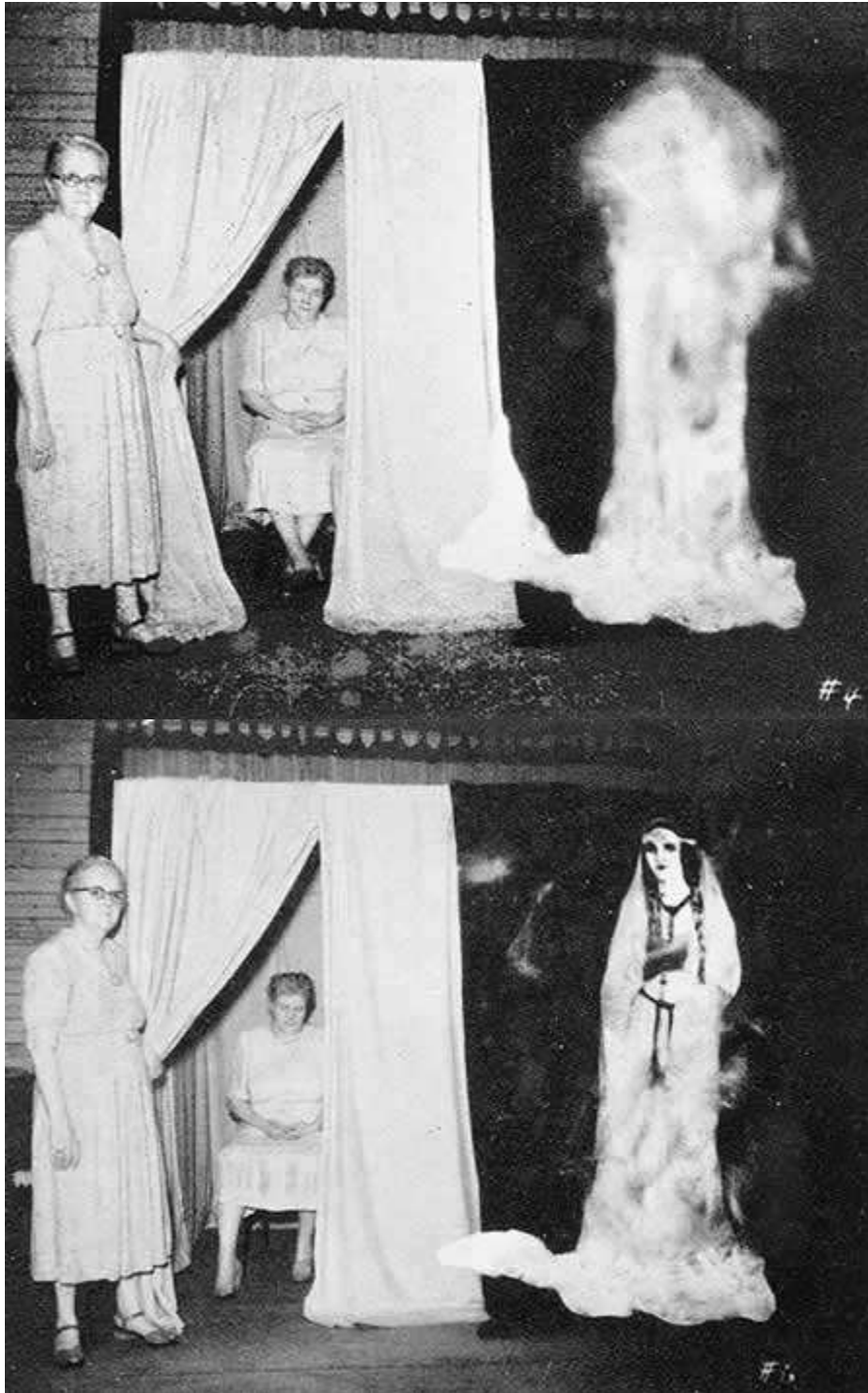


## Ectoplasm - Part 4

### Do You Know What You Look Like?



The first infra-red photo above shows a materialization in process with the medium Ethel Post Parrish. Note the ectoplasmic trail from the medium in the

cabinet to the materialization. The second photo shows the completed materialization of a spirit giving her name as Silver Belle, an Indian girl who claimed to be Parrish's spirit guide.

It is easy to dismiss the completed materialization as a fake, since it looks much more like a painting or a mannequin than a real person. However, an understanding of the ideoplastic nature of the materialization phenomenon helps us make sense of it, assuming an open mind.

One Internet site states that Professor Julian Ochorowicz, a Polish psychologist and physical researcher, coined the term "ideoplastic," referring to the "unconscious power of a medium to create tangible and apparently autonomous physical forms." However, the author, who calls it is a "stupid" idea, shows his own ignorance, as it is not the power of the "medium" that creates the materialization. It is the ability of the communicating "spirit" to project its image into the ectoplasm emitted by the medium.

In his 1942 book, *Life Now and Forever*, Arthur J. Wills, Ph.D., president of the U.S. College of Psychic Science and Research, tells of an experiment carried out by Mary C. Viasek and Mrs. Z. J. Allyn, a materialization medium.

Mrs. Viasek, who had learned to travel out of body, told Mrs. Allyn that she would attempt to visit her circle on September 28 while she was traveling by train from California to Toledo, Ohio. At the time of the séance in Los Angeles, the train was in Utah. After leaving her body, Viasek willed herself to Allyn's circle in Los Angeles. The circle was already in progress and Viasek entered the materialization cabinet, where she found Allyn entranced in a chair and a number of spirits waiting to materialize. The "cabinet guide" told her that she was welcome to observe but because she was mortal she could not participate.

Viasek then observed three "spirit chemists" collecting something. Looking closer, she saw a band of light, of bluish-grey vibrations, resembling heat waves, passing around the circle and into the cabinet. "The stream of vibrations started from the medium's husband, Mr. Allyn, who sat by the right side of the cabinet, and gradually increased in size as the various members of the circle contributed their vibrations to it," Wills quoted the report, going on to explain that the stream was about two inches in width and six inches in depth and increased in size as it passed around the circle and then into the cabinet, at which time it was about a foot in width and 18 inches in depth. It was further noted that not all of the sitters contributed to the stream, as it appeared to go around a couple of them.

Once the stream reached the cabinet, a spirit chemist took it and appeared to pour it into the back of the head and neck of the medium. At the same time that the light, bluish-grey vibrations were being poured into the medium, a white substance (not named, but apparently ectoplasm), began to emanate from the medium's chin, throat, and chest. This emanation was then taken by another spirit chemist and put over the spirit to be clothed. As he was pouring the substance over the spirit, he said in a firm positive voice: "Think your features! Think your face! Think your eyes! Think your form! Think positively! Think your form as you were on earth! Think your arms!" As the spirit thought these things a form gradually built up over him.

All the while the circle members were singing in order to establish and maintain harmonious vibrations. When they finished one hymn and before starting another hymn, the materialization failed as "the substance fell from the spirit." The spirit chemist then began attempting to clothe another spirit and it also failed when the hymn was abruptly changed. Viasek noted that the vibrations changed when the singing changed and interfered with the manifestations.

During these failures, Viasek was in the cabinet but could not get her feet on the floor. When the group members started singing *Shall we gather at the river*, her feet touched and she found herself standing in front of one of the chemists. He said, "You are mortal. You cannot go," but she appealed to him and he then consented. The chemist then turned her around with her back toward him and began pouring the substance drawn from the medium over her, while saying: "Think your features positively, just as you are! Think your hair! Your eyes! Think your form! Think your arms! Think your hands! Think your feet!"

Then the chemist placed some substance over her to form her dress, a garment of white lace. "This was a creation of the chemist, not of her thought."

When Viasek stepped through the curtain into the circle, she felt that she was blind for several seconds, but her sight then came to her. However, she found she could not speak. As one of the sitters approached her, she received "strengthening vibrations" and was able to speak. As she began to talk to the group, something happened to upset the vibrations of the circle and Viasek felt as if her breath had been knocked out of her by a blow to the solar plexus. She stepped backwards toward the cabinet and seemed to lose consciousness before regaining it again and observing other materialization successes and failures. She could not discern exactly when the forms began to materialize, but she noted that they began to dissolve outside the cabinet. What little of the substance was left when the materialization dissolved flowed toward the incoming stream of light, bluish-gray vibrations.

Members of the circle confirmed Viasek's materialization and it was noted that her "breathing" problems began when Dr. H. H. Turner, one of the circle member, increased the light in the room so that he could make a note of the time and record Viasek's words.

As indicated in parts II and III of this series, some spirits communicated that they were unable to materialize because they had difficulty remembering what they looked like when alive in the flesh. Therefore, the ability or inability of Silver Belle to visualize what she looked like when incarnate can explain the seemingly hokey appearance. She probably lived before photography, but may have had a painting of herself to visualize, or perhaps she had an idealized recollection of what she looked like.

### **Visualization self-experiment**

A little self-experiment will help in better appreciating the problems involved in both materializations and spirit photography. Imagine, if you will, that you were once a great athlete. Further imagine that you are sitting at home when you receive a phone call from the director of your sport's Hall of Fame. He or she tells you that you

have been voted into the Hall and will be inducted next month. Two photographs of you are needed - an action shot and a portrait. The director tells you that the Hall has the latest in photographic technology. All you have to do is visualize the two photos you want put on the Hall of Fame wall and transmit those visualizations over the telephone lines. Those visualizations will be recorded on a special machine and photographs made of them.

Now, visualize the action shot you want to transmit over the telephone wires. Then, visualize your portrait shot. If you are a man, it's unlikely that you imagined yourself as you appear looking in the mirror when you shave in the morning, and if you are a woman it's highly unlikely that you imagined yourself as you appear before putting on your makeup in the morning. If you are much over 40, you probably transmitted an image of yourself at a younger age.

The fact is that most of us really have a somewhat distorted image of ourselves. Often the image is based on photographs, including portraits, of ourselves when we are looking our best, both younger and slimmer. Moreover, we don't always visualize ourselves from head to foot. Was the action image you sent a full body shot or just an upper body shot?

When I mentally searched for an action shot of myself, I focused in on a photograph of myself during the 1977 New York City Marathon. The photo is from the waist up only. Although I ran scores of races during my younger years, I cannot really visualize a moment in any one of those races that is not recorded on a photograph; thus, I had to rely on a photograph of myself.

And so with this little self-experiment we might appreciate the problem spirits had in transmitting photographs of themselves in the phenomenon known as spirit photography. Many of those old photos were supposedly debunked because they looked very much like photographs or portraits that were taken of the person when he or she was alive. It was assumed that the photographer somehow got hold of an old photograph of the person, doctored it a little, and used it to trick his gullible customer.

When I summon up an image of my brother, who died in 1971, I visualize him as he appeared in his high school graduation photo, not at some moment in time that was not recorded anywhere other than in my memory. I can bring up the latter if I stop to search my memory for a time when I was with my brother, but it is much easier to just bring up the graduation photo.

A spirit photo purporting to have come from Father Junipero Serra, the early California missionary, shows Father Serra with his mother. It appears very hokey, because his mother is only about half his height, meaning around three-feet tall, and Father Serra appears somewhat wooden. However, when we consider the ideoplastic nature of the phenomenon, it makes sense. Father Serra lived before photography and probably didn't have many mirrors, if any, around his missions. Thus, the projection was far from representing what he really looked like and probably indicates that he saw himself so much taller than his mother.