

The Case for the Afterlife

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The belief in an afterlife dates back at least to the Neanderthals, who buried their dead with flowers, jewelry and utensils, presumably for use in the next world. And throughout recorded history people have reported many phenomena that would seem to indicate evidence of survival past the point of bodily death. Could the nearly universal nature of cultural belief in some sort of survival be based upon experiences humans have reported in all known cultures for thousands of years?

The evidence in favor of an afterlife is vast, varied, and ancient: it comes from near-death experiences, death-bed visions, reports of apparitions, children who remember previous lives, and apparent communications from the departed received via human mediums. These lines of evidence, very different from each other, all point in the same direction.

Yet various objections have been raised against the evidence, and so much more than “mere” evidence needs to be provided if we are to decisively settle this controversial issue: it is also necessary to carefully examine these objections, to see if they withstand critical scrutiny.

As we will see, many of these objections are crude, simple, and easily dismissed. Others are intractable, and so continue to appear in the literature decade after decade, with no apparent resolution in clear sight. The far-and-away most stubbornly-persistent of these intractable objections is the often-cited protest that various forms of super-powerful extra-sensory perception involving only living persons may more simply explain the evidence.

The idea that extra-sensory perception (ESP) could be used to plausibly explain the evidence for survival, including apparent communication from the dead via human mediums, is an idea that persistently appears in the literature on survival, decade after decade. After the theory that mediumistic communication could be explained as simple ESP between medium and sitter was refuted by the invention of proxy sittings (in which a third party with no connection to the deceased visits the medium as a proxy sitter), the theory of *Super-ESP* was advanced: that is, the idea that mediums may unconsciously employ vast, virtually-unlimited powers of telepathy and clairvoyance, far superior in scope and power than anything documented in other contexts, with the purpose of deceiving both sitters and themselves that the dead are in fact communicating.

I argue in this paper that the theory of Super-ESP has no rational foundation, and that it is nothing more than an excuse to not accept the most straightforward inference from the data. I further argue here that the reason the theory of Super-ESP has stubbornly persisted as a seemingly-legitimate counter-explanation to survival is due to on-going confusion over several fundamental yet intractable issues, and to the fact that proponents of Super-ESP never explicitly deal with these issues, but simply ignore them.

These issues would include: the mind-body relationship; the nature of evidence; the nature of proof beyond reasonable doubt; the difference between real and purely imaginary possibilities; and the nature of science.

This essay will examine the best available evidence, that is, the most convincing evidence, and the most convincing evidence for survival is that which cannot be explained away, as a desperate last resort, by any reference to extra-sensory perception, *super or otherwise*. It is my intention to provide here, in one place, a long-awaited resolution to the controversy over survival.

However, first we need to deal with the issues underlying the most intractable objections, in order that we may then have the tools at hand necessary to deal with these objections whenever they are raised.

The remainder of the essay will therefore follow this outline:

- The mind-body relationship: some critics insist that survival can be ruled out from the start for *a priori* reasons.
- The nature of evidence: reliability of eye-witness testimony; value of anecdotal evidence; and the technique of inference to the best explanation.
- Standards of proof: reasonable doubt, and where the burden of proof should properly be placed.
- Real versus imaginary possibilities: evidence versus speculation.
- The “extraordinary claims” objection: this lacks the force skeptics commonly attribute to it.
- The nature of science: the distinction between science, metaphysics, and ideology.
- Evidence and Counter-Explanations
- Super-ESP Revisited
- Conclusion

The Mind-Body Relationship

“In this materialistic age, dualists are often accused of smuggling outmoded religious beliefs back into science, of introducing superfluous spiritual forces into biology, and of venerating an invisible ‘ghost in the machine.’ However, our utter ignorance concerning the real origins of human consciousness marks such criticism more a matter of taste than of logical thinking. At this stage of mind science, dualism is not irrational, merely somewhat unfashionable.”

physicist Nick Herbert
Elemental Mind

The nature of the human mind is the most important question in philosophy, psychiatry, and psychology. And the nature of the relationship between mind and body is also the most central and fundamental question in the debate between those who accept and those who deny the reality of survival of the mind after the death of the body. Many “skeptics” assert that it is simply “impossible” for the mind to operate independently of a properly-functioning brain. So, our first order of business will be to closely examine the relationship between mind and brain, in order to deal with this, the most fundamental skeptical objection to the survival of the mind after the death of the brain.*

The Roman poet Lucretius wrote one of the earliest treatises advancing the arguments that the relation between mind and body is so close that the mind depends upon the body and therefore cannot exist without it. Similar arguments, to the effect that the mind is a function of the brain, were taken up with greater force centuries later, in the work of men such as Thomas Huxley, defender of Darwinism, and Corliss Lamont, former president of the American Humanist Association.

Huxley, a friend and colleague of Charles Darwin, described the brain as a mere *epiphenomena*, that is, a useless byproduct of brain activity that has no causal effect.

Although Darwin liked and admired Huxley, he would have none of Huxley’s theory of the one-sided action of body on mind. Supporting Huxley’s opinion would have contradicted his life’s work; Darwin correctly realized that his theory required the mutual interaction of mind and body. For if thoughts and feelings did not lead to useful actions in the physical world, then mind would be useless. But then it could not have evolved, as according to Darwinism, by natural selection. Whether or not we endorse a Darwinian approach to the mind, the fact is that even according to this theory the minds of animals and men should be expected to lead to useful actions, and should therefore exert a causal influence in nature.

* For instance, Murphy and Dale remarked, “it is the biological and the philosophical difficulty with survival that holds us back, not really the unacceptability of the evidence.” (quoted in Kelly, et al., 2009, p.598).

Corliss Lamont, former president of the American Humanist Association, rightly contends that the fundamental issue in any discussion of survival is the relationship of mind to body, and divides the various positions into two broad categories: monism, which asserts that mind and body are bound together and cannot exist apart; and dualism, which asserts that mind and body are separable entities that may exist apart. Lamont and several other modern writers are convinced that the facts of modern science weigh heavily in favor of monism. As I wrote in my second book *Science and the Near-Death Experience*:

In summary, the various arguments against the possibility of survival are: (1) the effects of age, disease, and drugs on the mind; (2) the effect of brain damage on mental activity, and specifically, the fact that lesions of certain regions of the brain eliminates or impairs particular capacities; and (3) the idea that memories are stored in the brain and therefore cannot survive the destruction of the brain. The inference drawn from these observations is that the correlation of mental and physical processes is so close that it is inconceivable how the mind could exist apart from the brain. Except for the appeals of the modern writers to the terminology of neuroscience, the arguments advanced in favor of the dependence of the mental on the physical are essentially the same as those advanced by Lucretius.¹

However, there are really two separate issues here: one is the *logical* possibility of survival, and the other is the *empirical* possibility. There is no self-contradiction in the assertion that consciousness may exist in the absence of a functioning brain, and so survival is at the very least a logical possibility. The question then becomes whether or not survival is an empirical possibility – that is, whether or not the idea of survival is compatible with the facts and laws of nature as currently understood.

Implicit Assumption behind the empirical arguments against the possibility of survival

As I continued in my second book:

All the arguments mentioned above that are opposed to the empirical possibility of survival are based upon a certain assumption of the relationship between mind and body that usually goes unstated. For instance, one of the arguments mentioned earlier starts with the observation that a severe blow to the head can cause the cessation of consciousness; from this it is concluded that consciousness is produced by a properly functioning brain, and so cannot exist in its absence.

However, this conclusion is not based on the evidence alone. There is an implicit, unstated assumption behind this argument, and it is often unconsciously employed. The hidden premise behind this argument can be illustrated with the analogy of listening to music on a radio, smashing the radio's receiver, and thereby concluding that the radio was *producing* the music. The implicit assumption made in all the arguments discussed above was that the relationship between brain activity and consciousness was always one of cause to effect, and never that of *effect to cause*. But this assumption is not known to be true, and it is not the only conceivable one consistent with the observed facts mentioned

earlier. Just as consistent with the observed facts is the idea that the brain's function is that of an intermediary between mind and body – or in other words, that the brain's function is that of a two-way receiver-transmitter – sometimes from body to mind, and sometimes from mind to body.²

The idea that the brain functions as an intermediary between mind and body is an ancient one, and like the materialist theory, this ancient argument also has its modern proponents, in the form of several philosophers, psychologists, and neurologists. These would include: philosophers Curt Ducasse, Robert Almeder, and Neal Grossman; renowned neuroscientists and Nobel Laureates Wilder Penfield and Sir John Eccles; neurologists Garry Schwartz and Mario Beauregard; and the psychologist Cyril Burt. The latter elegantly summarized the transmission hypothesis:

The brain is not an organ that generates consciousness, but rather an instrument evolved to transmit and limit the processes of consciousness and of conscious attention so as to restrict them to those aspects of the material environment which at any moment are crucial for the terrestrial success of the individual.³

What about the statement that the production hypothesis is somehow “simpler,” and for this reason should be preferred? In 1898 the American psychologist and philosopher William James delivered the Ingersoll Lecture, in which he wrote that the production of consciousness by the brain, if it does in fact occur, is “as far as our understanding goes, as great a miracle as if we said, thought is ‘spontaneously generated,’ or ‘created out of nothing.’”

The theory of production is therefore not a jot more simple or credible in itself than any other conceivable theory. It is only a little more popular. All that one need do, therefore, if the ordinary materialist should challenge one to explain how the brain *can* be an organ for limiting and determining to a certain form a consciousness elsewhere produced, is to ask him in turn to explain how it can be an organ for producing consciousness out of whole cloth. For polemic purposes, the two theories are thus exactly on a par.⁴

Two theoretical objections to dualism that are often raised by materialist philosophers are (1) the interaction problem, and (2) the notion that dualism violates the physics principle of energy conservation. We will now see that neither of these objections carries any weight whatsoever.

The Interaction of Mind & Body

Critics of dualism will often question how two very different entities such as mind and matter can possibly interact. As K.R. Rao writes

The main problem with such dualism is the problem of interaction. How does unextended mind interact with the extended body? Any kind of causal interaction between them, which is presumed by most dualist theories, comes into conflict with the physical theory that the universe is a closed system and that every physical event is linked with an antecedent physical event. This *assumption*

preempts any possibility that a mental act can cause a physical event.⁵
[emphasis added]

There are two problems with the above. First of all, the assumption that the universe is a closed system is *not* a physical theory but rather a *metaphysical assumption* once held by some classical physicists (although certainly not held by Newton and Maxwell, both deeply religious). This assumption does not follow directly from anything in classical physics. An argument has also been made by Wigner, Neumann, and others that modern physics – quantum mechanics – has brought mind back into nature and has thus eliminated the causal closure of the physical. Many modern physicists believe that the universe is not a closed system and that the collapse of the wavefunction – a physical event – is linked with an antecedent mental event.[†]

Second, by asking “How does unextended mind interact with the extended body?” Rao is implicitly assuming that things can only interact with other things with which they share some common characteristic. But as David Hume pointed out long ago, we form our ideas of causation by observation of constant correlation; since anything could in principle correlate with anything else, only observation can establish what interacts with what.

Parapsychologist John Beloff has considered the issue logically:

If an event A never occurred without being preceded by some other event B, we would surely want to say that the second event was a necessary condition or cause of the first event, *whether or not* the two had anything else in common. As for such a principle being an empirical truth, how could it be since there are here only two known independent substances, i.e. mind and matter, as candidates on which to base a generalization? To argue that they cannot interact *because* they are independent is to beg the question. It says something about the desperation of those who want to dismiss radical dualism that such phony arguments should repeatedly be invoked by highly reputable philosophers who should know better.⁶

Would Dualism violate Energy Conservation?

Daniel Dennett’s book *Consciousness Explained* has a chapter titled *Why Dualism is Forlorn* in which he asks: “What is so wrong with dualism?” His answer:

A fundamental principle of physics is that any change in the trajectory of a particle is an acceleration requiring the expenditure of energy ... this principle of conservation of energy ... is apparently violated by dualism. This confrontation between standard physics and dualism has been endlessly discussed since Descartes’s own day, and is widely regarded as the inescapable flaw in dualism.⁷

[†] Interested readers will find a full discussion in chapter 4, titled “Physics and Consciousness,” of *Science and the Near-Death Experience*.

Shortly after this he writes: “This fundamentally antiscientific stance of dualism is, to my mind, its most disqualifying feature, and is the reason why in this book I adopt the apparently dogmatic rule that dualism is to be avoided *at all costs*.”⁸

Commenting on the argument Dennett presents, physicist Henry Stapp writes:

The argument depends on identifying ‘standard physics’ with classical physics. The argument collapses when one goes over to contemporary physics, in which trajectories of particles are replaced by cloud-like structures, and in which conscious choices can influence physically described activity without violating the conservation laws or any other laws of quantum mechanics. *Contemporary physical theory allows, and its orthodox von Neumann form entails, an interactive dualism that is fully in accord with all the laws of physics.*⁹

Physicists Rosenblum and Kuttner also reject Dennett’s arguments:

Some theorists deny the possibility of duality by arguing that a signal from a non-material mind could not carry energy and thus could not influence material brain cells. Because of this inability of a mind to supply energy to influence the neurons of the brain, it is claimed that physics demonstrates an inescapable flaw of dualism. However, no energy need be involved in determining to *which particular* situation a wavefunction collapses. Thus the determination of which of the physically possible conscious experiences becomes the actual experience is a process that need not involve energy transfer. Quantum mechanics therefore allows an escape from the supposed fatal flaw of dualism. It is a mistake to think that dualism can be ruled out on the basis of physics.¹⁰

Finally, although Dennett displays ignorance of modern physics, his objection does not even follow from anything in classical physics. For as physicist/philosopher C.D. Broad pointed out decades ago, even if all physical-to-physical causation involves transfer of energy, we have no reason to think that such transfer would also be required in mental-to-physical or physical-to-mental causation.¹¹

In short, the transmission and production hypotheses are equally compatible with the facts materialism tries to explain – such as the effects of senility, drugs, and brain damage on consciousness – but the transmission hypothesis has the clear advantage of being able to explain other phenomena that are utterly inexplicable by the hypothesis of production. These phenomena include, but are by no means restricted to, the evidence for survival presented below.

But before we examine the evidence for survival, let us briefly consider some remarkable facts from biology and medicine that provide *prima facie* evidence indicating that the mind is not ultimately dependent upon the brain.

Are memories stored in the brain?

As mentioned above, some “skeptics” of survival insist that since memories are stored in the brain, memories cannot survive the destruction of the brain. But the

idea that memories are stored in the brain is also an assumption, not a fact, and there are some biological facts that call this assumption into serious question.

The idea that memories are somehow stored in the brain is ancient. However, modern attempts to locate memory traces in the brain have been spectacularly unsuccessful. For example, in one experiment chicks were taught to perform a new task, and, using injections of radioactive material, resulting changes in the left hemisphere of their forebrains were noted, compared to chicks who did not undergo the training. However, when the new brain structures were removed, the chicks still remembered how to perform the task. The cells that had experienced greater growth as a result of the training were not necessary for memory retention. Similar experiments have been performed with rats, monkeys, chimpanzees, and octopuses, and yet even when up to 60 percent of the brains of the animals have been removed, the unfortunate animals could often still remember how to perform the recently learned task. Findings such as this have led at least one researcher to the untestable conclusion that “memory seems to be both everywhere and nowhere in particular.”¹²

Maverick biologist Rupert Sheldrake has reviewed the extensive literature documenting the search for memory traces, and has concluded:

There may be a ridiculously simple reason for these recurrent failures to find memory traces in brains: They may not exist. A search inside your TV set for traces of the programs you watched last week would be doomed to failure for the same reason: The set tunes in to TV transmissions but does not store them.

But what about the fact that memories can be lost as a result of brain damage? Some types of damage in specific areas of the brain can result in specific kinds of impairment ... Does this not prove that the relevant memories were stored inside the damaged tissues? By no means. Think again of the TV analogy. Damage to some parts of the circuitry can lead to loss or distortion of picture; damage to other parts can make the set lose the ability to produce sound; damage to the tuning circuit can lead to loss of the ability to receive one or more channels. But this does not prove that the pictures, sounds, and entire programs are stored inside the damaged components.¹³

Terminal Lucidity

For centuries medical practitioners have reported a strange phenomenon: in the days, hours, or minutes before death, patients suffering from profound mental impairment due to dementia or brain damage sometimes give every indication of recovering full mental clarity and memories. In a recent paper on terminal lucidity Nahm and Greyson wrote: “In one study of end-of-life experiences, 70% of caregivers in a nursing home reported that during the past 5 years, they had observed patients with dementia becoming lucid a few days before death. Members of another palliative care team confirmed that such incidents happen regularly.”¹⁴

Today, autopsies are usually only performed when foul play is suspected, or upon request from family members. However, decades ago autopsies were much more routinely performed. German biologist Michael Nahm extensively surveyed the

European literature, and found the following case first reported in 1921. G.W. Surya's friend had been confined to an asylum for many years because of serious mental derangement.

One day, Surya's friend received a telegram from the director of the asylum saying that his brother wanted to speak to him. He immediately visited his brother and was astonished to find him in a perfectly normal mental state. The director of the asylum informed the visitor that his brother's mental clarity is an almost certain sign of his approaching death. Indeed, the patient died within a short time. An autopsy of the brain was performed. It revealed that the brain was entirely suppurated[‡] and that this condition must have been present for a long time. Surya asks: "With what, then, did this brainsick person think intelligibly again during the last days of his life?"¹⁵

A more recent case involves an elderly woman suffering from Alzheimer's disease, "largely caused by degeneration and irreversible degradation of the cerebral cortex and the hippocampus, resulting among other symptoms in confusion, disorientation, and memory loss."¹⁶ The woman had neither talked nor reacted to family members for years. And yet one week before she died, she suddenly started chatting with her granddaughter about various family members, and giving her advice. Her granddaughter said that it was like talking to someone who had been asleep twenty years.¹⁷

Reports such as this suggest that the mind of the patient is disengaged, or disengaging, from the restrictions of a material brain. This conclusion is nothing new, as Nahm reminds us:

Hippocrates, Plutarch, Cicero, Galen, Avicenna, and other scholars of classical times noted that symptoms of mental disorders decrease as death approaches. All of them held the view that the soul remains basically intact when the brain is affected by physical malfunction and disturbance of the mind. Therefore, they believed that during and after death, the soul was freed from material constraints, regaining its full potential.¹⁸

Conclusions

From the above it should be clear that the possibility of the survival of the mind following the death of the body cannot be dismissed on *a priori* grounds. The statement "the mind survives the death of the body" is not self-contradictory; nor is the idea in conflict with any of the facts or rules of nature as currently understood. Nor is it "simpler" to assume the brain produces the mind. There is no antecedent improbability of survival; the issue is entirely one for the testimony of the facts to settle.

[‡] "Suppurated" means filled with pus, which is produced in response to bacterial infection.

The Nature of Evidence

What is evidence? In legal terms, it includes established facts and testimony from competent individuals with no seeming motive to lie or embellish. Both types of evidence are considered reliable in court.

The Reliability of Eyewitness Testimony

Some of the evidence that we will review, such as reports of apparitions, has been routinely dismissed on the grounds that it is based upon eyewitness testimony, and that eyewitness testimony is notoriously unreliable. In support of this assertion, skeptics will often refer to experiments involving staged events in psychology classrooms. However, it is important to remember that although witnesses to an event, actual or staged, may disagree on incidental details, *they may all agree that such an event occurred*. That is, they may disagree on whether the assailant had red or brown hair, a green or blue shirt, fired two shots or three; and yet all may agree that a shooting occurred.

Because of the unrealistic nature of such staged events, the response of the judicial system to such studies has been lukewarm.¹⁹ Staged events cannot replicate the seriousness of actual events, and so psychologists Yuille and Cutshall examined an actual shooting. A gun store was robbed by an armed assailant; the owner picked up a revolver and followed the robber into the street, where a shoot-out occurred in broad daylight, in full view of multiple bystanders.

Five months later, Yuille and Cutshall interviewed 13 of the 15 principal witnesses, and compared their statements with the police reconstruction of the incident,[§] and with the statements the witnesses had given five months earlier. Yuille and Cutshall concluded

We take issue with the essentially negative view of the eyewitness that has been consistently presented by most eyewitness researchers. ... In the present research ... a different picture emerges. Most of the witnesses in this case were highly accurate in their accounts, and this continued to be true 5 months after the event.²⁰

It is sometimes said that eye-witness testimony is subjective, peculiar to each individual. But the law has an elaborate system of cross-questioning witnesses, seeking a common core of testimony, and comparing this testimony with physical evidence, until an agreed-upon set of facts are reached as the most credible account. Those parts of testimony that are peculiar to individuals may thus be excluded.

As biologist Rupert Sheldrake writes,

[§] This reconstruction was done by combining the eyewitness reports with photographs of the scene, location of blood stains, reports from ambulance attendants, and forensic evidence.

To brush aside what people have actually experienced is not to be scientific, but unscientific. Science is founded on the empirical method, that is to say on experience and observation. Experiences and observations are the starting point for science, and it is unscientific to disregard or exclude them.²¹

And as we will see later, much of our evidence for survival does *not* rely on eyewitness testimony, and is in fact *permanent and objective*.

Anecdotal Evidence

Much of the evidence presented here could be considered a collection of case studies, and case studies are commonly published in medical journals and are widely accepted as evidence by medical researchers.

Yet what about the criticism that case studies are only anecdotal, and therefore open to question?

The word “anecdote” comes from the Greek *anekdotos*, meaning an unpublished story. So, when medical stories are published, they literally cease to be anecdotes, and are promoted to the status of case studies.

And both case studies – as well as anecdotes – may be based upon more than eyewitness testimony, as we will see.

Case studies and anecdotes may provide convincing solid evidence *that* an event occurred, without conclusively establishing the causal factors behind such an event.

Inference to the Best Explanation

An inference is, of course, a conclusion that is formed because of known facts or evidence; the term also refers to the *process* of inferring, that is, of examining evidence to draw a conclusion. When, in medical or scientific research, we are trying to establish causal links between variables that can be observed in repeatable events – such as between cancer survival rates and certain medications – then experiments are ideally performed. In medical research, the gold standard is the double-blind experiment, in which as many causal variables as possible are controlled, in order to determine if there really is an effect, and if so, of what magnitude.

However, as Oxford professor of mathematics and philosophy of science John Lennox writes:

We do not always have the luxury of repeated observation or experimentation. We cannot repeat the Big Bang, or the origin of life, or the history of life, or the history of the universe. Indeed, what about any historical event? It is not repeatable. Does that mean we can say nothing about such things? There is, however, another methodology that can be applied to such situations, well known to historians. It is the method of inference to the best explanation.²²

This is a method of practical reasoning commonly used in daily life, and by historians, police detectives, lawyers in courtrooms, and research scientist. When there are several logically-possible explanations, more evidence is gathered, until only one explanation remains that is consistent with *all* the known facts. An explanation that is proven false by one or more known facts cannot be the best explanation, and as Lennox adds, “an argument that does explain a given effect is always better than one that does not.”²³

Standards of Proof

In legal matters there are two main standards of proof. In the majority of civil cases, the plaintiff must prove only that the *preponderance of evidence* is on their side. Criminal cases are held to a more demanding standard: the prosecution must prove *beyond all reasonable doubt* that the defendant is guilty as charged.

In all empirical matters, the strongest case we can make is proof beyond all reasonable doubt; only in pure logic and mathematics can we prove statements *beyond all conceivable doubt*. When dealing with factual matters, we can never reach conclusions with mathematical certainty.

But what exactly do we mean by the standard of proof beyond all reasonable doubt? Ultimately, it must mean this: an assertion is proven beyond all reasonable doubt when we have good reason to believe it is true, *and* we have no good reason to believe it may *not* be true.** And in all empirical matters, “good reasons” are those based upon reliable evidence.

Let us examine this further.

In criminal trials the rules of evidence prohibit both prosecution and defense from arguing on the basis of speculation, on the grounds that no one should be convicted or acquitted on the basis of speculation. Only arguments based upon evidence are allowed.

In legal terms *prima facie* (Latin for “first look”) evidence refers to evidence that is sufficient to prove the case, unless convincing evidence to the contrary can be shown. Before a criminal case can be brought to trial, the burden of proof lies with the prosecution to present evidence that makes a strong *prima facie* case for guilt. The reason for this burden is the principle that suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt.

A defense lawyer’s job during the rebuttal is to raise reasonable doubt in the minds of the jury. If during questioning it becomes apparent that the strategy of the defense is to offer an alternate theory of the crime that has no evidential basis, then the prosecutor will object on the grounds that the alternate theory is pure speculation unsupported by evidence. Speculation is not considered a basis for reasonable doubt.

** Merely suggestive evidence allows for reasonable doubt.

Of course, in practice defense lawyers will sometimes try any form of sophistry in an attempt to raise the illusion of reasonable doubt in the minds of a jury. Jurors are human, and are often influenced by appeals to emotions such as sympathy, anger, fear of the police, and so on. When strong emotions are aroused clear thinking is difficult, and so a clever defense lawyer can use this technique in an attempt to convince a jury that a mere logical possibility – such as police corruption – is in fact a real possibility, even in the absence of any positive evidence in support.

Even so, mere speculation unsupported by evidence is not admissible in a court of law, and an effective prosecutor will raise an objection every time such sophistry is attempted.

The most demanding concept of proof in legal matters – as in all empirical matters – is that of proof beyond all *reasonable* doubt, not proof beyond all *conceivable* doubt. Only in mathematics and pure logic can we prove anything beyond all conceivable doubt. This is the reason speculative arguments from the defense are forbidden in court rooms by the rules of evidence: speculative arguments with no evidential basis raise the burden of proof on the prosecution from beyond all reasonable doubt to beyond all conceivable doubt, an impossible standard to meet in factual matters.

Placing the burden of proof upon those making a claim is one means by which speculation is, ideally, kept out of any dispute over factual matters, whether inside or outside of court. The obligation of both parties to provide solid evidence in support of their claims is essential in any attempt to resolve matters of fact beyond reasonable, as opposed to conceivable, doubt.

In our discussion of the evidence, I will present a strong *prima facie* case that survival of consciousness past the point of bodily death has been proven beyond all reasonable doubt. Various skeptical attempts to raise reasonable doubt are then critically examined.

Real versus Imaginary possibilities

We have briefly discussed evidence versus speculation in the section above. Here we will elaborate on this distinction, and – as we will see later in our discussion of the skeptical objections – this distinction is crucial.

A purely logical possibility is any which can be stated without self-contradiction: for instance, the possibility raised by the philosopher Rene Descartes that we and the world were created by an evil demon only minutes ago, complete with memories of the past. A modern update on this idea was presented in the science fiction film *The Matrix*. But a logical possibility is not a real possibility unless there is some reason to believe it may actually be true.

Note that there are two different types of imaginary or purely logical possibilities: 1) those of which we have examples of them having occurred in the past, but no evidence that they occurred in this case (for instance, we may agree that historically,

corrupt police have in fact planted evidence) and 2) those for which there is no reason to *ever* seriously entertain as real possibilities (such as police planting false memories in the minds of witnesses: we may argue that there is simply no reason to believe that corruption *enables the ability* to employ such vast powers).

The Extraordinary Claims Objection

This objection, usually attributed to astronomer Carl Sagan, simply states that extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. But we need to remember that we have no objective guidelines as to what constitutes an “extraordinary” claim, and no objective criteria for what counts as “extraordinary evidence.” And several claims that were once considered truly extraordinary are now commonly accepted by elementary school children around the world. These would include the claim that rocks sometimes fall from the sky (what we today call meteorites); the claim that the continents drift (ridiculed by many geologists for decades); and the claim that washing hands before assisting in childbirth or practicing surgery greatly reduces the risk of subsequent death by infection. Evidence *that* these phenomena occurred was routinely mocked and ridiculed, because the experts of the day could not explain *how* these phenomena could occur.

The Nature of Science

Science is concerned with theories, but in science the term “theory” means something different than it does in ordinary conversation. In police work, for instance, “theory” may only mean a provisional explanation for a crime. In science it refers to an abstract explanation in terms of variables, and describes how two or more variables relate to each other. An example would be Newton’s theory of Universal Gravitation, which relates the force of gravity between a planet and the sun to the product of their masses and the square of the distance between them.

Note that the modern term is theory, not *law*. The term “law of nature” is an anachronism, dating back to the time when scientists and philosophers believed that Newton’s theories were facts of nature, not merely provisional approximations to the truth. Today, we speak of Newton’s laws and Einstein’s theories, even though Einstein’s theories are more accurate approximations to reality than Newton’s so-called laws.^{††}

As a student, the philosopher Karl Popper attended an early lecture by Einstein, and was greatly impressed by Einstein’s admission that although his theory of gravity made more accurate predictions than Newton’s, *it was not actually true*, but merely a better approximation. This led Popper to devote much of his career developing his philosophy of science, which was admired and endorsed by Einstein.

^{††} Einstein’s first claim to fame came from the demonstration during an eclipse that his theory of gravity more accurately than Newton’s predicted the bending of starlight by a massive body.

Popper's work is a refutation of Hume's conclusion that our "laws of nature" are general conclusions based upon repeated observation of specific instances (that is, inductions) and are therefore not rational. Suppose that every swan we have ever seen has been white, and we then conclude that "all swans are white." This is a (simple) scientific theory that relates two variables to each other. But is it valid reasoning to treat this statement as a law of nature? No, said Hume, because induction is not a valid method of reasoning: after all, the very next swan we see may be black.

This conclusion greatly troubled Bertrand Russell, as he was unable to solve the problem, and simply concluded that to do science we must accept inductive reasoning as a matter of faith. Popper's solution was radically different: he denied that induction is needed in science if we treat our ideas not as "laws" but merely as theories, hypotheses, approximations to the truth. Although we can never prove our scientific theories true – no matter how many white swans we see the next one may well be black – one black swan disproves the theory that all swans are white.

Thus, Popper was led to his criterion of testability: according to Popper, "a theory is scientific to the *degree* it is testable."²⁴ And because induction has no validity, testing of a scientific theory can only mean attempts to prove false, not correct.^{‡‡} Popper's method provides science with a means for learning from its mistakes, and thus provides science with a self-corrective mechanism at its core.

Our analysis of the data for survival is similar to that of a prosecuting attorney in a criminal case: we critically examine all the evidence to infer the best explanation for the facts. Statements regarding specific factual matters are often capable of being proven false *or correct* beyond all reasonable doubt (such as the statement "this bird is a black swan"). The main relevance here for Popper's criterion is its delineation of scientific theories as distinct from metaphysical or ideological theories. Scientific theories are capable of being tested, that is, falsified; metaphysical theories are not, because of the absence or paucity of evidence. If they eventually become capable of being tested, then they are "kicked upstairs," and become part of science.^{§§}

But the reverse may happen: a scientific theory may be refuted by the data, and its supporters may then try to salvage it with the addition of *ad hoc* auxiliary assumptions; if these render the theory untestable, it ceases to be science, and becomes ideology. Popper argued forcefully that this happened with Marxism, which made certain key predictions which were not fulfilled. Its supporters did not then abandon the theory; they instead modified it so that it became immune to falsification.

^{‡‡} A much more detailed discussion can be found in chapter 15 of *Science & Psychic Phenomena* (formerly titled *Parapsychology & the Skeptics*).

^{§§} Some complain that Popper's theory is not itself testable, missing the point that it is not meant to be a scientific theory. It is a *methodology* that describes how science may advance by learning from its mistakes.

The hypothesis of Living-Agent ESP claims that ESP involving only living persons can explain the evidence for survival. In its testable sense it may be considered a scientific theory, capable of being refuted by the data.

If after falsification in its testable form it defends itself with the addition of various untestable *ad hoc* assumptions, then it has immunized itself from falsification, and turned itself into ideology.

The Evidence

Given limitations of length, this essay cannot provide fully comprehensive and detailed accounts of all of the best cases for survival. For this reason, the most convincing cases will be described only in summary form, with ample references to books and articles that contain detailed and exhaustive descriptions. The emphasis here will be on *why* these cases are so compelling; and, ultimately, the reason is because they cannot be explained by fraud, human error, or any form of perception, *normal, extrasensory, super or otherwise*.

We will see that only the theory of Super-ESP remains in the field to challenge the idea of survival.

The Near-Death Experience

One phenomenon that would appear to be able to shed light on the relationship between mind and body would be the near-death experience (NDE), in which people revived after experiencing clinical death often report unusual, lucid experiences. It is estimated that now over 300 million worldwide have reported such experiences.²⁵ Published studies by cardiologists have reported that, when asked, between 10% and 15% of patients recovering from cardiac arrest will report an NDE.²⁶

Although scattered reports of NDEs appear throughout history, systematic study of the NDE only began in the 1970's, with the publication of the book *Life after Life* by physician Raymond Moody. Here is Moody's composite description:

A man is dying and, as he reaches the point of greatest physical distress, he hears himself pronounced dead by his doctor. After this, he suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body,^{***} but still in the immediate physical environment, and he sees his own body from a distance, as though he is a spectator. He watches the resuscitation attempt from this unusual vantage point.

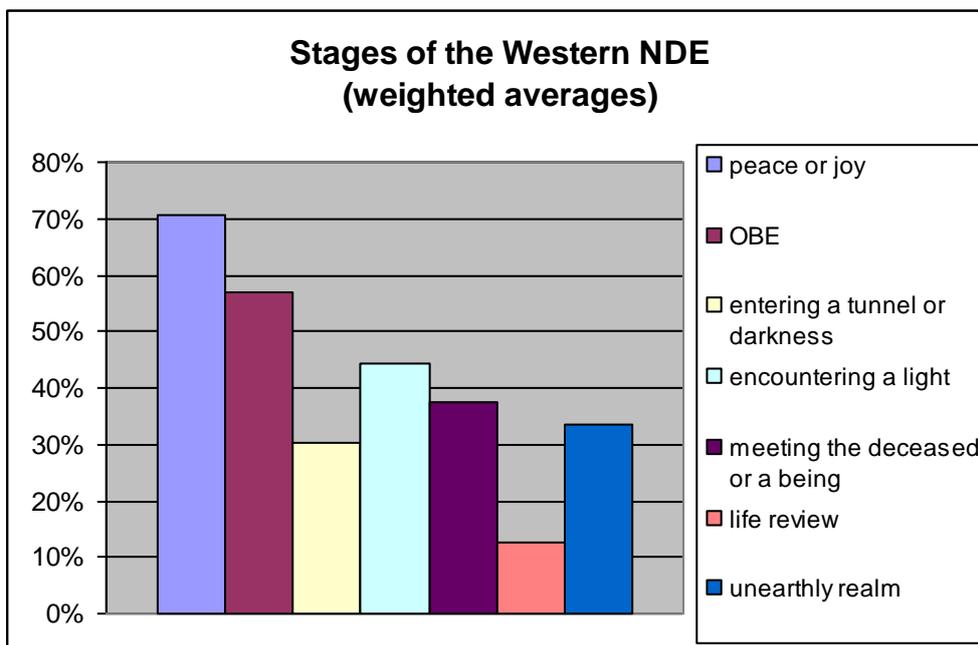
He notices that he still has a 'body', but one of a very different nature and with very different powers from the physical body he has left behind. Others come to meet and help him. He glimpses the spirits of relatives and friends who have already died, and a loving, warm spirit of a kind he never encountered before – a being of light – appears before him. This being [has] him evaluate his life and

^{***} Out-of-body experience, or OBE.

helps him by showing him a panoramic, instantaneous playback of the major events of his life. At some point he finds himself approaching some sort of barrier or border. Yet, he finds that he must go back to earth, that the time for his death has not yet come. At this point, he resists, for by now he does not want to return. He is overwhelmed by intense feelings of joy, love, and peace. [However], he somehow reunites with his physical body and lives.

The experience affects his life profoundly, especially his views about death and its relationship to life.²⁷

The table below shows the frequency with which the various stages have been reported, in five independent medical studies of roughly the same size.²⁸



Most of the individuals who have reported an NDE consider it to have been the single most pivotal event of their lives. The nature of the NDE may be controversial, but there is no doubt of the aftereffects, which typically include: increased compassion for others; reduced interest in material possessions; and an increased appreciation for life, coupled with a greatly reduced fear of death.

Alternative Explanations

Several alternative explanations have been proposed, but because of space limitations, only the two top contenders will be considered here.

Oxygen Deprivation

One of the most common materialist explanations for the NDE is a reduced supply of oxygen (hypoxia). The effects are well-known: as sometimes experienced during a

heart attack, hypoxia causes a series of subjective phenomena as the subject's brain becomes increasingly hypoxic.

Mountain climbers have frequently experienced hypoxia, as have pilots flying at high altitude. Symptoms typically include: mental laziness, slowness in reasoning, and difficulty in remembering.

Hypoxia has also been induced in laboratory experiments. As described in my second book:

Years ago, it was common practice for medical students to be shown the consequences of depriving their brains of oxygen. Students were told to breathe through a carbon dioxide absorber into and out of a spirometer filled with air. While doing this they were given some simple task to perform. Since the carbon dioxide was not allowed to build up in the spirometer, but was instead absorbed, the students would not become aware that they were slowly suffocating. They would continue to breathe normally, unaware that the air they were breathing contained less and less oxygen. Their performance at the task would become increasingly inept, until eventually they lost consciousness. In thousands of such experiments on thousands of people, no one ever reported a near-death experience.²⁹

This disorientation and confusion contrasts sharply with the clarity of thought and perception reported again and again in accounts of the NDE.

In my second book I considered every proposed physiological and psychological counter-explanation for the NDE that I could find, and *not one* stood up to critical scrutiny. All that is left to consider is the possibility of an explanation due to extra-sensory perception.

Clairvoyance (ESP)

Some have proposed that any out-of-body experience (OBE) during an NDE that includes accurate perception of the surroundings may be due to clairvoyant perception, occurring either before the patient loses or after the patient regains consciousness. However, there are several problems with this idea.

First of all, simple clairvoyance is not enough: since patients report events that occurred during moments when they were unconscious, the clairvoyance must also include pre-or retro-cognition, either of the near future, or the recent past. The problem with this is that any sort of insult to the brain results in a period of amnesia of the period preceding and following the insult. This is also typically true in cases of NDE; and yet in the middle of this amnesia is a crystal-clear memory of an NDE with an OBE.

Secondly, clairvoyant descriptions are not typically from an elevated perspective, and certainly not from an elevated position directly above the viewer's own body. An even stronger objection is that these perceptions occurred when we have every

reason to believe that the subjects' cerebral processes were either severely impaired or entirely absent.

Finally, clairvoyant perceptions are certainly not accompanied by the thought that one has died, feelings of peace and joy, lasting changes in values, and a greatly reduced fear of death.

Next, we consider one of the deepest NDEs ever reported.

Operation Standstill

This case occurred during neurosurgery at the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix Arizona, on an August morning in 1991. Thirty-five-year-old Pam Reynolds was being operated on for a giant aneurysm in the wall of an artery located at the base of her brain, which had ballooned out and threatened to rupture, causing death. Dr. Robert Spetzler of the Barrow Institute had pioneered a daring surgical procedure known as hypothermic cardiac arrest that would allow Pam's aneurysm to be removed. This operation, nicknamed "standstill," would require her heartbeat and breathing stopped, the electrical activity in her brain extinguished, and the blood drained from her head. In ordinary clinical terms, Pam would be dead.

This extraordinary case is described in great detail by Michael Sabom in his book *Light & Death*. As Dr. Sabom notes, the medical documentation of the events surrounding this case "*far exceeds* any recorded before and provides us with our most complete scientific glimpse yet into the near-death experience."³⁰

Pam was anesthetized, and instruments were set up to monitor heartbeat, brain activity in the cerebral cortex, and in the brain stem, the most primitive part of the brain, responsible for involuntary functions such as breathing and reflexes such as pupil dilation. Operation Standstill began.

By three clinical tests – flat EEG, no brainstem activity, no blood flowing through the brain – Pam's brain was dead, with almost certainly no activity whatsoever. Yet Pam reported the *deepest* near-death experience ever reported, including accurate, detailed perception of the operating room, and an encounter with deceased relatives.

It was the most aware that I think I have ever been in my entire life... It was not like normal vision. It was brighter and more focused and clearer than normal vision.... There was so much in the operating room that I didn't recognize, and so many people.³¹

Pam was interviewed on CBS' *48 Hours*, along with Dr. Spetzler. Spetzler left no doubt about Pam's clinical condition during hypothermic cardiac arrest: "If you would examine that patient from a clinical perspective during that hour, that patient by all definition would be dead. At this point there is no brain activity, no blood going through the brain. Nothing, nothing, nothing."³²

Pam's NDE closed with being led back to her body by a deceased uncle, not wanting to return, hearing the song "Hotel California" playing in the room, and witnessing her

body being shocked twice in order to restart her heart. Rivas, Dirven, and Smit pointed out: "At that moment, with her heart stopped and the blood drained from her brain, there was with absolute certainty no brain activity anymore."³³ One, or multiple shocks may be needed to restart the heart. Neurosurgeon Karl Greene was involved in the operation, and in an interview said "She knew her heart had to be stimulated twice to restart. She shouldn't have known that...She was physiologically dead."³⁴

Was Pam *really* dead?

Critics sometimes retort that NDEs do not provide evidence for survival, as the patients were not "really dead." What they always mean by this is that they think death means irreversibility. But this is to miss the point entirely. The point has nothing to do with a quibble over a dictionary definition.

Although the definition of clinical death differs somewhat from country to country, there are usually three criteria:

- no spontaneous breathing
- no heartbeat
- no activity in the brain stem

By all three measures Pam was clinically dead. And yet she reported the deepest NDE ever reported, including clear cognitive function with every indication of having occurred at a time when there was every medical reason to consider her brain entirely non-functioning.

Three features of the near-death experience seem to suggest survival:

- 1) Normal or enhanced mental processes at a time when brain processes are severely impaired or entirely absent.
- 2) Accurate out-of-body perception of one's own body, and of the surrounding environment.
- 3) Perception of deceased acquaintances.

The first indicates that mental clarity is not entirely dependent on a properly functioning brain; the second suggests that consciousness can function apart from the physical body; and the third, that those who have died before us continue to exist.

But the main relevance of the NDE for our topic is the fact that it proves false the materialist idea that consciousness depends on a functioning brain. OR that the mind cannot operate independently of a functioning brain.

Death-Bed Visions

Extraordinary visions experienced shortly before death have been reported throughout history, but the first systematic attempt to study the phenomenon was

made by a physics professor at the Royal College of Science in Dublin, Sir William Barrett. His book *Death Bed Visions* was published in 1926.

Thirty years later a modern, large-scale study was undertaken by Osis and Haraldsson, including patients in both the United States and India. As with the earlier study, most visions were of otherworldly visitors, usually deceased relatives, which were reported by dying patients as being there to take them away. Osis and Haraldsson summarized their results:

In both the United States and India, the visions of the dying and of near-death patients were overwhelmingly dominated by apparitions of the dead and religious figures. This finding is loud and clear: *When the dying see apparitions, they are nearly always experienced as messengers from a postmortem mode of existence.*³⁵

The researchers considered various hallucinatory explanations, including drugs, disease, and religious expectations, and after statistical analysis, rejected them all.

There are also several cases on record of the patient claiming to see a friend or relative of whose recent death they were unaware. As for an explanation in terms of ESP, I concluded:

The skeptic must say that the dying person telepathically or clairvoyantly gains true information about a recently deceased friend or relative, but of nothing else; and that the rest of the content of the vision is pure hallucination. It should be clear that this is a purely *ad hoc* theory, invented to explain these cases and nothing else. If this theory is to be more than merely dogma, it must be independently testable. And for this theory to be testable, from it certain predictions must follow. But there is not a shred of independent evidence that the dying become more clairvoyant or telepathic in the final moments of life; and not a shred of independent evidence that ESP “dresses up” knowledge of unpleasant occurrences into pleasant hallucinations. The predictions of the theory *in its testable form* are not borne out; and if the theory is still maintained with the addition of *ad hoc* auxiliary assumptions, then it is just another example of what Popper called an “immunizing tactic.”³⁶

Apparitions

Accounts of apparitions of the deceased come from virtually all societies of which we have record. Stories conveyed as fact come from ancient Greece and Rome, and Saint Augustine wrote about them as familiar occurrences.

Modern reports of apparitions are surprisingly common: in an Icelandic survey Haraldsson reported “that 14 percent of our original representative national sample may have experienced visual apparitions of the dead.”³⁷ John Palmer surveyed the residents of Charlottesville, Virginia, and found that 7.5 % of 622 respondents claimed to have had the visual impression of an apparition³⁸

In appearance, apparitions are typically described as looking like a normal person, so much so that they are typically mistaken for living persons. They may cast a shadow, and be reflected in a mirror. If more than one person sees the apparition, then each person will see the apparition from the proper perspective. In other respects, apparitions do not resemble living persons: they may appear and disappear in locked rooms, vanish while being watched, or pass through physical objects.

A prominent characteristic of apparitions of the dead is the high frequency of persons who died violently. Haraldsson found that 30 % of his Icelandic cases involved encounters with persons who had died violently, almost identical to the 28 % frequency of violent death found among the nineteenth century British cases of *Phantasms of the Living*.³⁹

The following remarkable case is one of several described in my third book.

The Blue Orchid Case

Arthur C. Clarke, author of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, was told the following strange tale by Englishwoman Georgina Feakes.

Before the Second World War, Georgina's sister Beatrice and her family had emigrated to South Africa. When hostilities broke out, Georgina's cousin Owen Howerson signed up, and was killed in action in 1944. Soon after, Georgina claimed, he appeared to her in England, surrounded by a golden mist. "He said his tank had been hit, but he still felt very much alive. Would I please tell his mum, and please give his love to poor Helen." Georgina claims to have been dumbstruck at first. "I tried to speak, although my lips were numb and frozen." Finally, she says she found her voice: "I said 'Proof, give me proof.' And he said 'watch'".

To my amazement, he opened the top of his shirt, and took out a beautiful blue flower, of penetrating perfume. It was very beautiful, long and bell-like, orchid like. A wonderful scent permeated the whole room. While I stared in amazement, he put it back in his shirt, took it out, and put it back, and took it out. And then he said, quite loudly, "tell mum, Table Mountain."

According to Georgina, the apparition then shimmered and vanished. With none of this making any sense to Georgina, she wrote at once to Owen's mother; and back from South Africa came this curious explanation. Owen had one day gone up Table Mountain, picked a protected blue flower, and brought it home, hidden it in his shirt. The flower was a rare blue orchid that grew on Table Mountain, and since it was illegal to pick, Owen had risked prison to bring it back to her. While showing it to her, the door slammed, and he nervously hid the flower in his shirt, only taking it out again after learning it was a false alarm. Her aunt Beatrice in South Africa had kept the story secret, in order to protect Owen, who could have been imprisoned for the offence. So it does not seem likely that Georgina could have known about the incident.

Georgina claims Owen appeared a second time, again in a golden mist. But this time his manner was not friendly. "He reproached me bitterly for not contacting Helen. And I was very distressed about this, because I had tried." His mother had been through all his correspondence, and had found no letter from anyone named Helen, or any reference to anyone with that name.

But there *had* been a Helen in Owen's life, a lovely young woman with dark hair and eyes, for whom Owen had written romantic letters and poems. After reading the story of the blue orchid in the newspapers, she contacted the family, and the mystery of Helen was solved.⁴⁰

Some have attempted to explain reports of apparitions as due to remarkable powers of telepathy or psychokinesis. But the vast majority of experiencers do not have any history of displaying any remarkable powers of ESP or psychokinesis, and so it seems *ad hoc* in the extreme to speculate that these individuals suddenly and temporarily acquire such remarkable powers, in many cases equal to if not exceeding the powers of the most remarkably-gifted subjects both inside and outside of the laboratory. It becomes even more *ad hoc* when we realize that outside the laboratory the most remarkable mediums in history have typically been deep in trance when they perform, unlike the state of the typical experiencer of an apparition.

Cases such as the one above are difficult to explain in terms of telepathy among the living, for the simple reason that the apparition shows a purpose that is difficult to attribute to anyone living, but which could easily be attributed to the deceased if they still lived.

Children who Remember Previous Lives

Reincarnation is an ancient belief, found in many diverse parts of the world. In the West we tend to associate this belief with cultures of the Far East, but in fact it has been found among tribes of Africa, the Eskimo of the Arctic, and the Australian Aborigines.

In southern Europe some Christians believed in reincarnation, and church leaders tolerated the belief as acceptable, until the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 CE. It has been argued that the actions of this council did not constitute an official ban, as the council was not called by the Pope.^{†††}

How did reincarnation come to be such a widespread belief? The most plausible explanation comes from extensive reports of children who claim to recall a previous life. Here is one of the best-documented cases of this sort.

Bishen Chand was born in 1921, in Bareilly, India. As he gradually gained the power of speech, he began to speak of a previous life in Pilibhit, a town approximately fifty kilometers to the east. He claimed his name had been Laxmi Narain, the son of a

^{†††} For an extended discussion of Christianity and reincarnation, see Almeder, pp.64-81.

wealthy landowner, and even boasted how the influence of his family had enabled him to escape a charge of murder.

Through a friend the case came to the attention of K. Sahay, a prominent attorney in Bareilly, who visited the family in 1926 and wrote down twenty-one statements the boy made about his previous life. A few months later, not quite eight years after the death of Laxmi Narain, Sahay took Bishen and his father to Pilibhit, where he made additional statements about the life of Laxmi; only one of the twenty-one statements turned out to be wrong: the name of Har Narain was given correctly, but turned out to be Laxmi's father, not uncle. He also recognized, without prompting, eight persons and places known to Laxmi Narain. The mother was still living; after asking the boy a series of test questions, she became convinced Bishen was her surviving son.

When the boy was presented with a set of *tabla* drums, he surprised his family by playing them skillfully, as Laxmi had been fond of doing. His father testified that Bishen had never even seen tabla before.

Bishen's older brother testified that when Bishen was a child, he could read Urdu, despite having had no instruction; his father, in a sworn statement, stated that Bishen as a child used some Urdu words. Laxmi Narain was well-educated and could speak Urdu.

This case was also independently investigated in detail by professor of psychiatry Dr Ian Stevenson, who considers the case of considerable evidential importance.⁴¹ As in this case, a prominent feature of Stevenson's reincarnation cases seems to be a sense of unfinished business in the lives of most of the previous personalities – even of the minority who died a natural death.

Fraud as an explanation can be ruled out: there was no possibility of anticipated financial gain, as it was well-known that the Narain family had become destitute after Laxmi's death.

There is only one remaining alternative explanation for the best cases which does not involve reincarnation: the child unconsciously employs ESP in order to unconsciously impersonate a deceased person they have never met.

But there are several problems:

- The children almost never show *any* evidence of ESP, apart from memories of a previous life.
- The best clairvoyants make a predictable number of mistakes, but in the best reincarnation cases the child makes virtually no mistakes.
- ESP cannot explain why the subjects are unaware of changes in the previous personality's environment they have not yet seen.
- Not merely is information provided about the deceased; rather we have the convincing impersonation of someone the child has never met, and the

display of skills the child has never acquired, yet were known to have been acquired by the deceased. Perception may enable someone to know *that* something is true, but not *how* to do something requiring practice.

Next, we consider the most convincing single line of evidence for survival.

Mediumship

A human medium is a person, usually a woman, who acts as a transmitter between the worlds of the living and the departed. Accounts of mediumship come from ancient, traditional, and non-western cultures throughout the world, and by the late 19th century this phenomenon began to be rigorously studied by some of the most prominent intellectuals of the western world. These efforts began with the founding of the British Society for Psychical Research by philosopher Henry Sidgwick at Cambridge in 1882, and with the founding of the American Society for Psychical Research by philosopher William James at Harvard in 1884.

The investigations began with a study of both mental mediumship and physical mediumship, the latter involving the seeming production of various physical phenomena. But after members of the Society for Psychic Research (SPR) exposed several fraudulent physical mediums, the study of physical mediumship was abandoned, as the reports could easily be dismissed on grounds of fraud or mistaken eyewitness testimony.

The investigators then concentrated on mental mediumship, in which the medium goes into a trance, and then either writes messages or conveys them verbally. The rarest and most dramatic form of mental mediumship is possession mediumship, in which a departed mind appears to take full possession of the medium's vocal cords and body. As a matter of policy, the SPR routinely kept complete records of everything written and said during seances, and so questions of mistaken eyewitness testimony, faulty memory, and exaggeration simply do not arise.

The other lines of evidence so far considered depend, more or less, on eye-witness accounts, and so there is always the possibility of mal-observation, exaggeration, faulty memory, and so on. With the evidence from mediumship as gathered by the careful investigators of the SPR on both sides of the Atlantic, these possibilities do not exist. Everything said and written during the seances was recorded, and so we have the permanent and objective evidence of the documents.

Given limitations of space, consideration of the previous lines of evidence has been brief. A much more detailed and exhaustive treatment will be given to our final and single most impressive line of evidence

Initial findings on mediumship were promising, although counter-explanations were soon raised. The SPR investigated the best mediums in minute detail, and even hired detectives to secretly trail several of them, with the result that even the slightest suspicion of fraud was soon ruled out. It also soon became clear that from cases in which the medium did not know the sitter, the amount of highly-accurate information vastly exceeded what could be expected by chance.⁴²

Another explanation proposed was that the medium “fishes” for information, using a combination of guesswork and hints from the reactions of sitters. A less conventional explanation was that the results were due to an unusual degree of telepathic rapport between medium and sitter.

Proxy sittings – in which a sitter with no connection to the deceased visits the medium on behalf of a third person – were used to eliminate both these possibilities. The best known of these proxy sittings are the numerous ones in which the Reverend Drayton Thomas acted as proxy, usually on behalf of bereaved parents and spouses. One such sitting was arranged by Professor E.R. Dodds, a well-known critic of the evidence for survival. The sitting was not on behalf of Dodds, but rather for a Mrs Lewis, and so the sitting was not even secondhand, but thirdhand. The results were considered very impressive.⁴³ Dodds, the skeptical investigator, was forced to conclude:

It appears to me that the hypothesis of fraud, rational influence from disclosed facts, telepathy from the actual sitter, and coincidence cannot either singly or in combination account for the results obtained. Only the barest information was supplied to sitter and medium, and that through an indirect channel.⁴⁴

Not only is there no experimental evidence for such an indirect form of telepathy, but both the experimental and anecdotal evidence strongly suggest that telepathy usually operates between people who are emotionally linked, or at least associated in some way.

For example, from his experiments with telephone telepathy, Sheldrake concluded:

In some of our tests, there were two familiar callers and two unfamiliar callers whom the subjects had never met but whose names they knew. The hit rate with unfamiliar callers was near the chance level; with the familiar callers it was 52 per cent, about twice the chance level. This experiment supported the idea that telepathy occurs more between people who are bonded to each other than between strangers.⁴⁵

The same conclusion has been drawn from the Ganzfeld telepathy experiments (in which the chance success rate is 25%). In one large-scale study the average hit rate was 37 per cent when the senders and receivers were emotionally close, versus 27 percent for the general population.⁴⁶ And, the investigators found that “parent/child and sibling sender-receiver pairs produced exceptionally high hit rates, 43.5% and 71.4% respectively.”⁴⁷

But what emotional link was there between the proxy sitter and medium with relatives and friends of the deceased? In a word, *none*. Yet a volume of ESP far exceeding in accuracy and detail that found in any experiment on record is alleged to have occurred between people with no connection whatsoever.

Noting the contrived nature of telepathic explanations of mediumship, Thomas wrote:

Critics who wish to apply the telepathic hypothesis will need to assume, without any justification for such an assumption, that thoughts pass between people who have not heard of each other and between whom there is no link save that they were interested in a person who died. And further, the selection must be assumed to act with unerring discretion, so that no facts are allowed to pass which do not relate to the inquiry at hand. In short, *everything must happen exactly as if an intelligent supervisor were obtaining information from the deceased for the purposes of the inquiry.*⁴⁸

The difficulties of using ESP as an explanation of the best cases resulted in the hypothesis of *Super-ESP*: that is, ESP (telepathy and clairvoyance) of a range, power, and accuracy far exceeding that found in experimental or anecdotal reports.

Telepathy and clairvoyance involve the transfer of information; but the minds of living persons involve much more than mere memories of their lives: they also have purposes, perspective, personalities, and skills.

Purpose Contrary to that of Medium or Sitter

Several cases on record clearly show evidence of the purpose of the deceased communicator. One such case comes from pre-revolutionary Russia, reported by Alexander Aksakov, imperial councilor to the czar.

Aksakov's sister-in-law Sophie and her daughter began to experiment with a pointer and an alphabet, when they suddenly received a message from "Schura," who claimed to be the deceased daughter of distant acquaintances, who had held revolutionary views. Schura warned that a cousin of hers, Nikolaus, had fallen in with a band of radicals, and that his family needed to be warned of the great danger. However, Sophie and her mother expressed hesitation for reasons of social propriety. "Absurd ideas of propriety!" was "Schura's" indignant reply.

All of this was very characteristic of the living Schura, who had been very decisive, forceful, and who had come to despise the conventions of society. However, Sophie and her mother continued to hesitate, while Schura's demands became more and more vehement, until she finally wrote, "It is too late ... expect his arrest."

Nikolaus was later arrested and exiled because of political assemblies he had attended in January and February 1885 – the very months in which "Schura" was insisting that steps should be taken *immediately* to dissuade Nikolaus from taking part in such meetings.

As I concluded in my third book:

The purpose of the communications received was definitely not that of the operators of the planchette board (who functioned as both mediums *and* sitters). Since they knew the other family only slightly, the thought of contacting them about so intimate a family matter embarrassed them. Yet the purpose shown in the communications would certainly have been that of the living Schura, if she had known of the danger to Nikolaus.⁴⁹

Perspective

One of the most impressive trance mediums investigated by the SPR on both sides of the Atlantic was Leonora Piper, of Boston. Richard Hodgson, lawyer, philosopher, and skeptical member of the SPR, had debunked several fraudulent mediums, and was determined to debunk Piper. He had her trailed by detectives, and even brought her to England where she knew no one, and so could have no confederates. The successes continued. Impressed, Hodgson joined the SPR as a full-time researcher, and spent the last 18 years of his life studying Miss Piper.

In 1893 Hodgson arranged two sittings with Reverend S.W. Sutton and his wife, in which their deceased daughter Katherine (who called herself “Kakie”) communicated. Piper spoke through a “control,” that is, a seemingly-discarnate person who acted as an intermediary. In this case the control was the usual Dr Phinuit, who claimed to be a deceased French physician.

“Kakie” communicated naturally and accurately with the sitters, at one point hushing singers to finish four lines of a song alone:

[I asked if she remembered anything after she was brought downstairs.] I was so hot, my head was so hot. [Correct.] ... [I asked if she suffered in dying.] I saw the light and followed it to this pretty lady ... Do not cry for me – that makes me sad. Eleanor. I want Eleanor. [Her little sister. She called her much during her last illness.] I want my buttons. Row, row, - my song, - sing it now. I sing with you. [We sing, and a soft child voice sings with us.]

[Phinuit hushes us, and Kakie finishes alone.]

*Let the wind and waters be
Mingled with our melody,
Sing and float, sing and float
In our little boat*

... Kakie sings: Bye, bye, ba bye, bye, bye, O baby bye. Sing that with me, Papa. [Papa and Kakie sing. These two were the songs she used to sing.] Where is Dinah? I want Dinah. [Dinah was an old black rag-doll, not with us.] I want Bagie [Her name for her sister Margaret.] I want Bagie to bring me my Dinah ... Tell Dodo when you see him that I love him. Dear Dodo. He used to march with me, he put me way up. [Correct.]⁵⁰

In his review of this case researcher Dr Alan Gauld concluded “I know of no instance of undeniable telepathy between living persons, or for that matter of any variety of ESP, in which the flow of paranormally acquired information has been so quick, so copious, and so free from error.”⁵¹ Yet no information conveyed was unknown to the sitters. However, one of the difficulties in using ESP to explain this case is that during both sittings several associations were made that were not in the minds of the adults, but rather in the mind of the child. For instance, the Kakie communicator asked at one point for a toy horse. From the transcript of the sitting:

Kakie wants the horse. [I gave him the little horse she played with during her illness.] No, that is not the one. The big horse – so big [Phinuit shows how large]. Eleanor’s horse. Eleanor used to put it in Kakie’s lap. [This horse was packed, in Trenton, and had not occurred to me in connection with Kakie. What she said of it was true.]⁵²

Gauld commented on what these passages imply:

If we are to say that Mrs Piper could select from the sitters’ minds associations conflicting with the ones consciously present and utilize them in order to create the impression that the communicator’s thoughts moved along lines distinctively different from the sitter’s, we are beginning to attribute to her not just super-ESP but super-artistry as well.⁵³

Another trance medium studied by the SPR was Mrs. Gladys Leonard, whom the SPR also had shadowed by detectives. Not a trace of fraud was ever found. Leonard’s usual control was named Feda, who claimed to be the spirit of a deceased native American girl. An odd feature of Leonard’s mediumship is that when Feda was in control and relaying messages from another communicator, she would sometimes be interrupted by a whisper seeming to come from the empty air directly in front of the medium. This “direct voice” seemed to be that of the communicator, and would sometimes interrupt and correct mistakes in Feda’s statements. At times the direct voice appears to express frustration with Feda, as though irritated by the effort of trying to dictate to a rather obtuse secretary.

Feda: He says that the *phenometer* – phenomena – He’s got a thermometer!
D.V.: *I was not talking about thermometers!*
Feda: Oh, he says, phenomena. Is that right? The phenomena referred to.⁵⁴

Feda: Your father says –
D.V.: *A few days out!*
Feda: A few days out? What, out of bed?
D.V.: *No, no, no no!*
Feda: A few days out? Oh, I’ll tell him. He was a few days out in his reckoning about the war.⁵⁵

On another occasion:

Feda: He says you must have good working – What? Hippopotamuses?
D.V.: *Hypotheses.*
Feda: (more loudly): Hippopotamuses.
D.V.: *Hypotheses –and don’t shout!*
Feda: I’m not shouting. I’m only speaking plainly.⁵⁶

These examples create an obvious difficulty for the hypothesis of telepathy from the living: for there is no evidence that telepathically-received information is ever first received wrongly, and then *corrected*. But mistakes and subsequent corrections make perfect sense if the messages are in fact what they purport to be.

So far, we have seen examples of communications that not only involve *information* far exceeding in speed and accuracy that found in laboratory and anecdotal reports of extrasensory perception: we have seen that the Super-ESP hypothesis *also* requires the active *deception* of the medium's unconscious mind, in order to present the information with the *purpose* and from the *perspective* only of the deceased. And even this *ad hoc* addition of elaborate and unconscious deception is not enough to explain the next set of cases.

Personality *and* Perspective

We have already seen several examples in which the distinctive personality of the deceased appears evident in the communications. The following remarks, fairly typical, were made after sittings with Mrs Piper in which deceased friends of the sitters gave every appearance of speaking directly through the medium:

The clearly-marked personality of the friend, whom I will call T., is to me the most convincing proof of Mrs P.'s supernatural power, but it is a proof impossible to present to anyone else.

Another sitter remarked:

In a great many little ways he is quite like what my friend used to be when living, so much so that I am afraid it would take a great deal of explanation to make me believe that his identical self had not something to do with it.⁵⁷

After the death of Dr A.W. Verrall messages purporting to come from him were received through the English medium Mrs Willett, and his friend Reverend M.A. Bayfield commented in great detail.

All this is Verrall's manner to the life in animated conversation. ... When I first read the words quoted above I received a series of little shocks, for the turns of speech are Verrall's, the high-pitched emphasis is his, and I could hear the very tones in which he would have spoken each sentence.⁵⁸

An intimate friend of Verrall's agreed with Bayfield's assessment, as did his surviving wife and a niece of Verrall's. Bayfield continued:

We have here an extraordinary faithful representation of Verrall in respect of a peculiar kind of impatience and a habit of emphasis which he had in conversation, and of his playfulness and sense of humour. ...to me at least it is incredible that even the cleverest could achieve such an unexampled triumph in deceptive impersonation as this would be if the actor is not Verrall himself.⁵⁹

Mrs Willett^{†††} did meet the living Verall three times, although the acquaintance seems to have been slight, and none of the investigators thought that she knew him

^{†††} 'Mrs Willett' was a pseudonym for Mrs Coombe-Tennant, justice of the peace and the first woman

intimately at all. However, in the next case, involving Mrs Piper and George Pellew, the relationship was even slighter, as Piper had met the living Pellew only once, when he attended a sitting under an assumed name.

We mentioned earlier that Hodgson began his investigations as a die-hard skeptic and debunker of fraudulent mediums, only to change his mind after investigating Mrs Piper. The turning point came after the death of close-friend and lawyer George Pellew at age 32, after a fall. Pellew, who was extremely skeptical about survival, did however promise Hodgson that if he died first and found himself still living, he would try to communicate.

About four weeks after his death, Hodgson attended a sitting with Piper along with another close friend of Pellew who visited under an assumed name. With Phinuit acting as intermediary, messages purporting to come from George Pellew (GP) were given along with his full name and the correct name of the sitter. Incidents unknown to Hodgson and the sitter were discussed, which concerned another family, the Howards. Three weeks later another séance was held with the man and his wife, and after Phinuit said a few words, GP suddenly appeared to control Piper's voice directly. Many private matters were discussed, and Hodgson wrote that the Howards "were profoundly impressed with the feeling that they were in truth holding a conversation with the personality of the friend whom they had known so many years."⁶⁰

From this time on, GP communicated directly through Mrs Piper's voice, or by writing with her hand. As I wrote in my review of this case:

Out of 150 sitters who were introduced to GP during that time, he recognized by name 29 of the 30 that George Pellew had known in life (the sole exception was a young woman who had been a child when the living Pellew had last seen her). He conversed with each of these individuals in the appropriate manner, and showed an intimate knowledge of his supposed past relationships with them. As Hodgson writes, in each case "the recognition was clear and full, and accompanied by an appreciation of the relations which subsisted between GP living and the sitters."⁶¹ And there was not a single case of false recognition; that is, GP never once greeted anyone of the 120 that the living Pellew had *not* known.⁶²

The continual manifestation of this personality convinced Hodgson beyond reasonable doubt that Piper was genuine; he was convinced Piper had no knowledge of the living Pellew; yet how could she have succeeded in dramatically impersonating someone she had barely met over four years earlier in a manner that convinced all thirty people that they were indeed conversing with their old friend?

We can see in these cases that we are beginning to require something different *in kind* from extrasensory perception. Even if we grant – for the sake of argument – that the medium possesses the staggeringly-vast powers of ESP required to *instantly* telepathically or clairvoyantly acquire the facts needed in these conversations: there is still a vast difference between *knowing mere facts* about a person, and then

to be appointed by the British Government as a delegate to the assembly of the League of Nations.

translating those facts into a completely-lifelike impersonation of someone unknown or barely-known to the actor. An entirely different skill is required, and this skill cannot be reduced to mere knowledge of facts, however those facts may have been acquired. Even Super-ESP is not enough to account for the completely-lifelike impersonation of Pellew over a period of five years.

And there is a final point to be made with regard to the Pellew communications. Recall from above that GP failed to recognize only one of the thirty sitters who had known the living Pellew, a young woman who had been a child when the living Pellew knew her mother.

Miss Warner attended the sitting with Hodgson, and GP asked who she was. The following exchange then occurred:

I do not think I knew you very well. (Very little. You used to come and see my mother.)...Yes, but I cannot seem to place you. (R.H.: Do you remember Mrs Warner?) Of course, oh, very well. For pity sake are you her little daughter? (Yes.) By Jove, how you have grown. (I was a little girl.)⁶³

Since Miss Warner had changed a great deal in eight years, the non-recognition by George Pellew would have been perfectly natural.

However, on the hypothesis of telepathy, there is no explanation for GP's failure to recognize Miss Warner. Since both Miss Warner and Hodgson were aware that the living Pellew knew her, sources for telepathy were readily at hand, and here the ESP hypothesis would predict "recognition." On the other hand, the *non-recognition* of Miss Warner is precisely what would be expected if Pellew were directly communicating.

Display of Skills

Next, we will consider cases in which the medium clearly displayed high-level skills he or she did not possess, yet were most certainly possessed by the deceased. These cases are even more difficult to explain via ESP than displays of the purpose, perspective, and personality of the deceased.

The first example comes from the mediumship of the English medium Mrs Willet. When she went into a trance, she did not appear to lose control of her body; rather, she would sit up and talk in a natural way; messages appeared to be conveyed directly to her, which she would then pass on to sitters.

Her two main communicators appeared to be Edmund Gurney and Frederic Myers, both of whom were avid philosophers and founders of the SPR. Through Mrs Willet the alleged communicators Gurney and Myers requested sittings with their friend GW Balfour, who had engaged in numerous philosophical discussions with Gurney and Myers before they died.

With Willet in a trance, lively philosophical discussions would ensue, and the communicators showed a thorough acquaintance with the views and terminology of

books written by the living Myers and Gurney. This was in the format of conversational give-and-take, not merely the outpouring of views. The philosopher CD Broad wrote that the communications were “plainly the product of a highly intelligent mind or minds, with a keen interest in psychology, psychical research and philosophy, and with a capacity for drawing subtle and significant distinctions.”⁶⁴ The philosopher Robert Almeder wrote that some of the sittings “were purely philosophical and sound like the transcript of an Ivy League graduate seminar on classical philosophy.”⁶⁵

As I wrote in my third book:

Mrs Willet’s mediumship strains the ESP hypothesis in two crucial ways. First, Mrs Willet had never met the living Myers or Gurney, yet Balfour and others were convinced that the Myers and Gurney communicators acted and spoke in ways uniquely characteristic of Myers and Gurney. Second – and perhaps even more startling – Mrs Willet was neither educated nor interested in philosophy, and showed little patience for such discussions. The attitude of her trance personality (as well as her normal personality) toward the communications can best be described as one of boredom and bewilderment. At one point, when the Gurney personality was discussing in detail some philosophical problem, she exclaimed “Oh, Edmund, you do *bore* me so!”⁶⁶

Balfour found the communications so convincing and natural that he came to believe he was indeed communicating with his old friends Myers and Gurney.

The next case involves the high-level display of another skill.

In 1855 Judge John Worth Edmonds, president of the New York State Senate and later judge of the Supreme Court of New York, reported a case involving a trance medium who spoke in a language of which she was entirely ignorant, and in this language conveyed correct information unknown to anyone present.

The judge began his investigations into mediumship as a determined debunker; so, imagine his surprise when his daughter Laura began to shine as a developing medium. One of her most impressive gifts was an ability to “speak in many tongues,” as he put it.

She knows no language but her own, and a little smattering of boarding-school French; yet she has spoken in nine or ten different tongues, sometimes for an hour at a time, with the ease and fluency of a native. It is not unfrequent that foreigners converse with their Spirit friends, through her, in their own language. A recent instance occurred, where a Greek gentleman had several interviews, and for several hours at a time carried on the conversation on his part in Greek, and received his answers sometimes in that language, and sometimes in English. Yet, until then, she had never heard a word of modern Greek spoken.⁶⁷

One evening there was a séance with a Greek named Evangelides. Before long a deceased friend appeared, and Evangelides asked if he could be understood if he spoke in Greek. The rest of the conversation, lasting more than an hour, was entirely

in Greek on his part, and on hers, sometimes in Greek and sometimes in English. At one point, Evangelides became upset to the point of tears. He refused to explain to the other guests what message had come through in Greek; but during another séance the next day, with no strangers present, he explained that the message from his friend was the death of his son in Greece, who had been in excellent health when Evangelides had left Greece. Ten days later the news from Greece arrived.

Judge Edmonds made the following observations about what happened during the seance:

To deny the fact is impossible, it was too well known; I could as well deny the light of the sun; nor could I think it an illusion, for it is in no way different from any other reality. It took place before ten educated and intelligent persons. We had never seen Mr. Evangelides before; he was introduced by a friend that same evening. How could Laura tell him of his son? How could she understand and speak Greek which she had never previously heard?⁶⁸

The next case also involves the demonstration of a skill, and this at a level very few people in the world possess.

Chess game with a deceased grandmaster

The remarkable story of a chess game played between a living and a deceased grandmaster began in 1985, when chess enthusiast Dr Wolfgang Eisenbeiss decided to initiate a chess match between living and deceased grandmasters. He contacted musician, composer, and amateur medium Robert Rollans, who always offered his services as a medium free of charge. Eisenbeiss had known Rollans for 8 years, and trusted his assertion that he did not know how to play chess.

Eisenbeiss was able to persuade the world-famous chess champion Victor Korchnoi, then ranked third in the world, to participate. Korchnoi was described in *Chessbase* (April 4, 2002) as “unquestionably one of the great chess players of all time.”

Eisenbeiss then gave Rollans a list of deceased grandmasters and asked him to find one willing to play. On June 15 1985 a communicator claiming to be deceased Hungarian grandmaster Geza Maroczy agreed to play. Maroczy was ranked third in the world in 1900 and was known for his remarkably-strong endgame.

For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to “the communicator identifying himself as Maroczy” as simply *Maroczy*.

The entire game was played with Eisenbeiss as an intermediary, relaying the moves back and forth between Korchnoi and Rollans. At no time did Korchnoi and Rollans have direct contact, except for a handshake on a TV show in September 1992, four and a half months before the end of the game.

At the twenty-seventh move, Korchnoi commented on the quality of his opponent’s play:

During the opening phase Maroczy showed weakness. His play is old-fashioned. But I must confess that my last moves have not been too convincing. I am not sure I will win. He has compensated the faults of the opening by a strong end-game. In the end-game the ability of a player shows up and my opponent plays very well.⁶⁹

The game continued, always with Eisenbeiss as an intermediary, until 1993, when *Maroczy* resigned at move forty-eight. The long duration was due to Korchnoi's frequent travels (in the days before widespread email) and to Rollans' illness (Rollans died just nineteen days after *Maroczy* resigned).

The full match went as follows:

1. e4	e6	19. Qe4	Qxe4+	37. Rf5+	Kxg4
2. d4	d5	20. fxe4	f6	38. h6	b3
3. Nc3	Bb4	21. Rad1	e5	39. h7	Ra8
4. e5	c5	22. Rd3	Kf7	40. cxb3	Rh8
5. a3	Bxc3+	23. Rg3	Rg6	42. Rg6+	Kf4
6. bxc3	Ne7	24. Rhg1	Rag8	43. Rf6+	Kg3
7. Qg4	cxd4	25. a4	Rxg3	44. Rf1	Rh2
8. Qxg7	Rg8	26. fxg3	b6	45. Rd1	Kf3
9. Qxh7	Qc7	27. h4	a6	46. Rf1+	Rf2
10. Kd1	dxc3	28. g4	b5	47. Rfx2+	Kxf2
11. Nf3	Nbc6	29. axb5	axb5	0-1	
12. Bb5	Bd7	30. Kd3	Kg6	Maroczy resigns	
13. Bxc6	Bxc6	31. Rf1	Rh8		
14. Bg5	d4	32. Rh1	Rh7	(48. b4	c2
15. Bxe7	Kxe7	33. Ke2	Ra7	49. Kxc2	Ke2
16. Qh4+	Ke8	34. Kd3	Ra2	50. b5	d3+
17. Ke2	Bxf3+	35. Rf1	b4	51. Kc3	d2
18. gxf3	Qxe5+	36. h5+	Kg5	52. b6	d1=Q) ^{\$\$\$}

Former South African chess champion Vernon Nepe reanalyzed this case in 2007, with the aid of a chess-playing computer program. He wanted to answer these three questions:

1. At what level did *Maroczy* play this chess game?
2. Could a chess computer reproduce this game?
3. Was the *Maroczy* style something a computer could replicate?

Regarding level of play, Nepe concluded that "*Maroczy* played at least at the Master level, and debatably, at a rusty, lowish grandmaster level."⁷⁰ Nepe's only criticism of *Maroczy*'s play was his weak opening, which both he and Korchnoi found old-fashioned. Other than that, "*Maroczy*, in my opinion, plays perfect chess."

^{\$\$\$} Moves 48-52 show how the game would have played out and provide the reason *Maroczy* resigned at move 47.

Neppe then tried to answer the question as to whether a computer could have simulated *Maroczy's* game. He set the program Sigma Chess 6.0 to respond to Korchnoi's moves, and compared the computer's choices with those of *Maroczy*.

Maroczy played human-type moves, and the computer simulation played computer-type moves correcting what it thought were inferior moves (e.g. in moves 23 and 24) despite their illogicality. *Maroczy* clearly played the endgame far better than the computer⁷¹

Neppe noted that the old-fashioned opening style of *Maroczy's* game also makes it unlikely that a computer was used to hoax the game. Comparing the style of *Maroczy's* game with the style of a computer's game, Neppe wrote:

Maroczy played in a style reminiscent of the early twentieth century, and demonstrated the endgame expertise he was famous for. ... In any event, the differences in style between an accomplished chess player and even the most remarkable computer hardware and software are profound.⁷² ****

Considering the possibility of fraud with the use of a computer, Neppe concluded: "it is my opinion that a chess computer could not reproduce this game as of the 1980s. Nor is it likely that it could replicate *Maroczy's* play even today because of the stylistic elements."⁷³

In other words, during the period of the game, computer technology – both software and hardware – were simply not advanced enough to give a chess grandmaster a challenging game. Also, it is exceedingly unlikely that the software would be programmed to use an old-fashioned opening. Finally, software cannot, even today, simulate a human style of play, and certainly cannot simulate the unique style of an accomplished player such as Geza *Maroczy*.

And as I added in my own review of this case,

The supposition that an elderly, frequently ill man with an impeccable reputation for honesty secretly conspired with a living chess master over seven years and eight months in order to mimic the chess ability and style of a deceased grandmaster for no apparent purpose or gain can be safely rejected by all but the most dogmatic skeptics.⁷⁴

But there is even more to the case than demonstrated high-level chess skills. *Maroczy*, through Rollans, was asked eighty-one questions about the obscure life of Geza *Maroczy*; he answered seventy-nine (97.5%) correctly (two remained unsolved). The accuracy rate for the most difficult questions to verify was thirty-one out of thirty-one, one hundred percent correct.

**** Chess player Tim McGrew of Michigan University has written "Barring a conceptual breakthrough, computer chess is and will remain detectably inhuman." ("The Simulation of Expertise: Deeper Blue")

The only remaining explanation for this case – apart from genuine communication from Geza Maroczy – is that Rollans unconsciously used Super-ESP in order to pull off an elaborate fraud for no apparent purpose or gain. However, several features of this case create enormous difficulties for this hypothetical explanation.

Romi(h)

When Eisenbeiss questioned *Maroczy* about the life of Geza Maroczy, he at one point received a very unexpected answer. He asked *Maroczy* if he had ever known a player named Romi. *Maroczy* in reply mocked Eisenbeiss for not knowing the correct spelling, which *Maroczy* gave as “Romih.” Eisenbeiss had no idea that name could be spelled that way.

Maroczy's answer was:

I am sorry to say that I never knew a chess player named Romi. But I think you are wrong with the name. I had a friend in my youth, who defeated me when I was young, but he was called Romih – with an ‘h’ at the end. In 1930 at the tournament of San Remo – who is also present? My old friend Romih coming from Italy also participated in that tournament. I suspect that you were thinking about the same person but gave the name incorrectly.⁷⁵

Which was the correct spelling? An historian was hired to find answers to the most obscure questions, and found both spellings in the literature. Finally, a copy of the official book from the San Remo tournament of 1930 was found, with the spelling as “Romih.” It turns out that after the 1930 tournament Romih moved to Italy and then dropped the “h”.

Eisenbeiss and Hassler concluded:

Because *Maroczy* claimed to know Romih from his youth, it is logical that he would have known the original spelling of Romih's name and would not have replaced it with the later Italianization. For the Super-ESP Hypothesis to work, the controlling mind, on perceiving varying references to Romih or Romi, would have to be able to grasp the correct one from *Maroczy's* perspective, decide to address the situation, formulate a response to the conflict and dramatize it in the context of a teasing dialogue with Eisenbeiss/Rollans about their ignorance of the correct spelling.⁷⁶

As Gauld would no doubt agree, we must be willing to attribute to Rollans not just Super-ESP, but super-artistry and super-*guile* as well.

The Vera Menchik Club

The August 4 1988 edition of the Swiss chess magazine *Schachwoche* held a readers' competition, asking them: Who was the Austrian founder of the Vera Menchik Club? Menchik was the first female world champion, and the club's members were those whom she had beaten.

Eisenbeiss asked *Maroczy* the same question on August 8 1988. *Maroczy* confessed that he was uncertain and speculated on various names. He also describes the club as “a silly joke to which he paid no attention.” On August 11 *Maroczy* considers Albert Becker as a possibility, but in the end rejects Becker. Note that the Super-ESP hypothesis would predict that the medium, posing as *Maroczy*, would give the correct name, because by August 4 the entire editing team at *Schachwoche* knew the correct name.

The solution was published in the same magazine on August 18 1988: Albert Becker. On August 21 1988 *Maroczy* is again asked for the founder’s name. However:

He still does not name Becker as the founder of the club, as might be expected under the Super-ESP hypothesis; once the solution was published it should be possible for the medium to access the information, either clairvoyantly, or telepathically from the minds of the magazine’s readers. But instead of correcting his wrong answer *Maroczy* quite unprompted comes up with a different story which evidently demanded his attention much more than the ‘silly joke’.⁷⁷

Eisenbeis and Hassler concluded:

In our example *Maroczy*’s rationale for forgetting the name of a man whom he would have considered to be merely indulging a pointless joke but then relating an unprompted story about a woman whose beauty had impressed him is plausible, whereas for Rollans the medium it is difficult to understand [if using Super-ESP] why he should be unable to retrieve the name requested, given his ability to convey detailed precise information on other occasions, even less why he should digress to an unprompted narrative thread.⁷⁸

The 1924 New York Tournament

A similar incident occurred when *Maroczy* was discussing a tournament in which he performed badly (by his standards). He discusses a “thrilling game” which he (correctly) says ended in a draw, but does not reveal his final ranking, admitting “it is true for me that I am not able to remember everything, most of all whenever winning eluded me.”

Research revealed that *Maroczy* finished sixth in the tournament

If Rollans were trying to engineer a story with verifiable facts as evidence of survival, he could have inserted *Maroczy*’s final ranking, a checkable fact. Clearly, elsewhere the *Maroczy* transcripts contain innumerable such verifiable facts. ... we know *Maroczy* to have been very ambitious and it is thus entirely in character that he would omit reporting failures or mediocre tournament rankings. Yet for Rollans, whose main objective was to provide convincing evidence to support the survival hypothesis, it would make no sense to censor information concerning *Maroczy*’s failures.⁷⁹

Discussion

What is so impressive about this case is the demonstration of a high-level skill (knowing *how*) combined with near-perfect accuracy in answers to questions about an obscure life in the early twentieth century (knowing *that*), and all presented in the style and from the perspective of a deceased grand master.

Neppe describes the difficulty of using any form of ESP to explain the chess-playing skill attributed to Maroczy:

Far more so, chess-playing skill requires a further profound leap when applying the super-ESP hypothesis – delving into a Master's (or several Master's) *unconscious* mind(s) is insufficient; their *active repeated cogitation* 47 times (as 47 moves) over many years plus the medium obtaining it all by automatic writing. ... the responses would require active intervention.⁸⁰

In other words, much more than mere *perception* is required: also required is the *active thinking* of the mind of at least one chess-master, living or departed. As we have seen, Super-ESP utterly fails to explain not just one but *four* features of this remarkable case.

Implication of Skills for ESP

Demonstration of high-level skills known to be possessed by a deceased communicator, and not possessed by the medium, is even more difficult to explain via any form of extra-sensory perception than the convincing impersonation of someone the medium has never met. This is because studies show that top-level performers *always* require many years of hard practice before achieving excellence.

Journalist Geoff Colvin has noted:

In a famous study of chess players, Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon and William Chase proposed the “ten-year rule,” based on their observation that no one seemed to reach the top ranks of chess players without a decade or so of intensive study, and some required much more time. Even [child prodigy] Bobby Fischer was not an exception; when he became a grand master at age sixteen, he had been studying chess intensively for nine years. Subsequent research in a wide range of fields has substantiated the ten-year rule everywhere the researchers have looked. In math, science, musical composition, swimming, X-ray diagnosis, tennis, literature – no one, not even the most “talented” performers, became great without at least ten years of very hard preparation.⁸¹

There is no reason at all to assume that mere *perception* – extra-sensory or otherwise – can enable anyone to instantly and temporarily acquire skills normally requiring years of practice to acquire.

So far, we have seen that Super-ESP was first proposed when the hypothesis of telepathy between medium and sitter was proven false by the continued success of proxy sittings. And Super-ESP was not enough: also required was the *unconscious deception* of the medium, pretending to be the deceased.

Analysis of other cases revealed that even this was not enough. The medium also needed to cunningly – and unconsciously – employ super-*artistry* and super-*guile* in order to adopt the *purpose* and *perspective* unique to the deceased. Finally, the Super-ESP hypothesis needs to be stretched even further; the medium must not only unconsciously employ vast powers of extra-sensory perception, super-*guile*, and super-*artistry*: the Super-ESP hypothesis also requires the *ad hoc* addition of skills that have nothing to do with *any form of perception*, extra-sensory or otherwise. Now we are asked to assume, with no evidence whatsoever, that the medium can use extra-sensory perception to brilliantly impersonate deceased individuals she did not or barely knew; and can also use telepathy and clairvoyance to *instantly* and *temporarily* acquire the skills that required those same deceased individuals years to acquire during their time on earth.

Commenting on such cases, Broad wrote,

It seems to me that any attempt to explain these phenomena by reference to telepathy among the living stretches the word “telepathy” till it becomes almost meaningless, and uses that name to cover something for which there is no *independent* evidence and which bears hardly any analogy to the phenomena which the word was introduced to denote.⁸²

In other words, whenever the hypothesis of Living-Agent ESP was falsified by the data, it was simply extended with speculative, untestable *ad hoc* assumptions that have nothing to do with extra-sensory perception as the term is normally understood.

And even these *ad hoc* additions are not enough.

Evidence of Design

Frederic Myers, whom we met earlier as one of the founding members of the British Society for Psychical Research, died on January 17, 1901. During his life he had been a classical scholar, extremely well-versed in the literature and poetry of ancient Greece and Rome. Myers had been intensely interested in the survival problem, and was fully aware of the difficulty of finding evidence that could not be explained by determined skeptics as due to some form of super-powerful ESP combined with unconscious deception.

Shortly after Myers died, messages purporting to come from him were received by several mediums in different parts of the world. Most of these messages were received by the technique of automatic writing, in which the medium enters a trance and writes with pencil or pen on paper. Many of these messages expressed a passionate longing to establish his survival. For instance, after his death Mrs Holland in India wrote in trance: “If it were possible for the soul to die back into earth life I should die from sheer yearning to reach you to tell you that all we imagined is not half wonderful enough for the truth.” And through Mrs Piper in Boston: “I am trying with all the forces together to prove that I am Myers.”⁸³

But other messages received through various mediums throughout the world, also signed “Myers,” were cryptic literary allusions; it seemed as though their true meanings were being deliberately concealed. As according to SPR protocol, the messages were sent to Miss Alice Johnson of the BSPR, and it was not until 1905 that she realized what was happening. By that time the scripts contained the astounding claim that the deceased Myers had devised a scheme of providing meaningless fragments in the scripts of different mediums, fragments which would be found to express a coherent idea only when combined. The quest to solve the puzzle of the *cross correspondences* had begun.

Miss Johnson described the apparent origin of the messages: “it has every appearance of being an element imported from outside; it suggests an independent invention, an active intelligence constantly at work in the present, not a mere echo or remnant of individualities of the past.”⁸⁴

What the cross correspondences add to the evidence from mediumship is *evidence of design* – a design that could not have originated in the minds of anyone living, but which gives every indication of being designed by the mind of Frederic Myers.

There is not space here to deal with the cross correspondences in the depth they deserve.^{†††} However, the following description of one case, taken directly from my third book, is a useful illustration. Note that, as was the case with several of the mediums involved in the cross correspondences, both women were well-respected public figures who kept their mediumship a closely-guarded secret. Mrs Verrall was a lecturer at Cambridge, England; Mrs Holland was the pseudonym of Mrs Fleming, a sister of Rudyard Kipling, and who lived in India.

The Roden Noel Case

On March 7, 1906 Mrs Verrall’s script contained an original poem, which started with the words:

Tintagel and the sea that moaned in pain.

When Miss Johnson read this she was struck by its similarity to a poem by Roden Noel, entitled “Tintagel.” To the best of her recollection, Mrs Verrall had never read this poem.

On March 11, 1906 Mrs Holland’s script contained these words:

This is for A.W. Ask him what the date May 26th, 1894 meant to him – to me – and to F.W.H.M. I do not think they will find it hard to recall, but if so – let them ask Nora.

The date given, which meant nothing to Mrs Holland, is the death of Roden Noel. The initials A.W. refer to Dr Verrall, and F.W.H.M. refers of course to F.W.H.

^{†††} Excellent analyses of these cases can be found in Saltmarsh.

Myers, both of whom knew Noel, but not very well. Nora means Mrs Sidgwick, which seems appropriate, as Noel was an intimate friend of Dr Sidgwick.

On March 14, before any of the above facts were known to Mrs Holland, she wrote, in a trance state:

Eighteen, fifteen, four, five, fourteen, Fourteen, fifteen, five, twelve. Not to be taken as they stand. See Rev. 13, 18, but only the central eight words, not the whole passage.⁸⁵

The whole thing was meaningless to Mrs Holland, and she did not look up the passage. But Miss Johnson did, and found that the central eight words were: "for it is the number of a man." Taking this to be a hint, she translated the numbers given in the script into the letters of the alphabet, with "d" being the fourth letter, "e" the fifth, and so on. When finished, the letters spelled *Roden Noel*.

There was a further reference to Roden Noel in Mrs Verrall's script of March 16, 1906, and finally, on March 28 1906 Mrs Holland's script contained the name *Roden Noel* written out in full. Hence, the common topic of the scripts was only revealed in a later script, and by the dutiful efforts of Miss Johnson to understand the earlier scripts.

Comments on the Roden Noel Case

In this cross correspondence between two mediums we find three references to the same person, but given in an indirect manner which did not reveal the chosen topic to the conscious minds of the mediums. This deliberate concealment seems to be crucial to the plan of the cross correspondences: the messages are deliberately enigmatic to prevent the mediums from acquiring knowledge of the topic, in order to rule out the possibility of the mediums helping each other, normally or telepathically.⁸⁶

To sum up the case so far: in order to deal with the cross correspondences, the Super-ESP hypothesis must be stretched even further: the unconscious minds of *several* mediums must also be able to use Super-ESP to simultaneously coordinate elaborate, *unconscious plots of deception* among mediums in different parts of the world. And if the plots are carried out unconsciously, then how could we ever find any evidence, for or against?

And even this desperate addition is not enough to rescue Super-ESP.

Mental Characteristics of the Deceased

The death of Mrs Verrall in 1916 made very little difference to the content of the cross-correspondence scripts. This contrasts sharply with the change in the scripts following the death of her husband, Dr A.W. Verrall, on June 18, 1912. Within a few weeks of his death messages purportedly from Verrall began to appear, these also in the form of enigmatic literary puzzles. When solved, they too revealed themselves as requiring specialized knowledge of the classics possessed by very few living

scholars; but known to be possessed by the living Verrall.⁸⁷***

The Lethe Experiment

The final case we will consider began on March 23 1908 when Mr G.B. Dorr, a member of the SPR, posed the following question to “Myers” through the medium Mrs Piper in Boston: ‘What does the word LETHE suggest to you?’ In Greek mythology the River Lethe flows through Hades, and is also known as the River of Forgetfulness. The dead are said to drink from this river to obliterate their memories, before being born again on earth. Dorr was expecting a reply along these lines. Instead, he got the following strange answer:

Myers: Lethe. Do you refer to one of my poems, Lethe?

Dorr answered in the negative, and pressed the communicator for another answer. But instead of getting the reply he expected, he received a disjointed reply that included references to a cave, to winds, to “entwined love” and to an arrow shot through the air. None of this made any sense to Dorr.

At a sitting the next day communicators claiming to be Hodgson and Myers came through, in which both clearly expressed concern that Dorr did not understand the previous day’s answer. In this sitting and the next a few days later, the following came through:

I walked in the garden of the gods – entranced I stood along its banks – like one entranced I saw her at last ... Elysian shores.

We walk together, our loves entwined, along the shores. In beauty beyond comparison with Lethe. Sorry it is all so fragmentary but suppose it cannot all get through.

Orpheus and Eurydice. It reminds me of them.⁸⁸

In seances over the following days, various references to names in classical literature are made, and Dorr found four authors from antiquity in whose work appear these names. In a subsequent séance Dorr mentioned three of these names to the communicator: Aristophanes, Horace, and Ovid, to which “Myers” replied:

I remember well OVID.⁸⁹

This was the clue that led to the eventual solution to this puzzle.

*** Earlier, we saw that the accompanying messages also displayed many idiosyncratic personality characteristics of the living Verrall.

Comments on this case

The investigators, several of whom were classical scholars, were at first utterly perplexed by these messages. Piddington, who eventually became the lead investigator of this case, was impressed by the confidence expressed in the messages that they were indeed relevant to the original question, and after following up on some clues in the messages, noted how he “by good luck came on a passage in the eleventh book, hitherto unknown to me, of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, which explains and justifies the main part of the answers given in the trance.”⁹⁰

In my chapter-long review of this case, I describe the conclusion eventually reached by the investigators:

This puzzle shows evidence of a design that was not at all apparent to any of the investigators, but it is a design that the living Myers was certainly capable of creating. The design required detailed knowledge of Ovid which Mrs Piper and the others simply did not possess. The associations provided in the script were ones Myers would have naturally made, but associations that at first left Mrs Piper, Dorr, Mrs Verrall, Lord Balfour, Piddington, and the other investigators completely baffled.⁹¹

There are also personal touches in the scripts which point to the distinctive personality and interests of Frederic Myers. Classical references appear to both Ovid and Virgil, both of whom were objects of special admiration to Myers. Also, three stories in Ovid's *Metamorphoses X* are alluded to in the three successive scripts, and Piddington discovered that the order in which the allusions emerge in the scripts is *not* the order in which they appear in *Metamorphoses*; but they are the order in which they appear in one of Myers' poems.

The references to Orpheus and Eurydice – lovers reunited in another realm – was a theme very near to Myers' heart, and appears in several of his poems. At age thirty Myers had fallen in love with a married woman who died three years later.

And there is more to this remarkable case.

Lodge continues the experiment

At the time Dorr was questioning Mrs Piper in Boston, Sir Oliver Lodge was also in Boston, and thought it would be useful to test the “Myers” communicator by asking the same question of Mrs Willett in England. So, in a letter, to be read to Mrs Willett, he wrote: “What does the word Lethe suggest to you?” Note that Mrs Willett in England had no normal knowledge of the question that was asked through Mrs Piper in Boston.

On February 4 1910 Mrs Willett in trance wrote “Myers yes I am here” and the question was read. The script began at once.

Myers the will again to live
the River of forgetfulness

and later, after several classical references to the River Lethe, in the same script appeared

there was a door to which I found no key
and Haggi Babba too
This is disconnected but not meaningless

This was followed by further various classical references to Lethe, and the script ended with “enough for to-day Myers”

The next day Mrs Willett suddenly felt an overpowering urge to write, sat down, and wrote:

You felt the call...it is I who write Myers I need urgently to say this tell Lodge this word... the word is DORR

The allusions to Lethe in the script of February 4th are obvious. The first sentence, “the will again to live” is from a poem written by the living Myers, and refers to souls gathering on the banks of Lethe, waiting to drink the waters of forgetfulness, and willing again to live on earth.⁹²

*God the innumerable souls in great array
To Lethe summons by a wondrous way
Till these therein their ancient pain forgive
Forget their life, and will again to live*

Recall that the *first response* of Mrs Piper’s Myers communicator in response to the Lethe question had been: “Do you refer to one of my poems?” This answer was thought by both Dorr and Piddington to be confused and inappropriate; Piddington had at first failed to discover any mention of Lethe in any of Frederic Myers original poems.⁹³

At one point the subject is changed, and a quote from Omar Khayyam is given: *There was a door to which I found no key,*^{§§§§} followed by what seems to be an attempt at the name Ali Babba of *Ali Babba and the Forty Thieves*, and by the words *This is disconnected but not meaningless.*

On March 7 the Myers communicator wrote “there was a pun but I do not want to say where.” Lodge searched the script for a pun, and on June 5 told “Myers” through Mrs Willett that he could not find any pun. In response, the entranced Mrs Willett wrote:

^{§§§§} *There was the Door to which I found no Key:*

There was the Veil through which I could not see.

Omar Khayyam

Rubaiyat, XXXV

Re LETHE...I, Myers, made a pun, I got in a word I wanted by wrapping it in a QUOTATION. Later I got the WORD itself.

Sir Oliver interpreted this as referring to the word “door” in the Omar Khayyam quotation as a pun on the name Dorr, the American who first asked Myers the question about Lethe through Mrs Piper. The door to the robber’s cave in the Ali Babba story only opened with the words “Open Sesame”, which could be described as “a door to which I found no key.” The fact that the name Dorr was given spontaneously the following day seems to justify this interpretation.

There is not space here to include the additional number of impressive features of this case which point only to the mind of Frederic Myers as the source of the messages received on both sides of the Atlantic. However, here is the conclusion I wrote after reviewing the entire case in detail:

The defender of the ESP hypothesis has to explain not only how telepathy or clairvoyance – as the terms are normally understood – were employed by a woman almost completely unfamiliar with the classics in order to *instantly* track down obscure classical references, from sources with which she had no personal connection. The defender must also explain how the associations specifically chosen from the classics were those that *Myers* alone would have made with the name “Lethe.” In his review of the cross-correspondences, Saltmarsh noted the implications these associations have for establishing personal identity:

Some of the most characteristic individual possessions of the human mind are the associations which it makes between ideas. These associations are the result of past history and are as clear an indication of psychical individuality as finger-prints are of physical. No two persons will make exactly the same associations between ideas, because no two persons have ever exactly the same history.⁹⁴

To sum up: the answers given to the Lethe question appear to have been deliberately chosen so that they would not be initially understood by the investigators; however, after a great deal of detailed investigation, they were found to have all the hallmarks of Myers’s unique interests, personality, and classical education. As Ducasse pointed out,

To account for such an ingenious feat of inventive and constructive activity as the purported Myers performed in this case, something different from ESP *in kind*, not just in degree, is indispensable; namely, either Myers’s own mind at work, or else a duplicate of it; which, however, then needs to be itself accounted for.⁹⁵

In a review of some of the earliest cross correspondences, Piddington wrote:

The only opinion which I hold with confidence is this: that if it was not the mind of Frederic Myers it was one which deliberately and artistically imitated his mental characteristics.⁹⁶

The Super-ESP hypothesis attempts to explain the seeming communication from the departed as due to clairvoyant perception and telepathy among the living. But as Ducasse remarked:

When Occam's razor is alleged to shave off survival as a superfluous hypothesis, and to leave ESP as sufficient to account for all the facts in evidence, it turns out that ESP cannot do it without being arbitrarily endowed with an *ad hoc* 'beard' consisting not of capacity for more far-reaching perception, but of capacity for reasoning, inventing, constructing, understanding, judging; i.e., for *active thinking*; and more specifically for the particular modes of such active thinking which *only* the particular mind whose survival is in question is *known* to have been equipped with.⁹⁷

And so it should be clear at this point that the crucial difference between the best mediumship cases and extra-sensory perception involving only the living is this: *the active participation of the deceased person's mind* is required, not just merely the gathering of information *about* the deceased.

Super-ESP Revisited

Does Super-ESP Exist?

Extrasensory perception includes the following abilities: *telepathy*, Greek for "distant feeling;" and *clairvoyance*, French for "clear vision."

Both of these abilities have been convincingly, independently demonstrated under controlled conditions in laboratories around the world. The most convincing evidence for telepathy comes from the *ganzfeld* experiments, in which one person, a sender, concentrates on a picture or short film, called the target. In another room is a receiver whose role is to let images and thoughts come into their mind. After thirty minutes the session ends and the receiver is shown four pictures or films, and asked to choose the one seen by the sender. By sheer chance, they should be right about 25% of the time; but results show an average accuracy rate of about 33%. Although some of the most gifted subjects show an accuracy rate exceeding 50%, *nothing* in the ganzfeld suggests that highly accurate and detailed messages may be sent and received via telepathy. Nothing displayed in the ganzfeld comes even remotely close to being powerful enough to explain away the survival evidence.

The common reply by defenders of Super-ESP is that ESP in real-life, "in the wild," may be much more impressive than that typically found in labs.*****

At any rate, is it true that wild ESP is capable of supporting the burden of explaining at least *some* of the survival evidence? I dealt with this in my third book:

***** Most reports of ESP in the wild involve a sense of being stared at, or of anticipating a phone call from a friend or relative (see Sheldrake, 2003).

If the function of Super-ESP is the use of its virtually unlimited powers by the subconscious mind to surreptitiously protect us from the abstract fear of death by fabricating elaborate evidence that seems in every respect exactly *as if* the deceased are visiting or communicating, then why don't we have evidence of our unconscious minds employing these vast powers to protect us from the *actual* threat of imminent death? That would at least provide a more plausible evolutionary reason for the existence of these powers.

The theory of the unconscious employment of vast powers of ESP would therefore seem to predict that these powers should, at least occasionally, be used to save us not from merely the fear of death, but from actual imminent death. Plenty of potential opportunities can be found in history. Consider only one: the Russian front during the Second World War. Surely there must have been many instances in which Slavs could have saved their lives from the death squads of the SS by using super-ESP to instantly acquire the ability to speak excellent German and thus pass themselves off as captured Germans taken prisoners of war. Answering test questions such as "which city is the capital of Bavaria?" would seem child's play compared to the vast powers of telepathy and clairvoyance the proponents of super-ESP attribute to mediums. There must also have been many instances in which Germans could have saved themselves from Russian work camps by using super-ESP to instantly acquire the ability to speak excellent Russian and thus convincingly pass themselves off as captured Russians.

But we have not one single shred of evidence that unfortunate people on either side were able to save themselves from death or lengthy and brutal incarceration by using these vast hypothetical powers. And if the proponents of super-ESP argue that these abilities only become manifest in a trance state, then we may wonder why trance mediums in heavily-bombed London were not invaluable guides to German plans and intentions.^{††††} Plenty of other examples can easily be found from WWII in which people could have reduced not merely the abstract fear of death but the threat of actual imminent death by the employment of the vast, virtually unlimited telepathic and clairvoyant powers attributed to mediums by the proponents of super-ESP.^{††††98}

^{††††} The only example I have found of a medium being usefully employed by British Intelligence is Geraldine Cummins, but the information she supplied invariably seemed to come from deceased individuals, and gave no indication of omniscient Super-ESP. (see Cousins, 2008). But in 1944 the medium Helen Duncan was charged and convicted of witchcraft(!) because she provided relatives with messages from deceased sailors regarding the sinking of their ships, which British Intelligence wished to keep secret for fear of harming public morale (see Crossley, 1975).

^{††††} There are in fact accounts from WWII of people using psychic abilities to save their lives. One of the most famous involved Winston Churchill, whose life was saved during a bombing raid by a feeling that he should not sit in his usual place in a car. Sheldrake also reports the case of a British soldier in Malaya who felt he was being stared at, accompanied by a sense of danger. He

The Arguments of Stephen Braude

The hypothesis of Super-ESP as a counter-explanation for the survival evidence has been vigorously defended by philosopher Stephen Braude, whose starting point is essentially this: although we have good evidence for the existence of extra-sensory perception (ESP) and psychokinesis (PK),^{§§§§§} at present, we do not know the limits of ESP. As Braude frequently asserts in various ways, “Just as we have no grounds at present for assuming that PK has any limits at all, the same is no doubt true with regard to the forms of ESP”⁹⁹ and “Disheartening as it may be, we simply have no decent idea what (if any) magnitude of phenomena is implausible or unlikely, once we have allowed psi to occur at all.”¹⁰⁰

So far, so good: we do not currently know the limits of extra-sensory perception. But Braude then goes further, and argues that ruling out ESP as an explanation of the data for survival *assumes unjustifiably* that ESP has limits that we can specify in advance.

The philosopher Robert Almeder has thoroughly examined Braude’s arguments on Super-ESP, and he agrees that no one should place any *a priori* limits on ESP or psi.

However, it seems reasonable to point out that, before one can appeal legitimately to super-ESP as an alternative way of explaining anything, one should have some empirical evidence that in fact super-ESP exists. This evidence is not provided simply by noting that it is possible – logically possible – that such super-ESP exists. [Those] who reject super-ESP explanations do so, presumably, because they think the burden of proof should be on the proponents of super-ESP to provide evidence for its existence if appeal to it is to serve as an alternative explanation for an existing body of data. Insisting that super-ESP be empirically confirmed to exist before it may be used to explain anything seems less an instance of assuming erroneously that there are *a priori* limits to ESP than simply just that: a request for some evidence of the causes cited in offering an explanation. Jones could hardly be the robber of the Rabun Gap Bank if we have no good reason to think that Jones ever existed.¹⁰¹

And note that even *if* it could be demonstrated that Super-ESP has occurred in some cases, evidence must be shown that it explains *the specific case under consideration*. A prosecutor may agree with the defense that police corruption can explain some limited class of cases, and yet still demand that the defense provide evidence that police corruption can explain the evidence in the case currently under trial. This in no way arbitrarily assumes there are some *a priori* limits to the extent of corruption within the department.

turned to see an enemy soldier about 20 yards away, bringing up his rifle to fire. The British soldier shot first, killing his enemy and thereby saving his own life (*The Sense of Being Stared At*, xii). These and other historical accounts do not stretch the original meanings of the words *telepathy* and *clairvoyance*, and can be found in *Science and Psychic Phenomena*, chapter 3.

^{§§§§§} ESP and PK lumped together are called *psi*.

The prosecutor may go even further, and demonstrate reasons why police corruption cannot explain certain features of the case currently under trial. Similarly, we have seen several features in cases above involving outcomes that are clearly contrary to how matters would be if ESP – super or otherwise – were involved. These features imply the falsification of ESP as a viable explanation *of these specific cases*.

We have also seen how the hypothetical existence of Super-ESP has rendered itself unfalsifiable in general with the addition of *ad hoc* auxiliary hypotheses; yet for Braude the non-falsifiability of the Super-ESP hypothesis is not a serious issue:

...one should not make too much of the non-falsifiability of psi hypotheses. Even if hypothesis H is non-falsifiable, there may still be other grounds for deciding between H and rival theses – for example, higher level pragmatic considerations concerning theoretic systematicity, explanatory fecundity, and conceptual cost. Besides, the non-falsifiability of an hypothesis may simply reflect the intractable nature of the phenomenon in question, rather than a theoretical deficiency, or the fact that the phenomenon does not exist. Widespread, large scale and inconspicuous *psi* would be the sort of phenomenon whose existence might never be conclusively demonstrated or disproved.¹⁰² *****

Braude's appeal to "higher level pragmatic considerations concerning theoretic systematicity, explanatory fecundity, and conceptual cost" is, to an empiricist, just fancy-sounding nonsense. There are no "higher level" considerations: the *only* consideration for an empirical thinker is finding the inference that stands as the best explanation for the evidence at hand. An imaginary, non-falsifiable hypothesis with no supporting evidence should never be considered a serious rival to an explanation which explains the data in a manner consistent with other things we have reason to believe are true.†††††

Furthermore, we have seen that in its testable form, Super-ESP as an explanation in several cases *has* been falsified by the evidence. An explanation that is proven false by one or more known facts cannot be the best explanation. And an explanation that can salvage itself only with the invention of speculative just-so stories with no evidential basis is the product of fantasy, and fantasy should never be allowed to trump evidence.

And this is far from the only problem with Super-ESP as an "explanation." The *most* Super-ESP by itself can even possibly explain is the rapid flow of accurate information concerning the deceased provided by the medium. In order to account for the cases in which the messages indicate the purpose of the deceased but not of the medium or sitters, or are from the perspective of the deceased, Super-ESP requires the *ad hoc* addition of the medium's unconscious mind acting in a deceptive

***** Note that the possible existence of Super-ESP has the same logical status as Descartes' Evil Demon theory.

††††† For instance, that years of practice are required to achieve expertise in every field researchers have examined.

manner in order to pull off an elaborate hoax. And as mentioned above, we have no evidence that *any* magnitude of perception, extrasensory or otherwise, can enable a person to brilliantly impersonate someone they have never met; to instantly and temporally acquire skills that required those individuals years of practice to acquire; and to reproduce the unique mental characteristics of those same individuals.

To be fair, Braude does deal briefly with the sudden appearance of skills not normally apparent. But he does not deal directly with the issues above, but rather skirts tentatively around the edges. For instance, Braude writes:

For now, let's ignore the questions arising in connection with the persistence of a deceased person's *idiosyncratic* abilities, such as a distinctively quirky sense of humor or highly specialized technical expertise. Let's focus now on more general abilities, such as the ability to write or speak in a foreign language, play a musical instrument, compose music, discuss theoretical physics, or solve mathematical problems., never mind the singular forms the abilities might take. If a non-survivalist hypothesis can't account for these general competencies, we needn't worry about more highly specialized forms.¹⁰³

Braude elaborates:

Consider the sorts of things that can interfere with skill development, even when we have opportunities to practice...learning of any kind is often highly resistance-laden; it can be hampered by an endless number of interfering beliefs, insecurities, and other fears.... However, these physical, cognitive, and emotional obstacles can be overcome relatively easily in hypnotic or other profoundly altered states. For example, under the influence of stage hypnotists, good hypnotic subjects do things they've never done before – for example, dance the tango, accurately imitate their boss (or various farm animals) ...¹⁰⁴

However, Michael Nash, editor in chief of the *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*, has written: "Performance following hypnotic suggestions for learning *does not exceed what can be accomplished by motivated subjects outside hypnosis.*"¹⁰⁵

Under hypnosis, subjects may lose normal inhibitions, imitate farm animals or monkeys in a way they would normally not, but they do not start speaking in a language they never learned, or brilliantly impersonate people they have never met.

Braude then describes:

a subject who, under hypnosis, started behaving and spouting New-Age platitudes like a contemporary channel or medium. ...[The] subject adopted novel speech patterns, tone of voice, and the awkward body language presumably appropriate to one who finds himself in strange body and unexpected surroundings. To my knowledge, this subject hadn't previously displayed the capacity to produce spontaneously consistent dramatic impersonations. And it's reasonable to think that hypnosis enabled him to accomplish what his normal fears and inhibitions might otherwise have prevented. More generally, it's

plausible that manifesting a skill might be facilitated if the process bypasses the normal states in which our inhibitions and other constraints are strongest.¹⁰⁶

Does Braude actually believe there is a serious comparison between portraying a crude caricature – “spouting New-Age platitudes like a contemporary channel or medium” – and the cases we have covered of impersonations of *specific* deceased individuals the medium has never met, impersonations that utterly convinced those who had known the living individuals that they were indeed conversing with their old friends? Braude’s speculation that “it’s *plausible* that manifesting a skill *might* be facilitated” by hypnosis might perhaps be drawn from his example; but both the example and his comments on hypnosis are completely irrelevant to the mediumship and reincarnation cases covered above.

With regard to the impressive display of skills shown in cases of reincarnation and mediumship, Braude claims that “the *acquisition* of skills may not be the issue. All we’re entitled to discuss, strictly speaking, is the *manifestation* of skills. We have no idea whether or to what extent new skills have been acquired by mediums or by subjects of reincarnation investigations. This isn’t a trivial distinction, because although practice seems essential to *perfecting* a skill, it’s *not* always needed to manifest skills for the first time.”¹⁰⁷

But it is simply not true that “we have no idea whether or to what extent new skills have been acquired by mediums or by subjects of reincarnation investigations.” Is Braude asking us to seriously entertain the possibility that Bishen Chand’s parents had no idea that their six-year-old son had been spending hours practicing on drums? Or that a judge had no idea that his daughter had taught herself to understand and speak nine or ten foreign languages fluently? Or that Mrs Coombe-Tennant, a busy woman indeed, may have been secretly studying classical philosophy to an expert level, a subject that bored both her awake and entranced self? Or that a man with an impeccable reputation for honesty secretly spent years attaining Master-level expertise in chess?

With regard for the necessity of practice, Braude then writes “musical prodigies such as Mozart ... usually manifest exceptional skills prior to perfecting or developing them through practice. ...Mozart was able to write down a complex piece of music while composing another one in his head but to my knowledge there’s no evidence that he first had to practice that skill.”¹⁰⁸

The only problem with the above is that this story about Mozart is simply a myth. As Colvin writes,

Mozart’s method of composing was not quite the wonder it was long thought to be...many people have believed that he had a miraculous ability to compose entire major pieces in his head. That view was based on a famous letter...the trouble is, this letter is a forgery. Mozart did not conceive whole works in his mind, perfect and complete. Surviving manuscripts show that Mozart was constantly revising, reworking, crossing out and rewriting whole sections. He wrote music the way ordinary humans do.¹⁰⁹

And it is clear that Mozart certainly did attain his skills through decades of intense practice and training:

From the earliest age, Wolfgang was receiving heavy instruction from an expert teacher who lived with him. His early compositions still seem remarkable, but it's interesting to note that the manuscripts are not in the boy's own hand. Leopold always "corrected" them before anyone saw them. It seems noteworthy also that Leopold stopped composing at just the time he began teaching Wolfgang.¹¹⁰

Mozart's first work regarded today as a masterpiece is his Piano Concerto No. 9, composed when he was twenty-one. That's certainly an early age, but we must remember that by then Wolfgang had been through eighteen years of extremely hard, expert training.¹¹¹

And New Yorker's music critic Alex Ross summed up the research on this so-called "prodigy": "Mozart became Mozart by working furiously hard."¹¹²

It should be clear that Braude's discussion of the need for practice to demonstrate impressive skill is highly speculative and based upon serious misconceptions. And, as far as I am aware, he has continued to "ignore the questions arising in connection with the persistence of a deceased person's *idiosyncratic* abilities" – the sort of idiosyncratic abilities clearly displayed in several cases covered earlier.

Super-ESP Revisited Conclusion

In summary, these are the problems with the Super-ESP hypothesis:

- Provides no positive evidence, merely proposes an imaginary possibility.
- Shifts the burden of proof away from those offering Super-ESP as a counter-explanation, and toward the defenders of survival to prove that this imaginary possibility is *not* true.
- Ignores the distinction between proof beyond all reasonable doubt, and proof beyond all conceivable doubt.
- Mistakenly argues that objecting to Super-ESP as an explanation of any particular case is to make an assumption about the limits to extra-sensory perception.#####

A useful analogy is a criminal trial in which the defense argues that we cannot rule out police corruption as an explanation for the evidence, on the ground that we do not know the limits of police corruption. The correct reply is of course that while we may not know the limits of police corruption – such as how far it goes up the ranks – we may still demand positive evidence of alleged corruption in this case. Objecting that we have none is not to place any arbitrary limits on police corruption, but rather to ask two simple questions: 1) is there any evidence of police corruption in this case? 2) are there reasons to

- Living-agent ESP has rendered itself unfalsifiable with the addition of *ad hoc* auxiliary assumptions, such as the cunningly-deceptive behavior of the medium's unconscious mind, and by extending the nature of perception to include abilities that have nothing to do with *any* form of perception, extra-sensory or otherwise, and hence has become the ideology of *Super-ESP*.

The fact that the fundamental issues discussed early in this essay have not been made explicit by proponents of Super-ESP has resulted in a trap into which even otherwise-sophisticated thinkers have fallen. After summarizing the Survival versus Super-ESP debate, one such thinker recently wrote:

This brief and abstract description will serve, I hope, to illustrate the general flavor of these debates, which seem to many well-informed observers to have arrived at **a logical impasse**. The core problem hinges on the fact that **information** provided by an ostensibly surviving communicator can only be verified by reference to information which is known to some living person or persons, or objectively documented in some other fashion, and hence which is also in principle potentially accessible to some sort of psi process. It is therefore always **possible to invent scenarios** according to which apparent evidence of survival can be "explained" alternatively in terms of psi processes involving only living persons. Such scenarios may need to be fantastically complex, but psi has been shown in various experimental contexts to operate in a 'goal-oriented' manner unaffected by the apparent 'complexity' of its tasks, and consequently they cannot be decisively refuted. But note the real **logical peculiarity** here: It is not that we have positive knowledge that psi processes *can* accomplish the extraordinary things required by such explanations, but rather that we are presently unable to prove that they *cannot*.¹¹³ [*bold emphasis added*]

The first and most obvious problem with the above is that it refers only to the *information* provided by mediums. But as we have noted, much more than mere information is provided in the best cases. In these we also see evidence of the purpose, perspective, personality, acquired skills, and mental characteristics distinctive of the departed in question.

A second problem with the above is that although there may be "a logical impasse", there is no impasse in terms of evidence. For all the reasons listed early in this essay, in both law and science the burden of proof, of providing evidence, is on the person making the claim. For instance, before a criminal case can go to trial, the prosecution must make an evidence-based *prima facie* case that the accused did indeed commit the crime in question. If during trial a defense attorney argues that it *might* be that the police officers involved participated in a conspiracy to frame his client, and offers no supporting evidence, then any competent prosecuting attorney

believe that police corruption *cannot* explain all of the facts in this case?

will object on grounds that the theory is pure speculation. It is not required in a court of law that the prosecution prove that the police did *not* frame the accused.

A mere logical possibility is not a real possibility unless there are evidence-based reasons to believe it may actually be true. We may agree with the author that “it is always possible to invent scenarios” to support an explanation in terms of ESP, but “inventing scenarios” is not the same as providing evidence. And evidence-based arguments are the only arguments appropriate in empirical matters, such as those dealt with in law, science, and history. Many philosophers tend to forget this, and believe that purely speculative arguments of the type offered by the proponents of Super-ESP have some validity in disputes over empirical matters. They do not. The proponents of survival have put forward a strong *prima facie* case; it is not required of them that they prove that imagined psi processes *cannot* accomplish the extraordinary things required by such explanations. The burden of proof should properly be placed on the proponents of Super-ESP to provide evidence that psi processes involving only the living *can be and were* employed to simulate an unconscious deception that a deceased personality has communicated.

Finally, the author asks us to “note the real logical peculiarity here: It is not that we have positive knowledge that psi processes *can* accomplish the extraordinary things required by such explanations, but rather that we are presently unable to prove that they *cannot*.”§§§§§§

And here we see the third problem: not only is the burden of proof shifted away from the proponents of Super-ESP; in addition, any theory which *cannot* be proven false is untestable. It is therefore not a scientific theory, and is thus properly classified as metaphysics at best, ideology at worse.

The reader will recall that the existence of Super-ESP was first proposed when the proxy sittings made it clear that ESP between mediums and sitters could not explain the evidence. Although the Living Agent ESP theory was falsified, it was not abandoned; it was simply stretched and extended to fantastic lengths until it could no longer be refuted. It should therefore be clear that the motivation behind the idea of Super-ESP is ideological, not scientific: it was proposed merely to oppose the *prima facie* case for survival implied by the evidence.

Nobel Laureate physicist Robert Laughlin has written:

A key symptom of ideological thinking is the explanation that has no implications and cannot be tested. I call such logical dead-ends anti-theories because they have exactly the opposite effect of real theories: they stop thinking rather than stimulate it.¹¹⁴

It is time we stopped giving the Super-ESP anti-theory the respect it does not deserve.

§§§§§§ Note that the possible existence of Super-ESP has the same logical status as the imaginary possibility that we live in the Matrix.

Conclusion

Using the technique of inference to the best explanation, an inference may be reached in a purely deductive manner.

Here is the argument in point form:

1. We have seen that the best evidence from mediumship not only involves a rapid display of highly-complex information, but also indications of the personalities, acquired skills, and unique mental characteristics distinctive of the minds of certain individuals who once lived on Earth.
2. We have no independent evidence that mere *perception* – extra-sensory or otherwise – can reproduce these three features.
3. The only source we know of that can instantly produce these features are the minds of individuals known to possess these personalities, acquired skills, and unique mental characteristics.
4. It is rational to prefer an argument that does explain the evidence over one that does not.
5. Hence, the most rational inference is the survival of said minds, and the continuing exercise of their capacities.

An assertion is proven beyond all reasonable doubt when we have good reason to believe it is true, and we have no good reason to believe it may *not* be true. Speculative just-so stories with no evidential basis do not provide good reasons to doubt arguments based upon evidence. The evidence from mediumship alone has proven the case for survival beyond all reasonable doubt.

And we have seen that survival also provides the best explanation of the data from near-death experiences, death-bed visions, apparitions, and memories of previous lives, in addition to the data from mediumship. Five independent lines of evidence, all very different from each other, all pointing in the same direction, and all accounted for by one simple and elegant explanation: the continuing survival of the minds of the deceased, with their distinctive purposes, perspectives, personalities, skills, and unique mental characteristics both intact and clearly evident.

Postscript

It is naïve to assume that the arguments and evidence presented here will result in all the materialists and believers in Super-ESP simply changing their opinion, just as it is naïve to think that arguments and evidence are capable of changing the opinions of those who believe, without a shred of supporting evidence, that the moon landings were faked in a film studio; that the United States presidential election of 2020 was stolen through massive voter fraud; and that the data for man-made global warming is the result of a conspiracy involving climate scientists around the world. As Karl Popper remarked, “True ignorance is not the absence of knowledge, but the refusal to acquire it.”

Endnotes

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- 1 Carter, 2012, p. 12.
 - 2 Ibid, p. 13.
 - 3 Burt, 1975, p. 60.
 - 4 James, p.22.
 - 5 Rao, 1994.
 - 6 Beloff, 1994, p.512.
 - 7 Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, p. 35.
 - 8 Ibid, page 37.
 - 9 Stapp, 2007, p. 81. Emphasis found in original text.
 - 10 Rosenblum and Kuttner, 1999, page 248.
 - 11 Broad, 1929, page 103.
 - 12 Boycott, 1965, p.44.
 - 13 Sheldrake, 1991, pp. 116-17.
 - 14 Nahm & Greyson, 2009, p.943.
 - 15 Nahm, 2009, p.95.
 - 16 Nahm & Greyson, 2009, p. 944.
 - 17 Nahm, et al, 2011, p.140.
 - 18 Nahm, 2009, p. 90.
 - 19 Yuille & Cutshall, p. 291.
 - 20 Yuille and Cutshall, 1986, p. 299.
 - 21 Sheldrake, 2003, p.5.
 - 22 Lennox, p.85.
 - 23 Ibid., p. 85.
 - 24 Popper, 1974, p.981.
 - 25 Personal communication, NDE researcher Bruce Greyson, MD, June 1 2021.
 - 26 Carter, 2010, p. 104.
 - 27 Moody, 1975, p. 21.
 - 28 Carter, 2010, p. 109.

29 Carter, 2010, p.162.

30 Sabom, 1998, p. 38.

31 Sabom, 1998, p. 41.

32 Sabom, 1998, p. 50.

33 Rivas, et. al, p.100.

34 Quoted in Rivas, et al, p. 101.

35 Osis & Haraldsson, 1977, p. 184.

36 Carter, 2010, p. 267.

37 Haraldsson, 1988, p. 106.

38 Stevenson, 1982, p. 345.

39 Stevenson, 1982, p. 346.

40 Clarke, 1985, (television program). Described in Carter, 2012b, pp. 115-6.

41 See Stevenson, 1975, pp. 176-205.

42 See Carter, 2012b, chapter 12.

43 Carter, 2012b, p. 166.

44 Carter, 2012b, p.167.

45 Sheldrake, 2012, p. 245.

46 Broughton & Alexander, 1997.

47 Broughton & Alexander, 1997, p. 218.

48 Quoted in Carter, 2012b, p. 169.

49 Carter, 2012b, p. 180.

50 Hodgson, 1897-8, pp. 485-6.

51 Gauld, 1982, p. 41.

52 Hodgson, 1897-8, pp. 491. Also see Carter 2012b, pp. 181-2.

53 Gauld, 1982, p. 42.

54 Thomas, 1949, p. 143.

55 Thomas, 1949, p. 142.

56 Thomas, 1949, p. 143.

57 Hodgson, 1897-8, p. 290.

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- 58 Bayfield, 1915, p. 246.
- 59 Bayfield, 1915, p. 249.
- 60 Hodgson, 1897, p. 300.
- 61 Hodgson, 1897-8, p. 328.
- 62 Carter, 2012b, p. 144.
- 63 Hodgson, 1897-8, pp. 324-5.
- 64 Broad, 1962, p. 297.
- 65 Almeder, 1992, p. 219.
- 66 Carter, 2012b, p.193.
- 67 Edmonds, 1855, p. 45.
- 68 Quoted in Almeder, 1992, p 206.
- 69 Eisenbeiss & Hassler, 2006, p. 67.
- 70 Neppe, 2007, p. 146.
- 71 Ibid, p. 136.
- 72 Ibid, p. 143.
- 73 Ibid, p. 146.
- 74 Carter, 2012b, p.212.
- 75 Eisenbeiss & Hassler, 2006, p. 74.
- 76 Ibid., pp. 74-75.
- 77 Ibid, p. 76.
- 78 Ibid, p. 80.
- 79 Ibid, pp. 77-78, 80.
- 80 Neppe, 2007, pp. 146-147.
- 81 Colvin, 2008, pp. 61-61.
- 82 Broad, 1962, p. 427.
- 83 Saltmarsh, 1938, p. 31.
- 84 Saltmarsh, 1938, p. 36-7.
- 85 Quoted in Saltmarsh, 1938, p. 57.
- 86 Carter, 2012b, pp. 230-1.
- 87 Excellent summaries of these cases can be found in Saltmarsh, 1938, chapter VI.

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- 88 Piddington, 1910, p. 105.
- 89 Ibid, p. 114.
- 90 Piddington, 1910, pp. 98-9.
- 91 Carter, 2012b, p. 243.
- 92 Lodge, 1911, p. 132.
- 93 Piddington, 1910, page 87.
- 94 Saltmarsh, 1938, p. 134.
- 95 Ducasse, 1962, p. 406. Preceeding paragraphs from Carter 2012b, p.248.
- 96 Piddington, 1908, p. 243.
- 97 Ducasse, 1962, p. 405.
- 98 Carter, 2012b, pp. 270-1.
- 99 Braude, 1991, p. 196.
- 100 Ibid., p. 196.
- 101 Almeder, 1992, p. 52. Note that in the original text “super-psi” was used instead of “super-ESP.” The change was made above with Dr Almeder’s full permission [via personal communication, April 29 2021]
- 102 Braude, 1989, p. 35.
- 103 Braude, 2003, p. 114.
- 104 Braude, 2003, p. 116.
- 105 Nash, p. 53, [emphasis added].
- 106 Braude, 2003, p. 116.
- 107 Ibid, p. 117.
- 108 Ibid, pp. 117-8.
- 109 Colvin, p. 27.
- 110 Ibid, pp. 25-6.
- 111 Ibid, p. 26.
- 112 Quoted in Colvin, p. 29.
- 113 Kelly, et al, p. 597.
- 114 Quoted in Lennox, p. 158.

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