



**Expelling Spirits from Psychological Research: The Investigations of a Haunted House
by the Swedish Psychologist Poul Bjerre.**

Ivar N. Hjortfors Lozanovic

Master Thesis - Department of Theory and History of Psychology

[s4362004]

[June] [2025]

Department of Psychology

University of Groningen

Examiner/Daily supervisor: Dr.
Annette Mülberger

Second evaluator: Dr. Maarten
Derksen

A thesis is an aptitude test for students. The approval of the thesis is proof that the student has sufficient research and reporting skills to graduate, but does not guarantee the quality of the research and the results of the research as such, and the thesis is therefore not necessarily suitable to be used as an academic source to refer to. If you would like to know more about the research discussed in this thesis and any publications based on it, to which you could refer, please contact the supervisor mentioned.

Abstract

This thesis studies the psychical research of Poul Bjerre (1876-1964), a Swedish psychologist who is famous for introducing the ideas of Freud in Sweden. Beyond his major works in which Bjerre developed his own system of psychology, he also showed a lifelong interest in the study of the “paranormal”. Until now this side of Bjerre has received limited treatment and the following paper provides an in depth analysis of his published studies in psychical research. Central in my analysis is the debate between animists and spiritualists which took place within the psychical research community. Where the spiritualists claimed that paranormal phenomena proved the existence of spirits, while the animists rejected this stance and tried to show how everything could be explained with the hidden powers of the human organism. As we will see, Bjerre took a clear stance on the animist side and his psychical research is permeated with the effort to disprove the existence of spirits. My close reading of Bjerre’s work will highlight the uncertainties behind his attempt to “prove” the animist position, and his efforts to cover these uncertainties in order to achieve his goal. The interest of the current work is then twofold. First it presents the psychical research of Bjerre. Secondly, it brings light to the conflict between animists and spiritualists, by showing us the strategies an animist employed to undermine the stance of his opponents.

Key words: Poul Bjerre, Psychical research, Spiritualism, Animism, Spirits, Material phenomena

Expelling spirits from psychical research: the investigations of a haunted house by the Swedish psychologist Poul Bjerre.

Poul Bjerre (1876-1964) was a psychiatrist, psychologist, writer and sculptor and an active intellectual in the avant garde of the early 20th century (Nilsson and Bärmark, 1984). He was friends with such figures as the famous Dutch psychologist, Frederik Willelm van Eeden (1860-1932) and the femme fatale of Western intellectual circles, Lou Andreas-Salmoné (1861-1937) (ibd.). Bjerre is maybe most famous for his role of introducing psychoanalysis to Sweden, but he was an original thinker and psychologist in his own respect, writing books spanning across the subjects of philosophy, psychology and religion. He further wrote novels and plays, established a large psychodynamic practice in Stockholm and developed his own psychodynamic theory which he called “psychosynthesis” (Bjerre, 1923). Like other prominent names in dynamic psychology, such as Carl Jung, or Théodore Flournoy, Bjerre showed an interest in spiritualism and psychical research throughout his life. While several studies have commented upon Bjerre’s engagement in these border sciences (Sanner, 2009; Bärmark and Nilsson, 1983), no extensive investigation has yet been conducted (Falk, 2024. p. 209). The aim of the present work is to fill this gap and explore the nature of Bjerre’s psychical research. Before moving to Bjerre, a bit of context.

Spiritualism was a movement that started spreading across the Western world in the mid 19th century (Gutierrez, 2010). It revolved around the practice of communicating with spirits, which were contacted through a medium; a person with the special ability to channel messages from another spiritual world. Spiritualist gatherings were often of limited size, taking place in dark rooms in domestic environments. During these meetings extraordinary things were said to occur; tables would start levitating, deceased people would present themselves through the medium, or the latter would read participants' minds or tell their future. The spiritualists also claimed scientific legitimacy for their ideas, pointing to the phenomena of their meetings as empirical proof for the existence of spirits and a world beyond physical reality.

While most scientists ignored spiritualism and its claims, a limited group of scientists sought to investigate its legitimacy. In the UK and US these investigations were known as psychical research. A term that had been popularized by the Society for Psychical research in London (SPR), established in 1882, with the expressed aim to scientifically investigate the kind of phenomena occurring in spiritualist circles (Oppenheim, 1985; Beloff, 1993). These researchers tried to find evidence for such controversial phenomena as the direct communication between minds without the need for physical contact. While their research was generally rejected, among its members were many prominent scientists of this time. Including such names as William James, Henry Sidgwick, Frederic Myers, William Crookes, Henri Bergson, Marie Curie and Alfred Russel Wallace (Sommer, 2014; Oppenheim, 1985. p. 135).

In the historical period spanning between the mid 19th to the early 20th century one can broadly distinguish between three general positions towards the phenomena of psychical research. The spiritualists, who claimed that these investigations proved the existence of spirits from an otherworldly realm. The animists, who accepted the reality of these extraordinary phenomena while arguing that they all originated from the human organism (Wolffram, 2012)¹. Thereby taking a clear stance against the spiritualists. Then there was the group I will call the “orthodox scientists”, who rejected the reality of these extraordinary phenomena, and considered the standpoints of both animists and spiritualists to be pseudoscientific (Coon, 1992; Jastrow, 1900).

As of now much work has been dedicated to exploring how orthodox scientists undermined the scientific status of psychical research (Sommer, 2016; 2014; 2012a;2012b; Coon, 1992; Alvarado, 2017). The interest of Bjerre’s case is that he takes a clear animist stance and strives to undermine the scientific status of spiritualists. Some studies have investigated the

¹ Animism is the term Heather Wolffram uses in her research to denote the group which rejected the spirit-hypothesis while looking to explain the extraordinary through the human organism. I will adopt the terminology of Wolffram in the present paper.

conflict between animists and spiritualists (Wolffram, 2009; 2012), but much more has been written about the demarcation of orthodox scientists. The investigation of Bjerre's work offers an opportunity to extend our understanding of this internal division in psychical research. Before I turn to the nature of the animist-spiritualist conflict and Bjerre's role in it, it is good for the reader to know something about current work, and what it has found concerning the demarcation of orthodox scientists against psychical research in general.

Psychical research and what today goes under the name of parapsychology, are commonly placed in the category of pseudoscience. However, the fruit of recent historical work has been to question the legitimacy of this title, by showing us the dishonest strategies that orthodox scientists employed in order to undermine the status of psychical research (Sommer, 2014). The suggested reasons for this behaviour are diverse; scholars have for example emphasized that paranormal claims clashed with the materialistic worldview of orthodox scientists (Alvarado, 2017), but also that it threatened the public image of the newly established discipline of psychology which was fighting for its right to be a science (Coon, 1992)². Others have pointed to the often fearful response that psychical research caused, and how this fear appears to be a considerable motivation for its rejection (Sommer, 2016). Regardless of the reasons for this behaviour, orthodox scientists would pathologize psychical researchers (Sommer, 2012a), discredit their authority as scientists (Coon, 1992), and disseminate questionable experiments as disconfirmations of their work (Sommer, 2012b). These strategies were all the more dubious considering that many of those they attacked were respected scientists in other non-controversial fields (Noakes, 2008).

To give some concrete examples we can consider that of Albert Moll (1862-1939) and Joseph Jastrow (1863-1944). Both were pioneers of psychology, in Germany and America

² Among those who were eager to undermine the status of psychical research were many psychologists. Due to the fact that psychical researchers often presented their program as a "new psychology", a title which antagonistic psychologists felt eager to attack (Coon, 1992).

respectively, who engaged in extensive personal attacks of psychical researchers, arguing that they were mentally ill (Sommer, 2012a; Jastrow, 1900)³. Another example is the exposure of the great spiritualist medium and experimental subject of psychical research, Eusapia Palladino. She was a major source of “evidence” for the claims of psychical researchers and her exposure as a fraud obviously had a detrimental impact upon the field. The exposure was carried out by another founder of American psychology, Hugo Munsterberg (1863-1916). Upon closer historical analysis this famous “exposure” is actually found to be filled with inconsistency and contrivance (Sommer, 2012b). Yet, the problematic narratives promulgated by these fierce opponents of psychical research have played a central role in “de-legitimizing” the scientific status of the discipline.

As we will see, Bjerre’s stance as an animist and his opposition to the spiritualists, shows interesting parallels to the conduct of orthodox scientists. Before analyzing Bjerre’s work, I begin with an overview of the animist perspective and how it approached the extraordinary phenomena of psychical research. Then I move to Bjerre’s work as a case study of an animist and how he endeavours to prove the truth of his position.

Methods

The study can be considered an example of microhistory (Mülberger, 2025), as my focus is an in depth analysis of Bjerre’s published work in psychical research. This approach has the limitation of being narrow, restricting the possibility of broader generalizations. However, it has the merit of revealing details overlooked by more general approaches. It is through this microhistorical approach that the work of for example Andreas Sommer has revealed crucial details in the demarcation process of orthodox scientists (see above).

My approach can also be placed in a tradition of historical discourse analysis (Stuckrad,

³ This same pathologizing discourse actually continues to this day under the name of anomalistic psychology, where interest and pursuit of what today is known as parapsychology is explained through emotional and cognitive deficiencies (Zusne and Jones, 2014).

2021)⁴, as I try to uncover the meanings of Bjerre’s psychical research by closely analyzing his textual statements. These meanings are further informed by taking into account the broader historical context that his work belonged to. When I write of such strange phenomena as spirits and telepathy in the following, my concern is not to determine the ontological status of these phenomena. Rather I seek to analyze the meaning that these phenomena had in the conflicts of psychical research.

An organism-centered account of the extraordinary

Debates between animists and spiritualists cut through the world of psychical research in the late 19th century (Wolffram, 2012). A representative figure for the animist position was the German philosopher Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906), who published the work *Der Spiritualismus* in 1885, in which he coined the term “spirit-hypothesis” and developed an extensive argument against the existence of spirits (ibd.). While rejecting the existence of spirits, Von Hartmann also distanced himself from the stance of orthodox scientists by arguing that at least some extraordinary phenomena were real. For example he claimed that telepathy was real, that is, the ability of minds to communicate without reference to the physical senses. Von Hartmann also urged for the importance of investigating the phenomena presented in spiritualist practice. However, according to him all of these phenomena could be explained by the human organism, and that this explanation aligned itself with the frameworks of natural science. In contrast to what he considered to be the supernatural and unscientific stance of spiritualists (ibd.).

The organism-centered approach of the animists was intrinsically connected to the theories of the unconscious which had developed in the 19th century. Usually we think of Sigmund Freud as the man who “discovered the unconscious”, but this notion actually preceded his work by a century and had already been widely used by the romantic philosophers (Ellenberger, 1970). Von Hartmann was also one of its great architects, having a significant

⁴ See (Stuckrad, 2021. p. 82). Today discourse analysis usually implies an explicit and specified method, however here I use historical discourse analysis.

impact through his work *The Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869). Von Hartmann's stance toward the extraordinary, where he at once showed openness and reservation to its claims, was actually characteristic of the philosophy of the unconscious. From its antecedents in the work of animal magnetism which had introduced the practice of hypnosis and in its elaboration by the romantics, the unconscious was used to comprehend the supernatural in a naturalistic world view (Sanner, 2009). By extending the capacities of the individual mind into the vast landscapes of the unconscious, supernormal powers such as telepathy were explained. The unconscious united separate minds on a deeper level, and through the unconscious they could communicate in ways not possible through the physical senses of consciousness. This philosophy enabled its adherents to localize the extraordinary in the human being, and by doing so it claimed to provide a "natural" explanation for paranormal phenomena. Which had otherwise been embedded in a discourse which assigned their origins to supernatural beings such as demons and spirits.

This was the worldview which animist psychology had carved for itself in the 19th century, positioning itself somewhere in between the radical rejection of the extraordinary by orthodox scientists and the acceptance of the supernatural by the spiritualists. Just as the orthodox scientists had been eager to undermine the scientific status of psychical research in general, the animists attacked the scientific status of spiritualists within the world of psychical research itself. Following in the footsteps of von Hartmann, representatives of the psychology of the unconscious such as Pierre Janet, Theodore Flournoy and Carl Gustav Jung, would all contribute significantly to the development of its theories through the simultaneous investigation and pathologization of spiritualist mediums' (LaChapelle, 2011; Jung, 1902). They at once affirmed the reality of the extraordinary states of mediums while presenting these as signs of hysteria and multiple personality. The message was clear; the origins of their powers were to be found in a disturbed but fantastic mind. Not in the realm of "spiritual beings". This pathologization of spiritualist mediums has parallels to the pathologization which orthodox

scientists carried out against psychical researchers.

One of the main concepts that the animists used to interpret the phenomena of spiritualism was “multiple personality”. This concept had been introduced with the development of the theories of the unconscious (Carlsson, 1989; Ellenberger, 1970). It arose from the studies of individuals who exhibited dramatic shifts in their identity, sometimes changing between “selves” that spoke completely different languages and were mutually oblivious of one another’s existence (Ellenberger, 1970. pp. 126-141). From these case studies it was inferred that the conscious self was merely one possible construct on the surface of the unconscious mind. Previously such states had been framed within a christian worldview which interpreted them in terms of demonic possession (Ellenberger, 1970). Within the new philosophy of the unconscious other-worldly agency was replaced with the hidden powers of a this-worldly mind.

Just as demonic possession had been presented in a new framework, so would the claim of spiritualists. The most common proof which spiritualists presented for their cause was the possession of mediums as they took on the identities of deceased souls. From the animist standpoint this became another expression of multiple personality.

Dramatic shifts of personality were only one of many strange phenomena associated with spiritualism. Others concerned the apparent acquisition of information from deceased individuals, or from the future or the distant past. Out of all phenomena the most controversial kind was the materialization of whole figures out of thin air, which would interact with the members of the séance. These were the so-called spirit-materialization. For the spiritualists this was an incontestable truth for the spirit-hypothesis, but animists would seek to incorporate also these phenomena in their framework. A prominent representative on this issue was the famous psychical researcher and Nobel prize laureate in physiology, Charles Richet (1850-1935). Richet developed a theory which explained materializations as emanations of nervous force from the organism (Mülberger, 2016; Richet, 1923). He also emphasized the human unconscious as the locus of these extraordinary powers and further considered the spiritualists stance as the

“prescientific” stage of psychical research. Clearly demarcating that the animist stance was superior to the spiritualist.

This divergence in interpretation would divide the psychical research community in half. The same year that the SPR in London published their seminal work *Phantasms of the Living* (1886), prominent spiritualists of the society would leave due to the above reasons (Oppenheim, 1985. pp. 139-141). The same occurred in the major psychical research society of Germany, the Psychologische Gesellschaft in Munich. The spiritualist Carl du Prel (1839-1899), had established the society hoping to prove the “spirit-hypothesis”, however, due to the conflicting stances among its members Carl du Prel eventually left with those supportive of his views (Wolffram, 2009. pp. 68-70).

When considering the psychical research of Poul Bjerre it is important to frame it within the context of his broader work. Which was part of the philosophy and psychology of the unconscious. In building his own psychology Bjerre drew upon the early work of romantics and magnetists, and the later work of Freud⁵ (Bärmark and Nilsson, 1983). Inheriting this intellectual tradition, Bjerre aligned himself with the animist stance in psychical research and sought to protect its interests.

First Encounters with Spiritualism and the problem of material phenomena

Bjerre’s involvement in psychical research was already inspired by his early encounters with spiritualism during his late teens, a time which can also be seen as marking his introduction to the theories and practice of dynamic psychology. At this time he would read works on magnetism, and during his attendance of spiritualist seances he would learn the techniques of hypnosis (Nilsson and Bärmark, 1984. p. 56-66). Later, after having completed his studies in medicine and having become the student of the famous Swedish hypnotist Otto

⁵ See (Gyimesi, 2009). Freud was himself eager to distance his own theories from that of spiritualists, which seems to have been an important motivation for his strict emphasis on the sexual foundations of the mind and the unconscious. By relating the unconscious to sexuality he secured its “physical” or “natural” foundations, guarding it against any potentially supernatural associations.

Wetterstrand (1845-1907)⁶, he would embark upon experiments with a mediumistically talented woman in which he attempted to explain her extraordinary abilities using the theories of the unconscious. Towards the end of his life he would publish his second work on psychical research. Which consisted of a republication of his previous experiment, with further reflections on the general state of the field (Bjerre, 1947).

As in the rest of the Western countries, spiritualism appeared in Sweden in the 1850s, but it took until the 1870s for it to become a prevalent subject of public debate (Falk, 2024. P. 54). The first figure who publicly positioned himself towards spiritualism was the professor of cultural history, Viktor Rydberg (1828-1895). In 1858 he published an article in a Gothenburg newspaper commenting on spiritualism and its cultural significance. He had been attracted to it because of the growing interest in spiritualist practice among the inhabitants of the city (Sanner, 2009; Sundeen, 2022).

About thirty years later, in 1894, Poul Bjerre who was then a 18 year old highschool student in Gothenburg, would attend his first séance with the then famous English medium Mrs d'Espérance. Born Elisabeth Jane Puttock (1848-1919), d'Esperance was already a popular medium in the strong spiritualist circles of NewCastle before she moved to Gothenburg in 1880. There she continued her career as a medium among the upper class circles of the city, becoming known as "The Gothenburg medium" (Parker and Adrian, 2016). Mme d'Esperance was especially known for her ability to produce the most extraordinary kind of phenomena known as materializations; in their simplest forms they consisted of the appearance of matter out of thin air, in their more complicated form whole human beings were said to materialize in the same fashion.

Attending her séances Bjerre was convinced of the reality of those controversial and

⁶ See (Ellenberger, 1970. p. 88). Otto Wetterstrand was one of the great practitioners of hypnotism in late 19th century Europe. He had introduced the method of prolonged sleep in hypnosis. His practice was based in Stockholm, and "His strange methods gave rise to a legend depicting him as an extraordinary modern wizard." (ibd.).

extraordinary phenomena that were said to take place in spiritualist séances. However, like many others who accepted their reality he took issue with the spirit-hypothesis. Bjerre presents us with the following note which he had taken after one of his seances with d'Esperance as an 18 year old;

I can't accept the spirit-hypothesis, even if it is fundamentally so simple, so natural. Through it everything can be explained. Yet it has the essential fault of being non-scientific. It is not built on simple laws of nature. If one assumes it, then these phenomena cease to be something natural. They remain supernatural. And this is what I can't accept. (Bjerre, 1947. p. 9).⁷

We see here that Bjerre had already positioned himself on the animist side of debate in psychical research, by accepting the veracity of the phenomena while rejecting the spirit-hypothesis. That Bjerre's perspective had been shaped by animist discourse can be seen from the literature he was reading during this time. Among which were books such as *Le Magnétisme Animal* (1887), an important work on hypnotism and extraordinary phenomena by Alfred Binet and Dr Charles Féré, or *Manuel de l'étudiant magnétiseur* (1838) by the famous magnetist Baron du Potet (1796-1881) (Bärmark and Nilsson, 1983. p. 56). Adopting an animist stance, we see that Bjerre clearly positions himself against the "supernatural" as something unscientific. Instead he demands a "natural" explanation, which is grounded in this world and does not invoke the agency of other-wordly beings.

In his demand for a natural explanation there was a specific kind of phenomena, seen during his séances with d'Espérance, that appeared especially problematic to Bjerre;

⁷ The original is in Swedish and all the translations of Bjerre's text are made by myself.

How should we explain the tableturnings and most of all the materializations? Don't we have to presuppose personal invisible beings? For the moment it no doubt looks like that. But I won't accept it. It requires a wild fantasy in order to believe that the members of the séance could themselves be the causes of these phenomena. But I don't consider it to be completely impossible. (Bjerre, 1947. p. 8)

As was stated previously, the materialization phenomena seen during séances were presented as the most powerful evidence for the spirit-hypothesis. It is not exactly clear what kind of materializations Bjerre experienced here, for d'Espérance's performance would span from the simple production of a silk-like substance that the participants could touch, all the way to the materialization of human-like figures (Parker and Adrian, 2016). Whatever Bjerre experienced, the phenomena appeared to have left a strong impression and we can sense his desperation to solve this problem. That is, to give this phenomena a "natural" explanation, avoiding the spirit-hypothesis.

After his experiences with Mme d'Espérance Bjerre attended medical school, and returned to his interests in psychical research by the end of his studies in the first years of the 20th century (Nilsson and Bärmark, 1984). In the opening paragraph of his first and only published experiment, *Fallet Karin* (1905), Bjerre immediately elaborates on the issue of "material phenomena", writing;

In the great chaos of peculiar and unexplained phenomena which are captured by the name "spiritualism" one can distinguish two groups - one could call them the psychical and the material. (Bjerre, 1947. p. 29)⁸

⁸ This quote comes from the study which was originally published in 1905 (Bjerre, 1905), but which was republished, along with other texts, in his later work "*Spökerier*" in 1947. I use this later version which is generally identical with the first, except for minor changes in wording.

The “psychical” group of phenomena included such things as telepathy, clairvoyance and automatic writing. Concerning these, Bjerre writes that while they are outside our everyday experiences they do not shake “our fundamental understanding of the relationship between our inner life and the outside world.” (ibd.). He continues by stating that this group of phenomena have been accounted for by scientific work through the positing of such ideas as “psychic automatism in general, of the hysterical splitting of the personality, of thought-transference etc.” (ibd.) and that it is therefore “barely helpful for the spiritualists to stubbornly maintain that these are revelations of other worldly living intelligences” (ibd. pp. 29-30). According to Bjerre the animist discourse had successfully accounted for the “psychical” phenomena, and the spirit-hypothesis was redundant. However, it was different with the “material” phenomena as Bjerre would explain;

It is different with the phenomena in the second group, the material ones. Here we are concerned with occurrences, that by the first impression appear to shake the most solid foundations of our worldview. We conclude for example, that objects move without any visible cause; we hear all kinds of unmotivated sounds such as rappings, poundings in the wall and the floor, the playing of instruments etc. we likewise see unmotivated phenomena of light; we witness how material bodies dissolve and appear before our eyes and in our hands. After a fifty year battle these phenomena have conquered the recognition of researchers; only concerning this last group the interpretations are somewhat divided. (ibd.).

Bjerre was not alone in postulating a difference of kind between the psychical and the material phenomena. Charles Richet would present the same distinction in his magnum opus on psychical research, the *Traite Metapsychique* (1923). Metapsychics being the name that Richet

used for psychical research. In his treatise the boundary between material and psychical phenomena is made explicit by dividing the book into two parts, each dealing with one group of phenomena⁹. Concerning the psychical phenomena Richet writes that they can be “admitted without reference to any known laws of living or inert matter, or any change in our concepts of the different physical energies-heat, light, electricity, gravitation, etc., which we are accustomed to measure and specify.” (Richet, 1923. p. 5). This group of phenomena included such things as telepathy, where there was no direct action on physical reality, but only so to say “mental” or “inner” effects. As we can see, these were not considered to interfere with the known laws of natural science. Commenting on the part of the book dealing with the material group, Richet writes that it “on the contrary, deals with certain material phenomena inexplicable by ordinary mechanics-the movement of objects without contact, haunted houses, phantoms, materializations that can be photographed, sounds, and lights-all of them tangible realities affecting our senses.” (Ibd.). We see here the same issue and a very similar tone to that what Bjerre expressed above. From both of their accounts it appears that the material phenomena were especially hard to integrate in their worldview. According to Richet, they questioned the established laws of natural science and Bjerre writes that they [...] shake the most solid foundations of our worldview.” (Bjerre, 1947. p. 30).

The problematic status of these phenomena can also be seen in the resistance they faced within the discourse of psychical research. Von Hartmann, while accepting telepathy, was an outspoken critic of material phenomena arguing that mediums produced them through fraudulent means (Wolffram, 2012). Frank Podmore (1856-1910), a leading member of the SPR in London adopted the same stance (Oppenheim, 1985. pp. 147-148). This position can also be seen in the Swedish context. In an important work on spiritualism and psychical research in the

⁹ Richet does not use the terms “psychical” and “material” like Bjerre, but rather he uses “subjective” and “objective” respectively (Richet, 1923). To my knowledge the way that both authors use these terms are synonymous. As long as the extraordinary phenomena stay on a “mental” level they are subjective/psychical and as soon as there is direct mind-matter interaction they become objective/material.

late 19th century, Karl af Geijerstam (1860-1899), argued for the reality of telepathy, while dedicating a significant portion of the book to explaining how material phenomena were produced through fraud (Falk, 2024. pp. 203-206). There is an interesting parallel between the position of these psychical researchers and that of orthodox scientists, considering that the latter frequently forwarded the “fraud-hypothesis” against the phenomena of psychical research in general. In this case we see those adopting an animist stance forwarding the fraud-hypothesis against the material phenomena specifically, which spiritualists otherwise considered the strongest proof for the existence of spirits.

In contrast to the psychical phenomena that were more readily accepted and compatible within the frames of an animist discourse, the material kind appeared to question this very framework. Already having been convinced of the reality of material phenomena during his seances with Mme d’Espérance, Bjerre would not simply deny their reality as some others had done. The problem for Bjerre became how to extend the animist discourse to comprehend also these phenomena, and this was the main task he had set himself in his investigations with Karin.

The Karin Case: Constructing Evidence Against Spirits

The investigation in the Karin Case was a joint collaboration between Bjerre and his lifelong friend Hjalmar Wijk (1877-1965), whose significant role in this study will become clear as we proceed. Wijk was the son of Olof Wijk, a wealthy industrialist and liberal politician in Gothenburg. He went to high school with Bjerre and the two of them remained friends through the rest of their lives (Bärmark and Nilsson, 1983. pp. 96-98)¹⁰. Before their investigations with Karin Nauckhof, Bjerre and Wijk experimented with another woman whom they called Margit. In these experiments they had used the method of hypnotism to invoke extraordinary states in

¹⁰ After his father's death Wijk took over his successful business. Actually he had wished to pursue an intellectual career and had reservations about pursuing the path of a business man. However he remained an active participant in the intellectual circles of Europe and made significant donations to cultural projects. Among which he funded much of Bjerre's literary production and also served as one of the main donors for the alternative community of Wilhelm van Eeden outside of Amsterdam (Bärmark and Nilsson, 1983. pp. 96-98).

Margit where her sense of touch was claimed to extend beyond her physical body. So they would for example poke the air around her with a needle and she would respond as if actually being stung. At this time Wijk went on a journey through Europe, during which he met Charles Richet with whom he shared their findings. To which the latter responded with enthusiasm (Bärmark and Nilsson, 1983. pp. 141-142). However, the study was never published, the reasons for which I do not know.

The technique of hypnotism which Bjerre and Wijk used in their experiment was a common method in psychical research. Owing to the fact that hypnotized individuals had a long reputation for producing extraordinary phenomena (Plas, 2012). Bjerre had first learnt to use hypnotism during his séances in Gothenburg and later through his practice with Otto Wetterstrand. In their following experiment with Karin they would use this method again, which had achieved such interesting results with Margit.

In the year 1904 Karin Nauckhof, 27 years old, and her husband moved into a house in a small village called Hornsö close to the south east coast of Sweden. In this house strange things started happening, such as rappings in the walls, objects in the home moving on their own, footsteps being heard when no person was actually moving. Despite the efforts of the couple and their guests to locate the cause of the phenomena it remained a mystery. Consequently rumors started spreading that the house was haunted, rumors which made it into the newspapers. It was Wijk who first read about the case and then shared it with Bjerre, after which the two decided to visit the Nauckhof's and take advantage of this opportunity to continue their psychical research (Bärmark and Nilsson, 1984. p. 141-143).

The visit lasted for two weeks, during which Wijk and Bjerre lived with the couple and performed experiments with Karin. Using the method of hypnosis, they sought to produce the mysterious rappings on command by suggesting their occurrence to Karin while she was in hypnotic sleep. With this method they hoped to show that the origins of these extraordinary phenomena was Karin herself. In the following publication of their experiment they claimed that

the rappings were successfully produced with their method, to the point of appearing at the specific time and order which had been suggested through hypnosis. This seemingly proved what they went to find out; that Karin herself was the cause and not some independent entity or spirit. Bjerre published their study in 1905, under the title *Fallet Karin* (the Karin Case), and Wijk published a separate version which differed from Bjerre's in some crucial respects. The significance of this divergence will be considered in due time, but first I will present and analyze the rhetoric through which Bjerre sought to explain the rappings.

One of the main goals which Bjerre endeavours to achieve in the Karin case is to associate the extraordinary phenomena surrounding Karin with the diagnosis of multiple personality. This diagnosis became relevant as Karin had developed a relationship with an entity by the name of Piskator in her previous experiences as a spiritualist medium, and the couple claimed that Piskator was causing the strange phenomena in the house (Bjerre, 1947. P. 42-43). The task Bjerre set himself was to show how this Piskator was a construct of Karin's unconscious and how her mind produced the paranormal phenomena through this unconscious "other". However, according to both Bjerre and Wijk, Karin herself rejected the spirit-hypothesis and claimed that Piskator was an expression of her own mind (Ibd.; Wijk, 1905. pp. 146-147). It is interesting that not only Bjerre and Wijk, but also Karin adopts this interpretation. Highlighting how laypeople engaged in spiritualist practice drew on animist discourse.

In the experimental trials of the study, Bjerre would hypnotize Karin and seek to produce the rappings through the means of suggestion. In other words, he would give Karin instructions while she was in a hypnotized state. However, Bjerre never directly addressed Karin, but asked her, to ask Piskator, to produce so and so many rappings at this or that time. In this way Karin maintained the role of a medium, as in spiritualist practice, but in this case she mediated the communication between Bjerre and her unconscious "other". This setup is interesting because it highlights the underlying similarity in practice, between two discourses which were otherwise antagonistic. Here there is still communication with an "entity", but the conflict revolves around

the meaning that should be attributed to this entity.¹¹

Commenting on the first hypnotic session with Karin, Bjerre writes “First of all we must find out, if on the other side of the deep sleep there exists a constructed state of consciousness” (ibid. p. 54). Initially, Bjerre avoided mentioning Piskator, to not make the mistake of constructing him, rather than “finding” him in her mind. Bjerre would ask if she knew what the cause of the rappings was, hoping that Piskator would appear spontaneously to Karin’s mind. However, when Karin leaves him without an answer, Bjerre writes that it was “necessary to actualize “Piskator” in her consciousness, when this is the only possible entrance for our attempts” (ibid. p. 55). So he asked her “Do you see “Piskator?”” (ibid.) To which Karin answered no, and that he is “far away” (ibid.). Bjerre then asked “Is there nobody else here?” (ibid.) to which Karin responded by saying that an old woman was there (ibid.). After this the hypnotic session is terminated, and it is interesting that no attention or comment is given to this old woman that Karin reports seeing.

In the next session Bjerre immediately asked “do you see “Piskator?””, to which Karin again answered “no, there is something white in the way” upon which Bjerre asked “Don't you think he would like to come here?” (p. 57). We see how Bjerre is working hard to bring about the presence of this “unconscious other” that is supposed to cause the phenomena. In their last experiment, Bjerre asks Karin whether Piskator could move an object. Karin says “no”. Bjerre objects by saying “but Piskator was able to move a chair last night” to which Karin says that it was not Piskator but “It was - the old woman”. Again the old woman appears but the topic is quickly discarded as Bjerre writes “she says this doubtingly, apparently endeavouring a last escape from the suggestion” (p. 63).

On the one hand Bjerre clearly endeavours to activate the presence of Piskator, and on

¹¹ Inga Sanner emphasizes this point in her own work on spiritualism and psychical research. Showing how pervasive similarities existed in actual practice, beneath the “ideological” conflicts concerning the “right” interpretation of this practice (Sanner, 2009).

the other he seems to ignore the spontaneous figures arising to Karin. Upon reading the text I wonder to what extent Bjerre himself, as he writes, “actualized” Piskator. From the perspective of current historical work, the socially constructed nature of multiple personality has been highlighted. Famously in the work of Ian Hacking (Hacking, 1992), who shows how the prevalence of the diagnosis has fluctuated with the prevalence of a discourse that emphasized its existence. The current case is suggestive of an example where a “multiple” was constructed.

From the text itself it is hard to tell why such an explicit focus is directed towards this particular figure and why Piskator is effortfully summoned instead of taking into account the “old woman” who appeared spontaneously. This “old woman” is barely given a single comment, beyond a passing remark, throughout the whole text. One clue to this situation may be the psychopathological framework which Bjerre uses in accounting for the extraordinary. A framework that as we saw was already an established tradition in explaining spiritualist phenomena. The idea of Piskator, which had already been suggested by the Nauckhof’s and which was grounded in Karin’s personal history, provided a ready made diagnosis of multiple personality. By securing the reality of this diagnosis Bjerre could connect the phenomena to Karin’s organism and psychic constitution.

Wijk and Bjerre’s efforts to frame the extraordinary phenomena within a psychopathological discourse can also be seen at another point. Both begin their reports by interpreting Karin’s past of illness in terms of hysteria, while explaining how these symptoms relate to her paranormal powers. Writing of Karin’s practice as a spiritualist medium, Wijk comments “[...] this process offers certain points of contact with Karin’s attacks of hysteria; not only do the tremors resemble each other, but also her state of mind, in both cases, presents certain similarities...” (Wijk, 1905. pp. 146-147). Bjerre goes so far as writing that “The hysterical symptoms are different expressions of this process, - which first culminates in the creation of a subconscious personality - only when this has occurred does the process become strong enough to lead to the here studied expression of it (the rappings)” (Bjerre, 1947. pp. 81-82. Within

brackets added by me). Here Bjerre tries to make a necessary connection between psychopathology and the rappings, and by extension with spiritualist phenomena more broadly. All of these phenomena are to be explained by reference to organismic states, especially disturbed ones, and along these lines Bjerre concludes that “We then claim that the studied phenomenon consists of an objective sound, produced through an organic process which has its origin in Karin’s nervous system [...]” (p. 75). On the one hand, Bjerre argues for the reality of the extraordinary phenomenon as an “objective” and not merely a hallucinatory effect. In this way defending the reality of “material phenomena”. On the other hand, these phenomena are claimed to arise from Karin herself, from the psychopathological state of her constitution, from her “nervous system”. Thereby “disproving” the spirit-hypothesis.

Hiding uncertainties

After having established a relationship with Piskator, Bjerre and wijk performed three experiments where they impelled Piskator to produce the rappings following their instructions. Their organic etiology was wholly reliant upon the success of these experiments. Here they claimed to show that by manipulating Karin’s unconscious through hypnosis the phenomena could be produced at will. Therefore Karin herself was their cause. However, it is on this point that uncertainties arise.

In the first session with Karin, Bjerre suggested that Piskator should appear “Tonight at eleven, precisely at eleven.” and “then he shall make three hard beats” (Bjerre, 1947. p. 58). After the suggestion that evening, at precisely eleven, three beats are reported to take place. However, the sequence of three beats, occurred not once as instructed, but two more sequences of three beats followed. Despite this slight irregularity it was a success, the beats followed the suggested sequence and took place at the specified time. In the next session, Bjerre instructs Piskator to come at half past nine in the evening, and make three beats, three times in a row. Half past nine the beats appear, sequences of three, three times, but the sequence continues to repeat itself beyond the suggested limits. Again an apparent success, with some irregularities (ibid. pp. 59-

62). In the last session Bjerre asked Karin after hypnotizing her “To show that he obeys us in everything. Let him come today at five in the afternoon” (ibid. p. 63). With the further suggestion that he should only beat four times and then leave. The purpose of this experiment was to produce the phenomena in daylight, as they usually only occurred during the night. Later that day, with a fifteen minute delay at a quarter past five, a sequence of beats in the pattern of four continues, but again for an indefinite time.

These experiments appeared to suggest the relative obedience of the phenomena to the suggestions given in hypnosis. However, as we see, none of the instructions were completely obeyed. Concerning this Bjerre writes “When we investigate higher, more complicated psychical processes, one should never hope to find them proceeding with mathematical certainty.” (ibid. p. 65). Meaning that the irregularity is expected when studying phenomena such as these, and the only important thing according to Bjerre was, that the “[...] attempts fully convince us that the rappings are produced through our suggestions.” (ibid.). The conclusion of which is that “the first and absolute cause of the rappings is Karin and her psychic constitution” (ibid. p. 75).

In contrast to Bjerre’s confident conclusion, we have already seen some uncertainties above, such as the neglect of the old woman, the explicit evocation of Piskator, and the irregularity of the rappings. The situation becomes much more uncertain when we compare Bjerre’s report to that of Wijk.

As mentioned above, Wijk and Bjerre published separate versions of the study, and the reason for this was a disagreement concerning the presentation of the results (Nilsson and Bärmark, 1984. p. 148). Furthermore, their studies were published in different countries. Probably so that their accounts of the event would not clash with one another. Bjerre first published in Sweden and some years later in Germany. Wijk published his study in French and in English. The latter is the version I refer to here. It was published in 1905 under the title *Karin: An Experimental Study of Spontaneous Rappings* in the *Annals of Psychical Research* (Wijk, 1905). In Wijk’s version we are presented with several details and events which Bjerre

had omitted.

First we may notice another appearance of the “old woman”, concerning which Wijk writes “To Bjerre's question whether it is only Piscator who is in the habit of knocking, or if it is also the old woman that she described in the previous seance, she replies that it is also the old woman.” (pp. 163-164). Like Bjerre, Wijk discards the importance of the old woman. However, it is telling that this instance is left out from Bjerre's report; where the old woman not only appears but where Karin also claims that she is responsible for the rappings. The neglect of this figure was already commented upon above, where I suggested that it did not fit the psychopathological discourse that these men pursued in their explanation. The omission of this specific instance from Bjerre's report further supports the idea that incompatible information was being excluded.

Another point at which the uncertainty of the experiments becomes evident, is in Wijk's explicit consideration of the irregularity of the rappings. In contrast to Bjerre who barely problematizes this point. Commenting on the irregularity of the final experimental session, Wijk informs us that “The result of the suggestion we had given was less accurate on this occasion than in the previous experiments : the phenomenon occurred a quarter of an hour too late [...]” (pp. 170-171). Comments such as these are present throughout Wijk's report, and while this may appear as a minor detail, its effect on the narrative is significant because it makes the tone of uncertainty explicit. In contrast, Bjerre never reflects upon the irregularity beyond the point when it is discarded as being “expected” from higher mental processes, in this way presenting the results in a confident light.

At another point Wijk discloses that “I count three or four groups of four rappings, then two of six, and afterwards two of three rappings, etc., quite irregularly.” (ibd.). While Bjerre writes concerning the same attempt “the beats of four is predominant” (Bjerre, 1947. p. 64). Here it appears that Bjerre hides the uncertainty behind the word “predominant”, giving the impression that the manipulation of the rappings had again succeeded, while Wijk discloses that

the rappings had actually failed to reproduce the pattern suggested during hypnosis.

Beyond Bjerre's tendency to omit certain details of situations, Wijk reports several trials with Karin where the suggestions completely failed. So in one instance Bjerre hypnotizes Karin and tells her that Piskator shall not come that night. In disobedience to the instructions the rappings take place anyway, on which Wijk comments "This is the first time that the phenomenon occurred in direct opposition to our suggestion, and Karin was right when she warned us that Piskator would come in any case." (p. 172). At another point Bjerre seeks to summon Piskator immediately during hypnosis but difficulties appear, and Wijk reports the following; "she whispers, " I cannot," and " he won't," and it appears as if the rapport between the hypnotiser and herself is about to be broken completely. Bjerre has to give up the attempt, and has a good deal of difficulty in calming her." (p. 173).

A final attempt is made where Bjerre suggests that Piskator is to return the next time he hypnotizes her. The next day when Bjerre puts her into trance nothing occurs, concerning which Wijk comments "We had expected that Piskator would come, by reason of yesterday's suggestion, and dominate Karin's imagination; but, instead, it seems as if his image had become completely effaced." (p. 174). None of these failed attempts were reported as part of the "official" experiment by Wijk, but as certain side attempts. It is significant that all these "unofficial" attempts had been negative, and one wonders if they would have been presented as part of the official experiment if they had shown positive results. It is further striking that Bjerre omitted all of this information, which would have made his confident conclusions about the origination of the rappings far less certain.

Bjerre's omission of information, his clear attempt to present the case in a specific light favouring his own stance, and on top of this his absolute certainty concerning the validity of his conclusions. All of this receives some explanation in Bjerre's commentary on the Karin case 42 years later, which almost reads like the confession of a psychical researcher. Maybe it was his old age, but Bjerre appears to reflect quite transparently on his earlier involvements in the field

and upon the motivations which drove him at that time. The work was published in 1947, consisting of a republication of the Karin case and four additional chapters. Reflecting upon the Karin case Bjerre tells us that;

During that time I wrote science with capital S and went to the work with a faith which I hoped to get affirmed. And the liberation I experienced was the liberation of the believer when he finds new evidence for his God's omnipotence (Bjerre, 1947. p. 23).

The liberation refers to the proof he established against the spirit-hypothesis. Despite Bjerre's openness in reflecting upon his desire to undermine the spiritualist standpoint, he did not doubt the value of the work which he had conducted in his youth. To the contrary it constituted a major part of this later publication which in large continued the polemic against the spirit-hypothesis. This polemic is made very explicit in this work, when Bjerre writes that with the Karin case he sought to "reach the old ark with a secure and explosive torpedo" (Bjerre, 1947. p. 148), the old ark being the belief in "spirits". The polemic is also explicit in the title of this work, "*Spökerier*", which is literally translated as "hauntings", with an additional tone of irony, and quotation marks.

Conclusion

In his efforts to localize the extraordinary in the human organism, Bjerre is a clear example of the animist stance in psychical research. We see how he molds the presentation of his case in order to fit this framework, how the notion of multiple personality is projected upon the situation and uncertainties excluded to strengthen the narrative. Lastly, we see Bjerre's conscious effort to disprove the spirit-hypothesis rather than testing it in an honest scientific spirit. This case specifically highlights two interesting points in the demarcation of animists against spiritualists. First, the parallels in Bjerre's conduct to that of orthodox scientists in their respective struggle to undermine psychical research in general. Secondly, the special problem of material phenomena in this demarcation process.

In the beginning we saw some of the strategies that orthodox scientists employed to undermine the scientific status of psychical research. The significance of the present case has been to show important parallels in the conduct of Poul Bjerre. Concerning the motivations of orthodox scientists to demarcate from psychical research, scholars have pointed to the problem which paranormal phenomena presented to their worldview. The orthodox scientists held on to a view of the mind as bound to the physical organism and the physical senses, while psychical research questioned this position. However, the same conflict reappears in the demarcation of animists. Holding on to the idea of the mind as centered in the human organism, they would

attack the position of spiritualists as superstitious and unscientific. Just as the orthodox scientists were ready to play foul in order to protect their position, so Bjerre was ready to do the same.

It is significant that Bjerre's efforts took place around the issue of material phenomena. As we saw above, these phenomena were especially controversial and difficult to integrate in a natural scientific worldview. One of the most common claims that orthodox scientists would forward against psychical research, was that their "findings" had been produced through fraud. The so-called fraud hypothesis. As we saw above, this same rhetoric was employed by animists against the "material phenomena", most notably by von Hartmann. Bjerre did not accept the fraud hypothesis, but as we see from the current analysis, he was ready to commit another type of "fraud" in order to integrate the material phenomena in an animist discourse. This highlights the tension which material phenomena presented to the animists. If future work could answer in more depth why the material phenomena were so problematic, I think we would learn much about the nature of the animist worldview.

Considering that the present study was a case study, the conclusions we can draw from it are limited. Above all it is interesting by pointing out the parallels between Bjerre's conduct and that of orthodox scientists. Concerning the latter group, the merit of the historical work has been to question their authority on the subject of psychical research. The dishonesty we see in Bjerre's work also questions the authority of his claims, but it would be interesting to know to what extent such dishonesty was prevalent among the demarcation of animists. On the point of dishonesty, recent historical research has shown a clear asymmetry between orthodox scientists and psychical researchers. It is the former which are truly eager to attack and undermine the work of the latter. Now the question is, can a similar pattern be observed between animists and spiritualists? Or do they stand in a more symmetrical relationship, where they equally try to

undermine the status of the other?¹²

To answer this question it will not be enough to merely study the rhetoric of each party. Because on that level both sides present a polemic in which the other is portrayed as unscientific (Wolffram, 2012). In the case of orthodox scientists, the close historical analyses of Andreas Sommer have been crucial in digging down beneath the rhetoric to exhibit the dishonest strategies which backed their claims (see for example; Sommer, 2012b). In the present case it is also the merit of a close analysis which has brought out, not only Bjerre's position, but also the means by which he backed it up. This type of "microhistorical" work seems indispensable in answering the question which I see the current study presenting (Mülberger, 2025).

Some limitations

I want to note that a limited amount of possibly relevant literature concerning Bjerre's psychical research was considered in the present study. I only used his and Wijk's published work, and the biography that has been written about Bjerre. The latter of course contains extensive material. However, its primary concern was far from documenting Bjerre's psychical research. A further and fuller investigation that makes a more comprehensive effort to collect all relevant documents would prove fruitful in giving an even fuller picture of his thoughts and attitudes on this point. Such an effort could even provide a somewhat different perspective than what has been presented here, either confirming what I have written or not.

I would also like to comment on my own opinion on the present matter. Do I believe in the reality of these extraordinary phenomena? Yes, I am prone to accept the reality of many of these phenomena, or at least consider them "natural possibilities". To someone who takes a skeptical position towards the present subject my treatment may appear uncritical. Seeing that I

¹² One fact that would speak in favour of the asymmetry hypothesis is the following; three hypotheses were forwarded to explain paranormal phenomena. First; they are illusory and the product of fraud. Second; they are produced by the human organism. Third; they are produced by spirits. The orthodox scientists only accepted the first hypothesis. The animists accepted both the first and the second, considering that in many cases, but not all, the phenomena were indeed due to fraud. The spiritualists however, assigned to all three (Wolffram, 2012). From this fact it would seem that the spiritualists would have less positions to "disprove" considering that they accepted each.

never question the veracity of these phenomena but go along with the claims of these historical actors. If it is the case that these claims arise from human delusion, then the present treatment approaches the matter from the wrong angle. However, the one who is acquainted with the literature on this subject could hardly explain all of psychical research in terms of delusion. It is nonetheless worth asking to what extent my “belief” in these phenomena could have biased the present work. On the one hand my belief is an advantage, because it lets me follow the historical actors in their own standpoints and in their own thoughts. Neither rejecting animists nor spiritualists, I believe I can follow both and see the value of both positions. This should make me less biased compared to someone who outright rejects all extraordinary claims. On the other hand, I am more gullible to accept extraordinary claims compared to someone more skeptical. This person, in approaching the present study, might have found other discrepancies in Bjerre’s research. Maybe highlighting Bjerre’s desire to believe in these phenomena while also questioning the reality of Bjerre’s experiences in the first place. Such a perspective would be equally valuable as my own, and it would contribute to our knowledge of Bjerre as a psychical researcher.

References

- Alvarado, C. S. (2017). *Telepathy, Mediumship, and Psychology: Psychical Research at the International Congresses of Psychology, 1889–1905*.
- Beloff, J. (1993). *Parapsychology: A Concise History*. The Athlone Press London.
- Bjerre, P. (1947). “Spökerier”. Centrum.
- Bjerre, P. (1923). From Psychoanalysis to Psychosynthesis. *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 10(4), 361-379.
- Bärmark, J., & Nilsson, I. (1983). *Poul Bjerre: “Människosonen”*. Natur och Kultur.
- Carlson, E. T. (1989). Multiple personality and hypnosis: The first one hundred years. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 25(4), 315–322.
[https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6696\(198910\)25:4<315::AID-JHBS2300250402>3.0.CO;2-H](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6696(198910)25:4<315::AID-JHBS2300250402>3.0.CO;2-H)
- Coon, D. J. (1992). Testing the Limits of Sense and Science. *American Psychologist*.
- Ellenberger, H. F. (1994). *The discovery of the unconscious: The history and evolution of dynamic psychiatry*. Fontana.

- Falk, J. (2024). *En andlig terra incognita: Spiritismen i det sena 1800-talets Stockholm*. Institutionen för idé- och samhällsstudier, Umeå universitet.
- Gutierrez, C. (2010). "Spiritualism And Psychical Research". In *Handbook of Religion and the Authority of Science*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004187917.i-924.173>
- Gyimesi, J. (2009). The Problem of Demarcation: Psychoanalysis and the Occult. *American Imago*, 66(4), 457–470. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aim.0.0064>
- Hacking, I. (1992). Multiple personality disorder and its hosts. *History of the Human Sciences*, 5(2), 3–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/095269519200500202>
- Jastrow, J. (1901). *Fact and Fable in Psychology*. London Macmillan and Co., Ltd.
- Jung, G. C. (1970). I. On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena. In M. Fordham & G. Adler (Ed.), *Volume 1 Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 1* (pp. 1-92). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
<https://doi-org.proxy-ub.rug.nl/10.1515/9781400850907.1>
- Lachapelle, S. (2011). *Investigating the supernatural : from spiritism and occultism to psychical research and metapsychics in France, 1853-1931*. Johns Hopkins University Press. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/11161103>
- Mülberger, A. (2025). La microhistoria como herramienta historiográfica. *Revista de Historia de la Psicología*, 46(2), 3-14. <https://doi.org/10.5093/rhp2025a6>
- Mülberger, A. (2016). La Investigación de lo Paranormal. In Mülberger, A (Ed.), *Los Límites de la Ciencia Espiritismo, Hipnotismo y el Estudio de los Fenómenos Paranormales (1850-1930)* (pp. 95-136). Madrid, CSIC (colección Estudios sobre la Ciencia), 2016.
- Noakes, R. (1989). Historiography of Psychical Research: Lessons from Histories of the Sciences. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 72(2), 891
- Oppenheim, J. (1985). *The Other World: Spiritualism and psychical research in England, 1850-1930*. Cambridge University Press.

- Parker, A., & Warwood, E. (2016). *Revealing the Real Madame d'Esperance: An Historical and Psychological Investigation*.
- Plas, R. (2012). Psychology and psychical research in France around the end of the 19th century. *History of the Human Sciences*, 25(2), 91–107.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695111428554>
- Richet, C. (1923). *Thirty Years of Psychical Research: A treatise on Metapsychics*. The Macmillan Company.
- Sanner, I. (2009). *Det Omedvetna: Historien om ett Utopiskt Rum*. Nora: Bokförlaget Nya Doxa.
- Sommer, A. (2011). Professional Heresy: Edmund Gurney (1847–88) and the Study of Hallucinations and Hypnotism. *Medical History*, 55(3), 383–388.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300005445>
- Sommer, A. (2012a). Policing Epistemic Deviance: Albert von Schrenck-Notzing and Albert Moll ¹. *Medical History*, 56(2), 255–276. <https://doi.org/10.1017/mdh.2011.36>
- Sommer, A. (2012b). Psychical research and the origins of American psychology: Hugo Münsterberg, William James and Eusapia Palladino. *History of the Human Sciences*, 25(2), 23–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695112439376>
- Sommer, A. (2014). Psychical research in the history and philosophy of science. An introduction and review. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 48, 38–45.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsc.2014.08.004>
- Sommer, A. (2016). Are you afraid of the dark? Notes on the psychology of belief in histories of science and the occult. *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling*, 18(2), 105–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642537.2016.1170062>

- Stuckrad, K. V. (2020). Historical Discourse Analysis: The Entanglement of Past and Present. In J. Johnston & K. Stuckrad (Eds.), *Discourse Research and Religion* (pp. 77–88). De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110473438-005>
- Wijk, H. (1905). Karin: An Experimental Study of Spontaneous Rappings. *The Annals of Psychical Science*, 2, 143-180.
- Wolffram, H. (2009). *The stepchildren of science: Psychical research and parapsychology in Germany, c. 1870-1939*. Rodopi.
- Wolffram, H. (2012). Hallucination or materialization? The animism versus spiritism debate in late-19th -century Germany. *History of the Human Sciences*, 25(2), 45–66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695112439375>
- Zusne, L., & Jones, W. H. (2014). *Anomalistic psychology: A study of magical thinking*. Psychology Press.