

ESSAY

Investigating Mental Mediums: Research Suggestions from the Historical Literature

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Abstract—Mental mediumship is a complex process involving a variety of factors in need of further study before we can increase our understanding of the phenomenon. The purpose of this paper is to offer ideas and topics for further research—mainly from the psychological perspective and with emphasis on the old psychical research literature. The topics discussed are mediumistic trance (e.g., function, stages, and depth, mediumistic mentation (e.g., imagery, symbols), the dramatic capabilities of the subconscious mind, the relationship between mediumship and psychopathology, the variety of experiences reported by mediums outside their performances (e.g., dissociative and ESP experiences), and the changing aspects of mediumship over time. It is argued that in-depth single case studies of specific mediums and interdisciplinary studies will greatly help us to understand mediumship more fully.

Keywords: mediumship—mediumistic mentation—personation—iatrogenesis
—trance—dissociation

Mental mediums are individuals who claim to convey messages from discarnate spirits in such varied ways as impressions, visions, and automatic writing. Historically, this phenomenon has been important for its influence on psychological concepts such as the subconscious mind and dissociation (Alvarado, Machado, Zangari, & Zingrone, 2007), ideas of pathology (Le Maléfan, 1999), and for presenting phenomena that have provided both research topics and ideas for fields such as spiritualism (Tromp, 2006), psychical research (Inglis, 1984), and anthropology (Seligman, 2005). Modern studies of the phenomena have included approaches and questions framed from such varied fields as anthropology, history, parapsychology, psychology, and psychiatry, to name a few. Ideally, to understand mediumship we need a comprehensive approach that considers multiple variables and the contribution of different disciplines. While practical considerations limit such research in a single project, perhaps we might follow more general approaches within specific

disciplines. For example, Frederic W. H. Myers (1903) not only focused on veridical mediumistic communications in his analysis of mediumship, but he also took a much wider scope considering non-veridical manifestations as well as non-mediumistic motor automatisms and secondary personalities.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest some topics for further research with mental mediums, taking ideas mainly from the old psychical research literature, and, to some extent, from the spiritualist and psychological literatures. Because of the type of literature consulted, the examples cited are mainly on trance mediums. But the systematic study of mediums can and should also include mediums who do not fall into trance, a type that seems to be more frequent today. Although the topic will not be completely neglected, my emphasis will not be on studies of veridical mediumship (e.g., Beischel & Schwartz, 2007, Hodgson, 1892). Instead, I will focus on a variety of questions related to trances, mediumistic mentation, the dramatic capabilities of the subconscious, psychopathology, the variety of cognitive and psychic experiences reported by mediums in their lives, and changes in mediumship over time. Rather than present detailed suggested research designs or reviews of past studies, my intent is to raise questions that may inform current hypothesis testing.

Trance

The term *trance*¹ is a problematic one. Not only has it been used to refer to a variety of apparent states of consciousness, but we need to be aware that it may manifest in degrees, a topic that has been discussed in the psychical research (Sidgwick, 1915) and spirit possession (Frigerio, 1989) literatures. In his influential study of music and trance, Rouget (1980/1985:3) pointed out that some individuals who have referred to trance have not used the same terms to designate the manifestations and that authors have used different terms to refer to the same phenomena. Pekala and Kumar (2000) have argued in relation to hypnosis that the concept of trance is ill-defined and has not been properly operationalized. The situation is similar in the mediumship literature. Nonetheless, while we need to keep this problem in mind, I will use the term *trance* here because the word is used to describe apparent changes in states of consciousness in the literature I am reviewing.

Trance has long been considered important for the manifestation of phenomena. According to James H. Hyslop (1918): “The trance of the living medium more or less excludes her own mind or thoughts from intermingling with or dominating the messages . . .” (p. 218). Unfortunately, there has been no systematic research on the subject to test such an idea. Perhaps a contrast of the medium’s experiences in trance vs. no trance, or between different stages of trance, could produce information relevant to the subject.

Medium Leonora E. Piper illustrates interesting research possibilities. As

described by Charles Richet, Piper started in silence and in semi-darkness and, after an interval of 5 to 15 minutes, exhibited “small spasmodic convulsions” that ended in a small epileptic episode (in W. Leaf, 1890:619). [This and other translations in this paper are mine.] Following this, the medium showed stupor and heavy breathing, and then started talking. Others observed similar convulsive behaviors with Piper, generally at the beginning of the trance: “She twitched convulsively, ejaculated ‘don’t,’ and went into apparent epilepsy” (Lodge, 1890:444); “She continually groaned as if in suffering. After long waiting . . . she went through a kind of struggle or crisis, confined to the upper part of the body” (W. Leaf, 1890:606); “Convulsions strong; continue ten minutes” (Hodgson, 1892:537). There were similar observations at the end of the trance: “Mrs. Piper had begun to come out of trance, but was strongly convulsed again” (Hodgson, 1892:483).²

While not every medium shows these manifestations, it would be worth determining how prevalent they are. Psychophysiological recordings at the time the tremors take place may be compared with periods without the tremors. It seems these phenomena were more frequent during the early years of Piper’s trances. Are such manifestations developmental? That is, did they appear during the early years of the medium’s practice as her nervous system developed or was trained (so to speak) to manifest the phenomena, disappearing as the processes involved became second nature?

Eleanor Sidgwick (1915) documented the existence of stages of trance and the variety of phenomena accompanying Mrs. Piper’s mentation. Particularly interesting were Hodgson’s (1898) observations of an initial stage in which he believed the subliminal mind of the medium took over at the beginning of the trance in which the medium was “dreamily conscious of the sitter, and dreamily conscious of ‘spirits’” (Hodgson, 1898:397). This led to a “fuller and clearer consciousness—we may call it her subliminal consciousness—which is in direct relation . . . not so much with our ordinary physical world as with ‘another world’” (p. 397), and later into a state in which he thought the “subliminal consciousness withdraws completely from the control of her body and takes her supraliminal consciousness with it” (p. 398). Hodgson wrote further that at the end there were indications of a return to Mrs. Piper’s consciousness in reverse of the order it had disappeared. He wrote:

But in passing out of trance, the stages are usually of longer duration than when she enters it. She frequently repeats statements apparently made to her by the “communicators” while she is in the purely “subliminal” stage, as though she was a “spirit” controlling her body but not in full possession of it, and, after her supraliminal consciousness has begun to surge up into view, she frequently has visions apparently of the distant or departing “communicators”. (Hodgson, 1898:400–401)

Unfortunately, very little work has been conducted since the old days to assess the existence and characteristics of stages of mediumistic trance. Many basic questions need to be explored empirically. In addition to the above-mentioned—the actual function of trance, its psychophysiology, features, and stages—there is the issue of veridical mediumistic mentation. Just as modern parapsychologists have studied ESP in relation to aspects of altered states of consciousness (e.g., depth, changes in sense of time and body image (Alvarado, 1998)), we may study veridical mentation in mediums in relation to the presence or absence of trance and its depth.

While trance mediums do not seem to be as common today as they used to be, observations of such states suggest that psychophysiological recording techniques could be profitably used in new studies, as has been done sporadically in the past (Evans & Osborn, 1952, Solfvin, Roll & Kelly, 1977). On a more basic level, we may better document today the variety of states of consciousness shown by some mediums, such as was the case with Mrs. Willett (pseudonym of Winifred Coombe-Tenandt (Balfour, 1935)).

Mediumistic Mentation

There are discussions in the literature about the features and difficulties of both mediumistic mentation and the apparent process of communication assuming the action of spirits (e.g., Hodgson, 1898, Hyslop, 1919). For example, Hyslop (1919) referred to the “pictographic process,” in which “the communicator manages to elicit in the living subject a sensory phantasm of his thoughts, representing, but not necessarily directly corresponding to, the reality” (Hyslop, 1919:111). Some messages were expressed in visual, or in other, modalities, according to the sensitivity of the medium. Motor expressions of mediumship, such as automatic writing, do “not represent anything pictographic, though pictographic processes may precede it” (Hyslop, 1919:111). Regardless of Hyslop’s emphasis on discarnate agency, in his view there could be confusions and distortion in the mentation due to the interpretation of images involving the subconscious mind of the medium. Such an idea opens possibilities for research to explore intrapsychic factors involved in mediumistic mentation. Among other aspects, such studies could use the various ways developed to study imagery, nonverbal abilities, and preferred modes of mentation (Mammarella, Pazzaglia & Cornoldi, 2006, Richardson, 2006, Riding, 2006).

Similarly, new studies could consider difficulties in expressing messages that may be caused by memory retrieval problems and other factors. One line of research that might be relevant is that concerning tip-of-the tongue states in which something that a person knows cannot be recalled (Schwartz, 2002).

Another topic deserving study, and one discussed from the early days of

spiritualism, is the influence of the medium on the communications. An early American researcher and medium, John W. Edmonds, wrote: “I know of no mode of spiritual intercourse that is exempt from a mortal taint—no kind of mediumship where the communication may not be affected by the mind of the instrument” (Edmonds & Dexter, 1855(2):39). Similarly, another author stated: “All communications partake more or less of the character of the media [mediums] through whom they pass” (Barkas, 1862:102).

Years later, Myers (1902) wrote about the mediumship of Rosina Thompson and suggested that confusions and mistakes may come “mainly from Mrs. Thompson’s own subliminal self” (Myers, 1902:72). Myers (1903), who discussed both the influences of discarnate influence and the influence of the medium, also referred to the mix of both sources. He also commented on “the influence of the sensitive’s supraliminal self . . . whose habits of thought and turns of speech must needs appear whenever use is made of the brain-centres which that supraliminal self habitually controls” (Myers, 1903(2):249).³ Content analyses of mediumistic mentation may be helpful in identifying the medium’s waking memories, turns of phrase, and other idiosyncrasies in their mentation.

Similarly, content analysis may help us to identify and classify symbols in mediumistic productions. Several writers have presented examples of symbols in mediumistic communications (Bozzano, 1907:253–254, Emmons & Emmons, 2003, Chapter 69). According to Hereward Carrington (1920): “It is in the interpretation of these symbols that much of the true art of mediumship and psychic development will be found to lie . . .” (p. 109), but he added that each medium “must learn . . . , by repeated experience, what the various symbols mean . . . , and thus form a ‘code’ or method of interpretation” (p. 109). Consistent with this, and based on their analyses of the experiences of many mediums, Emmons and Emmons (2003) stated that “to a great extent mediums have separate ‘psychic dictionaries’” (p. 258).

Saltmarsh (1929) explored symbols in his study of Mrs. Warren Elliott. The medium received messages from a control called Topsy such as the following: “‘You nearly married and then not married. Shows Topsy like wedding dress and then sort of drops it.’ (Symbol is obvious here.)” (p. 121). Saltmarsh wrote:

It will be observed that the symbols are all of a certain type. They are what might be called natural symbols, and are based on habitual analogies, either verbal, as for example when the hallucinatory figure coming near to the sitter is taken to mean nearness of relationship, or common forms of speech, as when all black is used as a symbol for worry or sorrow; or else they may be natural pantomime, as when the gesture of waving away is interpreted as meaning that the ostensible communicator was not connected with the relic. (p. 123)

A study could be designed in which symbols appearing in the mentation of particular mediums are classified by type and then compared both between and within mediums.⁴ While we may find some similarities or consistency, there is likely to be much symbolism that is particular to specific mediums. The issue, of course, is an empirical one and should be studied taking into consideration variables that may affect the symbols. This includes the general spiritualist beliefs and interests specific to circles in which the medium was trained or worked during his or her life. There is also much to investigate regarding the factors that may affect both the formation and the manifestation of symbols.

Regardless of common patterns, there are probably many individual differences in the content of mediumistic communications. But even if this is not the case, we could learn much about aspects of the mentation, such as the flow of imagery, and salient features such as the repeated use of specific images in relation to topics and communicators, as well as veridical messages.

The latter was documented by Charles Drayton Thomas (1928, 1939) in his study of Gladys Osborne Leonard. Communications from the medium's control Feda frequently alluded to seeing letters instead of perceiving names or places. The following examples of Feda's statements, published by Thomas (1939), are followed by explanations of the possible meaning of the letters in parentheses. "A place beginning with the letter 'S,' very much connected with him and his work. A place with a good many letters in its name. (When he came home from the West Indies he and his family lived in Southampton for many years)" (Thomas, 1939:261). Another example read as follows: "Was this Mr Macaulay a researcher of some kind? . . . He always wanted fuller information. He read much about it and went somewhere where he could study this "M" subject. ("M" is possibly a reference to Meteorology)" (Thomas, 1939:273).

Obviously not all mediums have this type of mentation with letters. A comparison of mediums with this imagery style with those who have other styles may help us to assess, for example, if such manifestations are related to cognitive differences, or to differences in training.

There are other examples with Mrs. Leonard of the features of reception of messages, and difficulties in expressing them. Troubridge (1922) referred to her observation that information sometimes came from the medium "bit by bit, conveying to the recipient or listener the impression of someone finding isolated pieces all connected with one jigsaw puzzle and dealing them out one by one with a view to their being fitted together by the recipient into an intelligible whole" (Troubridge, 1922:371).⁵ This is evident in an incident reported by Radclyffe-Hall and Troubridge (1919). One of the communicators, when alive, used the word "spork" and "sporkish" to refer to unpleasant people. In a seance held on January 17, 1917, Feda, Leonard's spirit control, was having trouble getting a word. She said: "Feda can't get it. But it is only a short word" (Radclyffe-Hall

& Troubridge, 1919:445). She traced the letter “S” on the palm of a sitter. At a sitting on May 2, the word still could not be obtained “beyond making the opening sibilant consonant” (Radclyffe-Hall & Troubridge, 1919:446). Fedra said in a low voice: “It’s *what*, Ladye? What are you trying to say S-ss-Sss-S-ss What *is* the word, Ladye? It’s Spor-Spor-Spor!” (Radclyffe-Hall & Troubridge, 1919:446). More faltering attempts followed, and she said “Sporti” and “Sporbi.” The account continued as follows:

After this small letter there comes a curved letter, and then it seems to Fedra there’s another long letter . . . It’s S . . . P . . . O . . . then a little letter and then a letter like this; (she draws a “k” . . .). It’s a down stroke like this, with a little bit like this sticking on to it; Sporki . . . Sporkif? That letter goes like this . . . (here Fedra draws an “S” . . .). And then there’s another letter like this (here Fedra draws an “H”). . . . Well, Fedra can’t see any more, (suddenly and very loud) SPORKISH! SPORKISH! But that isn’t a word at all! . . . “Sporkish,” she says it in such a funny way . . . she says that you and she used to call people that sometimes. . . . (Radclyffe-Hall & Troubridge, 1919:447)

In addition to the imagery and fragmentary nature of many communications, we could focus new studies on the variety of ways mediums manifest their communications. For example, Mrs. Willett’s mediumship consisted of impressions of presences, mental images, feelings and emotions, impulses and inhibitions, and verbal images (Balfour, 1935). Modern research could try to assess how many mediums combine these and other forms of expression, as well as how they may specialize almost completely in particular forms of expression.

Some modern researchers have analyzed aspects of the content of mediumistic mentation (K. W. Barrett, 1996, Emmons & Emmons, 2003, Rock, Beischel, & Schwartz, 2008). For example, Rock et al. (2008) studied a small number of mediums in terms of aspects such as the sensory modalities they experienced, feelings about ailments or cause of death, and changes of affect. I hope work along this line continues following up on the above-mentioned observations so that we may be able to replicate and extend previous findings. Perhaps some of the scales used by Pekala (1991)—including questions about such varied aspects as changes in perception and the sense of time, as well as imagery vividness and positive and negative affect—may be used with mediums, or adapted for such work even considering the problems of using such instruments to quantify experiences (Stevens, 2000).

The Dramatic Capabilities of the Subconscious

From the early days of spiritualism, some authors have mentioned that mediums may have the potential of dramatizing changes of personality. One

writer wrote that in some circumstances the medium's automatic brain functions could "assume any personality, from that of a divinity to that of a toad . . ." (Rogers, 1853:171). Another suggested that some mediumistic communications about the nature of the other world could "proceed from the poetic brains of the writers, and are not the product of any disembodied spiritual intelligences" (Barkas, 1862:134).

Myers (1884, 1885) argued early on for the interpretation of some mediumship on the basis of subconscious creations by the living mind of the medium, and sometimes transcending intrapsychic processes through recourse to telepathy. Eduard von Hartmann (1885) wrote about a somnambulistic consciousness in mediums that "inclines to symbolising and personifications," showing a dramatic "metamorphosing talent" (p. 453, both quotes) to produce fictitious communications. He postulated that such consciousness could obtain information from the waking consciousness and memories of the medium, as well as through telepathy and clairvoyance.

Many referred to the potential of the subconscious to dramatize spirit communications. Myers (1903(2):130) wrote about a "strange manufacture of inward romances." Théodore Flournoy (1900:425) studied what he described as a "tendency of the subliminal imagination to reconstruct the deceased and to feign their presence" in some mediumistic communications, as well as to a "spirit-imitating" process existing within us (Flournoy, 1911:202). In his *Traité de Métapsychique*, Charles Richet (1922) discussed what he called the "talents of the unconscious" (p. 50), or capabilities such as having a more detailed memory than the conscious mind. This and other abilities, he stated, allowed for the possibility of producing all kinds of phenomena, including those presented by mediums pretending to be the results of spirit influence.

An important concept to understand such tendencies is the view that the production of fictitious communicators and stories in mediumistic mentation may be a function of unintended suggestion, expectations, and beliefs in the social and psychological surroundings of the medium. The idea was applied during the nineteenth century and later to hypnotic manifestations and to such dissociative phenomena as secondary personalities (Alvarado, 1991). Some hypnotic phenomena, Delboeuf (1886) suggested, were due to the influence of imitation and education. Referring to suggestion, Pierre Janet in *L'Automatisme Psychologique* (1889) commented about secondary personalities in hypnotic subjects: Once named, "the unconscious personage is more determined and more distinct, it shows better its psychological characteristics" (p. 318).

Spiritualists also referred to similar ideas when discussing mediumistic communications. Some of these individuals were skeptical about the validity of communications about reincarnation based on the teachings of the "spirits" presented by Allan Kardec (e.g., 1867, Part 2, Chapters 4–5). One such critic

was Alexandre Aksakof (1875). In his critique of Kardec, he referred to writing mediums who “pass so easily under the psychological influence of preconceived ideas. . . .” (Aksakof, 1875:75). An anonymous author emphasized that the few English mediumistic discussions of reincarnation had been “strongly coloured by the opinions of the medium, or those of the sitter. . . .” (“Allan Kardec’s ‘Spirits’ Book, 1875:170). In his view, if reincarnation received more attention in England, “plenty of spirits will begin to teach it, the reason being that the minds of the various mediums will be set buzzing by the arguments on the subject mooted by persons around them. . . .” (“Allan Kardec’s ‘Spirits’ Book”, 175:170).⁶

In *The Principles of Psychology*, William James (1890) emphasized that the *Zeitgeist* influenced mediumistic productions. He wrote:

One curious thing about trance-utterances is their generic similarity in different individuals. The “control” here in America is either a grotesque, slangy, and flippant personage (“Indian” controls, calling the ladies “squaws”, the men “braves”, the house a “wigwam”, etc., are excessively common); or, if he ventures on higher intellectual flights, he abounds in a curiously vague optimistic philosophy-and-water, in which phrases about spirit, harmony, beauty, law, progression, development, etc., keep recurring. It seems exactly as if one author composed more than half of the trance-messages, no matter by whom they are uttered. Whether all sub-conscious selves are peculiarly susceptible to a certain stratum of the *Zeitgeist*, and get their inspiration from it, I know not; but this is obviously the case with the secondary selves which become “developed” in spiritualist circles. There the beginnings of the medium trance are indistinguishable from effects of hypnotic suggestion. The subject assumes the rôle of a medium simply because opinion expects it of him under the conditions which are present; and carries it out with a feebleness or a vivacity proportionate to his histrionic gifts. (James, 1890(1):394)⁷

The writings and studies of Théodore Flournoy (1900, 1901, 1911) are of key importance for the subject. He studied communications in which the medium Hélène Smith described previous existences in India, France, and life on planet Mars, including the creation of a Martian language. As he wrote:

We must . . . take into consideration the enormous suggestibility and auto-suggestibility of mediums, which render them so sensitive to all the influences of spiritistic reunions, and are so favorable to the play of those brilliant subliminal creations in which, occasionally, the doctrinal ideas of the surrounding environment are reflected together with the latent emotional tendencies of the medium herself. (Flournoy, 1900:443)

In addition to suggestibility, we could consider the concept of emotional contagion that has a long tradition in psychology (Levy & Nail, 1993). The

concept has been related to hypnotic experience (Cardeña, Terhume, Lööf, & Buratti, 2009).

Maxwell (1903/1905) used the term personification to refer to the intelligence behind mediumistic phenomena, an intelligence he believed came from the medium. The identity of the personification changed according to the individuals in the mediumistic circle:

I have noticed that the role played by the personification varies with the composition of the circle. It will always be the spirit of a dead or living person with spiritists. But the roles are more varied if the circle is composed of people who are not spiritists; it then sometimes happens that the communications claim to emanate from the sitters themselves. (Maxwell, 1903/1905:65)

The personification, Maxwell believed, was very suggestible.

Many authors discussed the importance of suggestions and beliefs on the development of trance personalities and the stories of the communicators, among them Pierre Lebiedzinski (1924), Amy Tanner (1910), and René Sudre (1926). The latter discussed what he termed “prosopope-sis,” or “brusque, spontaneous or provoked changes of psychological personality” (Sudre, 1926:85) developed by the subconscious mind in mediumship, as well as in possession, multiple personality, and under the influence of hypnosis.⁸ Eleanor Sidgwick (1915) commented about this topic:

That the sitters must influence the trance communications to some extent is . . . obvious. For one thing, they are themselves personages in the drama, and the part they play in it and the way they play it must affect the way the trance personalities play theirs. . . . And in the trance drama the sitters not only largely determine the subjects of conversation, but the personages who shall take part in it. They explicitly or tacitly demand that their own friends shall manifest themselves and produce evidence of identity, or give information on particular points. (Sidgwick, 1915:294)

Sidgwick’s point is well-taken. Such influence may be seen in analyses of the verbal interactions between mediums and their sitters (Wooffitt, 2006).

Communications about life on other planets such as those discussed by Flournoy (1900, 1901) are good examples of possible iatrogenic creations. But there are several other examples in the literature about interplanetary communications (e.g., Hyslop, 1906, Jung, 1902/1983:34–35, Sardou, 1858, Weiss, 1905). Astronomer Camille Flammarion (1907) explained a particular case in which there were mediumistic drawings of houses on Jupiter (Sardou, 1858) as “the reflex of the general ideas in the air” (p. 26). New cases of this sort could be studied to attempt to determine the specific influences leading to such productions.

Interestingly, some mediums known for producing veridical mentation have also presented non-veridical material that may be the result of the demands and suggestions provided by researchers and sitters. A case in point was Mrs. Leonard. In Thomas' book *Life Beyond Death with Evidence* (1928), there are chapters about evidential and non-evidential communications. The latter included descriptions of life in the spirit world, and ideas about the process of mediumistic communication.⁹ The impression I get going over the book is that Mrs. Leonard had the ability to produce material about almost every topic.¹⁰ While this may be consistent with the idea that mediumistic manifestations may be shaped by the interests of individuals around mediums, it is not proof that the medium was suggestible. In any case, we need to be more active in exploring the plasticity of the medium's psychological resources, and the limits of such processes.

One way to test for the influence of ideas on mediumistic mentation is to induce particular ideas through direct suggestions, as Richet (1883) and Harriman (1942) did in the creation of secondary personalities with research participants who were not mediums. This brings to mind the famous case in which G. Stanley Hall created a fictitious "Bessie Beals" personality with Mrs. Piper. The personality was presented to Mrs. Piper as his niece and the suggestion influenced the medium (Tanner, 1910:176, 181, 195–196, 254).¹¹

However, indirect methods such as creating a context with conversations and information about what is desired may also be successful. Mediumship is probably affected to some extent by the intellectual and psychological environment around the medium, not to mention by the demands of the sitters (e.g., Lebedzinski, 1924). The desire of members in mediumistic circles, or of individuals consulting the medium, to obtain philosophical communications about life or about the afterlife may not only shape but also train the medium to produce such manifestations. Similarly, interest in such aspects as evidential communications may lead the phenomena in that direction. Although, in theory, some mediums may be "fixed" into phenomena or topics in communications, they may also change according to the circle. An interesting study would be one in which mediums known for their production of non-evidential phenomena are influenced both directly and indirectly to produce veridical communications.

But regardless of what some have suggested (e.g., Tanner, 1910), the situation is not that simple. A medium is not a parrot at our command who can be shaped without limits. First of all, as in hypnotic suggestion, there are bound to be individual differences in the suggestibility of mediums. Second, we may find that, regardless of past discussions (e.g., Flournoy, 1900, Tanner, 1910), such effects are more difficult to produce than previously assumed. Nonetheless, research on the topic may allow us to empirically assess ideas about the plasticity of the medium's mind.

While in theory it makes sense to study this topic through some sort of manipulation, in practice there are ethical problems. Such an induction of phenomena would involve deception and may go against the medium's beliefs. Considering such objections, perhaps we would do well to see if studies similar those of Flournoy (1900), in which no manipulations were performed, could be conducted with modern mediums.

Psychopathology

Another research topic is the often-discussed issue of a relationship between mediumship and psychopathology, a topic discussed frequently during the nineteenth century. For example, in 1860 an anonymous writer in the medical journal *Lancet* argued that the "counterpart of the wretched medium we find in the half-deluded and half-designing hysterical patient" (*The delusion of spiritualism*, 1860:466). Similar thoughts were presented by many physicians who believed mediumship was pathological (for overviews, see Alvarado et al., 2007:48–50, Le Maléfan, 1999, Moreira-Almeida, Almeida, & Lotufo Neto, 2005).

The French were particularly interested in these issues. Pierre Janet (1889) said that mediums had frequent nervous "accidents" that included convulsions, choreic movements, and nervous crises. In his view, mediumship "depends on a particular morbid state" (Janet, 1889:406), similar to what later may develop as hysteria or insanity. But he argued that "mediumship is a symptom and not a cause" (Janet, 1889:406). Years later Janet (1909) presented a case of a 37 year-old woman who produced automatic writing messages. Most of the writings were said to come from her deceased father and were about the woman's clothing and hygiene. Janet believed that the woman's constant communications represented a case of "systematic" delusion.

"From time to time," wrote Alfred Binet in his book *Les Altérations de la Personnalité* (1892), "the most discreet authors cannot avoid saying that such an excellent medium has had a nervous crisis or gets fatigued quickly as the result of a too delicate health. . . ." (p. 299). J. Lévy-Valensi (1910) argued that the mental "disaggregation" (dissociation) of mediums became habitual, resulting in a delusion. Such condition could include hallucinations, erotic sensations, and problems with genital functions, and defensive reactions such as rituals and practices. He mentioned 17 cases of mediums of which six were said to have become insane due to their practices. Another French physician, Gilbert Ballet (1913), created a mediumistic diagnosis called Chronic Hallucinatory Psychosis that had the "disaggregation" of personality as the main symptom, as well as delusions of persecution and ambition, and hallucinations.

A problem with many of these observations is that they seem to have been done with clinical patients instead of with practicing mediums. Anyone who

knows the careers of mediums such as Piper, Leonard, or Eileen J. Garrett, among others, should realize that such observations do not apply to them, or to many other mediums. Joseph Maxwell (1903/1905), for example, criticized Janet along these lines: “Up to the present Janet seems to have operated with invalids only, and I am not surprised, therefore, that he should assimilate the automatic phenomena of sensitives with those of his hysterical patients” (p. 261). He wrote further: “Hysterical people do not always give clear, decided phenomena; my best experiments have been made with those who were not in any way hysterical” (Maxwell, 1903/1905:44).

Others were also skeptical of pathology in mediums. In fact, one physician referred to such ideas as “false conceptions and legends” coming from observations of “hospital hysterics” (De Sermyn, 1910:133). Similarly, Charles Richet (1922:50) rejected the characterization of mediums as morbid individuals. In his view, they did not show more problems than other individuals.¹²

A possible line of research is that following Maxwell’s (1903/1905) suggestion that the nervous system of mediums is liable to many changes and fluctuations that do not necessarily become pathological: “It seems to me that a certain impressionability—or nervous instability—is a favourable condition for the effervescence of medianity. I use the term *nervous instability* for want of a better one, but I do not use it in an ill sense” (p. 44). By nervous instability Maxwell said he did not mean pathology such as that found in hysteria, neurasthenia, or other afflictions. As he wrote:

It is a state of the nervous system such as appears in hypertension. A lively impressionability, a delicate susceptibility, a certain unequalness of temper, establish analogy between mediums and certain neurotic patients; but they are to be distinguished from the latter by the integrity of their sensibilities, of their reflex movements, and of their visual range. As a rule, they have a lively intelligence, are susceptible to attention, and do not lack energy; their artistic sentiments are relatively developed; they are confiding and unreserved with those who show them sympathy; are distrustful and irritable if not treated gently. They pass easily from sadness to joy, and experience an irresistible need of physical agitation: These two characteristics are just the ones which made me choose the expression of nervous instability. I say instability, I do not say want of equilibrium. Many mediums whom I have known have an extremely well-balanced mind, from a mental and nervous point of view. My impression is that their nervous system is even superior to that of the average. (Maxwell, 1903/1905:44–45)

While Maxwell’s descriptions do not seem to me to characterize the behaviors of many mediums, the idea of a mediumistic labile nervous system deserves exploration. In fact, the concept is consistent with some contemporary ideas of schizotypy that postulate that some people are more creative or

hallucinatory than others due to differences in the inhibitory mechanisms of the nervous system (McCreery, 1997). Their lack of inhibition is postulated to cause arousal—which in turn is affected by situational variables—leading to a variety of experiences such as hallucinations. While it is unlikely that this is the whole picture for mediumship, the idea deserves to be explored through psychophysiological experimentation. More specifically, and in relation to Brazilian Candomble mediums, Seligman (2004) has hypothesized that mediums have an inability to regulate physiological arousal.

The study of the relationship between mediumship and psychopathology needs more empirical attention. Examples of what could be done can be found in recent research that does not support a relationship between pathology and mediumship (some recent research includes Moreira-Almeida, Lotufo Neto, & Greyson, 2007, Moreira-Almeida, Lotufo Neto, & Cardeña, 2008).

Further efforts could focus on old discussions of the similarities between alters seen in dissociative identity disorder and spirit controls (Hyslop, 1917: 12–29, Troubridge, 1922; see also Braude, 1988). Also, the topic may be explored following Janet's (1889) ideas that pathology may be related to mediumship through a common predisposition shared by both, and not necessarily as a simple cause and effect.¹³ Similar to other research areas about relationships of psychological processes or phenomena to psychopathology (e.g., Barrantes-Vidal, 2003, Pickles & Hill, 2006), this hypothetical shared predisposition may have different pathways affected by both situational and developmental variables that may lead into adjustment or maladjustment.

Regardless of comparisons between mediums and non-mediums, there could be explorations about the possible existence of subgroups of mediums who show pathological tendencies. That is, while mediumship may not be generally related to psychopathology, there could be exceptions to the rule. This is perhaps similar to research conducted with presumably normal individuals who exhibit fantasy proneness, which is not in and of itself pathological, but may nonetheless be positively related to results on measures of pathology (Rhue & Lynn, 1987). Furthermore, we might also try to find evidence for Myers' (1903) view that the normal may use similar pathways of expression as the abnormal.¹⁴

Flournoy (1900) reminded us that Héléne Smith showed “disturbances of motility and sensibility, from which she seems entirely free in her normal state” (p. 441). While not all mediums have shown such disturbances, and I doubt many current mediums would, this brings up the study of neuropsychological dysfunctions. Possible research topics may include, among others, problems with orientation, attention, perception, memory, language skills, reasoning, and motor performance (Lezak, Horwieson, Loring, Hannay, & Fischer, 2004).

Another research possibility is that pointed out by such authors as Lombroso

(1909) and Morselli (1908) regarding physical mediumship. In their view, there could be individuals who exhibited simultaneous pathology and veridical phenomena. The idea is also consistent with the writings of psychotherapists such as Ehrenwald (1948).

Psychological and Parapsychological Experiences

From the days of William B. Carpenter (1853), to later times (Flournoy, 1900, Lebedzinski, 1924, Sudre, 1946), the medium has been seen as a person with great imaginal potential.¹⁵ However, there has been little research to put such assumptions to the test.

Much could be done today focusing on the constructs of absorption, boundary thinness, dissociation, fantasy proneness, hypnotic susceptibility, and transliminality, among others. Such constructs have shown positive relationships with parapsychological experiences in various questionnaire studies, suggesting the existence of a predisposition or a trait associated with these experiences that may be related to mediumship (Glicksohn, 1990, Hartmann, 1991, Myers, Austrin, Grisso, & Nickeson, 1983, Pekala, Kumar, & Marcano, 1995, Richards, 1991; see also discussion by Cardeña & Terhune, 2008).

The “disaggregation of personal perception” was described by Janet (1889:413) as a characteristic of both hypnosis and mediumship. In fact, dissociative experiences separate from mediumistic performances have been explored in a few modern studies with mediums (e.g., Hughes, 1992, Laria, 1998, Moreira-Almeida, Lotufo Neto, & Greyson, 2007, Negro, Palladino-Negro, Rodrigues Louzã, 2002, Reinsel, 2003, Roxburgh, 2008). While there is no doubt that mediums have dissociative experiences, as measured by standardized instruments, more could be done about the specific dissociative experiences they have and how they compare to the dissociative experiences of other individuals. One possible line of exploration, among many, is the relationship of mediumship to different types of dissociation (on the latter, see Brown, 2006, Cardeña, 1994). In addition to measures of absorption, depersonalization, and amnesia, this may also include somatoform dissociation (Nijenhuis, 2004).

Roll (1982) has suggested that some mediums have experiences suggestive of fantasy-proneness. These experiences include visions in childhood and difficulties in distinguishing fantasy from reality.

Some of the above-mentioned constructs—boundary thinness and transliminality—are theoretically related to ideas concerning various degrees of communication between the conscious and the subconscious mind. Such a notion was central to Myers’ (1903) conception of such phenomena as hypnosis, creativity, hallucinations, and mediumship. According to Flournoy (1901): “All the difference between mediums and ordinary people is that in the latter there

is a very pronounced gap . . . between wakefulness and daydreams. It is the opposite in mediums. . . ." (p. 127). Consistent with this idea, De Sermyn (1910) believed one of the defining features of mediums was "the facility with which the rapport between their conscious and unconscious will is produced" (p. 133). Scales to measure boundary thinness (Hartmann, 1991) and transliminality (Lange, Thalbourne, Houran, & Storm, 2000) may be employed in new research to test these ideas. Roxburgh (2008) did not find significant differences between mediums and non-mediums on boundary thinness. Furthermore, it is possible to conduct perceptual tests to measure the subliminal thresholds of mediums so as to assess directly if they have more perceptions of subliminal stimuli, perhaps indicating a more permeable barrier between conscious and subconscious than controls.

There is also a need to investigate other experiences mediums may have outside of their mediumistic performances. Charles Emmons' examination of autobiographies of mediums, and interviews with mediums, showed that their lives present many spontaneous parapsychological experiences (Emmons & Emmons, 2003). In their autobiographies, Gladys Osborne Leonard (1931) and Eileen J. Garrett (1939) mention that they had a variety of phenomena in their daily lives such as out-of-body experiences and apparitions. Mrs. Thompson saw spirits, heard voices, and perceived images in crystal balls (Myers, 1902:70). Hélène Smith had many experiences outside the seance room. In Flournoy's words:

Hélène's spontaneous automatisms have often aided her in, without ever having interfered with, her daily occupations. There is, happily for her, a great difference in intensity between the phenomena of her seances and those which break in upon her habitual existence, the latter never having caused such disturbance of her personality as the former.

In her daily life she has only passing hallucinations limited to one or two of the senses, superficial hemisomnambulisms, compatible with a certain amount of self-possession—in short, ephemeral perturbations of no importance from a practical point of view. Taken as a whole, the interventions of the subliminal in her ordinary existence are more beneficial to her than otherwise, since they often bear the stamp of utility and appropriateness, which make them very serviceable.

Phenomena of hypermnesia, divination, lost objects mysteriously recovered, happy inspirations, true presentiments, correct intuitions . . . she possesses in so high a degree that this small coin of genius is more than sufficient to compensate for the inconveniences resulting from the distraction and momentary absence of mind with which the vision is accompanied. (Flournoy, 1900:47)

New studies eliciting information from mediums could compare both

the prevalence, frequency, and variety of phenomena in their daily lives (e.g., hypnagogic imagery, ESP, and apparitional experiences), as assessed against control groups. In addition to expecting more experiences with mediums due to their presumed openness to a variety of influences, a possible prediction is that mediums would have more phenomena suggestive of discarnate agency (e.g., visual and auditory perceptions about the dead) than non-mediums. Furthermore, perhaps experienced mediums will show both a higher frequency and a higher level of control of these experiences than less-experienced mediums, and than non-mediums.

Another neglected area is the study of possible personality variables related to mediumship. Regarding the first, Schmeidler (1958) reported analyses of Rorschach responses generated by medium Caroline Chapman. The medium was said to show “little need for intimate personal involvement with others” (Schmeidler, 1958:153), as well as “inner meaning of events, symbolic values, [and] the appreciation of nature . . .” (p. 153). A few years later, Trick (1966) reported finding a tendency for field dependence in two mediums. Roxburgh (2008) found positive associations between mediumship and extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience, but no significant associations with agreeableness or conscientiousness.¹⁶

Other possibilities for future research may come from the statement that mediums show “excessive emotionalism” (Morselli, 1908(1):97), and are mainly characterized by “their tendency to distraction, to daydreams . . .” (De Sermyn, 1910:133). Work on these topics could be done using measures of emotions (Plutchik, 1989), daydreaming (Singer & McCraven, 1961), and distraction (Broadbent, Cooper, FitzGerald, & Parkes, 1982).

Finally, we may focus on cognitive studies of mediums. This may include tests for memory inhibition, facilitation, and cognitive interference, such as those conducted with DID patients (Dorahy & Irwin, 2004). Other performance tests may include those used to assess verbal and spatial ability, and problem-solving, among others.

Does Mediumship Change over Time?

There are many observations suggesting that mediumship is a developmental process. I am not concerned here with methods to develop mediumship but instead with observations suggesting changes in mediumship over time. Examples include the following observations made by John W. Edmonds of changes in a medium that, unfortunately, are not precise about the lapse of time between the changes shown by the medium, described as follows:

At first she was violently agitated in her person. She soon wrote mechanically; that is without any volition on her part, and without any consciousness

of what she was penning. . . . She next became a speaking medium. She was not entranced . . . but was fully aware of all she was saying and of all that occurred around her. She . . . was shown, through the instrumentality of her own mind, all the particulars of the wreck of the steamer *San Francisco*. . . . All this was several days before any news had reached the land of the accident to that vessel. . . . A few days brought minute confirmation of every incident which had been disclosed to her. . . .

She next became developed to speak different languages. She knows no language but her own, and a little smattering of boarding-school French. Yet she has spoken in nine or ten different tongues, sometimes for an hour at a time, with the ease and fluency of a native. . . .

About the same time her musical powers became developed. She has repeatedly sung in foreign languages, such as Italian, Indian, German, and Polish, and it is now not unfrequent that she sings in her own language, improvising both words and tune as she proceeds—the melody being very unique and perfect, and the sentiments in the highest degree elevating and ennobling.

Her next advance was to see spirits and spiritual scenes, and now scarcely a day passes that she does not describe the spirits who are present, entire strangers to her, yet very readily recognized and identified by their inquiring friends. . . .

At one time she was used as the instrument for delivering long and didactic discourses on the principles of our faith. Now she is mostly used to give moral and mental tests, which to many are very satisfactory. At one time she saw chiefly allegorical pictures; now she sees the reality of spiritual life. Once she wrote mechanically, but now by impression, knowing the thoughts she pens. Formerly it was difficult for spirits to converse through her; but now conversation, with anyone, however much a stranger to her, goes on with a freedom and ease most gratifying to the investigator. (Edmonds & Dexter, 1855(2):44–45)

The mediumship of Mrs. Piper showed changes over time both in the variety of spirit controls as well as in mode of expression. For example, the Phinuit control which was active from the 1880s to 1892 relied mainly on Mrs. Piper's voice to communicate while the G. P. control (from 1892 to 1897) relied more on writing (Sidgwick, 1915). In the case of H  l  ne Smith, the medium produced different phenomena in different time periods. After Flournoy published his famous study (Flournoy, 1900), a period during which he did not have access to the medium anymore, she went on to produce further Martian communications, and added new variants related to Uranus and to the Moon (Flournoy, 1901). Later on she presented what Lemaitre (1908) called a "new somnambulistic cycle" consisting of religious paintings. While Smith had produced paintings before, such as those related to Mars (Flournoy, 1900), she started having visions of Christ in 1900, and the first religious paintings appeared in 1903 and continued for several years.¹⁷

Evidence that mediums have had psychic experiences in childhood

(Emmons & Emmons, 2003, Chapter 52) suggests they may have had a predisposition to do so from the beginning. But there is a need for studies of the multiple factors—such as parenting, education, support, and training—that may have interacted with such a hypothetical predisposition across the medium's lifespan. Such work may allow us to identify common developmental pathways of mediumship.

Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this paper has been to suggest lines for future research with mental mediums using mainly the old psychical research literature as inspiration for ideas, with emphasis on psychological approaches. But such a complex phenomenon as mediumship needs to be studied in multiple ways, such as medically and anthropologically, among other perspectives that I have not emphasized in this paper (for a discussion of the psychosocial functions of mediumship, see Maraldi, 2009).

These studies encounter many problems. Among them is the difficulty of making sense of mediumship through relationships with other variables and processes that are not fully understood, such as dissociation, and the way the mind handles imagery. The lack of more detailed knowledge about the processes that complicate mentation in general—association of ideas, confusion of images, decoding of symbols—also hinders our progress in the understanding of mediumship.

Furthermore, our understanding of these manifestations may be complicated by the possibility that we may be dealing with different types of mediumship. While some cases of mediumship may be solely explained by the abilities of the medium to produce mentation based on psychological processes and social influences, other cases such as those of Piper and Leonard have presented veridical features and seem to require explanations beyond the conventional ones. Assuming these are different types of mediums, I wonder if they would differ in their relationship to the variables discussed in this paper.¹⁸ This may not be the case if we postulate, following Myers (1903), that veridical and non-veridical mediumship share the same subconscious processes of use of sensory and motor automatisms to convey messages. Consequently, if many of the variables discussed in this paper—dissociation, hypnotic susceptibility, or an openness to all kinds of experiences—manifests through the subconscious mind of the medium, they would be related to mediumship whether they can produce veridical content or not.

Then there is the issue of the interaction of many variables. Perhaps a model may be developed considering the interaction of early childhood experiences, later situational influences, including mediumistic training, and personality and cognitive variables.¹⁹

While I believe these variables are important, it is also important to assess cultural differences. For example, how does mediumship in countries with different cultural backgrounds such as Brazil and the United States compare regarding the variables discussed in this paper? After all, the social and religious factors that shape mediumship in Brazil—Afro-Brazilian cults and Kardecist spiritism—are generally different from those in which most mediumship develops in the States.

There are of course no simple solutions. In addition to continuing research in the above-mentioned areas, and in others not covered here, we may make significant advances if we could design studies of mediums that collected information in the same project from a variety of perspectives. A model in point was a report published about Italian medium Eusapia Palladino in which she was studied from the physical, physiological, psychological, and parapsychological perspectives (Courtier, 1908). Perhaps we could conduct research with a mental medium today in which there would be psychophysiological monitoring during the performance, analyses of possible patterns in the mentation (e.g., recurrent and symbolic images, predominant sensory modalities, distortions), assessment of personality and cognitive variables, and veridical mentation, and collection of information about the medium's childhood, family, social environment, mediumistic training, psychic experiences, health, and possible changes over time in the phenomena. While such a research program may not be practical or possible from the financial point of view, in theory it could provide much useful information about various aspects of mediumship.

Other literatures about investigations of particular individuals that may inspire our studies of mediums include those conducted with individuals with dissociative identity disorder (e.g., Jeans, 1976, M. Prince, 1908), and with cases of spirit possession (Crapanzano & Garrison, 1977). Students of mediumship could also emulate studies of single individuals with exceptional abilities (Obler & Fein, 1988), such as prodigious memory (Luria, 1987, Parker, Cahill, & McGaugh, 2006), and studies of neuropsychological disorders (Ogden, 2005) and hallucinatory experiences (Harris & Gregory, 1981, Schatzman, 1980). Today one remembers with respect the detailed studies done with mediums Mrs. Willett (Balfour, 1935), H el ene Smith (Deonna, 1932, Flournoy, 1900, 1901), and Mrs. Piper (Sidgwick, 1915), which could be used to guide further research. New studies could also focus on particular phenomena, as seen in past work about specific mediumistic phenomena such as paintings (Deonna, 1932), literary productions (W. F. Prince, 1927), and trance personalities (Progoff, 1964).²⁰

“The exact nature of mediumship,” wrote Horace Leaf (1919:125), “promises long to remain a mystery.” Nonetheless, the difficulties inherent in the study of the subject should not stop the research. It is my belief that the past

literature, used in conjunction with modern ideas, methodology, and creativity, can help researchers focus their efforts to increase our understanding of mental mediumship.

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Notes

- ¹ There are also many interesting observations about trance in the literature of physical mediums (e.g., Lombroso, 1909, Morselli, 1908).
- ² Although the focus of this paper is not on psychophysiology, it is interesting to note that William James (1886:105) mentioned that Piper's pupils contracted during trance. Hodgson (1892:5) simply stated that Piper's pupils reacted to light in trance. It is to be hoped that future studies of these issues will both be more systematic and reported in more detail.
- ³ Capron (1855:381) referred to the difficulties in separating spirit influence from that of the medium's mind. Kardec (1862, Chapter 19) believed that the medium could influence communications and that the content of his or her brain was used to form messages. Myers (1903(2):250) referred to a possible mix in trance communications of "mixed telepathy between the sitter, the sensitive's spirit, and the extraneous spirit." In his view, to separate possible influences one had to be familiar with the medium in question. This last statement reminds us of the importance of studying mediums over time so as to have information about the features of their mentation.
- ⁴ Symbols are not necessarily limited to mentation, as seen in the production of symbolic drawings such as religious scenes and emblems described by Crosland (1857).
- ⁵ Many writers have addressed the fragmentary nature of mediumistic communications in terms of both coherence and veridical content. Referring to Mrs. Piper, Oliver Lodge (1890) wrote: "In the midst of . . . lucidity a number of mistaken and confused statements are frequently made, having little or no apparent meaning or application" (p. 443).
- ⁶ Following the previously mentioned writers, Myers (1900:402) suggested that Kardec conveyed suggestions to his mediums.
- ⁷ James (1890), always fair to the opposite point of view, commented after the above quote as follows: "But the odd thing is that persons unexposed to spiritualist traditions will so often act in the same way when they become entranced, speak in the name of the departed, go through the motions of their several death-agonies, send messages about their happy home in the summer-land, and describe the ailments of those present" (James, 1890(1):394).
- ⁸ Twenty years later, Sudre (1946) published a book discussing personation phenomena in mediumship and in other phenomena. Unfortunately, the book does not seem to be well-known today.
- ⁹ These topics, and philosophical ones, have been discussed frequently by mediumistic communicators (e.g., Kelway-Bamber, 1920, Linton, 1855, Moses, 1883, *Thoughts*, 1886). Kardec (1862, 1867) developed a system out of communications which he used to provide a philosophical basis for spiritism and explanations for psychic phenomena. Bayless (1971) and Fontana (2009) discuss many examples of the "teachings" of the spirits received through mediums, with emphasis on the nature of the afterlife.

- ¹⁰ Another example of veridical and non non-veridical communications coming from Leonard can be found in Oliver Lodge's (1916) well-known discussion of messages presumably from his son.
- ¹¹ The interpretation of this is complicated by Hall's admission that there was a living person by that name whom he may have known about (Tanner, 1910:181).
- ¹² Many others have objected to the pathologizing of mediums (e.g., Kardec, 1862:263, Sprague, 1912:44–45).
- ¹³ Le Maléfan (1999) discusses different models of the postulated pathology–mediumship relationship, as seen in past French psychiatric literature.
- ¹⁴ According to Myers (1903):

It may be expected that supernormal vital phenomena will manifest themselves as far as possible through the same channels as abnormal or morbid vital phenomena, when the same centres or the same synergies are involved (Myers, 1903(2):84, italics in the original).

He further wrote about manifestations of a secondary self that

it seems probable that its readiest path of externalisation—its readiest outlet of visible action,—may often lie along some track which has already been shown to be a line of low resistance by the disintegrating processes of disease . . . If epilepsy, madness, & c., tend to split up our faculties in certain ways, automatism is likely to split them up in ways somewhat [sic] resembling these. (Myers, 1903(2):84)

- ¹⁵ I will discuss dreams and mediumship in another paper. Here I will only mention as a hypothesis that mediums, as compared to controls, may show a higher frequency of dream recall, and more reports of lucid, vivid, and unusual dreams.
- ¹⁶ See also Hearne (1989). Ideas for research can also be found in the literature about psychological characteristics of psychics (e.g., Schmeidler, 1982, Tenhaeff, 1972). There is also the issue of creativity in mediums, a topic discussed by Braude (2000) and Grosso (1997), and researched by Roxburgh (2008) with null results. Flournoy's (1900, 1901) and Deonna's (1932) writings focus on Héléne Smith's creations. The latter is a much-neglected study of mediumistic paintings, a topic with implications for the mediumship–creativity relationship (see also Osty, 1928).
- ¹⁷ The most detailed study of Smith's paintings, and a unique study in the literature of mediumship, was Waldemar Deonna's (1932). He argued that some of the reasons for changes in the phenomena were the medium's reactions to Flournoy's (1900) psychological analysis, and the fact that, due to a patron, she stopped working for a living and devoted her life only to her mediumship. This loss of her normal activities, Deonna speculated, led her subconscious mind to pay more attention to hallucinatory commands that "seemed to come from the beyond" (Deonna, 1932:59).
- ¹⁸ In practice, it is not that simple to separate mediums in terms of their production of veridical and non-veridical mentation. As seen in the case of Mrs. Leonard (Lodge, 1916, Thomas, 1928), mediums who have produced veridical phenomena also produce non-veridical ones that may have as their source only the intrapsychic processes of the medium. The mediumistic process, as Myers (1903) and Hyslop (1919) stated, is probably a mix of different influences.
- ¹⁹ On the interactions of some of these variables in Brazilian mediumship, see Krippner (1989) and Seligman (2005).
- ²⁰ Unfortunately, a good portion of modern psychological and psychiatric research has moved away from in-depth studies of specific individuals (for discussions, see Berkenkotter, 2008, Danzinger, 1990).

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