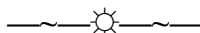




Volume 10, No. 1: 2023

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The Pioneer (bi-monthly) is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.

This history journal is presented using original researched material wherever possible. Articles and quotes are taken from original sources as they were published at the time and reproduced by optical character recognition (OCR), the conversion of scanned images of handwritten, typewritten or printed text into machine-encoded text. This means that grammar, old English, spelling mistakes, etc. are not usually changed. However, long paragraphs are sometimes split for easier reading; any errors or explanations needed are noted in footnotes.

Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing this issue

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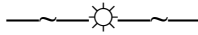
041 – New SNU Pioneer Page

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All references to Psypioneer in this issue are archived at <http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/>



The “Substance”



One of the most controversial issues in Spiritualism, probably more so in psychical research, is the word “ectoplasm” and, furthermore, the usage and meaning of other related names such as psychic force, teleplasm, psychoplasm and ideoplasm, which are to be found in our history books and can create some confusion. Readers of Pioneer will be familiar with some of these terms and the problems which mediums and researchers have encountered, especially in materialisation mediumship.

To my mind, what greatly adds to the confusion on this subject is the lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject in general in what we read, especially on the internet, where the information is often misinterpreted, misrepresented, sensationalised, with false and unreferenced quotations owing to the lack of understanding on the subject in hand. Much is often done to discredit the medium, the researcher or Spiritualism in general.

Without doubt, there has been, and still is, fraud in physical mediumship, which has been the case ever since its inception under the title of Modern Spiritualism. Spiritualists and researchers have publicly brought many fraudulent mediums to justice by exposing them publicly in the Spiritualist press of the day, by those who had years of experience in the subject and understood, as far as possible, the vital complexities of the *impressionable* structure of the psychic fluid or plasms required for materialisation, etc.

This is a far cry from the claims of fraudulent mediumship today!



One simple example is taken from the Wikipedia entry: “Ectoplasm (paranormal)”. I will use Helen Duncan, as many will know the name (I have touched on only a few claims from the page):

Firstly: ... *best known as the last person to be imprisoned under the Witchcraft Act* ...

Helen was the *only* Spiritualist medium to be imprisoned under a clause from this Act.

The claim ... *ectoplasm which was proven to be made from cheesecloth*: This rather sweeping allegation cannot be accepted in the way it is presented; Helen did undergo three seizures during her séances but *no* cheesecloth-like materials were found. Further, it states: *Helen Duncan was well known for using dolls and other props as ectoplasm in her séances*. I personally would love to see references for *well known for using dolls and other props*. These negative claims are quite pointless, as obviously there is no authority behind them, but many readers accept this as being factual.¹ It can be argued in part that there may be some substance in these sweeping statements but not within these contexts.

This issue will be about ectoplasmic substances simply to put into context some of the various names for the “substance”; for example, Helen’s alleged spirit control, Albert Stewart, called the substance “psychoplasm”, while those who investigated her early in her mediumship called the substance “teleplasm”. These variously-named plasms are required for physical mediumship as termed by the early researchers.

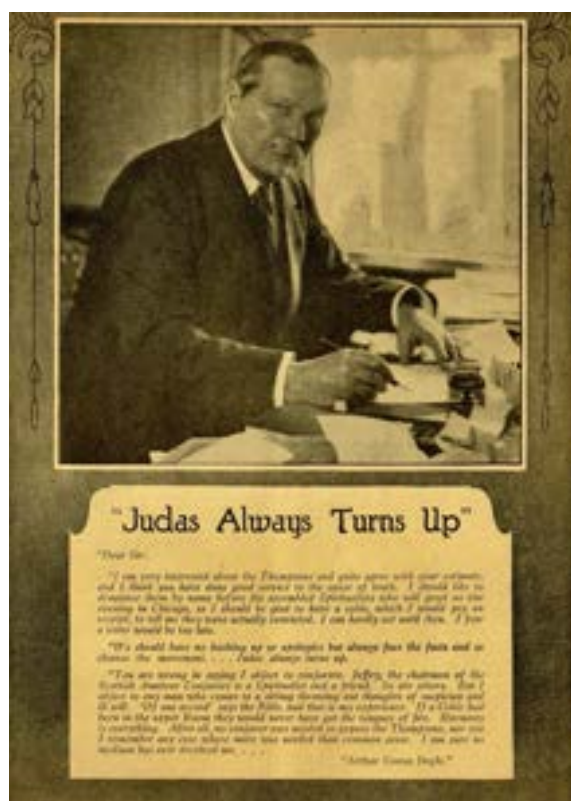
¹ This is also true with positive information: some readers accept what they read as fact but the information on many sites is incorrect. A good example of this is the unfolding events at Hydesville. See Pioneer, Vol. 9, No. 1: “Hydesville Day –Let’s get it right”.

The information in this issue is intended solely to put forward some of the history of this mysterious substance—however, for suggested reading for background and additional information please see the pdf Pioneer booklets, “A Question of Fraud” and “Physical Phenomena”. Please see the last page of this issue for information.

Charles Fulton Oursler (1893-1952), an American journalist, playwright, editor and writer, was a notable author of mysteries and a series of detective fiction under the pseudonym Anthony Abbot. Charles Oursler was also an amateur magician, who aided Harry Houdini in his crusade against fraudulent mediumship.² Oursler worked under another pseudonym of Samri Frikell, who himself had exposed a number of fraudulent mediums. Under this pen name, which Oursler used for his writings on Spiritualism and magic, he wrote in 1930 “Spirit Mediums Exposed”, revealing the techniques of fraudulent mediums.



During Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s first American tour in 1922, Charles Oursler interviewed Sir Arthur under his pen name and this is published in full below. It appeared in “Movie Weekly”, August 12th 1922: “Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Predicts Spirit Moving Pictures”, by Samri Frikell.



Around the time of the interview Oursler had met Sir Arthur on more than one occasion. In “Spirit Mediums Exposed” he gives the full story of one of his exposures and the arrest of the mediums, the Reverend William Reilly Thompson and his wife, Eva Allan Thompson, who were ministers of the First Spiritualist Church of New York City. The exposure was fully backed by Doyle, and the article includes some copies of Doyle’s letters regarding the case; unfortunately, it is far too long to reprint here, but shown is a snippet by Doyle from the article.

The interview with Sir Arthur is an interesting one. It may not be generally known that Baron von Schrenck Notzing used a cinematograph to produce an early movie film—cinematography was a more common term at the time—with a young Polish physical medium known as “Stanislava P”, showing the process of withdrawing the substance back into the mouth; sections of the film are reproduced in Schrenck Notzing’s “Phenomena of Materialisation”, first published in 1914. Samri Frikell uses Fig. 179 from the book in his interview to illustrate, and it is shown at the end of the article, together with a second additional plate filmed a little later. It can be noted that in the following article Frikell spells Schrenck incorrectly as “Schrenk”; also noted is the word “ectoplasm”, as the term used by von Schrenck Notzing would have been “teleplasm-teleplastic”.

² See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 2: “Houdini & Conan Doyle – Story of Strange Friendship and an Historic Quarrel”.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Predicts Spirit Moving Pictures !

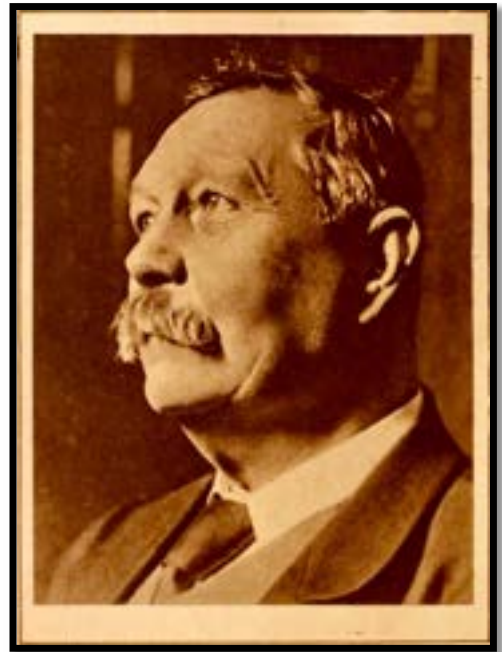
An amazing revelation of what spiritualism may do for motion pictures.

By Samri Frikell

THE spirits of the dead are going into the movies?

Before long, scientists are now predicting, it will be possible to film and screen the shades of the departed, as a final and positive evidence of the survival of identity beyond the grave, and the return of ghosts to the earth.

These predictions are based on the results already obtained with still cameras, together with one reel of movie film. During his recent lecture tour of the United States, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the "Sherlock Holmes" detective stories, and now the foremost spiritualist of the world, exhibited a series of startling spirit photographs.



In spite of the charges hurled against him that these pictures were clever fakes, Sir Arthur stoutly maintained that they were genuine, and brought forward evidence to show they had been secured under the strictest of test conditions, eliminating all possibility of trickery.

It is the contention of Sir Arthur that the science, the philosophy and the religion of spiritualism is still in its infancy. Undreamed of wonders, he declares, are still in store for the world, and therefore, motion pictures of ghosts are in no wise to be called impossible.

These pictures must not be confused with the motion pictures which Sir Arthur brought with him to the banquet of the Society of American Magicians, and which created such a tempest in a tea-pot, following their screening in the dining hall of the Hotel McAlpin. Those were admittedly faked pictures, taken to illustrate one of Sir Arthur's novels, and were offered in a humorous spirit, to have a little joke on the wise-aces among the mystery men.

But the photographs of phantoms, ghosts and spooks which Sir Arthur exhibited in his public appearances are of an entirely different character. He insists they are absolutely genuine.

And, Sir Arthur demands, if it is possible now to secure still photographs of the shades of the departed, why will it not be possible, by continuous experiment, to attract the dead to the studios ?

Attracting the spirits to Hollywood, Fort Lee or Long Island, and capturing them with the camera, will be only a matter of patience, care and the use of competent mediums !

During an interview which I had with Sir Arthur, while he was stopping at the Hotel Ambassador in New York, I brought up this and a number of kindred subjects of interest to the movie world. Before going to see him, I had fortified myself with all the

information I could get on the subject, especially with regard to experiments which had been made with motion pictures at seances.

I speedily learned that this was almost a virgin field. Very little attention, apparently, had been given to it, perhaps because of the expense attached to such experiments, and the extreme difficulty under which the experiments were conducted. However, I did learn that Baron Von Schrenk Notzing, the eminent Munich savant, had made a series of attempts with his celebrated medium, "Eva C."

The entire scientific world has been startled by the experiments of the Baron. He has published an enormous volume, describing his seances with "Eva C.," in which there are almost three hundred flash-light photographs which he took of the miracles performed by this strange woman. Under the strictest control, and with every precaution taken to prevent dupery, he secured whole scores of photographs, on which strange faces and figures appear.

It then occurred to the Baron that he could film these figures in the process of materialization—show how the white mist, called ectoplasm, streamed out of the medium, formed itself into ghosts, and then melted gradually away into the air.

When the first attempt was made, there were eight still cameras and one motion picture camera trained on the cabinet. On the eight still negatives, ghost impressions were secured. But there was nothing on the motion picture film.

But later, they did succeed with the motion picture camera !

This success came by the use of another medium, a Polish woman whose name is given in the Baron's book as "Stanislava P." While at the time of this spectacular sitting she was considered a novice by the distinguished scientists who investigated her, and ranked far below the "Eva C." already mentioned, nevertheless she did succeed in transferring to the celluloid the strange wonders which she wrought while in trance.

In the Baron's account of the sittings, he goes into great detail as to those present, the location of the cameras and cabinet, the illumination of the room, and other evidential details. Finally the medium was hypnotized and the seance began.

At these and other subsequent seances, a wisp of white gas was seen to emerge from the mouth of Stanislava, and coil down upon her breast. The book contains photographs of this, plainly developed, together with pictures showing this wisp of mist forming itself into the semblance of a human hand.

During all these extraordinary performances, the motion picture camera was clicking away.

Whole sections of the film are reproduced in the Baron's book, showing how this substance emerged from the medium's mouth, formed itself into spirit hands and features, and then was drawn back into the medium.

Here was a distinct achievement. True, it did not include the transference to the film of the weird faces and forms obtained on the still negatives, but it did reproduce the strange appearance and disappearance of the ectoplasm, under conditions which amply prevented the possibility of trickery.

Beyond these experiments, I was unable to find any other records of successful experiments with motion pictures at seances, and when I arranged the interview with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, I was anxious to learn his views on the subject. Why was it that the motion picture camera failed, while the still machines caught the spectres? And

would it be possible to eliminate the difficulties now present, and obtain motion picture records of the seances of the future?

These were the questions in my mind when I walked up Fifth Avenue one brisk and windy morning, distinctly curious, withal, as to the type of man I was on my way to meet.

Allow me to say at once that the first impression of this gifted novelist, and courageous spiritualist, is his complete sincerity. I have heard a great deal of discussion about Doyle and his theories, and very frequently I run up against the man who says:

“Why, do you think Doyle believes all this guff himself ? Not on your life ! He’s in it for the cash ! He’s got hold of a new sensation, and he’s making it pay. That’s all there is to that !”

No one who has ever talked with Sir Arthur would say that, or believe that. He is in the last degree removed from the theatrical type of mystic. Instead I shook hands with a lusty, manful Britisher, with the face of a lion. In his greeting he was jovial, good-natured and dignified. But what I noticed most was the serene and honest glow of his eyes, and his granite poise and power. He suggested nothing so much as a physician—which was the role in which he first entered the stage of public life. One rather looks to him to be standing by the bedside and asking for a glass of water and a spoon.

After a very few preliminaries in politeness, Sir Arthur threw himself down on a divan, clasped his hands behind his head, and instructed me to “Fire away !”

“Our interest in spiritualism,” I explained, having told him that I represented “Movie Weekly,” “is entirely practical. Our field is the cinematograph, as you call it in England. What we want to know is, can these spirits be captured by the motion picture camera ?”

Sir Arthur’s reply was characteristic, and shows how restrained and careful are his judgments.

“Questions like that,” he answered, “cannot be answered authoritatively off hand. They need mature consideration, investigation and experiment. That is already being practiced, on the Continent, I believe. It must not be forgotten that this science is still in its infancy. We are distinctly not in a position to dogmatize. Moreover, I must confess that this phase of the subject is new to me. It would certainly merit the fullest investigation. But I do not think there is any doubt that such pictures can be taken, when we understand the conditions better. If ordinary photography can compass it, why not the cinematograph ?”

I asked Sir Arthur how he accounted for failure in movie cameras and success in others. He replied that it was generally because harmony was lacking in the sittings, and harmony was sometimes exceedingly difficult to secure.

“I object to any man,” he declared, “who comes to a sitting, throwing out thoughts of suspicion and ill will. ‘Of one accord,’ says the Bible, and that is my experience. If a critic had been in the upper room, they would never have got the tongues of fire. Harmony is everything !”

“What about the charges that your still photographs are fakes ?” I inquired.

“As to faking photos, that is easy enough,” he chuckled. “These expert photographers who are always rushing into print explaining how I am deceived in my pictures seem to think I don’t know anything of these methods. *It is when you get photos of the dead which are like them, but differ from any taken in life that you are beyond the reach of*

rogues. All this talk of fake is absolute nonsense. These self-advertisers are parasites on the movement !”

As he developed this thought, Sir Arthur became more and more enthused with the boundless possibilities of mediumship in the future.

“We must not forget,” he declared earnestly, “that we are on the threshold of an entirely new world. What seemed impossible, even fantastic before, may now become entirely normal when we understand spiritualism better. Certainly our experiments with still cameras should give us good cause to expect some startling motion pictures before we have exhausted all the possibilities.

After a moment’s pause, the great novelist developed a new twist to the discussion which took me entirely by surprise.

“Not only may one expect motion pictures of spirits,” he remarked, “but what is to prevent the spirits from aiding us in the writing, directing, acting and general production of pantomime drama ?”

“That !” I cried, “is certainly a new and astounding idea !”

“I confess that it is new to me,” continued Sir Arthur. “But we may well ask ourselves, whence come our inspirations ? What the motion pictures need is inspiration. The chief criticism made against them is the machine-like quality of their stories. You have wonderful photography, splendid settings—but the inspiration is lacking from the plots. Now I have always been inclined to believe that what we call inspiration comes from within ourselves. What seems to well up in our minds, independent of our normal brain, really comes from the sub-conscious mind. That is the generally accepted theory—but I am now beginning to believe that it is not always a true theory.

“Every person who does creative, artistic work does reach the point where he must realize that the highest of our creations do *not* evolve from within ourselves. There comes a day when a thought is projected like a bullet through your brain. That inspiration is from the beyond. It has come from on high. Some spirit has given it to us.

“Now that fact is of tremendous importance to the makers of motion pictures !

“It must not be forgotten that there are only a very few spirits who know anything about the motion picture business. It is such a new enterprise altogether, and a development of the last quarter of a century, that most of its pioneers are still alive, I suppose. The proportion of living motion picture men to dead ones is very large. A hundred years from now you would have a greater reservoir to draw from, because more will have died. Thus the motion picture business is like spiritualism in that it is just beginning to find itself. You have very few veterans on the other side.

“But even now there is a possibility of helping hands being extended, to the motion picture men not only, but to every phase of creative effort. In more elevated moments of inspiration we can contact with higher intelligences. We all know that there is an ebb and flow of inspiration. Occasionally I am convinced we can draw down mighty thoughts from mighty thinkers—artists, painters, musicians, poets who have passed away. All such material could be utilized in making better motion pictures, I should imagine. There is certainly that definite possibility and unquestionably it fits in with the general spiritual hypothesis.”

There was also the possibility of motion picture stars getting spiritual assistance in delineating great roles. The wonderful actors and actresses of the past—Modjeska, Ellen Terry, Robert Keene, Booth, Barrett, Macready, Forrest—all the geniuses of the

footlights might be summoned through mediumship, and their help and inspiration gained by modern players.

Sometimes, when one is listening to such an eminent scholar as Doyle discussing miracles of spiritualism in matter of fact terms, one is apt to rub one's eyes to be sure one is not dreaming. It all seems so preposterous. Motion pictures of spirit land ! Stills of your dead great grandfather ! Getting actors and actresses, long mouldy and rotten in their graves, to coach you in a part !

It sounds like stuff and nonsense, doesn't it?

And yet, for a moment, pause and reflect!

What would your old school days' friend George Washington have told you, if you predicted to him the steam railroad, the electric railroad, the modern ocean liner, the subway, the skyscraper, the telephone, the telegraph, the phonograph, the air-plane, the submarine, the radio, or the moving picture?

You know what George would have thought about you ! He would have said it was all stuff and nonsense, and turned back to his chess board.

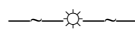
With such a record of achievement behind us, it is not wise to sneer too loudly at these men who insist that they have spoken face to face, voice to voice with their dead. Some of them rank as the foremost scientists of their time—Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Charles Richet, Lombroso, Von Schrenk Notzing and a cloud of other witnesses.

In every land and clime, reports are rising constantly of the marvels wrought in seances by mediums in the condition known as trance. Inquire quietly of your neighbors and you are certain to find some one who has had a ghostly experience they cannot explain. The subject is in the air. The belief is spreading. It may all be stuff and nonsense, that is true. But again, there may be something in it.

At all events, this much is true—that some of the cleverest men of science in the world declare they have seen these spirit forms; that there are more than a thousand spirit photographs in existence, and that Von Schrenk Notzing and his assistants did actually succeed in recording some of the seance phenomena on motion picture film.

Now, Sir Arthur predicts that the day is coming when these authentic reports will become the common property of mankind, exhibited in every movie theatre in the land.

It is something worth waiting for anyway !



Samri Frikell noted on the first image below:

A selected cinematograph showing the substance known as ectoplasm being absorbed again into the medium's mouth. From this substance, faces of departed ones were formed... This is the first motion picture taken of this phase of Spiritualism.

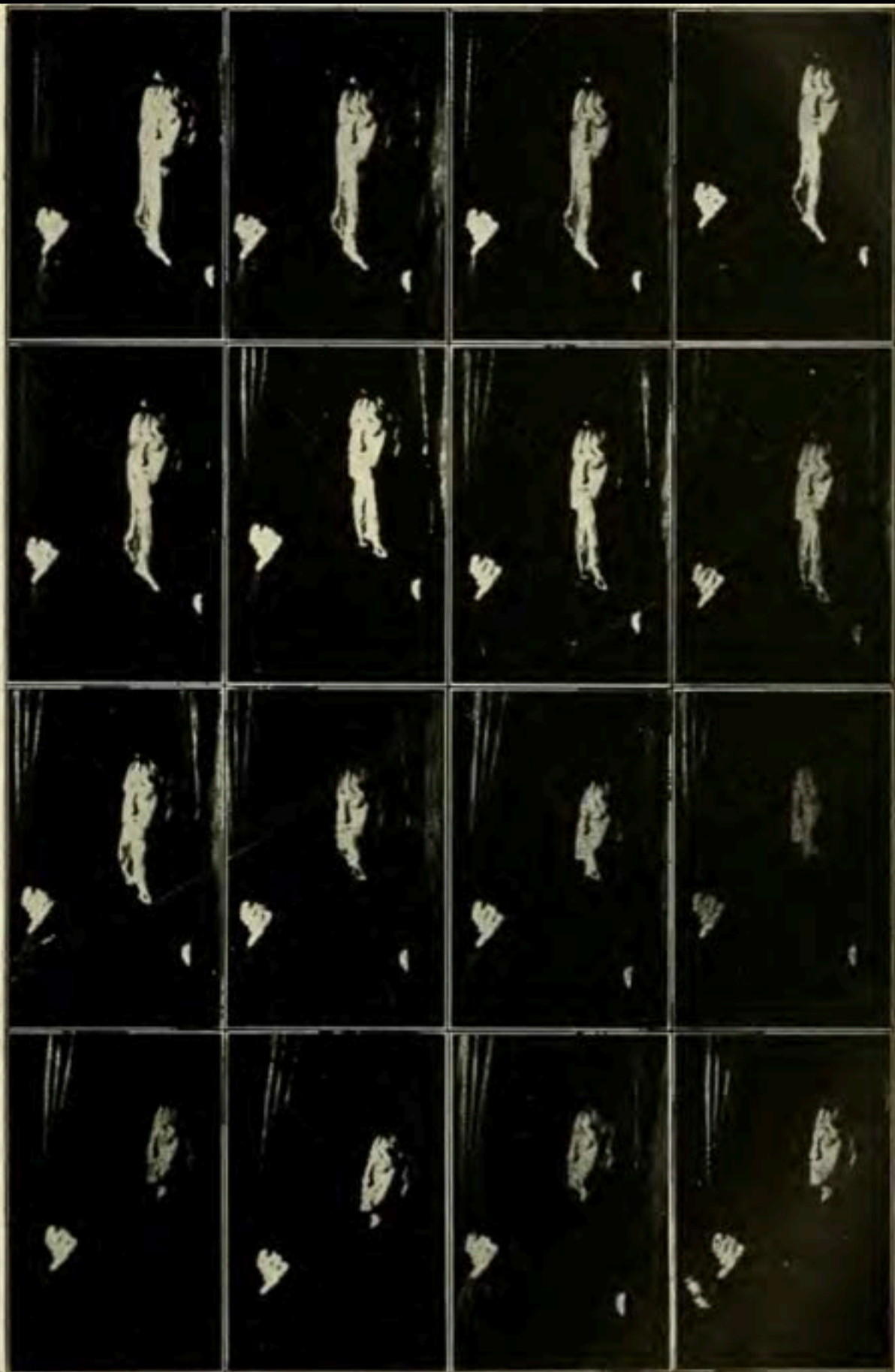


FIG. 179. SELECTED CINEMATOGRAPH PICTURES OF 25 JUNE, 1913, SHOWING ABSORPTION OF THE SUBSTANCE INTO THE MOUTH.

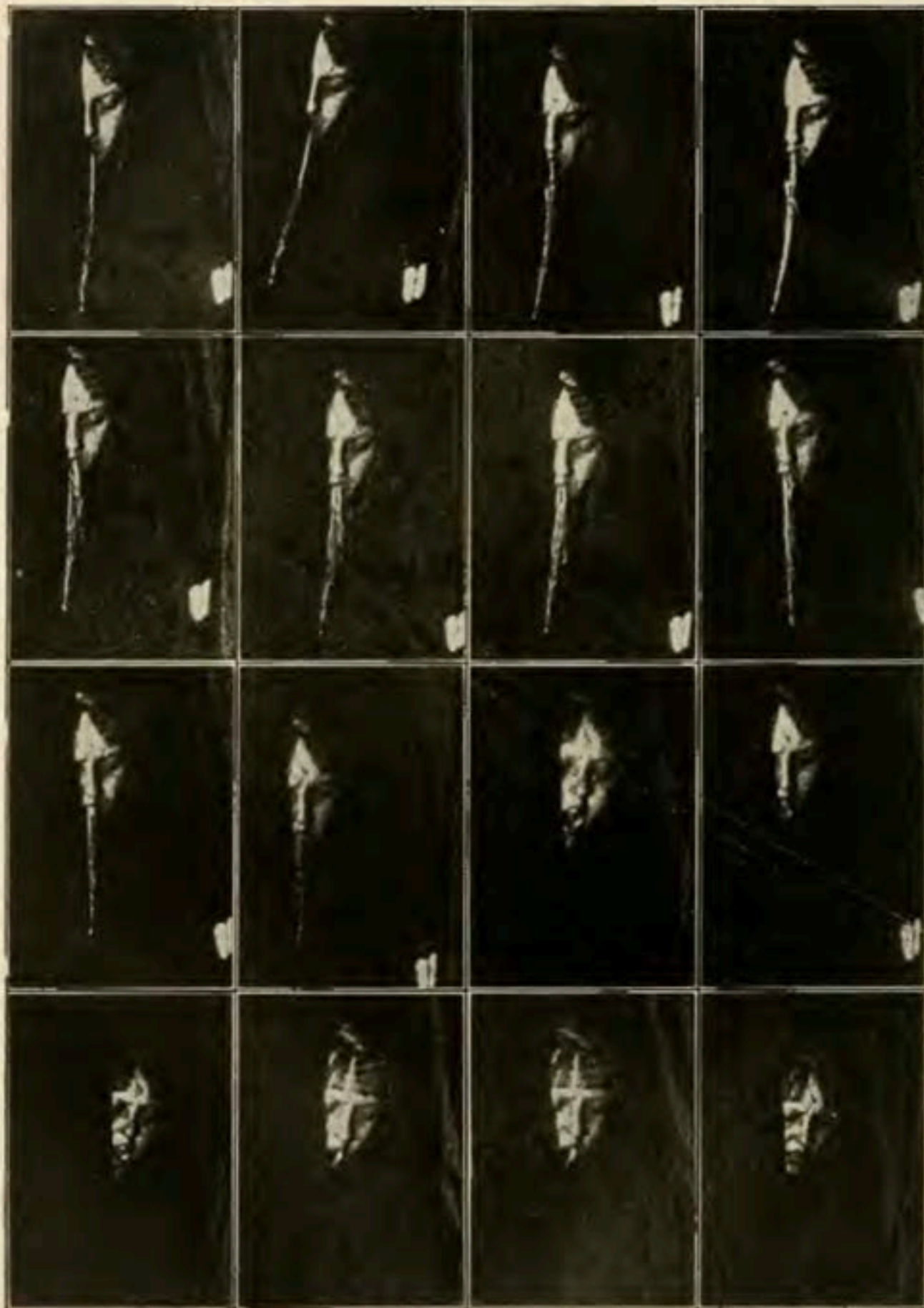


FIG. 180. SELECTED CINEMATOGRAPH PICTURES OF 13 JULY, 1913, SHOWING WIDENING AND NARROWING OF THE SUBSTANCE, AND ITS RECESSION INTO THE MOUTH.

Below is what is actually stated in “Phenomena of Materialisation” by Baron von Schrenck Notzing; the first English edition was published in 1923 and can be freely downloaded.

SITTINGS OF THE 25TH JUNE AND 13TH JULY 1913.

Conditions, illumination, and plan of the sitting as before. Professor B. and the author undertook the initial and final examinations of the medium and the cabinet on 25th June, and Dr C. (physician) and the author on 18th July.

In these sittings the veil phenomenon already mentioned was again produced. The curtain was only opened after the material had been formed.

On both evenings we succeeded in working the kinematograph for several minutes. These were the first occasions on which this had been done. The film taken on the first evening comprises about 360 pictures, and that on 13th July over 400. The two films in Figs. 179 and 180 show the recession of the material into the mouth, and the second film also shows the broadening and narrowing of the substance. On 30th July some photographs were taken with a portion of the matter still attached to the mouth, and finally the mouth was shown after the material had disappeared. The changes, visible on Fig. 180, might not suffice for the proof of an independent inner motion of the substance, however remarkable they may be. That the changes in the volume are produced by motions of the head is hardly suggested by the kinematograph. The objection will no doubt be raised that Stanislava probably drew the veil-like substance with her tongue into her mouth, and then swallowed it.

It is not denied that this is physiologically possible, but such an explanation would, in any case, assume an occurrence experienced only in a few rare cases by specialists in digestive diseases. The mere proof by photography of such a fact in the case of the medium would be a novel achievement worthy of mention for this reason alone. In any case, in both sittings the mouth was examined after the phenomenon had disappeared, without any remnants being found. Although this occurrence is not, by itself, evidential, as regards the disappearance and change in volume of the substance, the success of the kinematographic record of a mediumistic materialisation phenomenon represents such a considerable progress in method that, for this reason alone, the publication of some selected pictures of the series in both films should not be omitted. The investigator must in all his work state the truth, without considering whether it corresponds to his expectations or not.

RESULTS OF THE OBSERVATIONS.

The proof of the mediumistic faculty in Stanislava P. is not only found in her materialisation phenomena, but also in certain telekinetic actions spontaneously occurring, in her case, in daylight, as the author has several times had occasion to observe. If one only judged by the appearance of the products exposed in the sittings, which partly resembled large flat men's leather gloves, or compact woolly masses up to the size of a forearm, or veil materials of fairly coarse structure, the decision would not be in her favour. Besides, the structures produced by her are all coarse and imperfect in their form.

Now, it has already been pointed out by Colonel Peter³ that, during materialisation phenomena, the apparel, *i.e.*, the dress materials, produced and partly used for clothing the phantoms, give the strongest handle for the criticism advanced by sceptics, as soon as it is shown that they resemble terrestrial materials, or are composed of them. Peter has shown, by careful examination of such cloth samples as the finest cr pe, which were

³ Joseph Peter, *Die Gewandung der Phantome (the Dress of Phantoms)*, *Zentralblatt f r Okkultismus*, July 1902.

obtained from phantoms of different mediums under conditions excluding fraud, that they do not differ in any way from materials produced by the weaving loom. The creation of such materials is not more wonderful than the materialisation of living members, so that, in judging this point, we always come back to the conditions of production.

The initial and final examination of the bodily surface regularly carried out with Stanislava P., the wearing of a special séance costume, and the large volume of the material represented by the photographs, speak against the possibility of hiding them on or about her body. This also disposes of the objection of a scientific witness whose only reason for refusing to vouch for the genuineness of the phenomena was that the medium did not give him permission for a gynaecological examination.⁴

Quite apart from this question, the genuineness of the mediumistic performances can be vouched for by the character of the phenomena themselves.

Thus, with Stanislava P. the author could, on several occasions, and under conditions excluding such manipulations as are referred to by Ochorowicz, in his essay on “Involuntary Production of Unconscious Fraud,” observe a structure resembling a hand, which carried out movements, and grasped and threw away objects held out to it. In this case, the medium’s hands are visible, holding the curtain, her feet and knees were in their place, as was proved by the author during the phenomenon, by touching her knees several times, and her head was also visible in the red light. The author sat immediately in front of the curtain, and again and again verified the entire inactivity of the medium’s limbs during the investigation. Under the same evidential conditions (immobile, visible body of the medium) a handkerchief held out by the author into the back of the cabinet was grasped and drawn away with considerable force, as was a handkerchief laid on the hands in the medium’s lap in another sitting, while her head was visible. These examples suffice to show the evidential character of certain phenomena in themselves.



In the suspicions cast upon all mediums, even now, and in the attempts at negative explanations, we find performances assumed which have not been successfully accomplished under the same conditions even by the cleverest conjurors, and which in themselves require a proof of their possibility as manual tricks. That many phenomena, especially among those presented by mediumistic beginners of undeveloped power, can be imitated, is not to be denied, especially if the experimental conditions are not

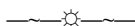
⁴ Image (Fig. 169) “Phenomena of Materialisation” by Baron von Schrenck Notzing: During the second series of experiments in Munich, June to August 1913, we often used a black tricot for the whole body which had only to be closed down the back. A veil securely sewn to the neck of the garment covered the whole head, and was closed with ribbons at the neck (Fig. 169). Along the slit on the back, and on the veil, there were a large number of black rings through which a string was drawn. The knot was sealed with a lead seal. If we also take into account that the hands were contained in white or black sacks of veiling sewn to the sleeves, one must admit that it is altogether impossible to smuggle objects for a fraudulent purpose out of this prison enclosing the whole body.

carefully chosen. But does this circumstance alone suffice to support a serious imputation of fraud ? Surely not.

The objections should be further tested in other sittings, and proved facts should take the place of mere suspicions and vague possibilities.

In the photographs of the sittings of Stanislava P. we may distinguish two groups, those of January and February 1918 and those of June and July 1913. The former shows, in four pictures, a fairly long white substance emerging from the mouth, and in two other pictures flat, badly-drawn hand-shapes. The substance used for these seems to be the same in all three cases. In the second group, including the kinematograph reproductions, the mouth is again the origin of the long veil-like substance which hangs down her breast and penetrates the tulle veil covering her head.

In the first veil photograph the material shows the structure of unravelled vegetable fibres, while the fundamental structure in the second experiment shows a resemblance to irregular distorted crochet work in wool threads. Although this point cannot be decided from the kinematograph pictures, on account of their smallness and indistinctness, we appear to have to deal with a structure resembling vegetable fibre. In neither case do we find the characteristic marking of the squarely arranged threads of purchasable silk veils. The conditions of the veil phenomenon excluded the possibility of fraudulent production. Like Eva C., Stanislava P. produces flat forms resembling sketchy hands. The emergence of the material from the mouth, and its disappearance into it, which was also observed in the case of Eva C. under evidential conditions, was found again with Stanislava P., and even recorded by the kinematograph. We also find remarkable analogies between the two mediums in the bizarre and irregular formation of the structures, and in the veil-like, fibrous condition of the material produced.



To address some of the points in the above observations:

SITTING OF THE 23RD JUNE 1913.

Present.—Herr von Kaiser, Herr Sch., Princess R., and the author.

Stanislava put on the whole tricot, with wide full bags for the hands, and a white veil covering over the head. The fastening of the head veil and the tricot were lead-scaled. All other conditions and control were as in the sittings of January and February 1913.

8.30 P.M. Hypnotisation by the author. Red light switched on, curtain closed. After about half an hour a long veil-like strip was shown, which came out of the medium's mouth and appeared to penetrate the veil. A flash-light photograph was taken. Sitting closed at 10 P.M., Final examination of the medium and cabinet negative. All the veils and lead seals intact.



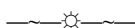
The enlarged photograph (Fig. 173), taken from the left within the cabinet, shows the medium's head in a black veil, and her hands in white veils. From the mouth down to the left hand there extends a broad fibrous material passing through the veil, which at its upper end shows a thick bulge, and is marked by a transparent pattern which, in its branchings, recalls vegetable fibres rather than textiles. It is interesting to note the difference between the regular square thread structure of the white veil, covering the hands, and the marking of the mediumistic product. A piece of the black veil seems to be drawn back into the mouth by Stanislava, so that the process of the penetration of the veil is not clearly shown. For this reason the experiment was repeated under the same conditions, with the head veil drawn more tightly, and the suggestion was made not to draw it into the mouth. But the experiment, in any case, is evidential, since the medium had no materials at her disposal with which she could have brought about such a result, outside her dress.



The second plate shows an enlargement of a séance photograph taken a week later, July 1st 1913, which shows a different structure of the materialised substance.

Schrenck Notzing notes:

On the photograph, taken from the front the forms of the body are clearly marked out through the tricot. In this case, the veil was drawn more tightly over the face and showed fewer folds. The upper lip is covered by a white substance, which appears to penetrate the veil, broadening out on the outside. There is a remarkable difference from the drawing of the structure of 23rd June. While the former recalls vegetable fibres, the present photograph shows a structure of lace-work, of woollen threads of various sizes, with thickened edges) Fig 176).



The views from the right and from the left (Figs. 177 and 178) corroborate these details, and hardly leave a doubt that the materialised substance, in a veil-like form, has penetrated the veil mask.



Below is Some Background Information on Stanislava P.⁵

PHENOMENA WITH STANISLAVA P.

INTRODUCTION.

The Polish medium, Stanislava P., at the author's invitation, placed herself at his disposal in Munich for a series of sittings extending from 29th September 1912 to 21st February 1913. The mediumship of this nineteen-year-old girl, who was employed as a cashier in a business at Warsaw, was discovered a year before and developed by Mr S. at Warsaw in a series of sittings.

In her eighteenth year Stanislava P. experienced in her room a telepathic hallucination by the optical appearance of her friend Sophie, of the same age, who, as it was afterwards found, had unexpectedly died at that moment. This experience directed attention to her mediumistic faculty, and suggested experiments with Stanislava in conformity with the spiritistic tradition. After this, the personification "Sophie" played the leading part in the manifestations.

Stanislava P. came of a good family, but lost her parents at an early age, and was adopted by a gardener. Up to her tenth year she remained illiterate, and when, at eighteen years, she took part in the sittings for the first time, she could not yet read or write perfectly. She showed, in accordance with her degree of education, a very limited comprehension of the necessary conditions of these experiments, only consenting to them with reluctance, to oblige her benefactor, and in order to earn her living. In her case, there is a great æsthetic awkwardness and a lack of disposition towards plastic art, and this is clearly seen in her materialised products. "Spiritism" she did not know even

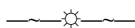
⁵ Taken from the "Phenomena of Materialisation", by Baron von Schrenck Notzing, pages 251/252.

by name, when the first experiments were made with her, thus any assumption relating to a possible training in conjuring are devoid of every foundation.

On the other hand, it should be mentioned that Stanislava P. created the most favourable impression on the persons whom she met in Warsaw and Munich by her modest, simple, and amiable character. But her excessively developed modesty, her great timidity, and emotional disposition rendered the application of rigid experimental conditions difficult. Any new method of control she regarded as an aspersion upon her honesty, and this was often followed by emotional excitement, tears, sleepless nights, and negative sittings. She did not permit an examination of her naked body by the author or any other male person, whereas she had no objection to the presence of ladies while she undressed and put on the séance costume (tights and apron dress, as in the case of Eva C.). For this reason ladies had to be admitted to the sittings. After her return, a lady physician sent the author a virginity certificate concerning the medium.

The arrangement of the experiments required, from the beginning, a delicate adaptation to the peculiarities of her character, but especially a discreet consideration for her well-developed sense of female honour and modesty, if positive results were to be achieved at all. Finally, we must not forget that in Stanislava P. we have a young novice whose mediumistic career hardly a year old, cannot be compared with the experience and education of Eva C., extending over nearly ten years. For that reason, conditions which could be applied, after four years, to Eva C., as the result of long and laborious training, could not be immediately applied to Stanislava. Under these circumstances, some of the phenomena presented by this mediumistic debutante are less evidential and convincing than the manifestations of Eva C. Yet there has never been any indication justifying the suspicion that she had introduced fabrics, veils, hands, gloves, etc., into the cabinet in any form. Before every sitting Stanislava usually undressed completely in the presence of a lady, and put on the séance costume which was prescribed by the author, consisting of tights with a black apron tunic. The two articles of apparel were not sewn together, as even if that had been done it might have been maintained that the medium could touch her skin, so long as she had the use of her hands. The medium's condition and history exclude the use of the vagina as a hiding place, but so long as the character of the phenomena is such that they cannot be imitated under the same conditions, such objections may be disregarded in any case.

During the second series of experiments in Munich, June to August 1913, we often used a black tricot for the whole body which had only to be closed down the back. A veil securely sewn to the neck of the garment covered the whole head, and was closed with ribbons at the neck (Fig. 169). Along the slit on the back, and on the veil, there were a large number of black rings through which a string was drawn. The knot was sealed with a lead seal. If we also take into account that the hands were contained in white or black sacks of veiling sewn to the sleeves, one must admit that it is altogether impossible to smuggle objects for a fraudulent purpose out of this prison enclosing the whole body. Besides, the material of the tricot is sufficiently transparent to show the whole surface anatomy and the main shades of the epidermis. Since the cabinet was also strictly searched beforehand, we may assume that under these conditions it would be an absolute impossibility to produce previously hidden objects, and to manipulate them through the delicate veils with the hands. The practical results achieved by this method may be considered as of equal value to those obtained by Eva C. Of the whole photographic results obtained with Stanislava P., only those are here communicated which are of interest for the present work on account of their agreement with those of the Paris meetings



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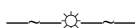
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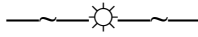


This page also has a selection of downloadable important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union, designed to cover key topics for anyone studying one of our courses or for anyone looking to further their knowledge on the history of our movement.

Also, a link to all “Psypioneer” issues often referenced in Pioneer

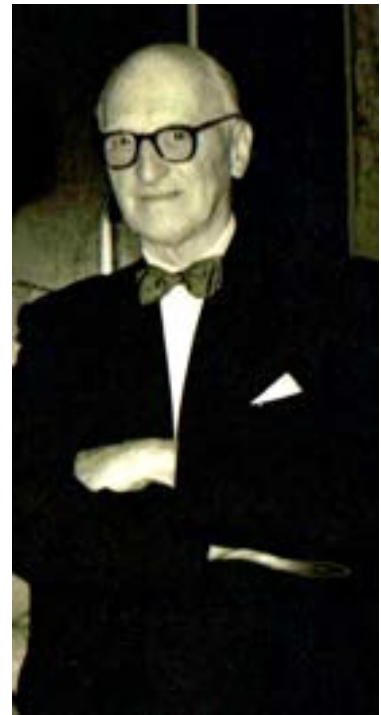


HARRY DAWSON



The lecture published below, “Materialisation Phenomena”, is by the former Spiritualists’ National Union President, Harry Dawson (1953-1958), who held a distinguished record within the SNU. He had served under six former Presidents when his appointment to the Union’s highest office was announced on July 4th 1953.

Harry Dawson’s introduction to Spiritualism was during WWI while reading “Spirit Teachings”, by Stainton Moses, regarded by many as the Spiritualists’ bible. This was followed by study of another book, “Harmonial Philosophy”, by Andrew Jackson Davis, founder of the Lyceum movement, which catered for Spiritualist youth. Dawson joined a Spiritualist church at Crewe, where he met Billy Hope, the psychic photographer. Then he moved north, joining Gateshead Spiritualist Church in 1918 and giving years of service in various offices before becoming Church President. Here he made his mark on the Northern District Council, which led to his appointment as its Area Representative to the National Council. For some years he acted as President of the Northern District Council.



Because of his interest in healing, a subject to which Dawson devoted many years, he was asked by the SNU to take over the secretaryship of the committees which looked after education, exponents and healing. His own children were brought into the Lyceum’s education system, leading Dawson to spend much time on the SNU’s educational activities. Some indication of Dawson’s own mediumship can be found in the “Two Worlds”, April 23rd, 1937, on the “Readers Page”, by A. Reynolds (D.N.U.), Ipswich, quoted below:

“I joined the Movement, and became a member of Eden Progressive Church in Gateshead, where Mr. Dawson was president.⁶ He was perhaps the most outstanding trance speaker and healing medium in the North. Fine addresses in big, rolling sentences, illustrating spirit-life, laws and philosophy, were expressed through him on the platform. These lectures by the spirit-doctor were very illuminating—a joy to all thoughtful spiritualists, but like other prophets the honour which was his due was not accorded him. He was too near to us and our times.

“I shall never forget the uniquely intimate conversations we had with Mr. Dawson’s controls—Red Eagle, the Doctor and Joe; as well as numerous other entities who were passed through the medium for instruction, awakening and rescue. The weekly circles, held in my home for some years, were characterised by simplicity, friendship and tolerance. There was nothing “religious” about them, no hymn-singing or prayers; just conversation on the subject so near and so dear to our hearts—Spiritualism.

“While talking or tinkering with the wireless—then in its infancy,—for Dawson is an electrician, he would slip quietly under control and a spirit-visitor would be joining in the conversation.

⁶ Eden Progressive National Spiritualist Church, Rectory Hall, Cuthbert’s Place, Bensham, Gateshead was founded in November 1897. On September 22nd-28th, 1997 it celebrated its Centenary; the speakers, demonstrators, etc. included SNU President Judith Seaman, Duncan Gascoyne, Mary Duffy and Coral Polge. Spiritualism in Gateshead can be traced back at least to the early 1880s with the ‘Gateshead Society for the Investigation of Spiritualism’.

“His body, which I often felt in the first stages of control, was of icy coldness, and hard and solid as frozen meat. The characteristics of the controlling entity followed. With the Indian Chief a lengthening by some 8 inches or 9 inches, so that trousers became almost knee breeches, and waistcoat almost bursting with chest and shoulder expansion; the Doctor produces slimming and contraction, with concave chest; and Joe, foreshortening, stooping, etc.”

“Joe, another control, was although perhaps less progressive, a very valuable guide regarding mundane affairs. Joe loved to predict when allowed to do so. The higher guides, however, believed Joe’s predictions tended to make things too easy for us. They would, they said, weaken rather than strengthen our character. We must face up to life and solve our own problems. We learned more of the lower spirits and their struggles towards the higher spheres from Joe than from any of the others. They had progressed—he was still too near the earth.”

A touching memory is published in the “Two Worlds”, April 7th, 1956, page 7:

“My wife was weeping but smiling when she brought me the telegram. It said, ‘Congratulations to the new president.’ ” Alas, Mrs. Dawson was to share her husband’s success for only a few months. She passed in October, 1953—leaving instructions that there were to be no flowers at her funeral and asking that the money which would have been spent on them be donated to the SNU fund of benevolence for which she had striven for many years.⁷

During his presidency negotiations were already in progress with J. Arthur Findlay, who first approached the Union regarding Stansted Hall when it was occupied by the Red Cross as a convalescent home and when he resided at Rockingham Castle, Market Harborough. This was followed in 1950 by personal contact with W. Lorraine Haig, then President of the Union, who appointed a President’s Committee to investigate and report on a College for Spiritualism. But it was not until January 1954 that Mr Findlay wrote to Mr H. Dawson, who had been elected President six months previously, followed by a meeting at Stansted, and that a direct and close liaison between the Hall and the Union was established.



Dawson notes – regarding the photograph shown of himself and Arthur Findlay during discussions on the future of Arthur’s gift

⁷ The Fund of Benevolence (FOB), was founded by Mrs Minnie Harriet Wallis (1854-1939) in the 1890s. For further details please see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 2014: “Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists’ National Union”.

The lecture below was delivered at the SNU South Wales Summer School 1958. The popularity and success of these events is published in Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 5: "What we did before Stansted." The article is taken from "Psychic News", August 30th, 1958:

Materialisation Phenomena

Harry Dawson, former president of the S.N.U. delivered a lecture on some further facts about materialisation at this year's South Wales Summer School. Here is Mr. Dawson's lecture, in abridged form, to make a feature article of absorbing interest.

The phenomena of materialisation introducing mediumistic teleplastics is in my opinion, still a subject for the private home circle and the research laboratory only.

Contrary to general opinion, I do not believe that physical manifestations are less frequent nowadays than in former times—they are under cover. I personally know of many who will not come into the light of publicity.

Of the many mediumistic phases, there is one whose subject matter and phenomena is not completely satisfactory to offer to the general public—materialisation.

Why, you may ask? I can suggest several good reasons, and the first is that there is insufficient knowledge of the subject.

To illustrate this point, think of the dangers to mediums by the foolish introduction of persons who have not even an elementary knowledge of this intricate and very personal subject.

Many of you who have given study and thought to this matter, or who have been fortunate enough to witness demonstrations by tested and more or less reliable mediums, and certainly those amongst you who have had to deal with the after effects of interference with mediums during sittings, will fully realise the dangers that can ensue, both to our cause and to the medium.

I have in my own search for knowledge on this vital subject during the last forty years been privileged to participate in many physical seances with well known good-class mediums—and with some not so good, either in will or purpose.

During my investigations I have found that many of the ideas so fondly cherished as being essential (for example, holding hands over long periods, sitting upright on hard-backed chairs, questionable singing, various coloured lights, etc.), have made little difference to the quality of the phenomena.

Yet, when none of these supposed essentials has been in use it has been my experience that the tragic need of some individual has often brought evidence of the first order.

There are many aspects of the technique of this work on which there appears to be insufficient knowledge. It is my firm opinion that no completely uninitiated person should attend a physical seance.

Many people expect a materialisation seance to be a simple matter; they know nothing of the various intermediate stages of etherialisation until the solidified figures are able to manifest.

There is another aspect—under certain conditions not yet fully understood or known to us, we get what appears to be fraudulent phenomena.

Sometimes the spirit people work under considerable difficulties; when for example there is only a limited supply of ectoplasm.

The medium in deep trance is under the control of the entity who wishes to manifest and speak to you but to supply proof to you this entity must be recognised; consequently the spirit people do the best thing possible with the limited amount of ectoplasm, using it on the face of the medium.

It has been known in such cases, in order to complete the manifestation, the spirits have made use of apports. This is a perfectly legitimate thing but it has given rise to queries in many cases.

Spirit people have been known also to take material from clothing of the sitters in order to help the presentation of the manifestation, and many regular sitters have noticed that the clothes reserved for their seance work sometimes become very threadbare or have unexpected holes in the fabric.

The first essential for any group is to establish and maintain a close co-operation with the spirit operators, who will instruct them. There have been many occasions in my own experience when I have asked the spirit operators, "Well, what sort of conditions will obtain tonight? Will it be spirit forms, or can you use this plastic stuff in some other way?"

Indeed the spirit people are co-operative in genuine research.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN A SERIES OF TEST SITTINGS WITH ALEC HARRIS, THE AUSTRIAN SCIENTIST IN CHARGE OF PROCEEDINGS ON THE OTHER SIDE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS SAID TO ME: "PROVIDING YOU GIVE US WARNING THAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO CERTAIN THINGS, WE HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO REASONABLE EXPERIMENTATIONS OF ANY KIND."

On one occasion Mrs. Gladys Mallaburn⁸ was present; from a child she has had long experience with seances and has profound knowledge of these matters.

It was interesting therefore, to note that on one occasion, upon the invitation of the Austrian scientist, she was admitted into the cabinet to watch the actual process.

She witnessed the building up from a heap of ectoplasm on the ground, a rudimentary figure, and then saw a spirit hand working upon this plastic material, moulding the draperies and touching up the actual features. And finally there came a complete form from the cabinet. This is a wonderful thing and yet many people would be sceptical.

In a conversation some years ago, with Dr. Hettinger,⁹ the question of a suitably qualified panel for testing purposes was raised.

It was agreed that a biologist was essential; then there should be chemists, both organic and inorganic; in addition there must be a spiritual person, someone of full spiritual understanding and sympathy. Finally, of course, there must be the demonstrator and at least one other person who would keep complete records.

⁸ Gladys Mallaburn was a Spiritualists' National Union Minister (MSNU); for some further information on Mallaburn please Google "The Mallaburn Circle by Maurice Barbanell". There is still today the Gladys Mallaburn Trust within the SNU: "The fund was established in 1978 to provide that interest on investments be utilised towards the general administration expenses of the head office of the Union, the fund to be invested in dated Government stock and any capital accretion at the redemption dates being added to and forming part of the trust for reinvestment."

⁹ John Hettinger: Author of various books and papers, primarily on Psychical Research.

One of two supremely interesting examples stand out in my memory from the many seances it has been my privilege to attend over the years. There was one occasion of a sitting with Alec Harris. With me were Ernest Oaten, John Stewart, Percy Wilson and Ernest Thompson.

DURING THE PROCEEDINGS A LITTLE STOCKY FIGURE CAME OUT OF THE CABINET, AND STOOD BY ERNEST THOMPSON WHO WAS A VERY BIG MAN. THIS LITTLE STOCKY FIGURE PROCEEDED TO LIFT ERNEST RIGHT OFF THE FLOOR. I MYSELF WAS SO FASCINATED I WENT DOWN ON MY KNEES IN ORDER TO WATCH THE PLAY OF THE MUSCLES IN THE CALVES OF HIS LEG.



As a Physiotherapist I know something about muscles. At the same time the Austrian spirit scientist in charge of proceedings invited another member of the group to reach out and ascertain that the medium was still in his chair.

Another incident, which has been frequently reported as a classic example of the co-operation between the spirit operators and ourselves, took place years ago at a sitting with Harris. Certain critics had suggested to me that it would be possible for the medium to come out of the cabinet and to pass himself off as a female figure.¹⁰

On this occasion the materialised form of a girl came over to me from the cabinet, stood in front of me and opened her spirit robes. And there was the naked form of a young girl.

The spirit in control requested me, in view of my many years of experience as a physiotherapist, to give the figure a complete examination and to assure myself that it was in fact the figure of a young girl and not that of the medium.

THE MORE I LEARN OF THESE MATTERS THE MORE VITAL IT SEEMS THAT A GREATER KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT SHOULD BE ACQUIRED AND I DO FEEL THAT IT IS DANGEROUS TO TAKE THE IGNORANT AND THE UNINITIATED INTO THE SEANCE ROOM.

The selection of members of test panels—particularly in this phase of mediumship—must surely be a matter for great care and thought.

Some of the reactions of so-called experts at physical seances have revealed a deplorable lack of knowledge of the subject, often allied to a sanctimonious attitude that was positively ludicrous.

What is available nowadays for the younger generation?

There is evidence collected and published by a number of famous men—Dr. Schrenck Notzing, Dr. Crawford, Sir William Crookes, Dr. Gustave Geley and many others.

¹⁰ Alec Harris: “The Full Story of His Remarkable Physical Mediumship”, by Louie Harris, available on the SNU website: <https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/alec-harris-the-full-story-of-his-remarkable-physical-mediumship>

The evidence they have accumulated is in the library at Head-quarters in Manchester,¹¹ and in the libraries of many S.N.U. Churches.

Those churches who do not have such books available can obtain from us a parcel of say twenty-five or thirty books on loan for serious study by interested groups.

Now let us consider the work of Ernest Vickers, of Orpington, Kent—one who held the Fellowship of Union for a thesis entitled “Psychic Physiology”. Vickers shared with C. Victor Miller, of San Francisco, the unusual ability to produce materialisations of varying types **whilst not in trance**.

Thus he was able to witness and be aware of all that happened and to be conscious of the pains and penalties that materialisation mediums suffer.

This remarkable characteristic of consciously producing the extrusion of his own physical substance to build up bodies temporarily, whilst the spirit entities manipulated them to give evidence of survival makes the miracles of the Bible (psychic happenings) fall into their natural place in accordance with the fulfilment of Natural Law.

Ernest Vickers was able to prepare a number of diagrams to show the methods whereby the spirit operators manipulate the ectoplasmic substance extruded by the medium.

The copyright of his work was left to the Union—and it is hoped that in the near future the National Council will exert itself to fulfil its promise to publish his book as one of the text books of the physical phase of the study. I know of no finer book for the physical medium of tomorrow.

At the last of the Psychic Sciences’ Conventions held at Dunbar,¹² I took the opportunity to ask some questions during the last series of Ernest Vickers’ lectures. One question was:

“Did you at any time during your contact with your guides obtain any information or details relative to the elements composing this “Ectoplasmic Stuff” as you call it, and more particularly, the composition of the ectoplasmic draperies used by spirit forms?”

He replied that he was informed that the material that passed from his body to build these forms was in the first place invisible, being in the form of a gaseous substance and also of liquid substances.

THESE GASES AND LIQUIDS, DIRECTED, MIXED AND EXUDED BY PSYCHIC FORCE, WERE THEN SOLIDIFIED AS REQUIRED AND TOOK DIFFERENT FORMS, FROM SMALL BODIES SUCH AS HANDS, FEET, UP TO FULLY DEVELOPED FIGURES.

This I maintain is of great interest to the student and to the experimental investigator. So far as I can ascertain, Dr. Schrenck Notzing was the only investigator to give the formula for “ectoplasmic stuff”—a term used by several well known scientists.

I wonder how long we shall wait until some keen investigator will corroborate his formula of the past.

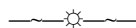
¹¹ This refers to the “Britten Memorial Library”, then housed at the SNU Registered Office, “Britten House”, at 12 Tib Lane, Manchester (purchased in 1948), later moving to the Annex at Stansted Hall in 1971. Today the SNU Registered Office is just a few metres up the path and is called Redwoods.

¹² These were SNU Psychic Science Conventions, which were held annually for several years.

One very interesting feature of materialisation history, carried out under the direction of several famous men and assisted by equally sound feminine investigators and mediums, reveals that the spirit operators choose with care the types of investigators.

Dr. Schrenck Notzing was a noted physician and psychologist—Dr. Crawford was a Professor in Mechanical Structures at Dublin University—Sir William Crookes a noted chemist—Dr. Gustave Geley a well-known Paris psychologist.

Each of these famous savants, it will be noted, received suitable materialisation evidences relative to their particular fields of science and medicine.



Editor's Note:

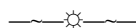
Readers of the SNU Pioneer electronic journal will be aware of some of the points made by the former Union President, Harry Dawson, as much of this is outlined in the Pioneer series, "A Question of Fraud", and further information in the Pioneer PDF booklet, "Physical Mediumship" (details on the last page of this issue).

Dawson draws the reader's attention to Ernest Vickers and to his important contribution to the Spiritualist movement in general. Vickers' interests could be said to have been twofold. Early on he realised the importance of education for the young, which led him into the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BSLU), becoming its President during WWI;¹³ equally, he was involved within the SNU and served as one of its Ministers. As noted by Harry Dawson, he achieved a prestigious award by earning a Fellowship of the SNU.

Firstly, I will briefly note part of Vickers' contribution to BSLU, which was published in *Psychic News*, April 6th, 2002: Tom Haver, the then Secretary of the Spiritualists' Lyceum Union Education Committee, wrote:

"The Divine Image is within, and it is the aim of true education to develop that image in such a way that the child's individuality will not be impaired. The highest aim of education is to reveal the life and form of that individual. This can be done through the learning process in a painless way. The Spiritualists' Lyceum Union has operated an education system since its inception. Revolutionised in 1910 by a Sheffield businessman called Ernest Vickers,¹⁴ a scheme was set up which worked on the basis of children learning aspects which adult Spiritualists took for granted. Annual examinations were held each year for older Lyceumists and for younger ones oral testing was found to be the better option.

This scheme, after being tried and tested to see if it was workable, was eventually confirmed as the best method of teaching at that time, and was fully approved by the SLU National Conference in 1915. This system lasted for 70 years till 1985 when the then President, Minister Allan Millichamp, introduced the present day method ..."



¹³ The British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union: In Manchester 1889 a committee was appointed to draw up a constitution for a proposed Lyceum Union, which included John Pemberton, Samuel Chiswell, W.H. Wheeler and Edward Wallis, with Alfred Kitson as Secretary. With forty delegates in attendance at the Oldham Conference on May 11th, 1890, under the presidency of Harry A. Kersey, the constitution for the Federation of Lyceums was formed.

¹⁴ Subsequently known as the "Vickers Scheme".

Returning to the focus of physical mediumship:

Vickers himself was a mental and physical medium. Dawson pointed out that he had achieved a Fellowship of the Union for his thesis entitled “Psychic Physiology”; this in part included the rare ability to produce materialisations of varying types whilst *not* in a trance state, enabling him to observe, and to be fully aware of, all that happened and its procedure, at the same time being conscious of the sensations, pains and penalties that materialisation mediums might suffer.

Consciously producing the extrusion of his own physical substance, i.e., psychic force, psychoplasm, ectoplasm, etc., required to produce an objective form in conjunction with the spirit controls to manipulate the fluids to produce the required features, characteristics of a materialised form, is quite remarkable. Ernest Vickers was able to prepare a number of diagrams to show the methods whereby the spirit operators manipulate the ectoplasmic substance extruded by the medium.

Harry Dawson had asked the medium at the last of the Psychic Sciences’ Conventions held at Dunbar:

“Did you at any time during your contact with your guides obtain any information or details relative to the elements composing this “Ectoplasmic Stuff” as you call it, and more particularly, the composition of the ectoplasmic draperies used by spirit forms?”

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“Psychic Physiology” was published circa 1951. Dawson made mention regarding the copyright of this work being left to the Union and hoped the National Council would republish it but unfortunately I have been unable at present to find any trace of this valuable book. Vickers gave a series of lectures to the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS)¹⁵ on “Psychic Physiology”; Light published a short snippet on March 14th, 1935:

PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP

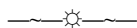
MR. ERNEST VICKERS, A.M.I.M.E., was the lecturer at the British College of Psychic Science, South Kensington, on March 6th. With gifts ranging from clairvoyance—objective and subjective—clairaudience and auric sight, to indications of physical mediumship, Mr. Vickers is giving close attention to the last-named, reserving all his time and strength for this with a selected group. Retaining full consciousness during the experiments, he is able to make a very full record of his mental and physical reactions, which should be invaluable in any later study of physical mediumship.

He emphasized the suffering endured by a Medium in the process of drawing out the etheric force from practically every organ of the body—heart, lungs, limbs, bones, blood, brain, etc. Usually such sensitives are entranced and suffer less, and this is perhaps the first time we have a record by a Medium himself of such experiences. Cold winds, many varieties of scents and smells, and the sensation by the sitters of masses of nebulous substance, is the present extent of the phenomena. Several charts exhibited by the lecturer gave an idea as to the various methods used in collecting the psychic force

¹⁵ See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: “International Institute for Psychical Research”.

from sitters and concentrating it on the Medium, and excellent advice was given as to the necessity of quiet and repose of mind and limitation of sittings if such work was to be successful.

A large audience appreciated Mr. Vickers' confidence in giving these details, and a good discussion followed. Mrs. Hewat McKenzie occupied the chair.



Further, the British College of Psychic Science quarterly journal published a synopsis of its then Autumn programme for 1935, with Vickers' upcoming October and November lectures at the College; this gives some indication of the extent of the subject:

PSYCHIC PHYSIOLOGY

By ERNEST VICKERS

The following is a synopsis of a very valuable series of lectures beginning on Monday, October 14th, 5.30 p.m., which appears on the Autumn College Programme, of which it is hoped many will take advantage. Mr. Vickers has practical experience of both mental and physical mediumship and for the first time it is possible to hear what a private scientist who has carefully recorded his sensations has to say of the reaction of mediumship on the physical organs and on the nervous system.

PSYCHIC PHYSIOLOGY

The general accepted definitions of the terms, Psychic, Psychic Research, and Physiology, are as follows :-

Psychic. Pertaining to or connected with the human soul, spirit, or mind.

Psychic Research. A scientific study of the more obscure and unexplained activities of the human spirit or spirits in general.

Physiology. The science that treats of the vital functions of the human body.

Psychic Physiology. Is a combined study of the activities of the human soul, spirit and mind, during its association with the physical body.

In this connection, study and research reveal the following:

1. The effect and reactions produced by the power of mind on the organs and physiological structure.
2. In the case of extreme sensitiveness, known as mediumship, the mind of the medium comes under the power of mind exerted by spirit guides. Contacts in all phases of mediumship are first established in this way.
3. To produce the necessary states in the body of a medium, the mind and brain of a medium, according to the degree of sensitiveness, is influenced by spirit guides either in a state where consciousness is wholly or partially maintained, or during deep trance.
4. Actions are produced on the organs and the physiological structure in general by spirit guides, to establish a flow of force and elements, for use in psychic productions.
5. A study of innervation, and strong stimulation by the nervous system, on the organs and periphery of the body, reveal that the states produced are the means of exuding force and elements from the body of a medium.

6. Actions on the bones, blood, glands, tissue, nerve substance, and all the vital organs, are the means of providing data for continuous and complete study and research in the science of Psychic Physiology.

7. Conclusions are possible of the character of the material exuded and the biological changes produced, during the actions. In this respect, a study of the bony system, blood circulation, organs, nervous system including ganglia, glands and brain is necessary.

8. How psychic force from a medium is withdrawn and used. Under this heading, knowledge on the following is ascertained :—

(a) The influence and effect of the power of mind, exerted upon mediums.

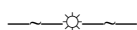
(b) Exudence and suction.

(c) Extraneous forces of suction and attraction, exerted upon the exudence from mediums, viz; psychic force, ectoplasm, psychoplasm, and gases.

(d) The power of mind which spirits exert during the processes of materialisation.

9. That for investigators in psychic research, mediums, medical men and others, it is essential to progress that a study of Psychic Physiology be undertaken.

10. Generally, attention has mainly been concentrated upon research in Psychic Science, but it is claimed that scientific study and research in Psychic Physiology is of equal importance for the well being of the human race, and by progressive research, knowledge made available for future generations.



Ernest Vickers died in May 1953;¹⁶ his obituary notice from Psychic News, May 23rd, 1953 is published below:

FORMER LYCEUM UNION PRESIDENT PASSES

ERNEST VICKERS, WHO PASSED ON IN THE EARLY HOURS OF WEDNESDAY MORNING LAST WEEK, WAS WELL-KNOWN IN SPIRITUALIST CIRCLES, BEING CONNECTED WITH THE MOVEMENT FROM AN EARLY AGE.

His particular interest was with children and young people, so it was not surprising that he became an ardent Lyceum worker. During the 1914/18 war he was President of the Lyceum Union.

He instituted several educational schemes and he wrote a number of books and pamphlets on subjects of interest to young people.

In addition to these pursuits, Vickers was a physical and mental medium of some repute. He contributed a number of pamphlets to S.N.U. Conferences on physical mediumship, and was the author of a book on the same subject entitled “The Development of Physical Mediumship.”

Another book, “Psychic Physiology,” completed only two years ago, earned him a fellowship of the S.N.U. It dealt with the sensations of a physical medium and the manifestations which occur. He presented it as a gift to the Union.

¹⁶ The SNU North Yorkshire District Council website, “Yorkshire Pioneers”, incorrectly states that Ernest Vickers was killed in action at Flanders on July 10th, 1917.

Ernest Vickers was also a minister of the S.N.U. and although holding a high business position and an Associate of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers he still found time to serve many churches. Prior to living at Orpington, his last home, he was for many years an active figure at Letchworth.

One of his last public appearances was at the Easter Congress of the London District Council at Brighton.

Harold Vigurs, who was a close friend of Vickers, tells us that only recently he received a peculiar telephone call from Ernest asking him to attend to the necessary arrangements in the event of the caller's death.¹⁷

Vigurs was very puzzled by this as Vickers always seemed very healthy. However, the following Saturday afternoon he met Ernest for lunch prior to their attending the May Convention of the LDC.

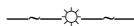
Mr. Vigur's wife was to play a selection of pianoforte solos and Vickers was particularly anxious to hear her. He was very musical himself, playing both the piano and the organ in his own home.

Vickers seemed perfectly well when they met and there was no mention of the telephone call; but during the meal he was taken ill, and became so bad that they were forced to abandon the idea of going to the meeting.

By the time Vickers reached Orpington again he was in a very ill condition but refused to be taken to hospital. His one thought was to return to his home.

Finally when he reached there and retired to bed he became immediately unconscious, from which sleep he did not wake.

The burial service was to be held on Tuesday.



There is no need here to repeat the research so far undertaken in *Pioneer* with regard to the early phases of materialisation, where the early mediums' externalised forms very closely resembled the mediums themselves, as well as problems encountered by insufficient psychic force¹⁸—for simplicity the term “ectoplasm” is used—where the supply of ectoplasmic drapery was not enough to cover the form, and the measures employed to address this problem.

It is often said that materialisation mediumship is more apt for the researcher, rather than general séances, due to the nature and complexity of the production of the phenomena, coupled with inexperienced sitters. Ectoplasm in itself does not prove survival. William Crookes, for instance, *did not accept* that the materialisation of the alleged Katie King was a spirit of a dead person.

Miss Felicia R. Scatcherd (1862–1927) was a well-known figure within the SNU and in psychical research, who produced numerous papers and books on Spiritualism and research. It

¹⁷ Harold Vigurs, SNU President 1943-1948, is well featured in the pages of *Pioneer*; see *Pioneer* PDF booklets “SNU History” and “SNU Presidents” (details on the last page of this issue).

¹⁸ A term used by William Crookes, basically related to the existence of a nervous atmosphere or vital force, i.e., nervous energy. The term “psychic force” was coined by a colleague of Crookes, Serjeant-at-Law Edward William Cox (1809-1879). He was sceptical of Florence Cook at the time of the Crookes investigations into her materialisations in 1873-4. Cox had worked with Crookes in his early investigations of May 1871 with Daniel Dunglas Home (1833-1886). Cox, incidentally, was convinced of the genuineness of Home, although he did not accept the spirit hypothesis. He had first used the term “psychic force”, publishing a booklet to this effect in 1872, “*Spiritualism Scientifically Examined with Proofs of the Existence of a Psychic Force*”.

was Scatterd who proposed the term “skotographs”—spirit writing, images or thought photography impressed on to photographic plates in unopened packets, etc. She wrote an essay, “Ectoplasm as Associated with Survival”, which was published in various outlets; this was later printed separately in a small booklet in October 1926, partly quoted below.¹⁹

Ectoplasm as Associated with Survival

“THE term ectoplasm is made up of two Greek words, ÉKTÓS (outside) and πλάσμα (a thing formed).

“Prof. Chas. Richet was the first to use the word as applied to the substance out of which materialisations are produced.

“An objection urged against the term is that it is already in use in connection with zoology.

“Madame Bisson prefers the word “substance,” and invariably refers to “*la substance*” when describing the phenomena concerned with the manifestation of ectoplasm. She was the first investigator to place these phenomena on record in such a manner as to compel the attention of the scientific world. In a sense the term substance seems preferable to that of ectoplasm, as being more inclusive of the ascertained facts concerning this living mode of matter in its various degrees of manifestation. American investigators have tried to popularise the terms *Plasma* and *Plasmology*, with regard to objective psychic phenomena, but the term ectoplasm has caught the popular fancy, and those who denied all reality to psychical phenomena talk glibly about ectoplasm and think they know all about it. In truth, up to the present very little is known about this “basis” of objective psychical phenomena. One of the oldest and most illustrious of living investigators tells us:



“ “We must not hide from ourselves the fact that these phenomena cause us to penetrate another world, a world unknown and as yet entirely unexplored.”²⁰

“If real progress is to be made in the exploration of this unknown world, ectoplasm, and its kindred psychic problems, must be studied with dispassionate ardour and due observance of the conditions essential to secure results.

“Dr. Franz Hartmann was of the opinion that all psychical phenomena were to be attributed to a nervous force producing mechanical and physical effects outside of the human body.

“Even a limited experience of the phenomena in question would prevent the acceptance of this hypothesis rejected by Flammarion, Mme. Bisson and other investigators, including Dr. Geley.

“All theories of the subconscious are seen to be equally inadequate to explain the facts as observed with Eva C. [image below] and other mediums.

¹⁹ The full booklet is published in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 10, No. 2.

²⁰ Camille Flammarion, *Les Forces Inconnues*.



“ “A portion of force, intelligence and matter can be exteriorised from the organism, act, perceive, organise and think outside of the muscles, organs, senses and brain. It is none other than the lofty subconscious portion of the Being. It constitutes truly a subconscious exteriorisable being, coexisting in the ego with the normal conscious being.”²¹

“The word *being* or *être*, is evidently used as our word self, and should be thus translated.

“Dr. Geley, however, has himself modified this view so as to cover the whole field of phenomena. In a later work²² he expresses himself thus:—

“ “During the whole time that the materialisation lasts it is in obvious physiological and psychological relation with the medium . . . every impression received by the ectoplasm reacts on the medium and *vice versa*; the extreme reflex sensitiveness of the forms is closely connected with that of the medium. Everything goes to prove that the ectoplasm is in a word the medium herself, partially exteriorised. I am speaking of course only from the physiological point of view and not at present from the purely psychological side of the matter” (page 63).



“All experiences in materialisation phenomena tend to demonstrate the existence of one primordial substance, of which living forms are but representations. Dr. Geley, a consistent and clear thinker, goes on to complete his views of the problem thus :—

(a) The essential unity of organic substance.

(b) The evidence of a superior dynamism implied by the necessity of admitting a superior, organising, centralising and directing dynamism.

(c) The conditioning of the dynamism by the idea.

“The third factor is the most important of the three, maintains Dr. Geley. It implies the complete reversal of materialistic philosophy, for it means “the modelling of living matter by an idea”—ideoplasticity, and when to this is added the fact of teleplasticity, denoting the same phenomenon of ideoplasticity taking place at a distance from the dematerialised organism, the ground of ascertained facts with regard to materialisation he holds is fully covered.

“Baron von Schrenck-Notzing, whom I have known longer than almost any of the other eminent psychical researchers, was one of the few who did not accuse me of inventing excuses for fraudulent mediums, when I brought forward this fact of ideoplasticity as an explanation of what seemed fraud on the part of a medium. I had discovered independently this fact of ideoplasticity (calling it the image-forming faculty) as possessed by myself and other sensitives when dealing with certain phases of ectoplasmic phenomena, especially that of psychic photography.

“In his foreword to Mme. Bisson’s work on materialisations published in the same year as his own volume, Baron von Schrenck-Notzing singles out this ideoplasticity as the most mysterious of all the enigmas associated with the marvellous living substance known as ectoplasm.”

²¹ Dr. Geley, *L'Être Subconscient*.

²² *From the Unconscious to the Conscious*.

Scatcherd further noted:

“Ectoplasm was at first understood to indicate the substance exuding from a medium in visible form, perceptible to all the sitters and capable of being photographed. It is now applied to any mode of mediumistic emanation which renders possible the various forms of physical phenomena (including psychic photography) from simple raps to partial or complete materialisations, the latter in every way resembling a normal human being.



“Prof. Chas. Richet, when describing the Bien Boa materialisation,²³ possessed all the attributes of life, walking, speaking and breathing, just like a human creature—having a body that manifested both resistance and muscular strength.”

“So perfect often were these full-form materialisations such as Crookes’s Katie King and Richet’s Bien Boa, that, as Prof. Richet himself has pointed out, the choice lies between two hypotheses, and two only: that of a phantom possessing all the attributes of life, or of a living person simulating a phantom.²⁴

“The average outsider usually adopts the second hypothesis.



“Commenting further on the subject, Prof. Richet said that as a physiologist he could not make up his mind to admit the fact of materialisation. He would only assert that it was a profound mystery that must change our ideas of nature and of life from top to bottom. This was written in 1906. I met him in the early part of December of that year when we discussed the question of survival. I wonder whether he remembers saying:

“Oh, mademoiselle ! I sometimes almost wish I could do violence to my conscience as a physiologist and accept the hypothesis of human survival. You ask me why I feel like that ? Because I might then entertain the hope, even if it were only for once, of shaking hands with Socrates.”

“Prof. Richet has now admitted the facts of materialisation, though he still rejects the only adequate, explanatory hypothesis, that of survival.

“Madame Bisson met Eva C. in 1910 and her observations were published in 1914, as were those of her fellow-observer, von Schrenck-Notzing.²⁵ Their careful records confirm and illustrate, in every essential detail my own sporadic experiences of 1906, and onwards. Until these studies were published, my statements were received with amused contempt or crude denunciations, and I utterly failed to interest any member of the S.P.R. except Sir W. Crookes, who had his time fully taken up with other matters.

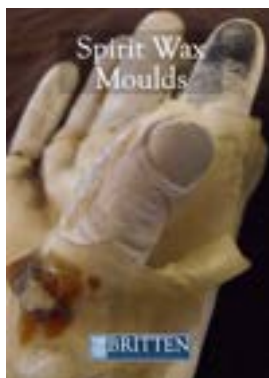
²³ *Annals of Psychic Science*, April 1906.

²⁴ *Annals of Psychic Science*, 1906.

Pioneer: Richet’s observations of the materialised Bien Boa, said to be a 300-year-old Hindu, via the mediumship of Marthe Béraud, better known as Eva C. The images of Bien Boa in Schrenck-Notzing’s book, “Phenomena of Materialisation”, resemble a figure which was made from a large cardboard cut-out; in other sittings Charles Richet reported that Boa was breathing, had moved around the room and had touched him (in the image shown the legs of the seated medium can be noted, but nothing appears to be supporting the alleged materialisation).

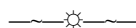
²⁵ This is incorrect inasmuch as Mme. Bisson was sitting with Marthe Beraud (Eva C) prior to 1910.

“Dr. Geley’s conference at the College de France, on “So-called Supernormal Physiology”²⁶ further elucidated and confirmed the observations of Bisson and von Schrenck, whose names, together with those of Richet and Geley, will for ever be associated with those discoveries which are making possible a new biology and a new physiology.

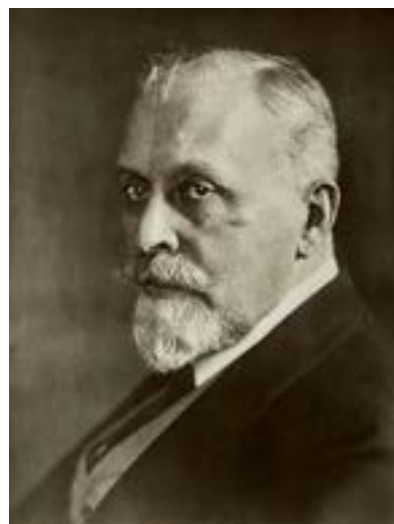


“Ectoplasm as such does not demonstrate survival. But when, with more than the rapidity of thought, it builds up and breaks down, or dematerialises *at the word of command*, producing by means of materialised hands and feet, seamless wax gloves, from which no living hand or foot could be withdrawn without damaging the glove, it demonstrates intelligence other than that of the experimenters.”²⁷

“When it reproduces by the agency of a temporary materialisation, or of a supernormal photograph, a death-wound, unknown to any of those present, but afterwards verified, survival as associated with ectoplasm is as clearly proved as any fact can be in this wonderful but relatively imperfect world, for here we have an instance of memory. Memory pre-supposes mind: both imply thought and all three demand conscious life, or rather self-conscious existence, as an essential pre-requisite for any similar manifestations whatsoever.”



The above is intended only to show some information on the process of *recorded information* on the “substance” known more widely as ectoplasm. The book, “Phenomena of Materialisation”, published in 1914 by the German physician Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (translated into English in 1923) is available as a free download. The book records séances involving Madame (Juliette) Bisson, some with her husband Alexandre, and from 1909 to 1913 with the physical medium Marthe Beraud. Around 1909 she changed her name to Eva Carrière (known as Eva C); she is referred to in the book only as Eva C. The researchers as mentioned by Scatcherd have, as in most cases, come under critical fire and accusations about their work from other psychical researches and authors, but the sole purpose of this article was to gather information on the subject of ectoplasm.

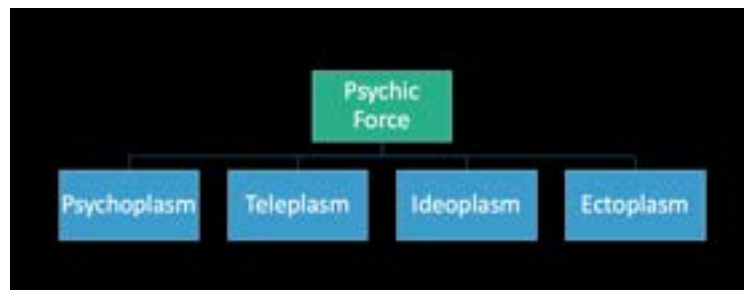


Numerous researchers have been noted for the various names of the *substance required*—making the invisible visible—objective phenomena—physical mediumship in general. There are numerous other names, e.g. magnetic fluids, and sub-categories from researchers which I have not included. The most well-known terms to suite the purpose of this article include psychic force, teleplasm, ectoplasm, psychoplasm, ideoplasm. In my opinion the various names given to the *different phases* of materialisation mediumship from the early 1870s are for all intents and purposes similar in structure and interchangeable—any modifications are in relation to the development of the mediumship and the style of its presentation.

²⁶ Gustav Geley, *La Physiologie dite Supernormale. Bulletin de l’Institut Psychologique*, 1918 (January, June).

²⁷ Both Richet & Geley researched this extraordinary phenomenon. In November 1920 Geley extended his experiments until his death in 1924 (b. 1886) in an aeroplane accident; he was returning from experimental séances in Warsaw. All the moulds obtained during the séances with Franek Kluski were, I quote: “... in a little bag which Dr. Geley was holding in his hand at the moment of this death; the aeroplane’s crash broke the moulds into tiny bits.”

Please see: Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 2: “Britten Museum & Library “Wax Spirit Hands” booklet — Reviewed by the SPR” & “Houdini & Wax Gloves — Joseph F Rinn”.



For further information on the fundamental substance required for the production of materialisation and other related physical phenomena in the séance room and the coinage origin of the various names used:

Spirits of the Trade: Teleplasm, Ectoplasm, Psychoplasm, Ideoplasm ²⁸

By Marc Demarest ²⁹

Let's start with a snippet from A. Campbell Holms' *The Fundamental Facts of Spiritualism* (Jamaica, NY: Occult Press, 1927, pp. 35-6), a book for which I have a soft spot, as Holms wrote it late in his life after years spent trying to make sense of Spiritualism:

It is not known exactly in what respect the organism of a medium differs from that of ordinary people, but it has been ascertained that the production of objective phenomena depends on their ability to emit a mysterious substance termed teleplasm, ectoplasm, psychoplasm or ideoplasm.

The fact that teleplasm is essential to the production of physical phenomena has long been known to spiritualists, for it was described in spirit communications as long ago as 1867 (see Kardec's *Book of Mediums*, p. 91) and it has often been seen from that time to the present day. Recent experiments by eminent European scientists, working with exceptionally gifted mediums, have established its reality beyond dispute, for it has been observed at close quarters, handled and photographed by flashlight; and several scientific monographs have been written describing it in detail, with many photographs showing its various modes of manifestation, and the human-like forms it may assume.

The section of Kardec to which Holms refers is the communication from the spirit of St. Louis on the nature of the *perispirit*. I don't know what precisely Holms is referring to (in the 1874 English edition, p. 91 is a bit off-point) but it may well be this (from pp. 87-8 of the 1874 Emma Wood English translation):

It has been said that the density of the perispirit, if one may so express it, varies according to the states of the world; it appears that it varies also in the same world according to individuals. Among the morally advanced spirits, it is more subtle, and approximates to that of the elevated spirits; among the inferior spirits, on the contrary, it approximates to matter, which is the reason these spirits of low state preserve so long the illusions of the terrestrial life; they think and act as if they were still living; they have the same desires, and we might almost say the same sensuality. This coarseness of the perispirit giving to it more affinity with matter, makes the inferior spirits more fitted for physical manifestations. It is for the same reason that a man of the world accustomed to the labor of intellect, whose body is frail and delicate, cannot carry a heavy burden like a porter. Matter, with him, is in a manner, as it were, less compact, the organs less

²⁸ <http://ehbritten.blogspot.com/2013/02/spirits-of-trade-teleplasm-ectoplasm.html>

²⁹ Marc Demarest, who runs the excellent research website, "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" (IAPSOP). It can also be noted that IAPSOP archives *Psypioneer*, so often referenced in the SNU *Pioneer*: <http://iapsop.com>

resistant; he has less nervous fluid. The perispirit being to the spirit what the body is to the man, and its density being according to the degree of inferiority of the spirit, it takes the place of muscular force; that is to say, gives him, over the fluids necessary for manifestations, a greater power than those have whose nature is more ethereal. If an elevated spirit desires to produce such effects, he does what delicate people amongst us do; he has it done by a *spirit of the trade* [MD: emphasis original].

(For the moment, I have to walk past this metaphor, which is every bit as potent, revealing and damning as Freud's early use of *house* metaphors, complete with servants at the door, deciding what is admitted to consciousness. But we'll come back here some day).

These two snippets form the bookends of the problem at hand, as well as any might. From 1850 onward, we have various and sundry notions of a force (and the complex psycho-physics behind that force) necessary to produce physical phenomena, from raps, tips and turns to (eventually) full-form spirit manifestations; from the 1870s onward, we have the (scientific?) motivation to separate this force from its controversial milieu and its (to many eyes, tawdry) productions (a motivation best expressed in the life and work of Serjeant Cox), to name it, study it, bend it to the will of man, and the will of the market.

What might be said about the origin of word *ectoplasm*? This is the Richet coinage question. Did Charles Richet coin the term ectoplasm, and if so, when? The answer is usually "Yes in 1894". Often we're treated to a nice etymology in conjunction with the assertion.

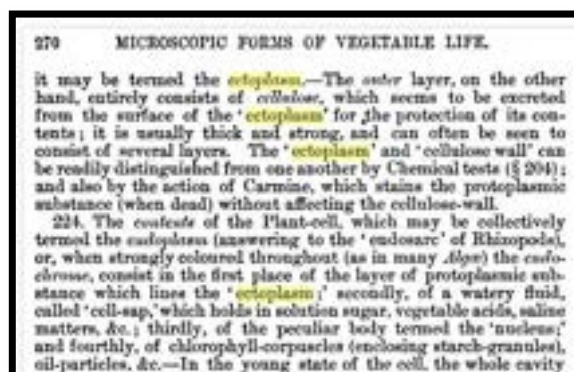
Arguing about who first used a word -- the first-use game -- is largely a waste of time, particularly in a discipline where unique names for a common theoretical object allowed one to establish a commercial or academic precedence for one's self that translated into hard currency, or social currency (think, for example, about the number of -isms under which magnetic theory went, in the 1840s and after -- my favorite is Le Roy Sunderland's Pathetism. "No, no, it isn't magnetism -- It's Pathetism. Only I have it, and it can be yours for three payments of...").

And we've known for quite some time -- nearly a hundred years -- that the canonical assertion "Richet coined the term *ectoplasm*" is false. Henry Holt, the publisher and Spiritualist, blew Richet's cover in an article entitled "A Review of Richet," which discusses Richet's *Traité Metapsychique*, in the *Journal of the ASPR* for 1922:

III. Ectoplasm on page 656 (of *Traité*) he [Richet] says that he devised (*imaginé*) the word ectoplasm. It was apparently an unconscious recollection -- and an unfortunate one. He has unwarrantably lifted the term from a permanent covering of certain protozoa on to an occasional exudation from the highest organism we know. Geley has suggested teleplasm, which fits in well with the rest of the teles and seems more suggestive than ecto. Richet defines his word as referring to "the formation of objects which in most cases seem to come out of the human body and take on the aspect of material reality (garments, veils, living bodies)." In this definition he leaves out the case of Crawford [MD: Crawford's "psychic rods," to explain telekinesis in the Goligher circle, I believe] and others where the exudation seems to serve as the vehicle for telekinesis, yet he often alludes to them elsewhere. M. Richet's absorption with ectoplasm leads him to say that ectoplasm is the basis of the whole subject of Metaphysics. Well, probably everything we know has a physical basis, nevertheless, it would seem rather queer to call Physics the basis of Metaphysics, and there are students of Metaphysics who will consider that placing ectoplasm at the bottom has not yielded as inspiring results from the Paris school as placing ostensible spirit communications -- or shall we say telepsychosis? -- at the bottom, as yielded from the London school. Such students will not find as much in this great book of Richet or in the great book of Schrenck-Notzing as they have found in the great book of [F. W. H.] Myers.

(In its multi-volume work on the Margery mediumship -- when I think of ectoplasm, I think of Mina Crandon. J. Malcolm Bird inserts a telling footnote, reading: “The original records of this period employ always the words ectoplasm, ectoplasmic. Inasmuch as the Society has abandoned this term, turning it over to orthodox biology in the interests of its long established use there in another connection, I have throughout substituted the newer and more expedient terminology.” That newer and more expedient term: *teleplasm*).

Ah, well. This is why they call forgery **utterance**. Three minutes with Google books will suffice to convince anyone of the correctness of Henry Holt’s point, and the incorrectness of his understanding of the prior use of ectoplasm, which was a term of art in microscopy and cell biology. W. B. Carpenter (yes, **our** W. B. Carpenter), used the term in **1881** in his book *The Microscope And Its Revelations*.



Charles Richet did not coin the term *ectoplasm*; he traduced the term *ectoplasm* from cell biology, unconsciously or otherwise, while claiming the invention of the neologism in print. He was the first person, so far as we know, to use the term *ectoplasm* to describe the formation of the accouterment of materialization séances (the “garments, veils, living bodies” above).

OK, but we still have to give Richet his due for applying the term we use today to describe the gauze-, rubber- or jelly-like exudations from spirit mediums, right?

Nope. Richet used the term to explain **what it was** that Eusapia Palladino could produce (a phantasmal arm), not **what it was** that Mina Crandon exuded from her orifices.

I think we owe the broadening of the term *ectoplasm* to F. W. H. Myers, who used *ectoplasm* in his *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903) in that way:

Another and apparently more developed form of prolongation has been observed with Mr. Moses. These are phantom arms and hands, reproducing the arms of the medium, coat-sleeves, shirt-cuffs and all; and extended generally from the shoulder, straight out, and above the true arms. These supplementary or “counterpartal” arms (suspicious objects enough, until observed under good conditions) seem never to have been actually touched, but are swiftly retracted into the medium, or simply vanish, if an attempt is made to grasp them. Nevertheless, the hands in which they terminate do appear to move objects.

Odd and unexpected as these phantasmal arms are, they are instructive in more than one respect. In the first place they supply in a certain way a missing link between mere phantasms and ectoplastic phenomena. We know that as a rule phantasmal appearances exert no objective effect upon the material world; -- and we know also that to this rule there seem to be some few exceptions. It is through these shadowy, yet materially active, prolongations, -- collective hallucinations which yet can affect the solid world, -- that the line of continuity, if such there be, between purely subjective phantasm and firmly materialized hand or body may have to be drawn.

In the second place, these reproduced coat-sleeves stand apparently midway between two phenomena not obviously allied; -- viz., the appearance of dying persons as though draped in their habitual clothing, -- and the greater facility (attested by Mr. Moses’ guides) of manufacturing a duplicate of some object already existing on earth, rather than a new and original object of their own devising.

Perhaps we may link the two by saying that everything which is not a purely earthly phenomenon must be for us mortals to some extent symbolical; and that the simplest form of symbolism depends on mere reminiscence; that this the line of least resistance for the **psychic force or telergic impulse** [MD: emphasis added] leads to the upbuilding of the ectoplasmic fabric upon the basis of thoughts and images which are already fashioned and stored in the human spirit.....

In the classes of ectoplasms already enumerated, there has been at least an apparent continuous connection with the body of the sensitive; -- although, in the last mentioned case especially, that connection is of a very shadowy kind.

We now come to ectoplasms without apparent connection with the organism from which we still must suppose them in some way derived. Two incomplete forms of such isolated ectoplasm first present themselves; the one manifesting, so to say, definition without visibility; the other, visibility without definition.

As examples of a certain amount of definition without visibility, I take touches and imprints....

A commoner way in which the detached ectoplasm begins its development is with an appearance of cloud, or light, or luminous mist, surrounding some object which is presently moved, -- the stem of a flower broken, or a bell carried about the room. Such appearances, already mentioned under the heading of vital photogeny, are frequently recorded both with D. D. Home and with Mr. Moses....In describing these imperfectly aggregated ectoplasms we have already touched on the next class, that of quasi-organic detached ectoplasms. These are especially hands, sometimes with wrists or arms attached, but no with no mere shadowy or duplicated drapery, but a drapery which is their own, and for the time being is as tangible as themselves....These ectoplasms, moreover, when developed, may be recognisable; they may serve as indications of identity....Amongst these detached ectoplasms must be reckoned the phenomenon of "the direct voice." Utterances may be referable to an ectoplasmic throat as distinctly as grip to ectoplasmic fingers; and may form of course an even higher manifestations, -- capable of manifesting more intelligence and giving more convincing indications of identity....Nor is it desirable here to dwell at length upon the most advanced type of ectoplasmy; -- when an apparently complete form seems to live for the time an independent life. This never occurred through Mr. Moses. Something like it occurred through D. D. Home several times; though the solidity of the form was not tested. No more, therefore, need here be said than that this complete development of the isolated and independent ectoplasm differs in no fundamental way from the types which we have already discussed.

It was Myers, I think, who takes Richet's idea -- labelled *ectoplasm* -- and develops an entire model and vocabulary of ectoplasticity, making variants of the term (noun, verb, adjective, to describe origin, manifestation and mechanism) stand both for the motive energy and the physical manifestations (and for a complete range of physical manifestations, as is obvious).

Myers, not Richet, made it possible for the term "ectoplasm" to be applied to the stuff that poured from mediums' orifices, as it was just another of the phenomena in Myers' typology (though whether "higher" than full-form manifestations, or not, I don't know).

But Myers -- straddling -- also roots ectoplasm in both an energy, and in a collective hallucinatory experience shared by medium and sitters.

Now, for the other terms: *psychoplasm*, *teleplasm* and *ideoplasm*.

Psychoplasm is the oldest of the four terms we are looking at, I think, and its origin (according to W. T. Stead, anyway) is attributable to James Burns.

In *Borderland* for October of 1895, Stead writes a short piece called “Psychoplasm,” quoting Burns at length (though from what, he doesn’t say [see below] -- I am sure it’s somewhere in *The Medium & Daybreak*):

“PSYCHOPLASM”

ONE of my correspondents in the United States sends me a copy of the *New York Sun* for August 18th, which contains an article on spirit pictures. After describing cases in which spirit photographs have been taken, the writer says:—

The connection between magnetic and spiritualistic phenomena has long been claimed. The photographer, the mediums say, has a guide, philosopher, and friend, a spirit-artist whose part it is to gather from the atmosphere certain rare and fine semi-luminous particles, of which he shapes a mask of the spirit sitter, much as a sculptor models in moist clay. This mask is then held up in such a fashion that the rays of it, invisible to everything but the sensitive plate, can imprint its image upon that surface. At least that is the explanation given to a New York Statesman by certain friends, who inform him that they have spent their mortal years upon the lost continent of Atlantis.

This bears a tolerable close resemblance to what “Julia” said as to making a mould by which these psychic pictures are procured. It is only in the adoption of the old doctrine of psychoplasm which is employed to explain the phenomena of spirit photography. Psychoplasm was explained by the late Mr. Burns in the *Medium* [& *Daybreak*?] as follows:—

Nature around us is a condensation into palpable forms of previously aerial and inscrutable forces. Man as an organic being is composed of these things. He holds them in suspension in his nervous system. We are all materialised spirits. The solid food we eat is condensed air. The life within us decomposes it again into gaseous form, rearranges its component elements, and uses the product to maintain the structure of the body, supply it with force, and the mind with means of feeling, thought, and expression. This fluid within man’s body is called *psychoplasm*, because it is so highly vitalized that the soul can mould it into organic form.

Burns didn’t originate the term; if he was the first traducer, and I can’t find a better candidate, Burns borrowed the term from (and this is a surprise) the dedicated anti-Spiritualist and theory of mind pioneer George Henry Lewes, who brought the term into currency in his 1874 work *Problems of Life and Mind*:

PSYCHOSTATICS

6. Let us now pass from Life to Mind. The vital organism we have seen to be evolved from the Bioplasm, and we may now see how the psychical organism is evolved from what may be analogically called the Psychoplasm. The Bioplasm is characterised by a continuous and simultaneous movement of molecular composition and decomposition; and out of these arises the whole mechanism, which is also sustained and differentiated by them. If, instead of considering the whole vital organism, we consider solely its sensitive aspects, and confine ourselves to the Nervous System, we may represent the molecular movements of the Bioplasm by the neural tremors of the Psychoplasm: these tremors are what I term *neural units*: the raw material of Consciousness; the several *neural groups* formed by these units represent the organised elements of tissues, the tissues, and the combination of tissues into organs, and of organs into apparatus. The movements of the Bioplasm constitute Sensibility. The forces of the cosmical medium which are transformed in the physiological medium build up the organic structure, which in the various stages of its evolution reacts according to its statical conditions, themselves the results of preceding reactions. It is the same with what may be called the mental organism. ...

A couple of things worth noting about Stead's note: he is **apparently unaware** of Richet's use of the term *ectoplasm* (and Stead is very well read) -- what is current in the scientific literature on psychic phenomena is not, necessarily, current in the popular literature on psychic phenomena, because one of the effects of the professionalization of investigation by the SPR and later organizations is: a separation of what had theretofore been a unitary discourse, into two discourses, one more accessible than the other.

Also, we need to be clear that Burns is using *psychoplasm* to clothe the old-as-the-movement magnetic fluid theory of manifestations.

Teleplasm appears to belong, if to anyone, to von Schrenck Notzing (although he also appears to have traduced his term, this time from pathology) and Morelli uses "teleplasmic" in passing in *The Annals of Psychical Science* in 1908). In his *Phenomena of Materialization* (1914, in Fournier d'Albe's English translation, 1920) VSN uses the term as follows:

...we may suppose that soft substances, such as the flowing dress of the medium, curtains hanging near, etc., can be of some advantage, and **may form conductors** [MD: emphasis mine] and reservoirs of power, from which the effects may take their origin, besides giving points of support for the materialized structures. Both for the materials of the furnishings of the cabinet, as well as for the dress of the medium (for which knitted fabrics are preferable), a black colour is to be recommended. For with a black background even the finest, hardly visible materialized fabrics can be seen. Besides, this colour increases the darkness of the cabinet, and thus contributes indirectly to the development of the phenomena. If care is taken that the medium has nothing white about her, the materialization structures, appearing grey or white on a black background, are very convincing. Thus darkness behind these structures appears to be a necessity for the development of the teleplasm. Yet these thoughts, which are the product of uniform observation of various mediums, are not to be a rigid rule, but only a hint. All observations made by the author concerning mediums agree in this, that a white light has a hindering and disturbing effect on the phenomena, and an unfavorable action on the development of the teleplasm.

Elsewhere, von Schrenck Notzing is a little more specific about what he means by *teleplasm*, calling it "the fundamental substance of materialization" and that's consistent with his working model of the origin and energy involved in the production of phenomena, which is the old magnetic fluid/conductive model, like that of Burns and the classical pre-SPR Spiritualist hypothesis more generally.

(It's worth noting that von Schrenck Notzing describes sittings with Eva C. in which sitters convince Eva C. to produce what we might call ectoplasm from the orifices of her naked body; "At the beginning of the sitting Mme. Bisson persuaded the hypnotised medium to open the dressing-gown, and thus had, for the first time, an occasion to observe the emanation of the teleplasm from the bare body of the medium. It seemed to emerge primarily from the bodily orifices, mouth, teats, and genitals, and also from the hands and under the arm-pits. The emanation had a smoke-like or gaseous character, and formed clouds, from which structures, like veils and fabrics, and eventually all kinds of forms, resembling human limbs, developed.")

Von Schrenck Notzing does not use either *ectoplasm* or *psychoplasm* but does use *ideoplasm* to refer to produced objects "closely connected with the psychic life of the medium, with her storage of memories, and with the intensity of dominant ideas."

Ideoplasm seems to have been used, first, by Ochorowicz, in an article entitled "A New Mediumistic Phenomenon", in *The Annals of Psychical Science* for 1909. He writes:

It is possible to create, between the medium's hands, a sort of thread, possessing for some minutes a certain consistency, which diminishes and disappears with the putting

apart of the hands. The formation of the mediumistic thread is accompanied by a sensation of chill. This thread, created by the unconscious imagination of the medium, seems to present a case of objective material ideoplasm: the strong desire to raise a small object at a distance, brings by association the idea of a thread which would do this.

Doyle, who preferred the term *psychoplasm* I think, credited Geley with the coinage of *ideoplasm*, and Geley does use and define the term (“Ideoplastic=moulded by an idea”) in his *From the Unconscious to the Conscious* (1918, 1920), wherein he also distinguishes it from *teleplasm*: “That word is ‘ideoplasticity,’ to which has been added ‘teleplasticity’ to describe the same phenomenon when occurring at a distance from the decentralized or dematerialised organism”. And Geley makes ideoplasticity a force that arises “from the depths of a mysterious and impenetrable unconsciousness,” as well as the basis not only for psychic phenomena like materialization, but related phenomena like mental healing, and even mimetic phenomena in nature (chameleons unconsciously want to be green, or red, or mottled, and so they are). When Geley uses the word “ectoplasm” which he rarely does, he means only “a thing formed: the exteriorised substance” **which may in fact be the origin of our contemporary use of the term.**

The term “ideoplasm” doesn’t show up very often in the literature; but the term “ideoplastic” occurs about an order of magnitude more often in my databases than does “ideoplasm” “Ideoplastic” means just about what Myers meant by “ectoplastic,” as this snippet from Hamlin Garland’s *The Shadow World* (1908) demonstrates:

“The question with me is not, Do these forms exist? but, What produces them? I am describing this sitting to explain what I mean by the ideoplastic or teleplastic theory. If, for example, this psychic had known me well enough to have had a very definite picture of “E. A.,” he might have been able to model from the mind-stuff that he or the circle had thrown off, a luminous image of my friend, and aided by my subconscious self, might have united the presence and the musical thought of Ernest Alexander.”

“It won’t do!” exclaimed Miller. “It’s all too destructive, too preposterous!”

“I insist that the spirit hypothesis is simpler,” repeated Fowler.

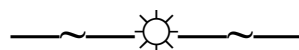
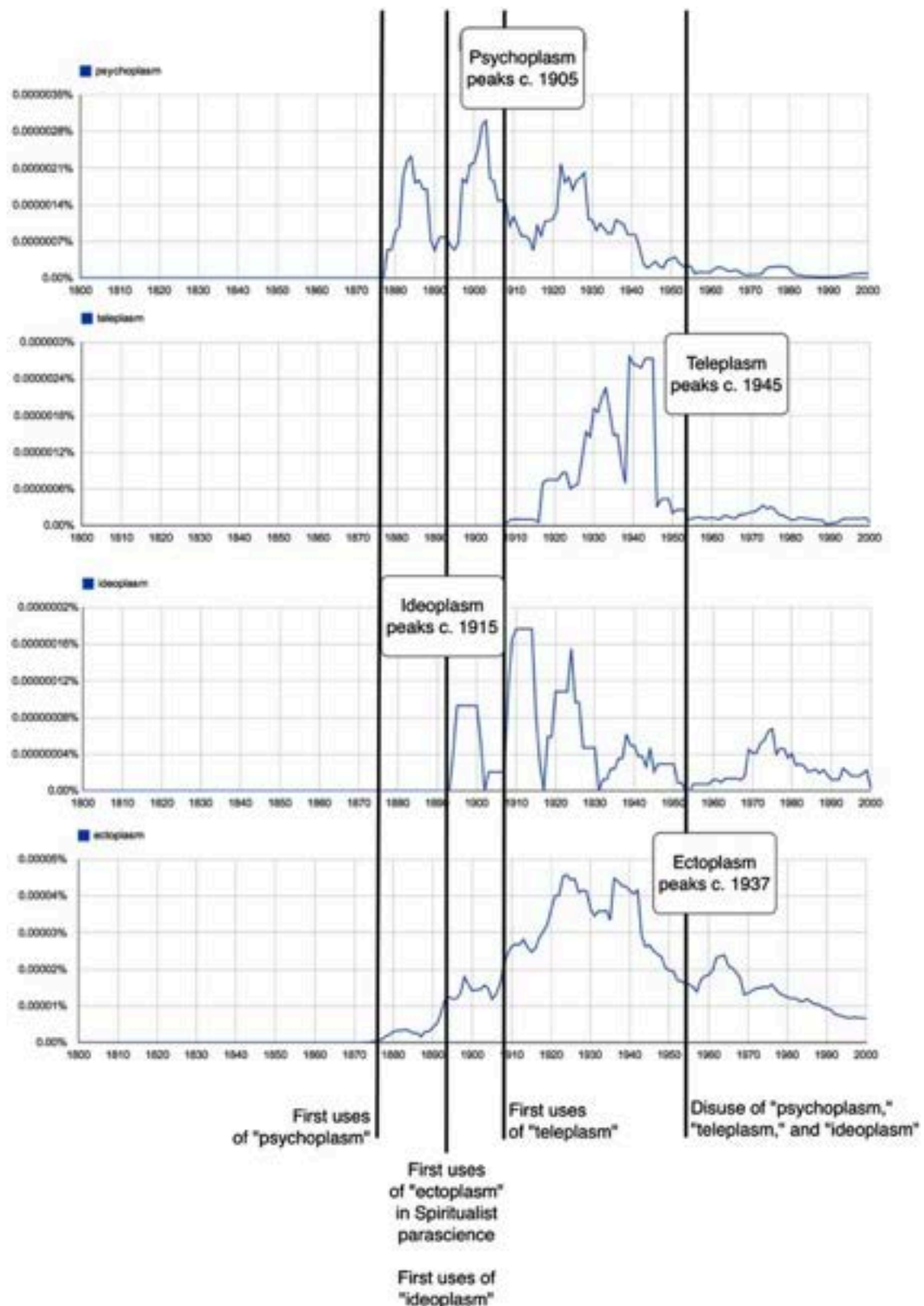
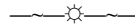
“It isn’t a question of simplicity,” I retorted. “It’s a question of fact. If the observations of scientific experimentalists are of any value, the teleplastic theory is on the point of winning acceptance.”

Which brings us full circle, I think. Holms saw the four terms as interchangeable, from his amateur’s seat, and focused on a description of the “mysterious substance” that was related to mediumistic power.

Although Richet may have first used the term *ectoplasm* to refer to some aspect (energy source, mechanisms or products) of psychic manifestation, it was a term he borrowed from cell biology and microscopy; his borrowing was known and documented early on, and at least some scientific researchers in the field eschewed the term because of the borrowing, in favor of von Schrenck Notzing’ *teleplasm*, which described **objective physical phenomena**, and not source of energy or mechanism of production. F. W. H. Myers is really to be credited, either for elaborating the term *ectoplasm* or obscuring it, depending on your perspective, in *Human Personality*, but despite Myer’s elaborate superstructure, and comingling of source, mechanism and effects, the term *ectoplasm* competed for years with *teleplasm* and to a lesser extent *ideoplasm*, none of which were used very precisely by anyone, including the best scientific minds working on the problem at any given time.

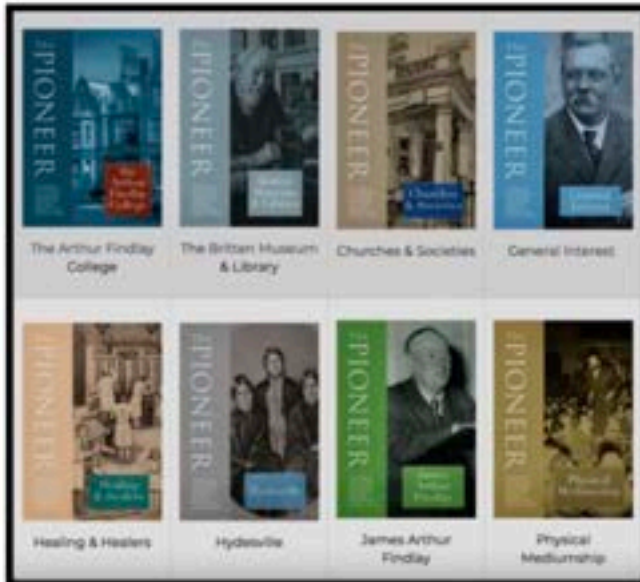
But none of this really matters, because in late 1919, the term **ectoplasm**, regardless of its history as a term of art in scientific investigations of Spiritualism, becomes (thanks largely to Conan Doyle’s proselytizing) a part of the vocabulary of the secular culture, identifying the

material coming out of mediums' orifices, forming physical objects, and moving things in the séance room.



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