PHILOSOPHERS AS PSYCHIC INVESTIGATORS

J. FRASER NICOL

The philosopher Henry Sidgwick used to say with regret that he never had the opportunity to meet and talk with "the bald-headed man on the bus." The descriptive expression was in common use by Victorians and means the same as what we call "the man in the street."

If Sidgwick on one of his visits to London had got on a bus at King's Cross Station—instead of calling a horse-cab as he probably did—and found himself in conversation with that bald-headed man, I think he would have found the experience intensely interesting. But what would the bald-headed man have thought of Sidgwick? He would have learned that Sidgwick was very sociable and certainly no intellectual snob. (If I may interpolate an anecdote, Sidgwick was once visited by a foreign professor who complained that the English language did not have a word for *savant* or *Gelehrte*. Sidgwick, who had a stutter, replied, "But we do—we call them p-p-p-prigs!")

If Sidgwick had tried to explain the meaning of such words as analysis, synthesis, metaphysics, utilitarianism, and others, his bald-headed companion might have thought that philosophers might be very wise and kindly men, but surely too remote in their mental processes to be of any practical utility in the affairs of this life.

The purpose of this paper is to show that, throughout the ages, philosophers engaged in psychical investigations have shown themselves to be men of sound practical ability unsurpassed, I should estimate, by any other profession. Some of them, it is true, have occasionally fallen into errors of investigation, but rather less so, I believe than members of other professions.

For reasons of space, philosophers of classical times must be excluded from this account, and for the same reason the investigations of a few philosophers happily still in practice will also be passed over. So we are left in this paper with a sort of episodic account of a dozen or twenty philosophers who, through many centuries, have contributed with ability and distinction to the progress of psychical research.

The earliest philosopher deserving of remembrance is Augustine of Hippo. He was born in Numidia (North Africa) in A.D. 354, and died there in A.D. 430. Of him, E. R. Dodds has said that he "deserves a more honorable place in the history of psychical research than any thinker between Aristotle and Kant."

Augustine personally investigated, or collected reports from friends of telepathic dreams, waking visions, precognition and paranormal healing. There was even a case of apparent experimental telepathy. In Carthage, there was a well-known thought reader named Albicerius. When a visitor asked him to say what he was thinking about, Albicerius replied correctly, "A line of Virgil." When invited to say which line, he quoted the line correctly. Augustine, always a cautious inquirer, was at pains to point out that, besides his successes, Albicerius had had many failures.

In a case quoted by Augustine, a man named Curma, a member of the local council, during an illness fell into a trance-like state. On recovering consciousness he said that another man, also named Curma, a blacksmith, was dying. Inquiries showed that the blacksmith Curma had died at the time the percipient was returning to consciousness. When, two years later, Augustine heard the story, he questioned Curma and witnesses. Though some modern writers have accepted the case, Professor Dodds has felt that it may have been a hoax, for reasons which he gives. It seems to me unlikely that so hard-headed a psychical researcher as Augustine would be fooled. And to bring the matter up to our own time, it may be noted that the similarity of names of the presumed agent and percipient would fit in very well with the late Whately Carington's Association Theory of paranormal cognition.

Augustine in his early career was Professor of Rhetoric at Milan. A citizen of that place received a legacy from his father, but was shocked to receive from a creditor a demand for settlement of an allegedly unpaid bill. But the father appeared to the son in a dream, told him the debt had been paid and where he could find the receipt. So it proved.

Those narratives and many others reported by the same philosopher form one of the most illuminating collections in the history of our subject; and, so far as I am aware, nothing of Augustinian quality would be heard of again for more than a thousand years.

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) was a scientist, inventor and philosopher who is best remembered in psychical research as an investigator of his own phenomena. These included a vast amount of

automatic writing, clairvoyant visions and claimed contacts with the Other World. Yet his psychic gifts did not develop until he was 55 years old. His experiences occurred either spontaneously or experimentally.

Of the spontaneous experiences, the most famous happened when he was attending a party in a house in Göthenburg in 1759. Suddenly becoming alarmed, he told the guests that a great fire was raging in Stockholm 300 miles away, and was rapidly approaching his house. Two hours later he joyfully exclaimed, "Thank God! the fire is extinguished; the third door from my house." Within hours, Swedenborg's vision became widely known in Göthenburg; and it was not until two days later that a messenger arriving from Stockholm brought news of the conflagration. It was found that Swedenborg's account agreed in all respects with the facts.

On the experimental side, when Swedenborg was living in Amsterdam, he was visited by a stranger, a German acquaintance of Jung-Stilling. The visitor told him of a friend who had died. During the last conversation, he said, "We conversed together on an important topic. Could you learn from him what was the subject of our discourse?" Swedenborg asked the stranger to return in a few days. When he did so Swedenborg said, "I have spoken with your friend; the subject of your discourse was, *the restitution of all things*." This was true, as was further information given by Swedenborg.

On another occasion, apparently July 18, 1762, Swedenborg, when in the company of some other persons, seems to have fallen into a trance. On recovering he said, "This very hour the emperor Peter III has died in his prison." In fact, that afternoon the Tsar Peter had been murdered in Ropsha Castle.

In 1776, Immanuel Kant published anonymously his small book about Swedenborg, entitled *Dreams of a Spirit Seer*, in which he professed to ridicule Swedenborg. But in places, Kant seemed unable to make up his own mind; and more than one subsequent writer has suspected that Kant's future philosophy was influenced by Swedenborg's writings.

Before the scientific period of our subject began a hundred years ago, there had been quite a number of philosophers who regarded paranormal phenomena as deserving of serious study—men like Schopenhauer, Sir William Hamilton, and, much earlier, Francis Bacon. It may be noted that Francis Bacon was an ancestor, on a side line, of four Presidents of the Society for Psychical Research. They were Arthur Balfour, Gerald Balfour, Eleanor Sidgwick and the

fourth Lord Rayleigh. Bacon was their great-great-etc.-grand uncle. As we shall see later, two of those Presidents were themselves philosophers.

The advent of modern spiritualism in the middle of the nineteenth century attracted the interest of a few philosophers, who, however, formed very varied opinions. Immanuel Fichte, philosopher son of a more famous philosopher, was convinced of the reality of mediumistic communications and also of their spiritualistic interpretation.

John Stuart Mill did not share Fichte's sanguine views. Mill seems to have investigated at least one medium, the American Charles Foster, billet-reader and producer of dubious marvels. Afterward, when a rumor got around that Mill was "a believer in spiritualism," he replied "I not only have never seen any evidence that I think of the slightest weight in favour of spiritualism, but I should also find it very difficult to believe any of it on any evidence whatever, and I am in the habit of expressing my opinion to that effect very freely whenever the subject is mentioned in my presence."

Viscount Amberley, though now forgotten, had strong philosophical interests and was the author of a massive two-volume work on the *Analysis of Religious Belief*. He investigated paranormal physical phenomena, but in view of the type of medium he visited in the 1860's it is hardly surprising that he was disillusioned. He is of interest to us because of his two sons. The elder, Frank Russell, was an early member of the Society for Psychical Research and also an officer of the Oxford University SPR. The younger son, Bertrand Russell, was a pupil of Henry Sidgwick; but he seems to have had no knowledge of psychical research. He made occasional jokes about it, which, as W. S. Gilbert might have said, were "funny, without being vulgar." A cousin of his by marriage was Gilbert Murray, twice President of the SPR. They were great friends; but what Russell thought of Murray's telepathic experiments is not known. Russell would have been of little use as an investigator. In spite of his great intellectual powers, his practical abilities were approximately nil. Late in his life he still could not learn how to make a pot of tea.

Of all modern philosophers, the man who has had the greatest impact on the progress of our subject is Henry Sidgwick. Not as an experimenter, nor as a thinker, but as one endowed with matchless gifts of leadership. He was the most distinguished intellectual in Cambridge. On any subject, he was as nearly free of prejudice as mortal men can be. Someone described him as "the sanest man in England." When still a young man at Cambridge, he had been

a member of the Cambridge Association for Spiritual Inquiry, familiarly known as the Ghost Society.

When the Society for Psychical Research was founded in 1882, he was elected President, an office he held in two spells for eight years. In fact, though, he was the effective leader for 18 years until his death in 1900. He advised and guided all the time, choosing the right people for the historic investigations—Edmund Gurney for *Phantasms of the Living*, the physicist William Barrett for a great dowsing survey, Richard Hodgson for the prolonged Theosophy investigation, and his own gifted wife Eleanor for the world-wide *Census of Hallucinations*. The Society rapidly increased in numbers; scientists of international reputation flowed in, and psychical research was recognized by the International Congress of Experimental Psychology in 1889.

Sidgwick in the early 1870s investigated a number of physical mediums. His collaborators included his wife, also Gurney, Myers, A. J. Balfour and others. The outcome of these extensive researches was disappointing, not to say suspicious.

As an investigator Sidgwick had his limitations, his powers of observation being imperfect, as he acknowledged. He inquired into and published about a score of spontaneous experiences of varied quality. When the Danish psychologists Alfred Lehmann and Carl Hansen tried by experiment to show that certain SPR telepathy experiments could be explained by "involuntary whispering" by the agents, Henry Sidgwick re-examined the old data and also conducted some new experiments, which showed that whispering could not account for the results.

To diverge for a moment, since I have mentioned Alfred Lehmann and we are here in Copenhagen, we may recall that Lehmann was a founder of the Danish Society for Psychical Research, and another founder was Severin Lauritzen, who, some years later, completed the monumental task of translating Frederic Myer's *Human Personality* into Danish. The Danish SPR was founded in 1905, and so is now one of the oldest psychical organizations in the world. Lastly, it was the Danish SPR, in 1921, that organized the first European international conference on psychical research. The Secretary-General was the devoted and hard-working Carl Vett.

In America, the most notable philosopher to engage in psychical investigation was William James. He is chiefly remembered for bringing to public notice the first great mental medium of the English-speaking world, Leonore Piper. The story of how James first heard of her has often been told, but usually in garbled fashion. The facts

appear to be as follows. Mrs. Piper and her husband lived in Boston with his parents, who had in their service an old Irish servant Mary. Now Mary had a sister Bridget who was a maid in another Boston home; and, as a daughter of Mrs. Piper recalled "many and marvelous were the tales with which Mary regaled her sister concerning" the strange doings of young Mrs. Piper. It happened that the home in which this second maid, Bridget, worked was frequently visited by a Mrs. Gibbens, who was William James's mother-in-law. Mrs. Gibbens, having a séance with Mrs. Piper, was enormously impressed and so, soon afterward, was her son-in-law, who was told things by the entranced Mrs. Piper which she could not have known by normal means. James published two reports in the *Proceedings* of the first ASPR. We may look back and reflect with Miss Alta Piper that but for those two talkative Irish maids, "an interesting and baffling psychological phenomenon might have been forever lost to the world."

In the next twenty years, James attended many Piper séances, including those at which his deceased friend Richard Hodgson ostensibly communicated. But on the question of Hodgson's survival after death, though a great deal of talk characteristic of Hodgson came through, he had been a personal friend of Mrs. Piper for many years, and so James found it hard to distinguish quasi-paranormal knowledge from what the medium might have heard from Hodgson in his lifetime.

As an investigator of mediums, James could hardly be called an ideal sitter. He tended to be too restless. In the middle of a séance he would get off his chair and walk about the room, while the deeply entranced Mrs. Piper was speaking or writing automatically. Once, at a sitting with another gifted trance medium, Mrs. Soule, when he was accompanied by his wife, he is reported to have become so tired of it that he left the room and walked the porch outside.

He and Alfred Russel Wallace attended séances with the Boston materialization medium, Mrs. H. V. Ross. While Wallace was deeply impressed, James suspected a certain "roguery" in the appearance of solid ghosts parading about the room.

Nevertheless, James believed that some physical phenomena were genuine, as, for example, when he attended a certain private circle. The observers sat round a table on which was loosely erected a large ring of brass wire. Among other incidents, the brass ring repeatedly rotated a distance of several inches which James was unable to explain on any normal hypothesis.

An out-of-the-body case reported by James concerned a Harvard professor who one evening about 10 o'clock tried to project his double

into the home of a woman friend half a mile away. Next day, and apparently without prompting, the woman told him that she was having supper about 10 p.m. when she saw the professor "looking thru the crack of the door." She got up and looked for him but he wasn't there.

James had very little experience of telepathy research on quantitative lines, but on a visit to England in 1889 he spent a day participating in Mrs. Sidgwick's famous telepathy experiments with numbers at Brighton. The results that day were unremarkable, but James found no fault with the experimental conditions.

Richard Hodgson was an Australian. He was educated at Melbourne University where, according to one who knew him well, he was the most brilliant student that university had ever known. He graduated in arts at the age of 19, then proceeded to concentrate on law, in which he obtained another baccalaureate and, at the age of 23, a doctorate. But his greatest interest lay in philosophy; and to deepen his studies in that field he moved to Cambridge, England, to become a pupil and life-long friend of Henry Sidgwick. Sidgwick quickly recognized the young man's intellectual qualities and also his single-minded devotion to truth in any task he undertook. It was not surprising that when the young SPR felt called upon to investigate the extraordinary psychic marvels claimed by the theosophical leader Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, Sidgwick chose Hodgson to go out to India to investigate the lady's claims on the spot. Hodgson did an extensive investigation and, in a report of 80,000 words, demolished Mme. Blavatsky's pretensions for ever. He was appointed an extra-mural lecturer in philosophy at Cambridge, but in 1887 the new American Society for Psychical Research in Boston invited him to become their chief executive officer. For a large part of 20 years he investigated the mediumship of Mrs. Piper. Being suspicious of all mediums, he employed detectives to spy on the young lady and her husband. Nothing detrimental was found. And the séance reports of Hodgson shed new light on paranormal phenomena. They also put mental mediumship on a sound basis for the first time in the English-speaking world. Moreover, his reports led to further developments in mediumship in Britain and indirectly to the historic cross-correspondence investigation that continued for a quarter of a century. The young philosopher had started a revolution in psychical research.

Hodgson also took part in séances with physical mediums, but was apparently unimpressed by any of them. On the other hand, he inquired into and published numerous spontaneous cases of good quality.

In spite of Hodgson's historic work, the American SPR was doing poorly and in 1890 it collapsed for lack of funds. Its assets were taken over by the SPR, which formed a branch of the Society in Boston with William James as Chairman, while Sidgwick and Frederic Myers in Britain subsidized it by helping to pay Hodgson's wages.

In the 1890s, another American philosopher appeared on the psychic scene. James Hervey Hyslop was educated at Wooster College in Ohio. After graduation and a visit to Germany, he lost his religious faith. On returning to America, he eventually became Professor of Logic and Ethics at Columbia University, where, incidentally, the President, Nicholas Murray Butler, was also a philosopher who happened to be seriously interested in psychical research, but took little part in investigative work.

Hyslop met Hodgson sometime in the 1890s. The occasion may have been one of Hodgson's lectures in New York. Hodgson took Hyslop in hand and trained him in the rigors of psychical investigation. Hyslop had a sitting with Mrs. Piper. Some years later, with the approval of Hodgson, who supervised all Mrs. Piper's work, he decided to have a series of sittings. There was an amusing incident before the first sitting. The two friends took the train out to Arlington Heights, where Mrs. Piper then lived in a handsome house. Arriving at Arlington Heights station, they hired a cab to take them up the long steep hill to the house. But Hyslop had been concerned that the medium should not recognize him as a former sitter. So, before getting out of the cab at the home, he pulled a mask over his head and face. Mrs. Piper, however, happening to be standing at an upper window, instantly recognized the man behind the mask and was much amused.

The sittings were very successful. More than that, Hyslop introduced a new principle in the reporting of mediumistic sittings. Hitherto, only items of what was called "evidence" were published. Hyslop held that everything happening at a seance ought to be printed; if that was not done, readers would get a biased picture of the facts. And if it was suggested that it might be sufficient to publish a brief report of the so-called "evidence," and preserve the complete transcript in a society's archives for the use of future students—well, Hyslop was too skeptical a man to swallow that plea. He knew that archives are eminently destructible. Were he alive today, he would find in various parapsychological organizations that the local trash-collector has been kept busy.

Hyslop also realized that seance incidents which seemed trivial at

the time, might, for future students in our developing field, be discerned as revelations concerning the psychic process.

I may add that to ensure the complete publication of his verbatim report—650 pages—Hyslop contributed over $1000 to the printing bill, and the estate of Frederic Myers contributed £92. All this was three-quarters of a century ago; and to this hour it remains unequalled for its thoroughness and reliability.

Hyslop's precautions before and during sittings were unique. Someone in a distant part of America might write to him in New York asking if it would be possible to have a sitting with a medium. He would instruct the sitter to meet him at some place in Boston. Then, he would conduct the sitter by a devious route to the address of the medium—perhaps Mrs. Soule—approaching the house from such a direction that even if the medium were watching from a window she could not see them. Before entering the house, the sitter was sworn to total silence. Inside the house, the sitter was not allowed into the séance room until the medium was in trance and seated with her back to the door. The sitter on being admitted was directed by Hyslop's pointing finger to a chair behind the medium. From start to finish the medium neither saw nor heard the sitter. Any speaking was done by Hyslop, who usually knew nothing about the sitter. Under these forbidding circumstances, the evidence collected from the medium was sometimes very remarkable.

After Hodgson's death in 1905, Hyslop founded a new society, but, being a practical-minded man, he would not initiate it until he had collected a sufficiency of funds to ensure its survival. When this had been achieved, he brought it to birth. He called it the American Institute for Scientific Research, which had two sections: the first was to study abnormal psychology; the second had to deal with psychical research, for which, indeed, Hyslop revived the long dead name of the American Society for Psychical Research. The first section never really came to life, and eventually the whole organization became known simply as the American Society for Psychical Research.

In the 14 years of life that remained to him, James Hyslop investigated virtually every type of paranormal phenomena—spontaneous cases, psychic healing, obsession, experimental telepathy and precognition, psychic photography, poltergeists, physical mediumship; but above all the phenomena of mental mediumship, especially as evinced by Mrs. Piper and the other distinguished Boston medium, Mrs. Charles Soule. The evidence convinced him of the reality of post-mortem survival. In terms of the amount of published reports, he

is by far the most productive psychical researcher in all history. His printed works amount to some 8 million words, the equivalent of about 80 to 100 volumes. For 14 years he carried the ASPR on his back, and except for the last year or so, when he was a sick man, he never accepted a penny payment.

A philosopher-researcher who is almost forgotten now, was William Romaine Newbold (1865–1926), professor of philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. He was described as "diminutive of body but powerful of intellect." He developed an intense interest in our subject by studying one of the long reports on Mrs. Piper's mediumship. He then contacted Hodgson and they became firm friends. Newbold had many sittings with Mrs. Piper, some of them highly evidential, but it was during one of them that the famous, but seemingly absurd, incident occurred in which the supposed spirit of Sir Walter Scott said there were monkeys living in caves in the sun; but suddenly Sir Walter added, "Oh! I lost my grasp on the light," meaning the medium. In the published report that curious remark was not printed, no doubt because it was of no interest.

But step forward to the present day, 80 years after that incident. We are hearing and reading a great deal about what are called "altered states of consciousness." These include sleep, hypnosis, meditation, trance, out-of-body experiences and other phenomena. In the Piper mediumship, it will be found that there were several variations of altered states of consciousness. The same is true of some other mediums. Unfortunately, 80 years ago investigators, with rare exceptions, confined their interest to paranormal evidence. Other odd things that happened at séances were not reported. But one researcher, James Hyslop, had the vision to realize that what seemed irrelevant at the time of writing might prove of prime importance to future students. So he unearthed the revealing fact of the ostensible communicator losing touch with the medium. That explained the confusion.

It has been reported somewhere that, after Hodgson's death, the SPR in London offered Newbold the vacant post in Boston. Perhaps he realized that being a professional psychical researcher was too risky an occupation. So the American branch was closed down and the philosopher Hyslop founded the second American SPR in New York. A few years after Hyslop's death in 1920, that organization got into dire troubles over the Margery mediumship, and a new and very sane society was started in Boston. Its chief founder was Elwood Worcester, then one of the leading clergymen in New England. But previously he had been professor of philosophy in Lehigh

University. His chief interest was in paranormal healing; but he had experience of mediums, and he published spontaneous experiences which he had thoroughly investigated.

Another psychically-disposed American philosopher, though he is never mentioned in print nowadays, was Hartley Alexander, who was for many years professor of philosophy in Nebraska University. In 1919, he was President of the American Philosophical Association.

In the summer of 1909 he carried out a long series of telepathic experiments with drawings. He was the agent, and the percipient was his wife. Though Alexander's research methods were not ideal by our standards, the results are worth looking at, especially as Alexander published all his target drawings and his wife's responses. They did not see each other's drawings until the end of each series. One historically interesting discovery was that Mrs. Alexander sometimes drew a picture one or more trials *before* her husband drew the same picture as a target—precognition apparently; and on several occasions she drew a picture several trials *after* it had been used as a target—retrocognition. This of course is the so-called displacement effect that Whately Carington discovered nearly 30 years later. Carington's researches, of course, were better conducted; nevertheless, it is certainly interesting that the same effect had been noticed three decades earlier.

Alexander made a study of many hypnagogic experiences of his own in which he reported numerous instances of "pictures in the dark" in the moments before falling asleep. Lastly, in 1926, he attended a seance with the physical medium Mrs. Crandon in Boston; but no account from his pen was ever published apparently.

In summary, and remembering in particular William James, Richard Hodgson and James Hyslop, we can say that, for forty years, the chief leaders of psychical research in America were philosophers. What American psychical research owes to them is beyond estimation.

Arthur James Balfour I can most easily introduce on a personal note. In my salad days in Edinburgh, I attended a meeting in the city (the Usher) Hall at which the speaker was the middle-aged Winston Churchill, a future prime minister. The chairman was a former Prime Minister A. J. Balfour, a past president of the Society for Psychical Research. I did not know until years later that two other people whom I saw on the platform were also former Presidents of the SPR—Balfour's brother Gerald and his sister Eleanor Sidgwick.

At Cambridge, Arthur Balfour was a pupil of Henry Sidgwick. He became a polymath studying all sorts of subjects, reading everything—except newspapers. In later life, he delivered the Gifford Lec-

tures at Glasgow University, subsequently published in two volumes. He did not read them from a manuscript, but from a page or two of notes. This method gave his listeners the impression of hesitancy as if he were uncertain of what he was saying.

Balfour's activities in psychical research began in the early 1870s, when, with members of his family, also Sidgwick, Gurney and others, he had sittings at his home in Carlton Gardens with the physical mediums Catherine Wood, Annie Fairlamb, and Kate Fox (Mrs. Jencken). His sister Mrs. Sidgwick later published an account of these séances, which were uniformly disappointing.

Balfour seems to have had a psychic gift of his own. Andrew Lang, a future President of the SPR, lent Miss Balfour a crystal ball. Balfour took the ball into another room. He came out looking "somewhat perplexed," saying he had seen in the crystal a lady whom he knew. Two days later he met the lady and told her what he had seen of her surroundings and actions in Edinburgh, 50 miles away. She confirmed all his visions.

"On another occasion, after talking to Mr. Lang about Miss Goodrich-Freer [herself a crystal gazer], Mr. Balfour said that he had had a vision, in a glass bowl of water, of that lady's house, and he described its interior to Mr. Lang, which neither of the gentlemen had ever seen. On visiting it afterwards Mr. Lang found that 'Mr. Balfour's description of what he saw in the picture was absolutely correct.'"

While still in his twenties, Balfour fell deeply in love with a girl named May Lyttelton, a few years younger than himself. She, it was evident, was deeply devoted to him. But in a year or two, she died of typhus at the age of 24. Being a very reserved man, Arthur Balfour carried his grief in silence. Thirty years later, when the famous cross-correspondences developed through a number of amateur automatists, there appeared among these writings some incomprehensible allusions to a candle, to "Palm Maiden," and to the Hair of Berenice. Years later when another automatist, Winifred Coombe Tennant (known as "Mrs. Willett"), appeared on the scene with further information, it gradually emerged that the veiled references all pointed to May Lyttelton. The candle represented an old photograph of her carrying a candle; Berenice's hair referred of course to the legend in which Berenice's hair had been cut off, and May Lyttelton's hair had been cut off in her last illness for the relief of pain; the hair was preserved in a silver case. And Palm Maiden pointed to the fact that she died on Palm Sunday.

When Balfour's sister Mrs. Sidgwick and his brother Gerald told

him about the evidence he was incredulous. But during the Great War, he had sittings with Mrs. Willett at his London home. When May Lyttelton communicated, Arthur Balfour was deeply moved and he clutched Mrs. Willett's arm so tightly, he feared he must have hurt her. Some time later he expressed his conviction in writing that "Death is not the end," and that May Lyttelton still lived.

Gerald Balfour, younger brother of Arthur, also had strong philosophical interests. After a spell as a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, he entered politics, in which he spent twenty years, part of the time as a Cabinet Minister. Though during most of the same period he was a member of the Council of the Society for Psychical Research, he never attended Council meetings. Nevertheless, in 1906 he was elected President of the Society. The circumstances leading to this surprise appointment are unique, and have not previously been printed. (Part of the following information (concerning Frank Podmore and Gerald Balfour) comes from the Council's private Minute Book, and I am indebted to the President and Council for permission to publish it).

Opponents of our subject have sometimes held it against the Society that, though it claimed to be a critical organization, it never elected the most famous critic in its ranks to the Presidency—Frank Podmore. The historic truth, however, turns out to be rather different. In December, 1905, a movement, led by influential members, was afoot in the Council to elect Podmore to the Presidential office. On learning of this project, however, the physicist William Barrett, who disliked Podmore's critical methods, sought to bring in another candidate—Alfred Russel Wallace. For this purpose, Barrett managed to enlist the support of Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge (Letter from Barrett to Wallace, in J. Marchant, *Alfred Russel Wallace*, New York and London, 1916, pp. 437–8). Nothing more is known of Barrett's proposal. It seems likely that Wallace declined, for he was 83 years of age and lived far from London.

Then, at the Council's meeting on December 11, 1905, Mrs. Eleanor Sidgwick proposed and Mr. J. G. Piddington seconded a motion that Mr. Frank Podmore should be elected President of the Society for the year 1906. The motion was carried unanimously. Podmore, on being informed, at first accepted the invitation but soon afterwards regretfully declined on the ground that a change in his professional duties (as a senior civil servant) would take him out of London and occupy all his time.

Finally, Gerald Balfour was unexpectedly drawn into the Presidential picture. At the famous "cataclysmic" General Election of

January, 1906, he lost his seat in the House of Commons. Less than two weeks later, the SPR Council elected him President of the Society. He filled the office with distinction, and psychical research became the dominating interest of his life.

Balfour's Presidential address was mainly philosophical, indicating no great knowledge of the psychical world. This deficiency, however, he soon remedied by engaging himself in the cross-correspondence phenomena, those strange occurrences in which some piece of meaningful quotation from ancient or modern literature would be given in part through one medium and the remainder through one or more other mediums, so that when put together they made sense. There were about a dozen of those cross-correspondence automatists, mostly living in Britain, but there was one in India and another in the United States. All were nonprofessionals, except Mrs. Piper. The one in whom Gerald Balfour was most interested was Mrs. Willett, with whom he had scores, perhaps hundreds of sittings. The leading communicator was an old friend of Balfour, Edmund Gurney, whose discourses were often marked by his characteristic wit. He also showed a considerable knowledge of psychology, philosophy and the classical languages which were outside the range of Mrs. Willett. After 25 years, Balfour was able to create a picture of human personality and its internal telepathic gifts (as he conceived it) which eventuated in a paper 275 pages in length. In this, he described in great detail the three states of consciousness through which Mrs. Willett's gifts functioned. It seems hardly necessary to say that Balfour's discoveries and teachings are highly relevant to our contemporary interest in altered states of consciousness.

F.C.S. Schiller, a philosopher of German origin, is remembered as "the British Pragmatist." Long before he adopted that philosophy, and while still only a young graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, he and his brother and sister experimented with the planchette. Communications came from nine "spirits" (though Schiller did not accept this claim). Schiller's brother was the most successful operator, and for him the planchette would write even when he was engaged in conversation or reading an interesting novel. Once the planchette wrote two sentences in Hindustani. Now Schiller's brother—the planchette operator—had lived in India in his babyhood, but left it at the age of 8 months. Nevertheless, Schiller believed the message might be an example of "unconscious memory."

On an occasion when Frederic Myers was present, there were brief passages in old Norman French and Provencal. The brother had no knowledge of old French, but Schiller evidently realized that he might

at some time have glanced at something printed in those languages, which the phenomena of cryptomnesia had brought back via the planchette.

Schiller's brother was much the most successful psychic. Sometimes he used two planchettes, having one hand on each. The right hand wrote in the usual way, but simultaneously the left hand produced mirror writing. Schiller could find nothing in these quasi-spirit communications requiring a paranormal explanation. He attributed them to "unconscious cerebration."

Schiller once silently asked a question and received through his brother's writing an appropriate answer. Schiller had reason to believe that this brother possessed a telepathic gift. To test this, card guessing via planchette was tried. Sometimes the target playing card was seen by an agent, at other times no one saw the card. There were, in this way, 11 trials for telepathy in which of course the expected score would be less than one success. There were actually four hits. For clairvoyance, the number of trials was 116, for which the expected chance score would be about 2; there were actually 9 hits. Those results of guessing by planchette are highly significant.

As for Schiller's reports, one would like to have seen more detail as to the precise experimental conditions—but, of course, the experiments took place in the primitive days of 90 years ago, so perhaps it is pointless to complain. But it is a matter for regret that we hear no more of Schiller's apparently gifted brother.

Many years elapsed before we hear again of Schiller as an investigator. In the 1920s, he had two sittings with Mrs. Crandon in London and six in Boston. From what he had witnessed he concluded that the phenomena had to be classed as supernormal; he could not explain them in any other way. In 1929, in London, he attended a sitting with another physical medium Rudi Schneider, in which he witnessed telekinetic movements of curtains.

Schiller taught philosophy at Oxford for many years, but in 1929 moved to the University of Southern California where he was professor. Looking back through his life, one would say that his psychical inquiries were spasmodic and the most interesting was his early work in planchette writing with his brother and sister. They are still well deserving of our attention.

Turning now to the philosophers of Germany, as in other countries only a few have come to the fore in psychical research, but those few, it is safe to say, have brought distinction to our subject.

In December, 1886, Edmund Gurney, the editor of the SPR *Proceedings*, received in the mail from Berlin a letter bearing the signature

of a man he could never have heard of—Max Dessoir. I call him a man, but this is somewhat of an exaggeration, for he was only 18 years of age. Presumably, he had only just left school and begun his freshman studies in philosophy and psychology at the University of Berlin. He had already got deep into psychical investigation, for with his letter to Gurney he enclosed reports of experiments in telepathy. He had also studied the willing game or muscle-reading and observed how easy it was, by muscle reading, to create the appearance of telepathy without telepathy. Dessoir slipped into one or two experimental flaws which Gurney politely corrected in footnotes when the report was published; but it is impressive to notice that before his telepathy experiments with drawings were completed, Dessoir realized that if the percipient was within earshot, it was possible to guess the design of the drawings from the sound of the agent's pencil. Consequently when, later on, the Baroness von Regensburg was percipient, the target drawings were made in another room.

Dessoir's paper being printed when he was only 19, it is safe to say that he is the youngest person who has ever contributed to the *Proceedings* of the SPR in nearly 100 years. It appears also that he must have visited Britain soon afterward. Certainly he came to know Gurney, Myers, and Sidgwick personally, and the respect that seemed to develop was mutual. In 1887, on the motion of Gurney, seconded by Frank Podmore, the Council of the SPR elected him a Corresponding Member—that is an Honorary Foreign Member—when Dessoir was only 20. It is, therefore, an easy guess that he is probably the youngest person elected to that rank in the Society's history. He was still a Corresponding Member when he died 60 years later.

About this time the notorious American slate-writer Henry Slade was touring Europe. Max Dessoir had sittings with him but detected no trickery in his performance, which need not surprise us, for Henry Sidgwick, the physicist Lord Rayleigh, the famous conjuror Hermann, and another conjuror were also baffled by Slade.

In 1889, Dessoir invented the word *parapsychology*, which he first printed and defined in the periodical *Sphinx*. He was fond of coining new words. The American professor and psychical researcher J. Rodes Buchanan introduced the word *psychometry*. Max Dessoir proposed to drop it and substitute *palaeoaesthetic clairvoyance*.

Of the physical phenomena of spiritualism, he became increasingly disheartened. He attended five séances with the Italian medium Eusapia Palladino and concluded that the phenomena were entirely fraudulent. Not everyone, however, would have agreed with his views.

A German apport medium of international fame in those days was

Frau Anna Rothe. Her specialty was flowers and plants which miraculously appeared in her presence. The Berlin police arrested her; and one of the witnesses against her was Dessoir, who said her performance was "sorry trickery that a common juggler would have been ashamed of." Frau Rothe was found guilty and sent to prison.

In the first third of the present century there was in Germany an intense activity in the investigation of physical mediums. The most enthusiastic leader was the neurologist Baron von Schrenck-Notzing, whose standards of reporting séances were often criticized by other psychical researchers. One of his most skeptical opponents was Professor Dessoir, who had a considerable knowledge of methods of deception.

Dessoir found mental mediumship much more impressive and spoke with warm appreciation of Mrs. Piper's mediumship. On the other hand, visiting the SPR in 1900, he had a sitting with the amateur trance medium, Mrs. Rosalie Thompson, of whose psychic powers Frederic Myers held a high opinion. But with Dessoir the evidence was poor.

When he and his wife visited the United States in 1929, he did not meet Mrs. Piper, so far as I am aware, but he did attend three dark séances with Mrs. Crandon in Boston. As so often in the Margery experiments, fingerprints were obtained on dental wax. (It was not until a later time that Crandon fingerprints were found to be bogus.)

Mrs. Crandon's control also tried number guessing. Prior to one sitting, Dessoir had been asked to write four numbers on four pieces of paper. He brought them to the dark sitting and placed them one by one on the séance table, as requested. The control Walter identified each number correctly. What Dessoir thought of this (as well as other "phenomena") is not mentioned in the report; and I don't know whether he ever published his opinion. But it is impossible to believe that so exacting a philosopher would be convinced by such dubious demonstrations. For, if Walter could read numbers placed on the table, couldn't he have read them if they had remained in the experimenter's hands or even in his pocket? Once they were out of Dessoir's control, Mrs. Crandon, perhaps with the help of a confederate, might have read them by means of a concealed luminous plaque no larger than a button. Nevertheless, considering the demonstrations of some other physical mediums, Dessoir felt that not all the phenomena could be explained away as fraud.

Another German philosopher who commands respect is Hans Driesch, who, beginning his professional life as a biologist, gained

world-wide renown. But his researches and studies taught him that the facts of life could not be explained by any mechanistic hypothesis. So he turned to vitalism and then to a new career as a professional philosopher, and eventually to the professorship of philosophy in Leipzig University. In 1907–8, he was Gifford Lecturer in Aberdeen University; in 1926–27, he was president of the SPR; and, in 1930, he presided over the Fourth International Congress in Athens.

Driesch's experience of psychical investigations was not extensive, but the standards of evidence which he demanded were extremely high. He required that not only mediums should be open to suspicion, but the investigators also. That doctrine may have seemed startling in the 1930s, but recently Dr. J. B. Rhine, in the most sensational article of his career, has recounted a dozen or more frauds by experimenters which he has personally encountered.

In the field of physical phenomena, Driesch attended séances with Willy and Rudi Schneider at Schrenck-Notzing's home in Munich. From what he observed, he concluded that telekinesis was a genuine fact.

On the phenomena of the direct voice—that is, voices not issuing from the medium's mouth, but at a distance—Driesch expressed doubts, especially after an experience with the American performer George Valiantine. "What I saw of Valiantine in Berlin," said Driesch, "was a lamentable farce." Valiantine, in his later career, was repeatedly exposed in cheating.

At the time of an International Conference on Philosophy at Harvard University in 1926, Driesch attended two séances with Mrs. Crandon in Boston. He was apparently not satisfied and made "certain proposals for the improvement of the conditions." Judging from later reports, it seemed that some improvements had been made; but, remarked Driesch, "darkness still reigns."

In the summer of 1928, Driesch, accompanied by his wife, was on his way to Buenos Aires where he was to deliver a course of lectures at the University. Breaking their journey in Brazil, they managed to get a sitting with the famous, but elusive, medium, Mirabelli. The séance took place in the home of a banker and his wife in São Paulo. Though the séance seems to have been in normal artificial light, it was all a most informal affair. The medium was accompanied by his girl friend. Though it was high summer and no great distance from the equator, Mirabelli wore an overcoat, which, as Driesch observed with surprise, was fitted with "enormous pockets." He was evidently never searched, and when apports began to appear, Driesch was not surprised. Mirabelli had a reputation for xenoglossy—that is (or so it was

reported), the spirits spoke through him in his trance in a dozen languages not normally known to him. Driesch judged Mirabelli's trance to be not genuine. The spirits spoke in Italian and Esthonian, which didn't impress Driesch, because Mirabelli's father was Italian born, and his girl friend in the room was an Esthonian from Reval. The medium seems to have moved from the drawing-room to the kitchen and to other rooms, and in the process objects were seen to move without explanation. During an interval in the drawing-room, Mirabelli, Driesch, and the banker's wife strolled through a doorway into a closed veranda. The others remained together in the room. Suddenly the folding doors slowly closed. "It was rather impressive, and no mechanical arrangements could be found," Driesch afterwards reported. Summing up, he thought the telekinesis incidents were genuine, but seemed to feel some doubt because the control of the medium was deficient.

In a Dresden criminal court in 1931, Professor Driesch and another leading German psychical researcher, Dr. Rudolf Tischner, were important witnesses in the trial for psychic frauds of the platform clairvoyant Fred Marion (Josef Kraus) and his impresario and confederate. The jury found them guilty and they were fined, with the alternative of imprisonment. Marion moved to England where he was eventually tested over long periods by various psychical researchers who were apparently unaware that he was a convicted criminal.

A dramatic spontaneous experience happened in Driesch's home. One night his wife dreamed of a fire in the servant's bedroom, and in her dream called out to the cook, "Clara, water! water! put water on the fire—more water still more!—oh, Clara!" The two bedrooms were separated by three doors. In the morning, she asked the cook if anything had happened during the night. "Yes," said Clara, "I read a book by candle light and fell asleep without putting it out. Suddenly, I felt that you, Madam, were awakening me, I opened my eyes, and saw beside me on the little table close to my pillow and to the window curtain a huge fire that seemed to reach the ceiling. In reality it was only the candle that had burnt down and set off a lot of matches. I took the candlestick and threw it into the water in the wash stand. In my hurry, some of the hot wax dropped on my hand and arm!!" Clara showed Mrs. Driesch the inside of her arm, which was covered with red spots up to the elbow. When asked if she was frightened upon opening her eyes and seeing the fire, Clara said, "No, that is the strangest part, I had the feeling that I was awakened expressly and knew exactly what to do, as if I had been told in my sleep."

To add to the strange experiences of the night, it seems that the little

maid Ottilie waking during the night had seen a ghost, the fire and smoke. But she seems to have promptly returned to sleep. At what time of night Ottilie saw the apparition is not known. Mrs. Driesch thought the phantom might have been a projection of herself. Anyhow, Professor Hans Driesch slept through it all.

Professor Traugott Oesterreich of Tübingen University seems to have done very little investigative work, but deserves to be remembered for the wonderful accuracy of scholarship he showed in several books he wrote about our subject, the most memorable of which was his large volume on *Possession*.

In conclusion, I would add that those three German philosophers, Dessoir, Driesch and Oesterreich, had at least one very nonparanormal experience in common, and almost simultaneously. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, all three of them were quickly removed from their professional posts.

Further east, in Poland, lived and worked the philosopher and psychologist Julian Ochorowicz (1850–1917), who held professorial posts successively in the universities of Lemberg and Warsaw. He is remembered for his part in the investigation of the hypnotic subject Léonie B., and his investigation of the telekinetic demonstrator Stanislawa Tomczyk.

Mme. Leonie B. was a middle aged woman who at some time, having been the recipient of some great kindness by Dr. Gibert of Le Havre, agreed to be the subject of hypnotic experiments by him. Many famous psychical researchers took part in the investigations and in 1886, Ochorowicz was a member of the group of observers who included Pierre Janet, Frederic Myers, Arthur Myers and others. One spring evening, when Léonie was a guest in a certain house, Dr. Gibert, in his home two-thirds of a mile away, attempted at a certain time agreed to by his colleagues to hypnotize her at that distance and try to bring her to his home by an act of will. Ochorowicz and his colleagues waited in the street outside Leonie's abode, but not visible from it. Soon after the appointed time she emerged from the house, plainly in a somnambulic state, wandering and muttering. She passed two of the watchers without noticing them, then made for Gibert's house by an unusual route, Ochorowicz and the others following. "She avoided lamp-posts, vehicles, etc., but crossed and recrossed the street repeatedly." She arrived outside Gibert's residence, passed him without noting his presence and entered the house.

Ochorowicz is even better remembered for his discovery of the Polish teenage girl Stanislawa Tomczyk. Her unusual telekinetic gift was demonstrated either in broad daylight or good artificial light.

Watched by Ochorowicz, she rolled her sleeves to the elbows and placed her hands palms down about a foot apart on a table. The philosopher then laid some object between them—a cigarette, a match box, a pair of scissors. When she raised her hands, the object rose simultaneously between them. Ochorowicz watched the process from every angle. Sometimes he saw a fine filament stretching from her fingers to the object. It did not resemble a hair, for there were bulges in it. Sometimes there was no filament. Many photographs were taken either by Ochorowicz or by other psychical researchers who investigated Stanislawa's phenomena in different parts of Europe. An independent committee of Polish scientists tested her at length and published a report entirely favorable to her and Ochorowicz. As Stanislawa's fame grew, she tried to improve on the phenomena by occasional tricks—which that fair-minded psychologist Theodore Flournoy of Geneva dismissed with disdain. Nevertheless, Flournoy believed that her telekinetic demonstrations were genuine.

Her powers underwent a slow decline and an investigation by SPR members in London was almost destitute of results. One thing did happen—she fell in love with one of the distinguished investigators—the Hon. Everard Feilding, who married her.

Sixty years after Ochorowicz's death, one wishes that some other philosopher would discover another Stanislawa so that we might solve the mystery of that ectoplasmic filament.

Frederic Myers was not only a scholar of encyclopedic erudition, he had the gift of realizing that something he was reading was of first rate importance even though other readers passed it by unnoticed. It was thus that he was the first person in the English-speaking world to call attention to the writings of Sigmund Freud. Similarly, it was Myers who first drew to the notice of psychical researchers the name of a youthful and unknown Frenchman, Henri Bergson. A report by Bergson on his hypnotic experiments, published in the *Revue Philosophique*, was not epoch-making, but Myers saw its significance.

Bergson and a colleague "found that a boy, who was supposed to be clairvoyant, or a telepathic percipient, could read figures and words under the following conditions. One of the observers hypnotised the boy, stood with his back nearly against the light, opened a book at random, held it nearly vertically facing himself, at about four inches from his own eyes, but below [them], and looked sometimes at the page and sometimes into the boy's eyes." In those conditions, the boy could generally give the number of the page correctly. Questioned, the boy said, and apparently quite honestly, that he "saw" the numbers on the back of the book. It occurred to Bergson, however, that the boy might

be reading the figures "as reflected on the cornea of the hypnotiser." Various tests gave support to this view. The printed letters were 3 mm in height and Bergson computed that their corneal image would be about one-tenth of a millimeter.

Myers was so taken by Bergson's discovery that he sought the assistance of H. E. Wingfield (who became well known as a medical hypnotist) and J. N. Langley in repeating Bergson's findings. They reported that they could read on each other's corneas the image of printed letters about 10 mm in height.

Myers, entering into correspondence with Bergson, obtained further information about other experiments with the boy. Bergson had shown the boy a microscopic photograph whose maximum diameter was only 2 mm. It was a picture of twelve men, and the boy faithfully described and imitated the attitude of each man. Reflecting on these incidents, Myers concluded that the hypnotic suggestion which had been administered to the boy had induced "some change in the shape of the crystalline lens which made the eye a microscope for the time being."

Bergson took part in the prolonged investigation of Eusapia Palladino at the General Psychological Institute in Paris in 1905–1908. As usual in her history, Eusapia was not averse to helping the phenomena by normal means. In the end the committee was hesitant to express a positively favorable opinion; but it is evident from the report that there were incidents involving the complete levitation of the table and other objects, which Bergson sometimes witnessed and which could not be explained except in terms of the paranormal.

Though Bergson, during his long life, engaged only infrequently in active research, what he did was and is worthy of study.

The last of our departed philosophers is Charlie Dunbar Broad, who lived and died fifteen centuries after Augustine of Hippo. His interest in our subject probably began in adolescence, when he read about it in a magazine to which his father was a subscriber—the *Review of Reviews*, edited by that redoubtable journalist and spiritualist W. T. Stead. Old numbers of the *Review* that I have seen contained regular articles on psychical research. Going up to Trinity College, Cambridge, as an undergraduate in 1906, he became a member of the Cambridge University Society for Psychical Research, a society that was born in 1885 and still continues 90 years later. Young Broad was in the right atmosphere, for Trinity has had a link with psychical research since the opening of the College by Henry VIII four centuries ago, when one of the first Fellows was the celebrated Dr. John Dee, whose mediumistic investigations are well-known.

Broad did not join the SPR until 1920 when he was 32. Either before that time or soon afterwards he had sittings with various sensitives, including the trance mental medium Mrs. Osborne Leonard. Though he published no formal report, he did state that in those sittings "I have met with clear cases of telepathy between myself and the medium when entranced. But I have noticed that these almost invariably involved past events of which I was not consciously thinking at the time. Thus the telepathic influence must have been due to mere 'traces,' or at most to processes of thought going on in my mind without my being aware of them."

Broad's first name was Charlie; but, in 1935, when he attended a sitting with the medium Frances Campbell, the latter said "Were you very nearly called JOHN?" In a note written later, Broad gave the surprising information, "My father always called me John, though it is not my name."

Broad was a witness in one of G.N.M. Tyrrell's "pointer experiments" with the percipient Miss Gertrude Johnson. This young lady had a remarkable gift for finding lost or mislaid objects. Tyrrell sought to test her skill scientifically by using very simple apparatus. Five boxes placed in a row on a table were open at the agent's side, and on the percipient's side closed by five lids. A large wooden board screened agent and percipient from each other. The agent, usually Tyrrell, would silently put a pointer into one of the five boxes, which were lined with sponge rubber, and it was Miss Johnson's job to open the box into which she thought it had been placed.

When Broad was watching the experiments, there were 500 trials. The expected chance score was 100; Miss Johnson's score was 132 which was very significant. Those early experiments were somewhat primitive, but Tyrrell later greatly improved them by using highly sophisticated electronic apparatus.

On physical phenomena Broad was skeptical. Referring to dice-throwing experiments, he said bluntly he didn't believe in PK. In his distinguished book *Lectures on Psychical Research*, he devoted only one paragraph to physical phenomena, and his attitude can be seen in the Index where the entry for "Ectoplasm" reads "see Butter-muslin." His great interest lay in the mental phenomena of our subject, on which he wrote extensively; and in nothing that he wrote did he fail to clarify and illuminate, for his gift of exposition was masterly.

And now that Broad is gone it is fitting to recall his life-long interest in the survival question. After examining it repeatedly over a period of close on half a century, he concluded in the last words of his last book: "I think I may say that for my part I should be slightly more annoyed

than surprised if I should find myself in some sense persisting immediately after the death of my present body. One can only wait and see, or alternately (which is no less likely) wait and not see."

So we come to the end of this rapid survey of philosophers practicing as psychical researchers. Others among the departed might have been mentioned, such as Eduard von Hartmann, Carl du Prel and C. J. Ducasse.

If we consider the mere quantity of work published by philosophers, we need to realize that philosophy is a very small profession—compare its numbers with those of doctors, lawyers, physicists, chemists, psychologists and others; it is safe to say that philosophers have produced more research than other professions.

As for the *quality* of research done by philosophers, well, it is hard to say which profession has provided the ablest psychic investigators, but I believe we can say with confidence that philosophers come very near the top.

DISCUSSION

EDGE: I think it's interesting to take note that there were no real contemporary philosophers who were listed, and I suppose my queries revolve around that. First, just a general kind of question. Do you think philosophers bring anything of particular value to the investigation of psychic phenomena? And secondly, more directly related to my previous comment, all of the philosophers that you mentioned were doing investigations at a time when investigation of mediumship was essentially the important thing. Is it the case now? Would you agree? Do you think that philosophers are of somewhat less value now, since sophistication in the investigation of psychic phenomena probably has gone beyond their normal competence? If you're taking psychic investigation in the sense of empirical investigation. . .

NICOL: On Dr. Edge's first question I would say that the history of psychical research shows that competence in science or philosophy or any other subject is unfortunately no guarantee of competence in paranormal investigations. Some scientists have done valuable work in our subject, but I should estimate that philosophers in proportion to their tiny numbers have done better. They have brought to psychical investigation a degree of open-mindedness and investigative acuity that is rare in any field.

As for the possibility that some of the current research methods might be beyond the competence of philosophers, it is worth noting that some philosophers have had scientific backgrounds—

Swedenborg, James, Bergson, Hyslop and Broad, to name a few. I should estimate that members of a profession who have shown extraordinary skill in controlling mediums in dark rooms would not find it beyond their capacity to control electronic instruments in daylight. Briefly, however, on the general question of competence, we shouldn't ask, Is Jones a good scientist, or Smith a good philosopher, but, rather, Is either of them a good psychical researcher?

Finally, I would add that respect for the abilities of philosophers is so widely shared that the SPR has elected more of them to its Presidency than from any other profession.

HAYNES: I was rather sad to see two earlier omissions, but I know you've had to cut your paper as we all did. One was Thomas Aquinas, who spoke with interest of the fact, not well known in his time, that ESP and other things of the kind could appear in men neither clever nor of good moral character, and that it appeared in animals as well as in humans. The other omission, if you don't mind my saying so, was that of the eighteenth century philosopher-theologian, Lambertini, who did an immense amount of work on this subject, initiated experiments on the liquefactions of the blood of St. Januarius, and made a number of extremely relevant observations on psi which he called the "preternatural," or "natural prophecy." He again observed that it appeared more in the illiterate, of whom there were many then, than in the learned, and he said he thought it came through mostly in people's minds which were not too preoccupied with learning.

NICOL: I agree with you about Lambertini. Did you also mention Ducasse?

HAYNES: Gilbert Murray.

NICOL: I would hardly call Gilbert Murray a philosopher, though certainly a great classical scholar. When I discussed modern philosophers, I was thinking mainly of those who had held philosophical appointments. Thus Gerald Balfour taught philosophy at Cambridge; and Arthur Balfour was a Gifford lecturer; but there is nothing like that about Gilbert Murray. He could have been mentioned, but one has to come to a stop somewhere, of course.

COX: I wondered what Mr. Nicol thought of the efforts of Frederick Marion to illustrate his self-discovered on-stage ESP ability formally. I saw a magician in Utrecht a few nights ago. At the end of his entertainment for the Parapsychological Association members, he proceeded to do an illustrious ESP effect—but not by trickery, so far

as I was able to detect as a magician myself. He did a good job of it. Now, the case for Marion, an entertainer who appeared often to have used fraud, is that he too could attain that mental state where it seems psi actually was of aid, as I recall from his book *In My Mind's Eye*. Thouless and Wiesner felt that he had an inordinate amount of psi, so he was studied later for it successfully. Is that in error?

NICOL: I think the evidence against Marion is too strong. In the 1930s, S. G. Soal published a report in which he described how he and his colleagues sought to prevent Marion from getting information by normal sensory methods. Near the end they had him in what was virtually a closed box. In that situation Marion got nothing at all. At his trial in Germany he was given the opportunity to demonstrate telepathy. He completely failed. More than one psychical organization has been invited to publish reports of Marion's alleged psychic gifts, and they have cautiously preferred not to do so.

Once on a social occasion which I attended in London, Marion shuffled a deck of cards—which he could do with the dexterity of a conjuror—and gave them to me to reshuffle. Then he asked me to draw a card. I did so. He tried to guess it. He was wrong. On a second occasion he was right. The cards were shuffled again and spread face down on a table. Marion said, "Would you like me to pick out the black cards or the red cards?" I told him which color to select. He was right twenty-six times. But this is an old conjuring trick. In some decks the backs of the black and red cards, though seemingly identical, have a slightly different shade, which can be detected with a little study.