scarce supply.
4. the advertisements. If you pay attention to them, all sorts of interesting things pop out. Adverts reflect sellers' views of the demographic of the periodical (that's one angle) and in the case of TW; the advertisers are also editors, contributors and interested parties. The economics of a Spiritualist magazine (cover price, less distributor's discount + ad revenue) is part of the milieu here, and an important one, since so many of these periodicals failed to make it financially.

[Introductory Note by Psypioneer: -

The following paper is by Dr. Carlos S. Alvarado (see his web page).²⁹ Psypioneer would like to extend our thanks to Dr. Alvarado for his continuing support and contributions to our journal over 2009.

Dr. Alvarado³⁰ is affiliated with the Division of Perceptual Studies, Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences, at the University of Virginia.]

Discussions of Telepathy and Nonphysicality by Early Members of the Society for Psychical Research

Carlos S. Alvarado

I summarized in previous writings past ideas of physical, or biophysical forces to explain a variety of psychic phenomena (e.g., Alvarado, 2006, 2009). Such ideas represent a conceptual tradition that is known in our times because of movements such as mesmerism and spiritualism, as well as through writings about a variety of phenomena such as healing and physical mediumship (e.g., Esdaile, 1852; Mahan, 1855). In later years William Crookes speculated on telepathy: “Let it be assumed that these rays, or rays even of higher frequency, can pass into the brain and act on some nervous centre there. Let it be conceived that the brain contains a centre which uses these rays as the vocal cords use sound vibrations (both being under the command of intelligence), and sends them out, with the velocity of light, to impinge on the receiving ganglion of another brain. In this way some, at least, of the phenomena of telepathy, and the transmission of intelligence from one sensitive to another through long distances, seem to come into the domain of law, and can be grasped” (Crookes, 1897, p. 352).

However, not everyone reduced phenomena to physical emanations, radiations, waves, or forces. Others presented a different approach, as can be seen in the excerpts reprinted in this article. This was a tradition, which still continues, that held that the nonphysical nature of human beings has been defended adequately using cases (e.g., Jung-Stilling, 1851), as well as statistically evaluated experimental results (e.g., Rhine, 1947).

Examples of these types of arguments appear in the writings of some members of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) (e.g., Gurney, Myers, & Podmore, 1886; Lodge, 1920; Myers, 1903; see also Gauld, 1968). These ideas were clearly articulated in two important books produced by SPR members of which excerpts about telepathy appear below.

²⁹ Carlos' Bio: - <http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/personalitystudies/Carlosbio.cfm>

³⁰An interview with Dr. Carlos S. Alvarado by Michael Tymn: - http://metgat.gaia.com/blog/2008/12/an_interview_with_dr_carlos_s_alvarado

Edmund Gurney in *Phantasms of the Living*

While *Phantasms of the Living* was authored by Edmund Gurney, Frederic W.H. Myers, and Frank Podmore (1886), the study was to a great extent the theoretical work of Gurney. He remarked in one of the chapters in reference to experimental studies of thought-transference and spontaneous telepathy:

As long as the impression in the percipient's mind is merely a reproduction of that in the agent's mind, it is possible to conceive some sort of *physical* basis for the fact of the transference. The familiar phenomena of the transmission and reception of vibratory energy are ready to hand as analogies . . . Still more tempting are the analogies of magnetic and electrical induction . . . A permanent magnet brought into a room will throw any surrounding iron into a similar condition; an electric current in one coil of wire will induce a current in a neighbouring coil; though here even the medium of communication is unknown. So it is correspondence of psychical impressions. Even here, perhaps, the conception should rather be regarded as a metaphor than an analogy. We have only to remember that the effect of all the known physical forces diminishes with distance—whereas we shall find reason to think that, under appropriate conditions, an idea may be telepathically reproduced on the other side of the world as easily as on the other side of a room. The employment, therefore, of words like *force*, *impulse*, *impact*, in speaking of telepathic influences, must not be held to imply the faintest suspicion of what the force is, or any hypothesis whatever which would co-ordinate it with the recognised forces of the material world. Not only, as with other delicate phenomena of life and thought, is the *subjective* side of the problem the only one that we can yet attempt to analyse: we do not even know where to look for the *objective* side. If there really is a physical counterpart to the *fact* of transmission—over and above the movements in the two brains which are the *termini* of the transmission—that counterpart remains wholly unknown to us.

But a much more serious difficulty in the way of any physical conception of telepathy presents itself as soon as we pass to the cases where the image actually present in the agent's mind is no longer reproduced in the percipient's. A is dying at a distance; B sees his form. We may perhaps trace a relation between the processes in their two minds; but it certainly does not amount to anything like identity or distinct parallelism. That being so, there can be no such simple and immediate concordance as we have supposed, between the nervous vibrations of their two brains; and that being so, there is no obvious means of translating into physical terms the causal connection between their experiences. This difficulty will take a somewhat different aspect when we come later to consider the part which the mind's *unconscious* operations may bear in telepathic phenomena. We may see grounds for

thinking that a considerable community of experience (especially in emotional relations) between two persons may involve nervous records sufficiently similar to retain for one another some sort of revivable affinity, even when the experience has long lost its vividness for conscious memory. Meanwhile it is best to admit the difficulty without reserve, and to state in the most explicit way that in the *rapprochement* between experimental thought-transference and spontaneous telepathic impressions we are confining ourselves to the *psychical* aspect; we connect the phenomena as being in all cases affections of one mind by another, occurring otherwise than through the recognised channels of sense. The objector may urge that if we have not, we ought to have, a *physical* theory which will embrace all the phenomena—that we ought not to talk about a *rapport* between A's mind and B's unless we can establish a *bridge* between their two brains. This seems rather to assume that the standing puzzle of the relation between cerebral and psychical events *in the individual*, B, can only be stated in one crude form—viz., that the former are prior and *produce* the latter; and though for ordinary purposes such an expression is convenient, the convenience has its dangers. Still, as the converse proposition—that the psychical events are the prior—would be equally dangerous, a *crux* remains which we cannot evade. Since we cannot doubt that B's unwonted experience has its appropriate cerebral correlate, we have to admit that the energy of B's brain is directed in a way in which it would not be directed but for something that has happened to A. In this physical effect it is impossible to assume that an external physical antecedent is not involved; and the relation of the antecedent to the effect is, as I have pointed out, hard to conceive, when the neural tremors in A's brain are so unlike the neural tremors in B's brain as they must presumably be when A's mind is occupied with his immediate surroundings, or with the idea of death, and B's mind is occupied with a sudden and unaccountable impression or vision of A.

But however things may be on the physical plane, the facts recorded in this book are purely *psychical* facts; and on the psychical plane it is possible to give to a heterogeneous array of them a certain orderly coherence, and to present them as a graduated series of natural phenomena. Can it be asserted that this treatment is illegitimate unless a concurrent physical theory can also be put forward? It is surely allowable to do one thing at a time. There is an unsolved mystery in the background; that we grant and remember; but it need not perpetually oppress us. After all, is there not that standing mystery of the cerebral and mental correlation in the individual—a mystery equally unsolved and perhaps more definitely and radically insoluble—at the background of every fact and doctrine of the recognised psychology? The psychologists work on as if it did not exist, or rather as if it were the most natural and intelligible thing in the world, and no one complains of

them. All that we claim is a similar freedom (Gurney, Myers, & Podmore, 1886, Vol. 1, pp. 111-113).

Frederic W.H. Myers in *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*

Myers addressed the topic in his classic book as follows:

. . . There is one provisional interpretation of telepathic experiment which must be noticed thus early in our discussion, because, if true, it may conceivably connect our groping work with more advanced departments of science I refer to the suggestion that telepathy is propagated by “brainwaves”; or, as Sir W. Crookes has more exactly expressed it, by ether-waves of even smaller amplitude and greater frequency than those which carry the X rays. These waves are conceived as passing from one brain to another, and arousing in the *second* brain an excitation or image similar to the excitation or image from which they start in the *first*. The hypothesis is an attractive one; because it fits an agency which certainly exists, but whose effect is unknown, to an effect which certainly exists, but whose agency is unknown.

. . . In this world of vibrations it may seem at first the simplest plan to invoke a vibration the more. It would be rash, indeed, to affirm that any phenomenon perceptible by men may not be expressible, in part at least, in terms of ethereal undulations. But in the case of telepathy the analogy which suggests this explanation, the obvious likeness between the picture emitted (so to say) by the agent and the picture received by the percipient — as when I fix my mind on the two of diamonds, and he sees a mental picture of that card — goes but a very short way. One has very soon to begin assuming that the percipient’s mind *modifies* the picture despatched from the agent: until the likeness between the two pictures becomes a quite symbolical affair. We have seen that there is a continuous transition from experimental to spontaneous telepathy; from our transferred pictures of cards to monitions of a friend’s death at a distance.

These monitions may indeed be pictures of the dying friend, but they are seldom such pictures as the decedent’s brain seems likely to project in the form in which they reach the percipient. Mr. L. — to take a well-known case in our collection (*Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i, p. 210) — dies of heart disease when in the act of lying down undressed, in bed. At or about the same moment Mr. N. J. S. sees Mr. L. standing beside him with a cheerful air, dressed for walking and with a cane in his hand. One does not see how a system of undulations could have transmuted the physical facts in this way.

A still greatly difficulty for the vibration-theory is presented by *collective* telepathic hallucinations. It is hard to understand how A can emit a pattern of vibrations which, radiating equally in all directions, shall affect not only his distant friend B, but also the strangers C and D, who happen to be standing near B; — and affect no other persons, so far as we know, in the world.

... The above points have been fair matter of argument almost since our research began. But as our evidence has developed, our conception of telepathy has needed to be more and more generalised in other and new directions, — still less compatible with the vibration theory. Three such directions may be briefly specified here — namely, the relation of telepathy (*a*) to telaesthesia or clairvoyance, (*b*) to time, and (*c*) to disembodied spirits. (*a*) It is increasingly hard to refer all the scenes of which percipients become aware to the action of any given mind which is perceiving those distant scenes. This is especially noticeable in crystal-gazing experiments. (*b*) And these crystal visions also show what, from the strict telepathic point of view, we should call a great laxity of time relations. The sryer chooses his own time to look in the ball; — and though sometimes he sees events which are taking place at the moment, he may also see past events, — and even, as it seems, future events I at least cannot deny *precognition*, nor can I draw a definite line amid these complex visions which may separate precognition from telepathy. (*c*) Precognition itself may be explained, if you will, as telepathy from disembodied spirits; — and this would at any rate bring it under a class of phenomena which I think all students of our subject must before long admit. Admitting here, for argument's sake, that we do receive communications from the dead which we should term telepathic if we received them from the living, it is of course open to us to conjecture that these messages also are conveyed on ether-waves. But since those waves do not at any rate emanate from material brains, we shall by this time have got so far from the original brain-wave hypothesis that few will care still to defend it.

I doubt, indeed, whether we can safely say of telepathy anything more definite than this: *Life has the power of manifesting itself to life*. The laws of life, as we have thus far known them, have been only laws of life when already associated with matter. Thus limited, we have learnt little as to Life's true nature we know not even whether Life be only a directive Force, or, on the other hand, an effective Energy. We know not in what way it operates on matter. We can in no way define the connection between our own consciousness and our organisms. Just here it is, I should say, that telepathic observations ought to supply us with some hint. From the mode in which some element of one individual life, — apart from material impact, — gets hold of another organism, we may in time learn something of the way in which our own life gets hold of our

own organism, — and maintains, intermits, or abandons its organic sway
. . . . (Myers, 1903, Vol. 1, pp. 245-246)

Concluding Remarks

The ideas presented above are an example of how some SPR members open to the existence of a nonphysical mind objected to physically-based explanations of telepathy. Later writers on the subject, among them Flammarion (1900) and Rhine (1947), continued this line of thought.

But we also need to acknowledge the existence of those who have combined in their systems physical and non-physical process, allowing for the manifestation of the spirit through semi-physical concepts of force (e.g., Baraduc, 1897; Kardec, 1863). In other words, there were then, and are now, various trends of thought and nuances within the arguments of those who defended the nonphysical nature of humankind that have yet to be studied in detail.

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