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THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR POSTMORTEM SURVIVAL

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Abstract The paper presents 18 personal activities and experiences that present themselves as a contact with the deceased. These are divided into Sought Experiences, i.e. sitting with a medium and Spontaneous Experiences ,i.e. ghosts and apparitions. The reason that the official university science establishment rejects a priori all of these afterlife communication experiences (ALCs) is discussed. It is shown that all of the ALCs have been the subject of study by scientifically oriented investigators seeking to refute the spiritual hypothesis but who concluded that the phenomena were real, that they were not fraud, and not bad observation. It is noted that these data reveal just how little we know about the limits of our minds and that alone is reason enough for official science to be studying ALCs. The spirit/mind decision may evolve.

"It is a scandal that a dispute as to the reality of these phenomena should still be going on, that so many competent witnesses should have declared their belief in them, that so many others should be profoundly interested in having the question determined, and yet that the educated world, as a body, should still be simply in the attitude of incredulity."

– Professor Henry Sidgwick, 1892

Let me start with a table of all the human activities and experiences that present themselves as a contact with the deceased divided into sought and spontaneous experiences. Please remind me of any I have not listed.

Sought Experiences	Spontaneous Experiences
Raps	Apparitions
Automatism: Table Tilting, Ouija Board, Automatic Writing	Death Bed Visions/Communications
Mental Mediums	Near Death Experiences (NDEs)
Physical Mediums	Children Who Remember Past Lives
Electronic Voice/Image Phenomena	Dreams
Psychomanteum	Ghosts
Induced After Death Communication	Poltergeists
Past Life Regressions	Possession

Table 1, AfterLife Contacts (ALCs)

The Phenomena: For the sake of convenience I have chosen the name After Life Contacts (ALCs) to describe the common attribute of all the experience types we need to consider, i.e. that they claim to be a contact with a person in spirit or are visibly so. This title implies that these experiences are indeed what they seem to be, actual contact with the spirit world and that we are not just talking to ourselves. But that of course is the big question that I believe the science community should be using the scientific method to answer.

I am limiting my discussion to the ALC modalities in bold type. The first four experiences in each class have the longest and best history of investigations. However all the ALCs have strong claims of spirit interaction and all should receive scientific study. The number and variety of the ALCs in the list is in itself a strong argument for the reality of the contacts indicated because it makes it very difficult if not impossible to conceive of alternate explanations such as SuperPsi that can cover them all.

A major purpose of this paper is to point out the enormous amount of data that exist in the written records attesting to the existence of an afterlife and our continuing communication with those inhabiting it. For any other subject the quality of these investigations would be considered scientific proof. Mike Tynn's (*The Articulate Dead, They Brought The Spirit World*, 2008, *The Afterlife Explorers, The Pioneers of Psychical Research* Vol. 1, 2011). provide the data in detail. Mike has also placed quite a bit of this information on the site of the Association for Evaluation and Communication of Evidence for Survival (AECES) www.aeces.info. (See it also for great evidence for survival)

I of course am only seconding an opinion expressed 120 years ago (see quote above) by Professor Henry Sidgwick and many others of that time. In spite of his very high position in English academe their reaction to the paranormal forced him to form the Society for Psychical Research in 1882. But even with the 120 years of very active investigation by the SPR, its several foreign offshoots and our own organization there has been no academic impact.

And there will be none if the following comment continues to represent their attitude. Steven Pinker Ph.D. a psychologist at Harvard, wrote in the lead article in a Jan 9th 2007 Time magazine issue devoted to explaining the brain, "Attempts to contact the souls of the dead (a pursuit of serious scientists a century ago) turned up only cheap magic tricks" It is hoped that this paper will provide a basis for changing this "scandal".

It seems that the "scandal" is deep within the academic institutions that now claim complete authority over what is or what is not science. (Science is only that done by Ph.Ds and published in refereed journals managed by Ph.Ds. Books don't count) The institution rejects a priori all data on spirit contact because it has decided (not proved) that the dramatic success of their theories about the physical world allows them to pronounce that the world is totally material and works through cause and effect. They have concluded that our minds and our consciousness are totally caused by the chemical/electrical changes in our brains, the cause and effect clause leaving no room for free will.

There is hope however. Since Rhine established the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke in 1930, and a few years later got Parapsychology recognized (reluctantly) by the AAAS as a real science there have been academic activities that have resulted in the laboratory proof that the four elements of ESP, (telepathy, precognition, clairvoyance and psychokinesis) are real if still unexplained phenomena. These phenomena have lead those scientists to adopt William James' "transmission min/brain theory" that the brain

acts like a multi-channelled TV that is normally set on the five sense channels but can in some people, some of the time, access channels that provide information from non-sensory sources to our non-material mind. Charles Tart sums it all up in his memoir of 50 years of studying consciousness titled "The End of Materialism" 2009. (also I highly recommend Lawrence LeShan's "A New Science of the Paranormal, The Promise of Psychical Research" 2009)

Tart also identified "the maybes" OBEs, NDEs ADCs (after-death communications) and postmortem survival that have enough evidence that it would be foolish for science to simply dismiss them as unreal and notes that "the fact that we don't support any research to speak of that deals with the reality or lack of it of postmortem survival and the nature of the afterlife is an incredible lack in modern culture".

The Data: Table 1. is also the outline for the rest of the paper. The sought experiences are obviously the better candidates for scientific experiments, however the spontaneous experiences can also be scientifically collected, verified as to really happening and studied to seek their relationships to the more established forms of human behavior.

Raps: Raps are the ALC that started modern spiritualism when they were heard by the Fox family who learned how to talk to them through agreed upon numbers of knocks for yes and no. This was extended to reading the alphabet till the rap said yes and in this way complex messages could be obtained. This very cumbersome method was soon superceded by table tipping and the other automatisms. However raps were a staple of the physical mediums, some producing raps that shook the room.

The acoustic signature of a set of 10 cases of paranormal raps have been measured. (see Miles Edward Allen, 2012 Pg 60, and/or Colvin, 2010) Their amplitude time histories were all the same and quite different from raps made by the physical impact of objects. Thus Raps join levitation as the two repeatedly measured but as yet never explained physical phenomena of ACLs that should be a challenge to our physicists. It is to be noted that raps are a strong feature of the made-up Philip séances. (see below)

Automatism: Table Tilting, Ouija Board and Automatic Writing: Automatism is the involuntary functioning of an organic process, especially muscular, without apparent neural stimulation. It is often called the ideomotor function and is the scientific explanation for the three ALCs noted above. However since automatism is attributed to the unconscious, the question remains, is it the mind or spirit that is guiding the movements.

While the question of the source of the physical movements is in itself very interesting, its use as an argument for or against the afterlife has been made somewhat questionable by the proof of macro-psychokinesis exhibited in the Philip case of table raps and tilting based on appeal to a made-up ghost. (More on Philip below).

Table Tilting: Table tilting was a very big part of the initial spiritualistic period and was famously dismissed by Faraday's experiments that proved that ideomotor activity was causing the table to move. While he cooled the turn of the century craze, he later had to admit that it could not explain many of the table motions being experienced. Typical of the scientists of the day, he avoided an invitation to sit with D. D. Home.

Tables are still being used in spiritualistic circles. My wife and I have had a half dozen table sessions with a small Canadian spiritualist group. We can report that prior to any table movement there is the feeling of a vibration as if the table was waking up. Then the tilting on two legs starts and the tilts can get almost violent and occasionally the

table will stand on one of its four legs. I have found that I can with my hands on the table produce the two leg tilts and with more effort the one leg stand. But I could not replicate with my hands on the tabletop the motion the table made as it frequently “walked” across the carpeted floor, causing us to have to get up and out of its way. There are many accounts, especially in the early literature, of tables seeming to do their own thing.

Table levitation: Ideomotor of course cannot explain levitation. We can only use the term macro-psychokinesis to relate it to a phenomena only a bit more understood. Table levitation was a staple of the early physical mediums. D.D Home and Eusapia Palladino were especially famous for it. Several photographs of Palladino levitating tables were shown in the presentation of this paper. However we also have photographs of two different groups levitating a table so it may be a group-generated activity also.

There have been several scientifically recorded series of table levitations. K. J. Batchelder 1966, reported on 70 sittings of a 200 sitting program that produced nearly all of the paranormal phenomena of the traditional séance. The sittings were held in the dark but the table was instrumented to record when all four feet were off the ground They heard raps, the table was sometimes glued to the floor, the table levitated as high as 6 feet, and in the later sittings the table moved **without any contact**.

There were 2 follow-ups. Colin Brookes-Smith 1973 records 57 sittings in which levitations were measured and concluded that they had developed a methodology that could and should be used to really get to the details of the strange forces involved. Julian Issacs 1984 conducted some successful sittings but was forced to conclude that the long-term group sittings required were probably too psychologically difficult for physical scientists to get involved with.

The Philip Group: See Iris Owen, *Conjuring Up Philip* 1976 A group in Toronto applied Batchelder’s rule of having the group treat the session as a party, sing , tell jokes, to their own attempt to recreate a séance. The Philip Group invented a ghost complete with tragic story and sat at a table trying to contact him. The new technique worked and soon they were having conversations with Philip through raps on the table. (once a week for four years) And thus was started a definitely non-spiritual table sitting séance in full light that rapped, tilted, moved and conversed with an imaginary ghost. The fact that raps were obtained is unusual and significant. This process has been replicated at least two times, one of the subjects being a dolphin. The Philip sittings may be the most important parapsychological tests yet performed. They provide proof that at least some séance phenomena could be performed by a human group using PK. This means that henceforth, the physical psychic activities as well as the mental, have to be judged in each case by the comparison of the spirit hypothesis with the Psi or SuperPsi explanation.. This will be discussed in other ALCs.

Ouija Board: The Ouija board is probably the ALC that most people have actually tried. It is also how many mediums found and started developing their talents. “Talking boards” were being used fairly soon after the Fox sisters started their knocking communication process and so the invention of the Ouija board in 1890 was more an adaptation, copy-write and marketing event. It instantly became and still is very popular.

There is little doubt that the motion of the planchette is by the unconscious movement of the strongest hand on it guided by either the sitter’s mind or by spirit through his unconscious. But, maybe not always. Horace Westwood 1949, reports of the planchette riding off the board and slowly lowering to the floor and up again However the Ideomotor process cannot explain how some participants are able to operate the board blindfolded, even when the letters of the board have been scrambled.

This occurred with one sitter in my only Ouiji experience. Not only did the planchette move to the letters rapidly, the blindfolded sitter began to call the letter before I read it. It also became obvious from later conversations with her that the answers that were given came from her unconscious. (The board did not answer questions whose answers she did not know)

The board has been and still is used for serious research. Hester Smith's "*Voices from the Void*" 1919 is a detailed summary of 7 years of weekly sessions. It illustrates perhaps all the psychic experiences of using the board. These included blindfold reading, spirit controls who, as with many mediums, controlled which spirit answered the questions, psychometry of objects placed near the board, conversations with the deceased and through one spirit guide, messages from sleeping people. It is most difficult to believe that all of these were the product of the minds of the sitters.

One modern series of Ouija transcriptions are the 4 books of Chelsea Yarbo's "Messages from Michael" (1978 on) purporting to be from a group of a thousand souls. Wikipedia reports the communications were still going on in late 2007

And currently, at least one ghost investigator is using the board. Stanley Wojcik's, "Ghosts are Everywhere" sums up the findings of the author in his "hundreds" of investigations using the Ouija board in haunted houses.

No mention of the Ouija board is complete without noting its most famous sentence. "Many moons ago I lived. Again I come, Patience Worth my name." This Ouija board message started a series of communications that are certainly the longest (1913 to 1937) and most productive (twenty nine volumes totaling 4375 single spaced pages) ever recorded. But it also illustrates the basic issue with all Ouija board communications. Are they from spirit or from the sitter's subconscious? It took Stephen Braude 42 pages of discussion in his "*Immortal Remains*" 2003 before coming down on the non-spirit side on the basis that it required belief in only one incredibility whereas the spirit hypothesis required two. There are of course many who chose the spirit hypothesis including W. F. Prince whose "*The Case of Patience Worth*" 1927 is the most complete account of that phenomena available.

One last word is required. Some mental health people strongly advise against ever using the board as they have seen patients whose psychosis were caused by board activity. Some ex-users warn of possession by evil spirits. This is discussed in "Ouija, The Most Dangerous Game" 1985 by Stoker Hunt who however ends by saying "If you choose to work the Ouija after having read all this, I wish you good luck. May you find what you are looking for, and may it enrich your life."

Again, the technique can apparently be used for spirit contact and is therefore a candidate for use by scientists.

Automatic Writing (AW): AW is pure automatism. It was the main mechanism used by many of the classical mediums including those involved in the cross-correspondences. It has been the source of an uncountable number of books. I will note the 15 books of Geraldine Cummings of which *The Road to Immortality, Communicated by F. W.H. Myers* 1932 and *Swan On A Black Sea* 1965, are often quoted as the most believable and informative descriptions of the afterlife. However for sheer number, there are the Brazilian Chico Xavier's 130 books, (3 million sold). See Guy Lyon Playfair 2010

AW is the one ALC that has been shown to have a truly secular counterpoint. The process itself has been experimented with and described by one scientist. “*Automatic Writing, an Approach to the Unconscious*” 1928 was written by Anita M. Muhl, an MD who worked for a time at St Elizabeth’s Hospital (a mental hospital) in DC.¹

After observing a group developing AW, Dr. Muhl decided that she could teach the process and use it to understand the unconscious of patients. And the patients wrote. They wrote while talking or reading, sometimes mirror writing, mixed writing with one line regular and mirror the next, both hands writing different content, one hand forward and one hand mirror, and some created intricate drawings, in short they reproduced all of the AW writing phenomena observed in mediums.

The stories were very often fairy stories, some of which were written in rhyme. There were also dramatic mystery stories. She found all of these very valuable in analyzing her patient’s problems. She emphatically stated that none came from the spirit world and certainly appeared true for the cases she quoted. Since psychiatrists became pill pushers soon after this book was written her work has not seen the application it would seem to deserve.

Thus AW is like the other automatisms, a function of the subconscious mind and the question is as always, where does the information come from, the subconscious or spirit.

Since apparently AW can be taught to most people this technique for testing communication with the departed should be one of the first used for a thorough scientific examination of spirit communication.

Mental Mediums: Communication with the departed through mediums is the most the most commonly used means, historically and currently. As a quick google will show you, mediums and their related practitioners, psychics, (all mediums are psychics but all psychics are not mediums) make up a sizable and thus apparently profitable industry. Mediums are also the foundation of the Spiritual religion that while quite small in this country is a major religion in Brazil.

Mediums function in a variety of ways. Currently by far the most usual is by **clairvoyance & clairaudience**. They mentally see and hear departed relatives, describe them and repeat the spirit’s message in platform & private readings. In the early days many went into **trance** in which spirit contacts speak through and move their unconscious bodies. (They have no memory of the session). A rather rare but very significant medium method is the **direct voice**. This is when a voice speaks independently of the mediums voice. In tests, the voices are heard while the medium has a mouth full of water, marbles etc. Some needed trumpets but the later ones did not. Most were in trance but not all. And very importantly, **automatic writing**: (the technique has been discussed in detail above). This is writing under the control of the subconscious. It was the most widely used method in the classical period. Many, many books have been written in this way. And finally, **trance dictation**. Again many books have been written this way. As with AW, the content is the only way to judge the source, spirit or mind, and for many such writings there is no eventual material, no facts not known that can be checked to show a paranormal source. Three modern works in this class (though their authors do not claim to be practicing mediums) whose sources have been heavily debated are, Helen Schucman’s *The Course of Miracles* 1975, *The Seth Books* 1966), and Neale Donald Walsch’s *Conversation with God* 1996

Mediums were studied intensively during the turn of the century by investigators that had very impressive scientific credentials. Two researchers had even been knighted for

their capabilities.. Note that the first two below were tested continuously for 43 years and 50 years respectively, time spans that I have never heard of in any other scientific study. They were tracked to prove that their information could not have come by normal means, and the sitters were unnamed substitutes for the real sitters and so cold or mind reading were ruled out. Science was forced into inventing SuperPsi to challenge spirit.

Leonora Piper 1859-1950 (Trance). She was investigated over 43 years by James, Lodge, Myers, Hodgson & Hyslop (up to 5000 sittings) Hyslop concluded “Those who read the Piper case carefully will discover that the phenomena have all the appearance, at least, of being organized efforts on the other side to prove the identity of those who have passed away.”

Gladys Osborne Leonard 1882-1968 (Trance) For over fifty years, Mrs. Leonard was studied by the best investigators of the British and American Societies of Psychical Research. She developed the “Book” & Newspaper Tests where spirit read passages in books and provided the text of yet unwritten newspaper stories. It requires a super Super-Psi to eliminate spirit from these tests.

Eileen Garrett 1893-1970 (Trance) She is Famous for the R101 case (see AECES case 2) She founded the Parapsychology Foundation for investigation of psychic phenomena. Always questioning and seeking tests of her capabilities her final judgment was “it would be impossible to doubt the continuity of consciousness and the survival of the human entity after death”

There were of course many who were tested again and again in this period and found to be providing information that convinced their investigators they were in contact with the departed. However, we must also be aware that there are many records of communications that were recognized at the time even by believing Spiritualists as to be totally bogus, that “make the spiritual pretensions of the communicants ridiculous in the estimation of most persons of taste”. See Chapter 15, of *The Heyday of Spiritualism* Slater Brown 1970 for some of the most weird. Th. Flournoy’s “*From India to the Planet Mars*”, 1903 is multi-year study of Helene Smith’s mediumship that included trips to Mars and the generation of a Martian language, a reliving of her past Hindu life and as Marie Antoinette. It provides us with a scientific analysis of a trance medium whose visions certainly came from her own subconscious.

In more modern times we can note two well tested direct voice mediums, Sophia Williams who directed the finding of 15 crosses buried by American Indians in the 1800s around LA by talking to the spirits of the Indians and several Catholic missionaries. (see AECES case 6) and Leslie Flint 1911-1994 The recordings of his voice sessions can be heard at <http://www.leslieflint.com/recordings.html>

In the last decade programs for testing mental mediums have been created in two universities: Gary Schwartz, PhD, University of Arizona, and Emily Kelly, PhD, University of Virginia. Also Julie Beischel, PhD, formally with Schwartz, has created the Windbridge Institute, Tucson, Arizona specifically for the testing of mediums.

The work at Arizona was started in the late ‘90s and the results have been published in two books. The first and most complete Gary Schwartz “*The Afterlife Experiments: Breakthrough Scientific Evidence of Life After Death*” 2002 was followed in 2005 by “*The Truth About the Medium*” that was almost demanded by the public because of the TV program *Medium* that was based on the life of one of his research mediums, Allison DuBois.

Schwartz made a set of tests using multiple mediums all reading the same set of sitters. The mediums used, Laurie Campbell, John Edward, Suzanne Northrop, George Anderson, and Anne Gehman, are, with the exception of Laurie, all very famous, have been on TV, written books etc. The results of these tests showed that the average accuracy rating of the statements was over 70%.

Bottom line: Mental mediums do provide information about the sitter and the departed that are highly accurate and that could not have been obtained by any normal means. So science agrees, spirits are real. No there still hovers the dark shadow of ESP. And note, to my knowledge, Schwartz's data have not been published in a scientific journal. And he has moved on to other interests. It is fortunate that the unit at UVA is now taking up the challenge.

Physical Mediums: Physical mediums have been and still are the most controversial and the most challenged of all the ALCs on our list. In addition to their claim of spirit communication, much of their phenomena directly challenge the laws of physics.

The physical phenomena that have been reported and vouched for by investigators include multiple manifestations by many mediums of all of the following.

- Raps (that have different acoustic patterns than normal physically produced raps),
- Levitation of objects, the medium, other people,
- Apports (objects transported into the séance from outside the séance room) sometimes randomly, sometimes by specific request.
- Playing of musical instruments (no visible hands)
- Movement of objects (usually trumpets) about the room rapidly and the gentle touching of the sitters by them (in the total dark)
- Lights moving rapidly about the room and touching and going through the sitters' hands.
- Materialization of hands of various sizes that felt real and would simply dissolve if not let go. Hands have been dipped in wax and moulds made of them.
- Materialization of full people recognized by the sitters, touched and kissed by them and long conversations exchanged. The materialized figures are often seen to collapse slowly through the floor, the head going last. Sessions with 10 to 20 different people, from small to large, have been reported. A red light or spirit self-illumination made these observations possible.

We must acknowledge that the fact that all physical séances (except those of D.D. Home) were/are conducted in the complete dark or low red light, thus providing the strong opportunity for fake phenomena. There is no question that there were many fraudulent mediums, so many in fact that they were responsible for the decline of Spiritualism in the early 1900s.

Most discussions of physical mediumship begin and end with two mediums: D. D. Home (pronounced Hume) 1833-1886 and Eusapia Palladino 1854-1918. Since they are so famous let me just refer to Stephen E. Braude, PhD, *The Limits Of Influence* (1997) He writes of both Home and Palladino and castigates the academic community for not accepting the fact that both certainly demonstrated supernormal powers and thus their records should be studied by scientists.

But Holms is not really the only physical medium to escape provable allegations of fraud. The careers of three recent physical mediums who have not had any provable charges of fraud over their many years of séances have been recorded in the following. Louie Harris *Alec Harris, The Full Story of His Remarkable Physical Mediumship* 2009,

and Tom Harrison *Life After Death- Living Proof* 2004 both of whom have recently passed and Stewart Alexander *An Extraordinary Journey, the Memoirs of a Physical Medium* 2010 who is retiring but still having a few séances.

It is equally important, proof wise, that for the Home and Palladino period there are many records of other physical mediums many of whom produced full materializations. A sense of just how common these mediums were is provided by the numerous accounts of materialization séances noted in the memoirs of two very well traveled upper-class Englishwomen, E. Katherine Bates, *Psychic Investigations in Early America* (1908) and Florence Marryat, *There Is No Death* (1891) and *The Spirit World* (1894). The fact that both of them found capable physical mediums in several cities in England and the US and that Bates once randomly picked out a very capable materialization medium out of 20 listed in a Boston Newspaper certainly gives the impression that a fairly large number were practicing at that time.

Another multi-year survey is by Hamlin Garland, *Forty Years of Psychic Research* (1936) who saw in situations in which he had almost total control, all the physical effects which included table levitation in full light, voices from trumpets and from the air, ectoplasm, fingerprints. etc. He declared that while he knew that the PK and other physical effects were assuredly psychic he was never able to believe that they were caused by spirits because he so often noted a connection between the phenomena and the medium.

Closer to our time, Arthur Ellison, *Science and the Paranormal* 2002 twice president of the SPR describes (p 109-116) sitting in a series of physical séances that included full materialization of sometimes elaborately dressed people, some famous (King George the 5th, Sir Oliver Lodge and the designer of the Taj Mahal), some relatives, and some Indian (Great White Feather and Grey Horse) and Chinese guides. They walked around the circle being made visible in the totally dark room by carrying phosphorescent wood panels and greeting each person with what he described as banal remarks. His reaction to the remarks, especially that of Lodge's to him, was that they virtually proved that the figures were not spirits but perhaps the creation of the unconscious of the medium and the circle, much as Philip was created by that group. He noted that the ectoplasm that formed these beings, smelled like a very large dose of BO. The figures seemed to rise from the floor and to disappear into it, the wood plaques falling as the hands disappeared. He was most impressed by the creation in front of his eyes in red light of a rose that was presented to him. His séances were very similar to those described by Florence Maryat with the exception that she was convinced that her conversations were with the people the spirits said they were, especially her meetings with her daughter many times over several years and with several mediums.

The above convinces me that there were large number of physical and materialization mediums in the past and that conclusion that the phenomena (the levitations, materializations, etc.) were real and not faked made by many if not all of the serious investigations provides sufficient reason for our scientists to go and do likewise.

One such scientific investigation has already taken place. An experimental physical séance series sat in Scoble England meeting twice weekly from 1993 to 1998. Three scientists from the SPR sat in 30 sessions. Their extensive report (*Proceedings of the SPR Vol 58 Nov 1999* and see also Grant & Jane Solomon *The Scoble Experiment, Scientific Evidence for Life After Death* 1999) noted that they saw lights moving all around the room making intricate patterns, some seeming to go through their bodies, small articles levitated, and gentle touches were felt by several widely separated people simultaneously. A major focus of the sittings was the creation of images, poems,

symbols and drawings on rolls of un-exposed 35 mm film that was purchased by the SPR observers and kept in a locked box until unlocked and developed by them. The extensive SPR report concluded that “the evidence favored the hypothesis of intelligent forces... able to influence material objects and to convey associated meaningful messages, both visual and aural”. With much publicity the SPR sponsored a public debate in 1999. The established academic critics pronounced it a fraud without any relevant arguments. Then silence. This rejection of what under any definition must be judged a scientific analysis illustrates the problem this paper is about.

There seems to be a revival of physical séances. David Thompson of Australia has been very active and is positively evaluated by some, including Dr. Hogan (an AcademyTrustee) and negatively by others. Roy Stemman’s review is an excellent discussion of the pros and cons of dark séances. See <http://www paranormalreview.com/articles/20101021> It is very similar to my reaction to my first and only dark séance that was with Tom Morris and Kevin Lawernson, see their web site www.montcabirol.com. A friend of Mike Tymn however had a very positive sitting with them. Another friend of mine and his wife had a two sittings with Stewart Alexander that included shaking hands with the spirit control. It left them wondering. The point is that there are sittings to be had out there but that there is still a mixed reaction, fake or real. It will always be so until the dark requirement can be mitigated by IR cameras so all can see exactly what is going on in that blackness.

Apparitions: Seeing apparitions is not rare. In a recent survey 25 % of British adults claimed to have experienced a ghost. Their observations are quite varied as the following list from 850 people questioned by Celia Green in *Apparitions* 1975 shows.

- 80% humans, 20% animal (cats/dogs)
- 28% are recognized
- 33% of the recognized are living
- 14% of visual apparitions speak
- 66% of living not in crisis situation
- 84% Visual, 37% Audible, 15% Tactile, 18% Temperature, 8% Smell

It is certainly of interest that there was a sizable population of apparitions of the living and animal lovers will be delighted at the occasional presence of pets. There is a lot to be explained in such data.

The SPR started out with surveys. *The Census of Hallucinations*, Sidgewick 1898 was the first is still probably the biggest and best documented and analyzed data set on spirit communications, and *Phantasms of the Living*, Sidgewick et al 1920 which covers the many SPR activities of the early 1900s. These have been long neglected and cry out for a modern analysis and comparison with current data. If I have missed such analysis please let me know.

In modern times sightings the literature often uses the term After Death Communications which was I believe invented by Bill & Judy Guggenheim in *Hello From Heaven* 1995. Two other collections of special note are Sally Rhine Feather’s *The Gift, The Extraordinary Experiences of Ordinary People* 2005 and Andrew Honigam’s *My Proof of Survival, Fate Stories*, 2003

Death Bed Visions: There are quite a few books that report the experiences of hospice attendees as their patients are in the dying process. Some say many, and some have said most, show signs of seeing and talking to spirits/angels. John Lerma,MD in *Into The Light* 2007 says that nearly all of his hospice patients saw angels during the 2 or 3 days prior to death.

Two scientific studies were done by Karlis Osis, *Deathbed Observations by DR/RN*, 1961, and with Erlandur Haraldsson, *At the Hour of Death* 1977 a larger study that included data from India. The latter report showed that the visions were 88% secular and 12% religious in the US and 62% secular and 38% religious in India. An earlier report, *Death Bed Visions* by Sir William Barrett, 1926, recounted examples of what have been come to be called Peak In Darian Cases. These are visions where the dying person sees a person who they believed was alive since their death had been kept from them. These would seem to be very evidential except there is that ESP explanation hovering about.

It is also of great evidential interest that there are case histories of attendants sharing the visions of the dying, some having NDEs themselves in which they go part way with the dying. Note, the normal person's NDE cannot be attributed to the physics of the dying process. See *Glimpses of Eternity*, Raymond Moody 2010 (ref k)

This is obviously a very fruitful area for scientific investigation, especially now that we have hospitals devoted to the care of the dying and therefore nurses and doctors who are available to make the observations and keep the records needed.

Near Death Experiences: Since Moody's identification of them in the 1970s and the creation of IANDS, the fact that NDEs are quite common is well known. See Jan Holden et al *The Handbook of Near-Death Experiences: Thirty Years of Investigation*, 2009 Finally official science, after years of claiming NDEs are certainly just the product of the oxygen starved dying brain, has initiated a program to capture and record veridical NDEs. These are NDEs in which the patient has an Out of Body Experience (OBE) during which they see themselves being operated on, or see relatives in other rooms and hear them talking, all of which are verified by the people observed. Such observations provide objective proof of the separation of the mind and the brain.

The new study is called the Aware Study. Dr. Sam Parnia of Cornell is leading a team that will be working in collaboration with more than 25 major medical centers throughout Europe, Canada and the U.S. They will be testing the validity of the OBE by the use of randomly generated images only visible from near the ceiling. They will also tape the operations so that descriptions by the returned NDEer can be verified.

This is a very good example of what we should expect from our scientific establishment in the investigation of all ALCs.

Children's Past Life Memories: This ALC is the only one that has strong academic scientific data to support it. UVA's Ian Stevenson's 40 years collecting 3000 cases of children remembering past lives provides the data set that he described as "strongly suggesting reincarnation", and reincarnation provides proof of an afterlife. See Ian Stevenson MD, *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation* 1974

It is interesting that the large majority of the cases involve people who died prematurely by accident or murder. For many cases the child's birthmarks are identical to the physical marks that caused the original death, bullet holes, knife cuts, etc.

Stevenson's cases were mostly from India and nearby countries where reincarnation is a part of their belief system. His successor at UVA Dr. Jin Tucker is collecting U.S. cases. Carol Bowman's *Children's Past Lives and Return from Heaven* 1997, 2001 are collections of American cases that emphasizes the healing effects that can occur with these memories. For a very convincing American case see Bruce Lenniger et al *Soul Survivor* 2009

Final Remarks: This has been a quick trip through 10 of a list of 18 human experiences that purport to be or seem to be conversations with or directed by the departed. The 18 Afterlife Conversations (ALCs) are my attempt to show all the ways that we and spirit are trying to communicate. The skeptic must understand just how many and different are the phenomena that he/she is dismissing out of hand. (Please feel obligated to inform me of any I have missed).

I hope I have demonstrated that the above discussed ALCs have all been validated by investigations that must be acknowledged as scientific and thus we are dealing with real human experiences that cannot be dismissed as fraud, an over active imagination or bad observation.

I believe that the number and quality of these investigations has proven the existence of spirit beyond a shadow of a doubt or at least right up to it. I also believe that the many non-scientifically possible phenomena (raps levitations etc.) in our data base require specific investigations if we are to really understand the ALC phenomena. The mixture of obviously secular and potentially spiritual elements in many of the ALCs highlights the many limits to science's knowledge of our mind's capabilities. Not understanding that limit leaves the SuperPsi mind vs spirit question somewhat open. It is certainly ironic that the academic scientists who have not really bought into the reality of Psi are so quick to use SuperPsi to explain away the spirit hypothesis.

Perhaps, as Tart says, the end of materialism is here and we can expect that our phenomena will receive the attention it truly needs from the official science community and that they will, as so many before them already have, find that spirit is the correct solution for all ALCs.

In anticipation of that inevitable, but probably far off, day perhaps the Academy should consider a conference on what the world would be like if we all were taught from first grade on that there was in fact another dimension to which our spirit would be going and that we could contact our departed if we wished. Could the end of religious wars be one positive effect?

