

PARAPSYCHOLOGIST'S HANDBOOK



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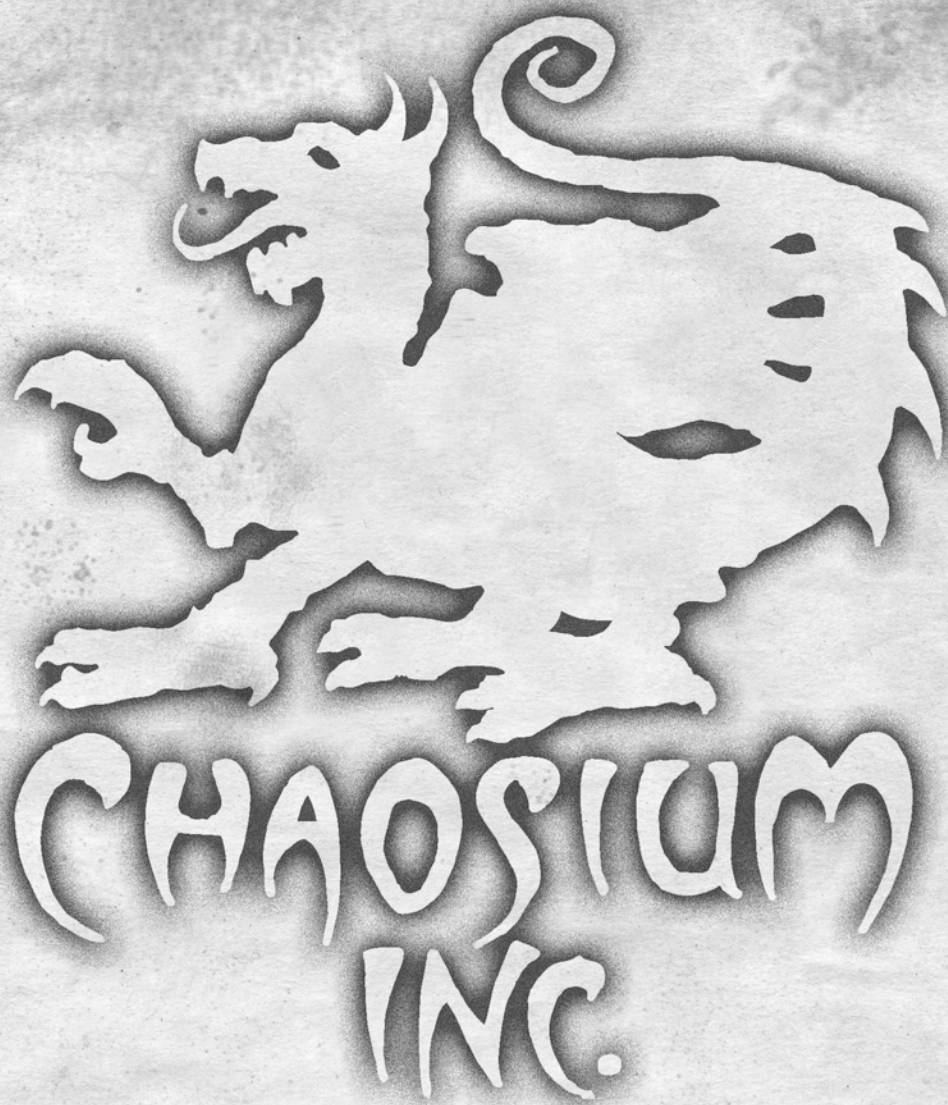
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A NEW OCCUPATION FOR CALL OF CTHULHU





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The Parapsychologist's Handbook

A sourcebook for 1890's/1920's and contemporary adventures

For Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* Roleplaying Game

(c) Chris Jerome 2003



This is a game supplement, and the ideas and material included are in no way representative of the author's opinions about any religion, phenomena or belief discussed. In reality these issues are often far more complex than can be considered in a supplement of this size. The author intends no offence to any person or creed and hopes none will be taken...

Clear Credit

Sandy Petersen and Lynn Willis, all Cthulhu rules material unless otherwise specified; Polly Draper for the section on 'Profession Templates'; Dorne Duke for the section on Equipment, and Christopher Moreman and Ian Baker, UK Parapsychologists, for reading and revising the manuscript.

Cover Illustration: Meghan McLean

Interior Illustrations: Simon Monk, Jessica Billman

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Introduction

Not just the Mythos... have you ever wondered just how frightening a ghost or poltergeist might be in Call of Cthulhu? In this handbook you'll find the real world science of the paranormal, Parapsychology - its history, its methods and how to play a parapsychologist or run a campaign centred around a ghost-hunting group, and how to simulate various non-mythos entities and psychic powers in your Cthulhu campaign.

All Cthulhu investigators are parapsychologist the moment they begin an investigation. Parapsychology is the scientific study of the unknown, and the parapsychologist is the investigator of the supernatural and paranormal. Even today, there are few formal qualifications one can undertake in this field, and many researchers drift in to the field after being intrigued by their own anomalous experiences, or finding that their researches in other fields are inexplicable by current scientific models.

Designed for both Keeper (Referee) and Players, this handbook will teach you everything you need to know about generating parapsychologist characters, equipping yourself for an investigation and provides copious notes on some of the theories and techniques used in the field, which can be useful for almost any Cthulhu scenario.

The second part of the Handbook, 'Phenomena', provides further notes on the major parapsychological entities and how to investigate them. A wealth of game mechanics are also provided, giving the Keeper rules for staging hauntings in her campaign.

Perhaps of most interest to players initially are the optional rules on playing

a psychic or medium as an investigator. Having been carefully playtested for many years, these rules remain optional - it is entirely up to your Keeper if they can be used by player characters or if they must forever remain restricted to Keeper controlled characters. Certainly your Referee must carefully study them before allowing such characters into the campaign.

Frustratingly, some portions of the Handbook should really be reserved for Keepers to read. Section Three, *Secrets Mankind Was Not Meant To Know*, contains all the game statistics and advice to referees (referred to as Keepers). You may improve your enjoyment of the game by not reading the game mechanics in the Keepers Section if you are a player. If however if you wish to read these as well, perhaps because you Keeper and play at different times, there is no real problem if you do, though you may wish to check with your Keeper. The concept of paradigms allows the Keeper to decide which version of the paranormal is true in their campaign. Even if the Keeper decides not to use paradigms, there are, for example, a bewildering number of possible causes, both natural and supernatural, for the simplest poltergeist. It is up to your adventurers to decide which is actually behind those strange footsteps in the Old Martense Mansion!

So grab a flashlight, a notepad and your camera and set off into the shadows!

Part One: Parapsychology - exploring new frontiers of science

Chapter 1: Parapsychology

Parapsychology is the science of the investigation of those borderline scientific phenomena we call 'the paranormal'. It is the attempt to prove, disprove and to understand those phenomena which stand outside of modern scientific understanding. Ghosts, telepathy, or auras – all are fitting subjects for a parapsychological investigation.

What is the Parapsychological Campaign?

Cthulhu investigators are parapsychologists by default, whether they know it or not. Lovecraft's heroes are rarely parapsychologists, or even occultists or mystics, yet their experiences with the unknown force them to confront the unknown, and they too work at the boundaries of scientific knowledge. They attempt to understand forces of which most of the world remains indifferent or ignorant, and often receive scorn and ridicule from scientists in other more established sciences. They seek to penetrate the veils of the unknown, and to understand... but in the Cthulhu universe understanding brings not wisdom but mind shattering terror.

In this handbook however the term is used in a more specific sense, to denote a game centred around a group of psychical investigators (whether professional parapsychologists or amateurs with other primary occupations) who are not only attempting to defeat the forces of the

Mythos and their nefarious plots, but also come to an understanding of the alien science which underlies their existence and the physical laws which denote the reality of our Universe...

The parapsychological campaign by its nature cries out for ghosts, poltergeists and strange psychic events. It is anchored firmly in the world of folklore, of the ghost story and of the things that made us shiver in fear as children. One of the strongest motifs in a parapsychological campaign is the juxtaposition of the comfortable, mundane and normal against the other worldly, the outré and the inexplicable. When the family next door are hounded from their house by footsteps, eerie laughter echoes through the walls and then your clocks start running backward the horror becomes immediate and personal, in a way that ancient crypts and lost cities can never achieve. It is the world where your old teacher you met on the bus had died moments before on the operating table, a world in which, if we believe those whispered stories our friends and work mates tell, we actually live.

Investigating a Case

How do you set about investigating a case? This after all is what most investigators are doing, parapsychologist by training or not – all Cthulhu investigators are by definition working in the field of parapsychology! Something unusual, quite possibly paranormal is occurring - the investigators seek to understand it. The following notes are merely tentative guidelines. The following

is written from the viewpoint of a research group, but I stress again, most of it applies to any group of Cthulhu Investigators.

There can be huge differences between one case and the next. In 1995 the author, working as a field researcher investigated three mediums, three hauntings and two poltergeists as well as an out of the body experience. There is a huge variety from case to case; yet it has become obvious that certain methods are consistently useful. Each group will develop its own ways of investigating but the following ideas will prove useful in most cases, and later chapters contain hints for investigating different types of phenomena.

They must construct an equipment case and list all the gear they are taking with them. This equipment may be extremely sophisticated or very simplistic and a large amount of game time or between game discussion can be profitably employed this way, designing new devices and testing them. **Mechanical Repair (d20 Repair)** rolls anyone? The case will normally occur somewhere other than the groups home or headquarters, and they must plan what equipment to take, and how to transport it there. Snowshoes are inappropriate for the South of France, though I have seen veteran investigators who always carry a two man hiking tent and mosquito net on their persons! In one hugely enjoyable scenario I ran half the team went back to a friend's house to pick up the cameras they had forgotten, while the remainder were slowly driven insane and made a number of increasingly desperate cell phone calls. Those who left returned to an empty house, with a noticeable chill in the air, and no sign of their colleagues...

A real life group now has the problem of advertising it's existence and finding a case. In the game it is less of a problem, for one can assume that a case will crop

up, however unexpectedly. What else has the Keeper planned for the evening - roleplaying the investigators filling in tax forms?

"Grandmothers told strange myths of the Martense spectre; myths concerning the Martense family itself, its queer hereditary dissimilarity of eyes, it's long unnatural annals, and the murder which had cursed it"

HP Lovecraft, The Lurking Fear

On arrival at the location the first thing to be done is to fully interview each of the witnesses. Interviews should be done individually with the interviewer and interviewee out of earshot of those who are yet to be interviewed, and those who have given testimony should not discuss their answers with those yet to be cross-examined. The testimony is often the centre of a case as it is quite possible (and in reality probable) that the parapsychologists will not themselves experience the phenomena, although in the game anything is possible! Try to think of clever questions, and always be aware that people are telling the truth as they perceive it, which may be coloured by their own assumptions. Use **psychology rolls (d20: sense motive)** to try and get a grip on what they really believe and their motivations in talking to you. Obviously you will need to use skill rolls on **persuade (d20: gather information)** but to get the right answers you need to ask the right questions!

"I had thoroughly searched the ruin before, hence knew my plan well; choosing as the seat of my vigil the old room of Jan Martense, whose murder looms so great in the rural legends."

HP Lovecraft, The Lurking Fear

Secondly, it is important that the team prepares an accurate scale map of the property, and mark the exact positions of

each person present at the time of each event, as well as the location where any phenomena occurred.

In addition, examine the surroundings in as much detail as possible. How often has one been able to track that pesky knocking spirit to a faulty water pipe in the basement? This is the only way to rule out normal explanations for what might otherwise seem completely inexplicable

Photography can then be used to create a permanent record of any evidence left and also of each room and the exterior of any property. Armed with this information the team should then return to a safe place to discuss and plan their next move. This planning phase is vital, but most teams will neglect it.. Having worked extensively in psychical research I can honestly say that I learnt huge amounts of what I used in the field from playing *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios, not something many roleplaying games can claim! We call the initial visit the recce (for reconnaissance) and use it to be well prepared for a vigil or full investigation.

It is important that the testimony is compared, and the relative reliability of witnesses assessed. Was there a natural explanation for events? It is probably true as a famous consulting detective said that it is a mistake to hypothesise before all the evidence is available, but in psychic research it is invaluable to be prepared, and to consider all options, 'however improbable'. You should try and think of possible experiments and ways to test what is happening on location...

"I had come with a fierce resolution to test an idea. I believed that the thunder called the deathdemon out of some fearsome secret place; and be that demon solid entity or vaporous pestilence, I meant to see it"

HP Lovecraft, The Lurking Fear

Next you must fall back on your own

initiative and ideas. Can you establish what is occurring, and if so can you devise a plan to deal with it? Various persons will also offer their own explanations based on their personal belief systems, but which is true in the Keepers campaign and which is causing the current problem? Players should use their imaginations to devise tests that will suggest evidence. Does the knocking spirit only appear when the hot water faucet in the bathroom is opened? Test it to find out!

"Fear had lurked on Tempest Mountain for more than a century. This I learned at once from newspaper accounts of the catastrophe that first brought the place to the worlds attention..."

HP Lovecraft, The Lurking Fear

Library research is one of the least exciting but most necessary aspects of psychical research. The library may tell the investigators what buildings if any, once stood on the site in question, and give details on a vast range of relevant details. Normally **library use (d20 research)** works best in conjunction with another skill, such as **anthropology and archaeology** –(what tribes lived here in prehistoric times and who did they worship?), **history**, (were the ghost's clothes typical of a particular period? or **law** (searching land-registry records for deeds and details on previous owners). Geological surveys are also vital - is the property subject to subsidence or underground water which may be causing some of the phenomena? As well as libraries they might check out City Hall, newspaper morgues and university departments for specialist information.

Even when all the witnesses are interviewed the investigators have still not exhausted the possibilities of talking. You may wish to approach the police for their opinions of the case and should certainly ask the neighbours to tell a little about the people concerned, and ask if they have

experienced anything themselves. Of course, such additional interviews can get tricky when considering the wishes of those already involved. Often, a family suffering a haunting, for example, will not want any of their friends or neighbours to know for fear of ridicule. It is always important to bear such things in kind when investigating. A witness who previously knew nothing about the phenomena and did not know the other witnesses is worth their weight in gold, for obvious reasons.

Each of the following chapters contains hints on investigating a particular type of phenomena based on what you might consider if you really were involved in

For example, Arthur Knight has been called to investigate an apparition repeatedly seen on the factory floor of a local business. Research establishes the supposed ghost is similar to an employee killed twenty years before in an industrial accident. He is not sure if this is a Spirit or a worker's unconscious 'psi' so he decides to test both possibilities and try to find out anything he can about the haunting.

He begins by locating six reputable psychics and three well known mediums (all NPCs played by the Keeper, the finding of whom may be an adventure in itself!) and gives each a map of the property. He keeps another annotated map himself on which he has previously marked where the apparition is reported to walk. Then he gets a friend who knows nothing of the haunting to escort the psychics and mediums around the building when it is empty and to mark on their plans where they feel the presence is strongest. Each medium and psychic is then asked to record their testimony as to anything they might have picked up using their talents.

Secondly he creates a control group of six sceptics who are asked to imagine where they would see a ghost, and then make up a ghost story for the building. Each participant is taken around separately, and all record the data. The experiment works simply; is the psychic and spiritualist evidence closer to the original testimony than the imaginative sceptics? Did more of them establish the right spot for the ghost?

parapsychology as a pursuit...

Harry Price, 1920's Ghosthunter, assembled this toolkit!



Using Psychics

If using psychics or mediums like this it is imperative that the investigators do not tell them anything about the case before they go in. The above idea is based on the 'quantitative assessment of hauntings' devised by Gertrude Schmeidler, an American parapsychologist in the 1980's, and an **Occult** roll or **KNOW** roll from a professional parapsychologist character may suggest it as one possibility for an

investigation. Obviously it should be played out as well, to build the maximum atmosphere, with events occurring throughout the process, and the results are then handed to the team after they have pulled out to let the players puzzle over them!

Psychics and mediums often have a disconcerting habit of telling the participants what they think is going on

and hence colouring future testimony. They may wish to become personally involved, hijack the case, disrupt proceedings, badger the team, or they may be fantastic friends and allies. Be careful – they can lead witnesses badly astray and ruin the investigator's reputations if not worse!

The investigators should check the medical history of all witnesses if at all possible, but bear in mind there may be legal issues unless one of the characters happens to be the witnesses personal physician, and that such information is very confidential. Temporal lobe epilepsy is covered in the chapter on ghosts and apparitions, and a variety of other medical conditions are known to result in apparent psychic experiences. A doctor is an invaluable asset to any research team, and a psychiatrist truly invaluable. Schizophrenic patients may well have distinctly strange perceptions of reality, but their testimony may still prove useful. In many cases where stress or family dysfunction seem important it is wise to have some kind of therapist to hand.

As important as recording the environment of the event is a profile of each witnesses relationships. This is of especial relevance if the events are taking place in a family home and feature poltergeist activity. The inter-relationships of these people may be of crucial significance to the investigation of the case, and a family therapist may be consulted in contemporary games. Draw a diagram showing all the people involved, and then arrows showing who knows who, and their hates, loves, likes, frustrations and indifference or whatever, to create a realistic emotional back drop to events. **Psychology (d20 Sense Motive)** should be applied here. The witnesses' dreams may also prove an interesting area of study for some researchers, especially if they come to share them...

“My chief acquaintances at Lefferts Corners had been the affable reporters, of whom several had still remained to collect final echoes of the tragedy. It was from these I determined to select a colleague...”
HP Lovecraft, the Lurking Fear

Dealing with journalists is a real minefield for the intrepid parapsychologist. **Credit Ratings (no d20 equivalent- it is the characters reputation)** may well dwindle as sensational misquotes appear in the tabloid press and the presence of a journalist may well induce hysteria or cause witnesses to withhold relevant information. They might however have information that is of great use to you, particularly on other cases or earlier events. The team should never neglect hiring a newspaper clipping service to find you all those player handouts from the *NY Pillar/Riposte* or wherever.

Natural causes should always be looked for first. Is that really a ghostly groaning or just the radiators gurgling? Is the clock jumping off the mantelpiece because of poltergeists or vibrations caused by heavy lorries? Is the house settling or damp? How far away is the nearest mine, railway, underground stream, power lines and the sea? Are the house electrics defective? A good structural survey should take place as soon as possible, and may involve several skill rolls. Keepers should not be afraid to have some, or even all of the phenomena explicable by natural causes, as long as the players have a fun time! The scenario '*Westchester House*' is an excellent example of such a non-mythos adventure!

“I watched from midnight to one o clock, when in spite of the sinister house, the unprotected window, and the approaching thunder and lightning I felt singularly drowsy...”
HP Lovecraft, The Lurking Fear

All of this may sound very dull and in reality it can be but within the game such research is reduced to a few die rolls and will hopefully give you some indication as to what you are up against. By far the most interesting aspect of spontaneous case is the attempt to witness or record the event yourself, and the usual method employed is the vigil. You can take elements from it and use them as you will in your game if your character is familiar with Psychic Research or Parapsychology.

The Vigil: one method of investigating a haunting

Vigils are quite simply the process of sitting around waiting for something to happen. The usual approach is to have a team loaded down with all the monitoring equipment available position himself or herself in a property or location and note all activity. Certain factors should be taken into consideration in making preparations.

Firstly consider your investigators needs. Appropriate clothing, food, drink and toilet facilities come high on the list. Have you obtained permission for your presence and perhaps considered legal disclaimers? Are there enough investigators to cover all the locations you wish to? Make sure teams always operate in pairs. This has several advantages, lessening boredom and tiredness, providing a second witness if anything does occur and also improving your chances when the tentacle slips out of the chimney...

Organise vigils carefully. Ensure everyone has mapped out several swift modes of exit. Other equipment should be selected carefully with the view to testing different hypotheses. Use your imaginations, record all data carefully and see what you can learn.

“As the tree-muffled thunder grew louder, I arranged my plan’s details. First I fastened side by side to the side of the large window three rope ladders which I had brought with me. I knew they reached a suitable spot on the grass outside, for i had tested them. Then the three of us dragged from another room a wide four poster bedstead, crowding it laterally against the window. Having strewn it with fir boughs, all now rested on it with drawn automatics, two relaxing while the third watched.”

HP Lovecraft, The Lurking Fear

Investigators should sit quietly and keep accurate timed records of anything they experience, and if they inadvertently make a noise or if they move (say to the toilet.)

Eliminating the obvious.

When on a case you should always begin by looking for normal causes for what is being experienced. Medical and psychiatric considerations aside, what are the things to check for first? Check witnesses testimony by re-enacting as far as possible the events, timing them if appropriate. In one case I investigated witnesses twice saw a figure at a window as they drove up their drive and we spent ages trying to recreate the effect by driving up and down at the same lighting condition with investigators trying to create a reflection by standing all round. Frosted glass, shadows, mirrors and other lighting effects may account for an apparition. Of course this requires players willing to get that engrossed in the mystery!

In the event you hear footsteps and the area is vacated you may think the case closed. In fact if the temperature goes up as when the central heating comes on

then each board expands and settles and may nudge the next, creating an illusory sound of footsteps. Old buildings do settle, creak and groan and even new buildings are rarely silent. It can take up to six months for a resident to be used to the natural noises of their own home. Pipes gurgle and the wind may whistle through the tree outside. This is really the job of professional outsiders like Chartered Surveyors and builders who you may wish to engage to check the building. Anyone with **explosives (d20 demolitions)** skill may have some knowledge of structural considerations.

In the 1950's G.W.Lambert, a President of the Society for Psychical Research, created the geophysical hypothesis of underground water. This is particularly applicable to poltergeist cases, but might

Selecting Equipment

Certain items are totally invaluable when on an investigation. All prices are given in modern US dollars, covert as required. It is assumed that investigators will carry such practical items as food, drink, a first aid kit, compass, maps, writing paper, pens, pencils, synchronised watches, etc. The following items are also fairly standard...

Cameras. Be it a Thornton-Pickard, Box Brownie or modern Polaroid photography is an excellent way of recording events and in particular ghosts. In the 1890's flash photography was still at times explosive and films slow but modern cameras of the pick up and point variety can be used by anyone. It is a very good idea to have someone skilled in **Photography** on the investigation. Knowledgeable investigators may wish to experiment with filters or special emulsions such as those which show Migo, which require **Chemistry** or **Physics** skills to create. **Cthulhu Mythos** and **Occult** and

be considered in any investigation. He believed that many of the strange noises heard were caused by unknown underground streams which might only exist after heavy rainfall. After hearing these sounds witnesses filled in the blanks by hallucinating apparitions. Check this with careful study of geological maps and local rain records, requiring **Geology** or **Physics**. It is also possible that vibration from underground water, heavy traffic or railways could dislodge objects but as experiments conducted by parapsychologist Tony Cornell demonstrated it is very unlikely. The average house must be shaken almost to pieces (which is exactly what he did, with the help of heavy earth moving machinery in his experiments) before objects begin to fly about.

Luck rolls might be used to create



cameras which show other realities.

Disposable Cameras (around \$5) are ideal for photographing blatant manifestations as they are sealed units developed by a company with which you have no connection, and the developers will often agree to sign a statement to the effect that the camera has not been tampered with.

Digital Camera: There is a huge range on the market of digital cameras, starting from around \$50 now. However the cheaper ones are not too great. A good price range to aim for would be about \$270 & over. There is an interesting phenomena, which many claim to be paranormal, associated with digital photography – the so-called 'orbs' phenomenon. (See side box for discussion). A typical digital camera might take 16, 32, 64 or 128 shots per memory cartridge depending on resolution. Those interested in performance can find easily details from manufacturers brochures or websites. At least one camera per investigator is the norm on any investigation. Digital Cameras use Nickel Metal Hydride rechargeable battery packs, which come with the camera, and spares are \$15-70. The problem with digital cameras is that the images are transferred to a computer and printed off or distributed via e-mail, and can easily be faked or falsified with someone with Art, Computer Use or Photography skill and very cheap photo-imaging software. The same software (\$15 and up) can also be used however to clarify, improve, and examine images, detecting fraud as well as enabling it.



A modern digital Camera

Polaroid Camera & Film: Polaroid cameras are great, you take your picture and get it there and then and the other great advantage is it is harder to fake a

Polaroid, giving you credibility when photographing anomalous phenomena. The camera itself starts at around \$40, The films for these are around \$15 each, but work out cheaper to buy as a pack - a 5 pack of films costs only \$50. Each film provides ten or twelve pictures, depending on the model. While I am informed it is theoretically possible to create double exposures on Polaroids it requires a fair degree of know how and the result is not convincing as a ghost!

35mm Camera - from \$25 to several hundred dollars. You get what you pay for really. Decent film can be had for \$3, but professional film is \$25 for 36 exposures in black and white, or anything up to \$70 for colour. Infrared film costs \$25-50 and requires an inexpensive filter placed on the lens. Additional lenses with varying capabilities can be obtained for specific purposes, costing \$100-\$2000.

A separate flash unit costs from \$15 to \$300. Most cameras contain decent flashes, but external units can be handy, especially if faced by the Haunter of the Dark! A spare lens cap is \$3, as they can easily be lost in a panic situation, and a remote switch to allow you to trigger your camera can be had for \$20 to \$50. With electronics skill it is easy enough to set up cameras to take images as some external trap is triggered. You will also probably want to spend \$50-100 on a professional kit bag or shock proof hard case. A tripod is a little bulky but can be useful – the cheapest are about \$25.

Digital (& Video) Camera: A video camera is a useful thing – they use either Super8 or VHS tape, and the cameras can be had for about \$700 or much less second hand – tape is \$2-15. Allows you to record 3-4 hours per tape of moving images and sound. However the new digital movie cameras are far superior – they can be held in one hand,

are amazingly compact, have good quality sound pick up, excellent ranges of accessories, and many come with nightscope and IR floodlight unit in the basic price, allowing you to film in the dark. Total cost around \$500-\$3000, but even low cost units are very good compared to video cameras. The disadvantage is that as with digital photography, 'ghost' images are easy to fake – there is no film to be verified.

Thermometers. Standard thermometers are extremely useful, and the min/max variety which show the extremes recorded particularly good, and are available from the 1890's onwards. As sensitive as possible, preferably one per room and a couple outside. Chart temperature every fifteen minutes or get a computer or automatic mechanical recording device to record temperature change. Don't forget to note natural changes relating to doors opening and closing, central heating, etc., etc. Note existence of cold spots using these. In the modern era digital thermometers can be wired into a laptop computer and it can then be set to provide audible cues in the event of sudden change.

A Thermometer-hygrometer with a digital read out can be yours for \$25 and gives both temperature and humidity. Other thermometers in a similar price range have separate probes – great for cold spots, or are min/max, recording the extremes of temperature in a location. Many can be adapted to plug in to a computer which then monitors them, and records data, or used to trigger a camera at any sudden variation in temperature.

However possibly the best looking piece of temperature reading kit is the non-contact thermometer, costing \$50-100. It picks up temperatures by firing an invisible IR beam at a surface, and then giving a reading of the temperature of

that object or particular spot. Sophisticated models have a laser rangefinder which allows you to see exactly where it is pointing by projecting a red dot – theoretically you might be able to track an invisible creature with one of these and a good handgun skill, if the Keeper so decides. What they excel at however is measuring cold spots!

Candles. Serve a variety of purposes, not least as auxiliary lighting if the power fails. Perhaps best used to detect drafts and explain natural cold spots, and may come in handy in impromptu rituals.

Compass. Use to check for magnetic anomalies. These can be caused by any large ferrous object or wiring etc, etc, but odd magnetic fields are sometimes associated with hauntings...

Coloured tape, invisible thread, sealing wax. . Used to seal off areas and ensure there are no human trespass. Place your thumbprint on tape to mark it as your own, and prevent substitution. A more expensive equivalent is an IR Beam of the type used in Burglar Alarms which senses any motion in it's path; the problem is that if the power source is interrupted it fails to work.

EMF Meters – it still baffles me why the EMF meter has become a popular tool of ghosthunters, as I am incredibly sceptical of their being of any use whatsoever. They measure electromagnetic fields – the theory is that the 'spirits' (these are ghosthunting not parapsychology devices) must give off energy, and that energy is measurable on the electromagnetic scale. Well maybe, but I have never seen any proof. Most amateurs seem to fail to understand the nature or extent of electrical 'pollution' – is a device some hundred yards away turning on the real source of that increase? Or have you approached hidden electric cabling, an

electrical device, or some other mundane source?



However your Keeper may have decided that EMF meters are as probably the majority of Ghosthunters seem to believe very useful tools of the trade – so buy one! The documentation which comes with them is sufficient to use them – on a ghost hunt you will need to firstly establish what is called a baseline reading, checking to see what the 'native' levels of EMF are. You can then often set them to trigger an audible alarm should the EMF go above this by a set factor. They probably require Electrical repair and Physics rolls to be used to maximum effect. Once you get a strange reading you then have to establish if its cause is supernatural or just down to some undetected electrical source – but a lot of fun nonetheless, and very cheap at \$25-70.

An EMF meter is a small hand held device, and many can be found on the web which make excellent illustrations.

Tape recorders and Dictaphones are a must in the modern era and allow careful recording of evidence. In earlier periods Wax Cylinder Recording might be used, as in *The Whisperer in the Darkness* by Lovecraft.

Geiger counters

Many ghosthunters in the search for

unknown entities have tried using Geiger counters to measure radioactivity. It is alleged that ghosts can rather irritatingly either increase or decrease background readings, but a physics roll may well assist in interpreting data. Standard models are around \$100-300.

Remote Motion Sensors

Much cheaper now than even a few years ago, like much household security equipment it is incredibly easy to find uses for them on cases. You set one up in a room, and if something moves, it triggers an alarm. Some detect items bigger than a household dog, others even tiny objects moving. Many are not triggered by very slow moving objects. You can get models which project a simple beam which sounds the alarm if broken, and others which cover the whole room. Many also have a portable alarm unit which receives the signal and sets off the alarm up to 100 yards away, even through walls. Some are even available in toy shops, priced from \$40 - \$200 per unit.

Night Vision Goggles - available for prices ranging from \$200 (second hand) to \$3000.

Computers can be used to connect a whole series of devices and warn investigators of any change in the environment, while recording hard data. The small home computer of the late 80's is ideal for this purpose, but if you can afford it, go with a reliable laptop.

Example: *The Spider*

Designed by Dr. Howard Wilkinson of Nottingham University in the late 1980's, the Spider is a tool used by the SPR on cases. It has seven legs, each of which carries a probe which measures things like temperature, vibration, sound, etc, etc. A video camera monitors the environment and motion senses detect any human interruption or poltergeist events. All of the data is

recorded by a small home computer which also can provide hard copies for analysis.

Walkie talkies/intercom/field telephones can prove extremely useful for facilitating communication between vigil teams. 1890's teams in larger houses must employ coded messages rung on the servants bells or shouting!

Chalk can prove useful for marking the location of objects which might move and any other marking that has to be done. Powdered you could try throwing it over invisible entities, but if so bring a Hoover with you!

Tape measure for measuring and mapping the house, and if possible a spirit level to check surfaces and a set square for angles of rooms which never seem exactly at ninety degrees.

Zener cards - (see p. 109)- so you can test everyone present for ESP, and 1890's investigators might also try a Ouija board (a practice the author strongly opposes in reality.) Both have the advantage they keep the family together in one place under observation. An ordinary pack of cards or board game may also prove useful for this purpose!

Local maps and geological maps are invaluable, and should be studied carefully. They may provide a totally mundane explanation for the bizarre phenomena.

Thin glass slides should be glued across cracks to see if the building is under stress or subsiding. Modern equipment can also give readings on damp, but simple observation should suffice. Similarly a bowl of water can show vibrations as well as the most sophisticated equipment. Place a heavy viscous fluid (such as oil) carefully coloured with dye, on top of a glass of water. If it tilts the residue stains the glass long after the fluid has settled.

Flashlights -Pretty obvious, from a couple of dollars up. Neat red light flashlights which don't destroy your night vision also exist, for \$20 or more.

Almost anything can be used! Half the fun of investigation is cobbling together equipment. Use your ingenuity, but try to stay away from pseudo-scientific gadgets like the Ghostbuster's PKE meter unless the your character has actually discovered the interface for mind-movement energy and worked out how to measure it. Mythos technology would be totally appropriate such as a pair of Hauptmann spectacles somehow returned to the Spirit Plane, but unlicensed nuclear accelerators are not in the spirit of Call of Cthulhu! Buy *Ghostbusters*, designed by Chaosium and published by West End Games if that is what you want; it's not Cthulhu...

When devising equipment browse through catalogues and try to create new equipment by linking several ideas. Skills like **Mechanical** and **Electrical Repair (d20:Repair)**, **Electronics (Craft:Electronics)**, and **Computer Use** are excellent for this sort of thing, and devising equipment for your group makes an excellent session in its own right. Even in the 1890's the amount of stuff which can be used is daunting so bear in mind practical limitations of set up time, transport and that few people, no matter how scared, will welcome a video camera in their toilet! This makes for excellent down time discussion between game sessions and can be handled between you and the Keeper over pizza, in a bar or even by telephone. Many players enjoy having something to keep them occupied until the next Wednesday evening (or whenever) game session!

A final note of caution; don't believe every claim made by parapsychologists about their equipment. Some of the

weird science stuff doesn't work at all, but at least it looks good. This can be important if what you really want is a chance to study the inhabitants of a building and their psychology. And always remember that equipment can malfunction at a vital moment for no apparent cause...

Check everything you can think of, and get a good stage conjurors advice whenever possible. Is the effect you witnessed easily faked, and if so how? Find out and try it to see if that was how it was done. Retain an open mind but don't be afraid to let your investigator's prejudices come through. In Cthulhu this is good roleplaying, but in reality such a course would be a disaster.



The 'Moving House' Experiment

In the early 1970's Tony Cornell of the SPR came up with an interesting test to see if vibration from underground sources could create the effects we associate with poltergeists, in particular objects flying across rooms. Acquiring a condemned house, he then had students from his university literally shake it to pieces using heavy machinery which caused the whole house to vibrate. Remaining inside till the last possible moment, he discovered that walls were collapsing and the floor opening up in fissures before a vase jumped any distance off the fireplace.

Chapter 2: Parapsychology in the Laboratory

Most of a parapsychologist's career these days is actually spent on laboratory experiments to try and prove the existence of the supernatural. The most commonly tested hypothesis is a theory called psi. The section on paradigms later in this book explains this theory in some detail. However what really makes a parapsychologist a parapsychologist rather than a Ghosthunter is their ability to use technical jargon to baffle people and sound as if they know what is going on. If you are actually playing a professional parapsychologist why not make a note of the following terms and definitions and drop them in to conversation with the other investigators?

Jargon for Parapsychologist's: A Players Guide

There are two main types of psychical research, **Experimental** and **Spontaneous**.

A spontaneous case is any in which phenomena occurred without anyone apparently consciously trying to produce them. A haunting, abduction by fairies, aliens or a Near Death Experience (NDE) may all be characterised as Spontaneous cases.

Experimental phenomena include deliberate astral projection, Zener card tests, Spiritualist séances and anything conjured up by a Sorcerer. The distinction may be blurred and is often a fine one. In modern parlance Parapsychologist is often used to refer primarily to those who work on Experimental research, the older psychical researcher used for those who work on spontaneous cases, but it is not a hard and fast distinction and many do

take part in both kinds of research.

Since the creation of J.B.Rhine's experimental science of parapsychology in 1927 the G.E.S.P. theory has been one of the most discussed hypotheses. GESP stands for **General Extra-Sensory Perception**, and suggests that various types of **ESP** exist, including:-

Psychokinesis: mind over matter - the movement of objects at a distance by mental powers.

Telepathy: The transmission of information from one mind to another.

Clairvoyance: seeing events or objects at a distance by paranormal means. Not seeing into the future - that is precognition.

Clairaudience: as clairvoyance but hearing.

Clairsentience: feeling sensations, possibly emotions, remotely.

Precognition: seeing into the future.

Retrocognition: seeing into the past.

These are the major types of GESP manifestation, though others may exist. Most modern parapsychologists hold to this, the psi hypothesis, and believe that spirits and ghosts are nothing more than manifestations of unconscious human psi, though others believe it to be partially true, and others not at all! This theory has come under endless attack; it is unfalsifiable, for any evidence of the existence of spirits or life after death can be negated by the supposedly unlimited nature of human psychic powers.

All laboratory work in the past has pointed towards psi (the human GESP function) as being a tiny and barely perceptible effect. Yet in poltergeist cases for instance it can be magnified until it has real and extreme effects on those who witness it.

There is no consensus on the nature of psi, or if it even exists. Stimuli for inducing psi suggested in the past range from utter boredom to sudden crisis and extreme excitement or fear, and everything from genetics to orgasm (or conversely, sexual frustration), personality factors and family relationships have been invoked. Your Keeper has chosen what works in her game, and it is up to you to uncover that truth!

It is worth noting however that the GESP theory is the dominant theory in modern academic parapsychology, though this only came about in the 1950's. Before that point parapsychologists were referred to as psychical investigators. Many Ghost hunting organisations are not aware of this philosophical and scientific theory, which is really restricted to professional parapsychologists.

The Parapsi Lab

Laboratory experiments rarely make for good scenarios, though you may occasionally decide to set one up to test something out in the game. The most famous types of laboratory experiments in parapsychology are:

Zener Card Tests: Any test really where the psychic must predict the type of card selected, or influence their order, or 'see' the card selected after it has been drawn. Tests respectively for precognition, and clairvoyance or telepathy. The Zener cards have five well known symbols – star, wavy lines, circle, cross and square. Appendix C has a set of

card designs suitable for photocopying and then mounting on stiff card and using as props in your own games, or for testing your players psychic potential if you prefer!

The methodology for Zener testing is relatively straight forward; a pack of cards has a normal set of playing card backs, but only five symbols on the other side - one symbol per card. A standard Zener pack has twenty five cards, with five of each symbol. The experimenter shuffles the pack, and then the procedure is varied depending on whether the test is for telepathy or clairvoyance/precognition.

In the former instance the experimenter looks at the card, and the test subject calls out their guess which is recorded along with the actual card. In the second instance the Experimenter takes the card and moves it across, not looking at the cards until after the run is complete.

The number of 'hits' (correct guesses) may denote psi ability. Out of twenty five cards chance dictates a success rate of five; an average result of eight plus would certainly evoke interest, as would results of two or less successes. This corresponds to what is called psi-missing; the subject is believed to possess psychic abilities which they use actively to get it wrong! Parapsychologists would also look to see if the card guesses was the previous or next card each time, as the displacement effect is sometimes significant.

Four runs of twenty five cards mark the usual minimum for a serious piece of investigation, and subjects may be required to perform far more tests if they show unusual ability. Standard symbols are sometimes replaced with emotive or sexually charged images rather than the supposedly neutral Zener images to try and enhance results, and subjects have tried the test in a variety of mental states while the search continues for a psi-enhancing stimuli. A hundred card

standard run of four trials takes about an hour, and may be useful as a way of testing if your witness or even team mates have latent psychic powers. The Keeper has rules for this procedure in part three of this handbook.

Drawing tests: The psychic must attempt to draw a target picture. Tests for telepathy or clairvoyance, depending on protocols used.

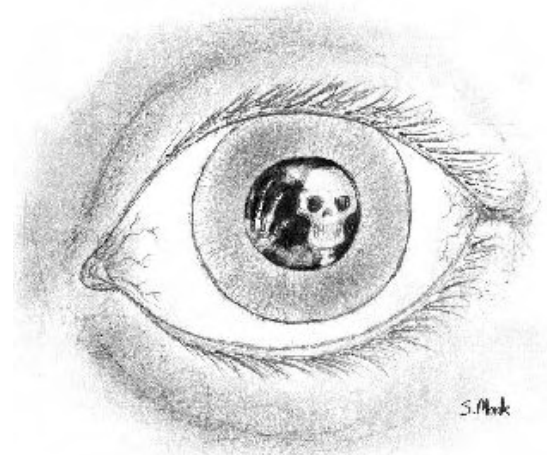
Ganzfeld tests: Similar to drawing tests, but the images are often video clips, and the psychic is in sensory deprivation, often listening to white noise and securely blindfolded, normally with cotton wool and half ping pong balls! The subject is asked to lay on a couch, is blindfolded securely and gets to listen to modulated white noise (pink noise) through headphones. A red light is often shined directly at the blindfold to reduce any visual cues. They are then asked to relax and try to envisage a target film playing in another room or a target being sent by another experimenter, and they vocalise their thought process which is then recorded on tape... Some excellent results have been achieved in reality by this method, though positive and repeatable results remain elusive. Still, many in the field, as well as some sceptics, believe that Ganzfeld experimentation provides the clearest indication that psi is a reality.

In a normal test, after describing one's visualisation (called mentating) for approximately half an hour, the subject is shown three or four target pictures or short video sequences and asked to select the correct one, based upon the visualisations seen during the experiment.

RNG Tests: RNG stands for random number generator. The aim of the experiment is to psychokinetically influence the numbers in a given direction, and often a computer graphic moves on the screen to provide reinforcement so the experimenter and

test subject can see how they are doing – will the ball or pointer to the right or left of the screen etc, etc.

Another classic experiment in PK influencing randomness involves the throwing of six ordinary six sided dice thirty six times. For the first six throws (of all six dice) the subject attempts to score 'ones', then six attempts at 'twos' and so on until the last six throws aim at sixes. This is to cancel out any statistical problems caused by imperfections in the manufacture of the dice.



Remote Viewing: The psychic is given precise geographical co-ordinates for a location, to which they must journey and describe what they see. The main difference between this method and the Ganzfeld method already described is that the subjects in Remote Viewing are not encouraged to enter an altered state. The Remote Viewer will seem lucid and is simply imagining the geographic target rather than slipping into an altered state of consciousness and mentating accordingly.

Dream Research. Subjects are connected to expensive arrays of medical machinery and kept under surveillance while they sleep. In earlier periods dreamers were instead asked to keep Dream Journals in which they recorded

their sleeping hours events, which were then analysed for foreshadowing of major world or personal events.

Psychic abilities do not seem to function well in the lab. Some have suggested this is because the psi effects are so small as to be almost indistinguishable, while others point to the lack of a repeatable experiment as proving the non-existence of the phenomena in question, and suggest that parapsychology is no more than a pseudo-science and a waste of research resources. In the past laboratory work has been bedevilled by experimenter fraud, flawed protocols and above all lack of funding. It has produced many suggestive results; but every time they are replicated they seem to eventually fail or diminish. This habit of the phenomena to 'run away' from researchers is known in parapsychology as the retreat factor. Many parapsychologists have blamed this on some omnipotent Cosmic Joker!

Perhaps the most important contribution of experimental parapsychology has been in creating a clear scientific nomenclature for the various phenomena. All GESP phenomena are frequently known as **psi** effects, from the Greek letter which serves as convenient shorthand, and is emblem of the SPR.



The Symbol of the Society for Psychological Research, London, founded, 1882

Chapter 3: Generating a Parapsychologist Character

Templates for Professionals in the Paranormal

As previously stated, all Cthulhu investigators are in effect pursuing parapsychology. The professional parapsychologist, or more properly in the 1920's and 1890's era psychical researcher, (the term parapsychologist was not in use then), may however prove to be a popular career choice. At the moment there are two differing lists of starting skills used for generating parapsychologists in Cthulhu. One appears in the rulebook (p.24) and the other in the Investigator's Companion, Vol.2, (p.47) Let us look at each in turn...

Psychical

Researcher/Parapsychologist

The rulebook skills best reflect the professional researcher of independent means or intense dedication who belongs to the SPR or ASPR. The only alteration here to that list is the addition of Credit Rating.

Anthropology

Credit rating

History

Library Use

Occult

Photography

Psychology

Other languages

+ one personal speciality

This type of researcher is ideal for 1890's and 1920's games, though rarer today.

The Ghost-Hunter

This list is excellent for designing characters like Elliot O' Donnell or Harry Price, who are active ghosthunters but have little patience for laboratory work. (Not quite true of Price...) Such characters often support themselves by sensationalist newspaper articles and public lecture tours. The 1920's was the great age of the ghosthunter, though there are still plenty today! This version is taken from the *Investigator's Handbook*, Vol. 2

Anthropology

Electrical Repair

Hypnotism

Library Use

Mechanical Repair

Occult

Photography

Parapsychologist - Spontaneous Case specialist

Designed to reflect the skills used by modern parapsychologists in the field, this is yet another possibility for any period.

Electrical repair

History

Natural History or Geology

Mechanical repair

Occult

Psychology

Spot Hidden

Photography

Related Careers

As well as the parapsychologist the following occupations are perhaps useful...

UFologist (1950's onwards)

The UFologist is someone who specialises in investigating UFO cases, which may include conspiracies, abductions, contactee cases, etc, etc. This occupation is only tangentially linked to true parapsychology, but make for an interesting character.

Professional UFologists are almost as common as Parapsychologists today owing to the great fees royalties and television rights can command!

Astronomy
Computer Use
Electronics
Hypnotism
Psychology
Psychoanalysis
Spot Hidden
Photography

New Age Seeker/Wiccan (1960's onwards)

These types are professional religious gurus, and are the radical new occultists. The traditions they follow vary, and they may or may not actually make their living from their studies.

Anthropology
Fast Talk
Natural History
Occult
Pharmacy
Psychoanalysis (usually stress therapies and Jungian)
Read/Write English

Stage Magician

Houdini was deeply interested in psychical research, and spent many years debunking mediums, a task with which he appears to have become obsessed. His work has been continued to this day by others of his profession, who are often virulently sceptical of all paranormal phenomena.

Conceal (Sleight of hand)

Credit rating

Dodge

Fast Talk

Hypnotism

Locksmith

Psychology

Spot Hidden

Special DEX +2

Professional Fake Medium

These people make their living by faking psychic phenomena. Some do it on stage, but the more unpleasant kind prey on the recently bereaved offering little solace but relieving them of their valuables.

Art (Impersonate Spirits)

Conceal (Sleight of hand)

Credit Rating

Disguise

Fast Talk

Persuade

Psychology

Spot Hidden

Special DEX +2

A genuine Medium would have skills as main or previous occupation, plus mediumistic abilities (see p.83)

Psychologist

Many parapsychologists and sceptics are by training psychologists before they become interested in the speciality of parapsychology. About 90% of contemporary parapsychologists have taken this route and have the following skills (taken from the *Investigator's Companion*, Vol 2.)

Accounting

Bargain

Library Use

Persuade

Psychoanalysis

Psychology

Professor

If most parapsychologists are today psychologists, they may equally be Professors from any other field.

J.B.Rhine, father of modern parapsychology, trained as a Botanist. It may be that psychical research is a hobby or side interest for these characters. (Taken from the *Investigator's Companion*, Vol 2.)

Special: +2 EDU

Credit Rating (add +10 points)

English

Library Use

Persuade

plus 3 fields of study

Any other investigator may of course decide to give up on their previous job and work in the field of parapsychology. To this day there are no real formal qualifications for the job in any country in the world, though being elected to full membership of the Parapsychological Association is probably the best criteria for using the title.

Part Two: Phenomena

Chapter 4: Paradigms – Theories of the Unexplained

The parapsychologist, by definition, seeks to explore the nature of the unexplained. Over the course of the period 1882 to the present day a bewildering number of theories have been devised which attempt to account for some or all paranormal phenomena.

The differing views of how the universe works, especially with regard to paranormal events, have produced contradictory models, or paradigms. (Pronounced para-dimes). A paradigm is a world view, a set of beliefs, a scientific model of how things might be. At one time the dominant paradigm in life sciences was that of Creationism and a Universe ordained by God; since 1854 and the publication of Darwin's 'Origin of the Species' the dominant paradigm has been that of Evolution, and an impersonal mechanistic universe. Almost all sciences advance by paradigm shifts, where one model is discarded in favour of one which seems to explain more and reflect reality better.

In paranormal research, there are three dominant paradigms. Investigators may well be inclined towards belief in one or the other:-

The Spirit Paradigm holds that there is a spiritual (often called 'astral') plane Which exists alongside the material

universe. Human beings have spirits, which survive bodily death and may go to some type of afterlife, or may remain to haunt the living. There may be other spiritual entities of non-human origin, be they spirits, demons, fairies or deities.

Many religions use this paradigm, and it is still probably the dominant belief system for most of the human race. A specific religious tradition, such as Protestant Christianity, is a sub-paradigm of the Spirit Paradigm. Magic, telepathy, hauntings, are all in this paradigm the result of either the influence of discarnate spirits or the natural psychic power of the living human's spirit. In game terms, POW (**d20 WIS**) is therefore the measure of the strength of the investigator's spirit. Reducing POW (**d20 WIS**) to zero effectively destroys the investigator's soul, killing them and rendering them non-existent, denied afterlife or even life in the dreamlands. They are utterly annihilated. In this paradigm the mind, or self, is not a function of the brain, but something separate. In fact, by this view, the body is not even necessary for the continued existence of the individual personality.

The Psi Paradigm holds that spirits do not exist, or at least are not responsible for many so called paranormal events. Paranormal powers are in fact merely mundane principles which science has yet to explain, governed by laws we simply do not understand. Telepathy, psychokinesis, ghosts and premonitions are examples of the brain of a living person using powers we do not understand, and are

not aware of. Lovecraft's mythos magic is normally of this type; not true (spiritual) magic but rather highly advanced (alien) science. POW (**d20 WIS**) here reflects the latent psychic potential of the individual, and being reduced to zero POW the annihilation of all mental activity and hence death. To this paradigm the mind and brain are intimately related, to the point where bodily death and the destruction of the brain is thought to almost certainly entail the destruction of the mind as well. It is not necessarily opposed to the spirit paradigm, as both may be partially true, and different phenomena may have different causes – some may be psi (or psionic if you prefer), while some may be spiritual.

The Sceptical (Materialist) Paradigm holds that all 'paranormal' events are delusions. Parapsychologists who approach the subject from this paradigm are chiefly interested in why people believe these things. They explain away purported paranormal events as hallucination, misinterpretation, coincidence, unusual natural phenomena or simple fraud. In the 1920's the Bolsheviks are materialists, as are many Rationalists, Humanists, and Atheists. France has a particularly strong atheist-rationalist tradition of scepticism. Sceptics who refuse to accept even the possibility of paranormal occurrences as by definition impossible (a priori scepticism) are called Sceptics, with a 'k'. (The US spelling). Today most countries have Sceptics organisations. It is interesting to note that HP Lovecraft himself like his friend Harry Houdini was a Sceptic, and that Lovecraft spent much time writing to Newspapers asking them not to carry horoscopes as they were superstitious mumbo jumbo. He has no time for the occult or religion, and was utterly unimpressed by psychical research. If Lovecraft was alive today he would undoubtedly be a member of

CSICOP, the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, the most famous skeptics association. James Randi the famous contemporary skeptic is in turn is an admirer of Lovecraft's fiction.

The Paradigms in History.

The three paradigms represented above developed historically. In the 1890's many educated British, and to a lesser extent, U.S. citizens had embraced Scepticism and lost their faith. Such individuals were accepted, though Atheism was frowned upon in both countries, and almost all radicals, anarchists and revolutionaries from all periods will be Sceptics. The majority of investigators will subscribe to a Spirit Paradigm, in the form of one of the denominations of Christianity or quite possibly Spiritualism. The Psi paradigm is limited to an educated elite, though it was certainly a central question in the psychic research societies; at that time the question was largely whether mediumship could be explained by telepathy, or whether it really provided proof of life after death.

These societies were often sympathetic to Spiritualism, which holds the validity of the Spirit hypothesis. They carried out extensive researches with mediums, who seemed to give information which came from the dead. The problem remained - could the information have been telepathically read from the minds of the living? (as in the psi paradigm.)

By the 1920's the Russian Revolution had resulted in dialectical materialism (a sceptical paradigm) becoming dominant in Russia. A number of British and American citizens, shaken by the horrors of the Great War, had embraced atheism. In 1924 a German,

Rudolph Tischner, invented the term ESP (Extra-Sensory Perception), the first attempt to create a consistent theory of psi.

Today, most professional parapsychologists hold some variant of the psi or sceptical paradigms, though the Spirit paradigm is still popular. The weight of evidence is still not sufficient to allow for any of these paradigms to be universally accepted, and investigators may hold any belief system they choose.

Paradigms in Call of Cthulhu - An Option for the Keeper

The Call of Cthulhu rules provide the framework of 'reality' within which the game is played. It is fitting therefore, that there should be ambiguity in which paradigm is 'true' in each Keeper's campaign. Do psychic powers really work? Is the poltergeist the spirit of an earthbound soul or an expression of the youngest child's 'nervous breakdown outside the head'? Can a medium really contact the spirit of Jackson Elias and resolve what he was up to before his death? Can a clairvoyant see into the mysterious tunnels under the Marsh Mansion and give warnings about the horrors that lurk there? Is the spirit, sceptical, or psi paradigm a better explanation of the horrors of the Mythos? Or is there something stranger, such as demons or fairies lurking behind the odd events investigators are confronted with?

It is part of the task of the parapsychologist to answer these questions. One way to handle this, is for the Keeper to choose a paradigm, and then structure his campaign in such a way that that is the truth which is proverbially out there. Only the Keeper

should know which of the paradigms is true, and the parapsychologist investigator must experiment to learn the truth. Yet it need never be clear cut; there are always multiple explanations.

Chaosium scenarios provide some excellent illustrations of this idea. In *'The Fungi From Yuggoth Campaign'*, psychic Paul LeMond gives visionary evidence which leads the players into the conspiracy. In a Spirit paradigm, all is as it seems. If the psi- paradigm is in play, he is an exceptional clairvoyant, talking not to spirits but in fact using remote viewing (see glossary). Or perhaps he is completely deluded, and coincidence accounts for his success - or he is influenced by a mythos entity?

In *'Spawn of Azathoth'* the scenario begins with a classic 'Crisis Apparition'. Is it a spirit which visits the investigators or the last thoughts of the dying man telepathically transmitted? (spirit or psi?).

Ultimately it matters little. The mythos horrors may well work on a scientific/psi paradigm, yet there is no reason why all the paradigms may not be at least partially true, and different 'paranormal' events have differing explanations. Keepers may freely choose to ignore the idea of paradigms if they find them overly complicated or unnecessary, with little loss to the game. Yet throughout this handbook all paranormal events are discussed in terms of conflicting paradigms, often with varying rules. It would be a terrible mistake to reduce the potential of The Unexplained to just one set of possibilities, and leaving players uncertain adds greatly to the uncertainty from which grows horror...

Chapter 5: Ghosts and Hauntings

Quaine walked into the library, poured himself a stiff drink and slumped into an armchair. It was obvious to David Dodge's experienced eye that he was badly shaken, but he waited for Quaine to speak. At last the fearless pilot put down his glass and spoke. "I met the small boy in the corridor. I asked him had he seen the ghost." He raised his drink once more, then continued - "the boy said no - he didn't believe in ghosts - and vanished in front of my eyes!"

Ghosts have always haunted the living; whether as memories, the shades of the unquiet dead or something even stranger. As long as people have gathered around campfires stories have been told in hushed voices about them. The ghost story dates back to our earliest writings, and it is probably from the ghost story that the whole genre of Horror writing developed. Believe in them or not, they are at the heart of the human psyche.

Ghosts of Ages Past

How did people regard the ghost in the periods in which Cthulhu games are often set? The following guidelines may prove useful.

1890's

The Victorians loved ghost stories. Many historians have noted that the Victorians were obsessed with death in much the same way that our modern societies are constantly looking at sexuality, and that obsession produced some of the finest horror stories ever written. At a time

when electric lighting was just beginning to drive the shadows of flickering gas lamps from the homes of the wealthy, the ghost story told in front of the fire was as much a family event as television today. Christmas in particular was a time when ghost story telling reached it's peak, and the Victorian ghost story has left one famous classic - Charles Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*.

That is not to imply that all Victorians believed in ghosts. In fact belief was probably no stronger than it is today. Many Protestant theologians had since the Reformation insisted categorically that ghosts did not exist, and any such experience was in fact a demonic impersonation of a dead soul. Scepticism and rationalism were extremely strong, and if anything materialism was stronger amongst the scientific community than it is today. It was certainly not respectable for middle class scientifically minded investigators to believe in this nonsense.



Amongst the aristocracy, ghost stories were as popular as ever. Almost every stately home had it's White Lady or ancient family curse, and questioning your family ghost was not the done thing. They were marks of good breeding, and the sense of history - your family had lived in Thornton-Under-Yew Manor since 1066, and the ghosts of Wicked Edmund and Mad Aunt Maud

were as part of the feudal tradition of which you too were a relic.

Psychical research was in its infancy. Ghosts were investigated by the SPR, though the difficulties of any experimental research meant they were often overlooked in favour of work with mediums which offered more immediate results. An investigator in this period will be determined to catch the ghost on camera, or communicate with it. Ghosts are generally viewed as 'dead souls' haunting for a purpose, and therefore worthy of attention. Remember though that in this period **Credit Rating** (in d20 terms the characters social class and reputation) is everything, and the testimony of one Peer of the Realm is worth thirty statements from Cooks, Parlour-maids and Under-Gardeners. However the Society for Psychical Research was incredibly democratic, and even at the time when Lord Balfour, Prime Minister of Great Britain, was also President of the SPR, it also included influential members who were greengrocers and parlour maids, but who could discuss ideas as equals. Sexes were also treated equally within the SPR, and one famous lesbian novelist held the Presidency in the 1920's - lesbianism was considered un-noteworthy and there was no comment, let alone scandal. Things that might shock the middle classes have rarely bothered the British aristocracy and academics.

1920's

By the 1920's things had changed in British society, and old social divisions were rapidly breaking down. The Great War had left an indelible mark on the consciousness of the nation, and with up to one in three young men killed in some villages thousands were turning to Spiritualism in search of reassurance. (see chapter 12 for a detailed discussion of this topic).

The new interest in the paranormal led in Britain to the first great media Ghosthunters, Harry Price and Elliot O' Donnell. Both had more than a little of the raconteur and charlatan about them, but both popularised the idea of psychical research in countless popular books and newspaper articles. No longer content to sit and read about the supernatural, the bright young things of the '20's might choose to seek it out themselves.

In the U.S. the divisions between the Boston Society for Psychical Research and the American Society for Psychical Research weakened parapsychology, but there was still a noticeable increase of interest in these topics. Journalists continued to record odd phenomena, and some serious investigations were conducted.

In both countries parapsychology in the 1920's was still largely concerned with the nature of mediumship, but investigators might be willing to consider the idea that ghosts were telepathic projections or even recordings of past events. These subjects are discussed at length later in this chapter.

A Typology of Ghosts

Psychical researchers and parapsychologists divided ghosts into a variety of categories, each of which suggest an underlying theory which may or may not explain the haunt. Players should familiarise themselves with these theories and distinctions if playing a parapsychologist character, though other professions may be content to "call a ghost a ghost." The major divisions of the genus *spookus spookus* are defined by the author in the following manner, though other classification systems exist:-

1. The True Ghost

What most people think of when they hear the word ghost, the true ghost is a dead person returned to haunt the living. Self aware, a conscious entity, this spirit may have returned to seek justice, vengeance, to reassure or protect loved ones or because it's bones were not correctly interred. In one of my campaigns a dead investigator, Father Mason, returned as a ghost and tagged along with the party invisible but to one psychic character! (See Sinister Seeds p.102 for an example). Perhaps the spirit is not aware that it is dead, or maybe it is not sure what to do about it's new deceased status, and where to go next.

2. The Apparition

The apparition is an 'appearance'. Think of it as an audio or video recording. It is not intelligent or self aware - if you are watching 'The Muppets' on T.V. you can not hold a conversation with Kermit, and no more can you interact with an apparition. It therefore poses no physical threat to the investigators, though as it is indistinguishable from the true ghost in appearance it may take some while for them to realise this, and they will of course lose sanity through seeing it!

3. The Crisis Apparition

A telepathic projection of someone in crisis or approaching death, and usually appears to a friend or loved one which appears much like any other ghost or apparition. It is presumed that the great mental energy released in the moments of crisis telepathically reaches the witnesses mind, and that they then 'see' the ghost. According to some theorists Apparitions appear to fade over time. Many psychical researchers have suggested that such recordings are left by strong emotional energy, generated during tragedies such as murders, suicides or combats. Presumably mythos activity has

generated many such recordings, and an apparition may lead your investigator into a major investigation of the dark secrets of some (presumed) long dead mythos sorcerer...

Such experiences often happen about 3am, for unclear reasons. It is a significant time in the medical condition of the human body, and the time at which many people die of illnesses and wounds – though obviously the Crisis apparition tends to occur at whatever time the crisis occurs!

4. The Phantasm.

Named after the great SPR study, '*Phantasms Of The Living*', the phantasm is the 'ghost' of someone who is very much alive and well. Such ghosts may be generated in many ways, but the British parapsychologist Andrew Green tells an interesting story of a case which serves as a wonderful example.

The Vanishing Baker; an example of the Phantasm.

The case, which took place in the 1960's, developed as follows. After a life time of service to a small village as a baker, the old man retired and sold his shop to a new baker. The young man who took over the shop was soon intrigued by sightings of the old man's ghost, haunting the bakery and going through all the motions of baking bread. Then one day, the apparition did not appear, and was never seen again. On investigation the parapsychologist found the baker was alive all the time he was appearing, sitting in his armchair day dreaming about his former job. Only when he finally died had the 'ghost stopped' appearing.

Investigating a Haunting

Investigating a ghost ultimately comes down to common sense, whichever era the game is being played in. Firstly, it is necessary to visit the site of the haunting and take detailed notes on the environment.

Are there any **geological** factors that could be causing strange noises or smells, or even hallucinations? Could the ghost have been nothing more than a reflection or trick of the light?

Physics skill is useful here. Is there a secret door or panel through which the 'ghost' could have passed? Use spot hidden skill to thoroughly scrutinise your surroundings. **Natural History**, may, perhaps surprisingly, prove very useful. Is a phosphorescent fungus emanating light after dark? Could rats or mice in the walls be causing the odd scratching noises. If it is rats in the walls do you really want to be here? Use **mechanical** and **electrical repair (d20: repair)** rolls to check out the structural integrity and electrics of the house. Examine all possibilities very, very carefully.

If you haven't already interview every witness, taking careful notes. Follow police procedure here, and interview witnesses separately, keeping them apart so they can not contaminate each others testimony. Use psychology to assess how honest they are being about their experiences, and try to avoid asking leading questions. Feel free to use quick questions to try and see if their story changes.

Ideally, check the witnesses medical history, and check their current physical health. Some apparitional experiences, especially those of hallucinatory smells, can be rooted in temporal lobe epilepsy, though the experience is also fairly common among the perfectly healthy. Were they very tired, or under the influence of drink, drugs or medication? Do they have any odd mannerisms

which might suggest mental health problems. Use your skill in psychoanalysis to see if there is any material repressed or aspects of the witnesses psychological history which could lead you on in your investigations...

There is a mass of theoretical material which could be considered, such as the Persinger field fluctuation theory (that ghosts are associated with falls and poltergeists with increases in the Earth's Magnetic Field readings which in turn is related to sun spot activity). Or what about Serena Roney-Dougal's fault hypothesis (that quartz crystals in fault lines generate a piezo-electric field under seismic stress which causes neurochemical reactions which render you more psychically aware or prone to hallucinate ghosts). Or maybe you'd like to examine Albert Budden's electrical allergy hypothesis (that some people have an allergy to electrical fields and therefore hallucinate aliens, ghosts, etc.)

Information on current parapsychological theories can be discovered easily from the websites listed at the end of this book. If the Keeper is fiendish enough to have embraced one of these as explanation for a case, you must trust they have also included enough clues to lead you to that conclusion!

Generally when investigating ghosts the vital thing is to establish what type of haunt you are dealing with. Did the haunt try to communicate, act intelligently, or show awareness of it's environment? Then it is probably a true ghost. The next question is the ghost of who? You need as much information as possible on that person, their likes and dislikes, what happened to them, etc. Remember ghosts haunt for a reason - they are almost never blindly malignant. If you keep getting attacked by the spirit you are missing something. Interviews,

library research, (d20;gather information) archaeology, anthropology, a study of the personalities of all involved - there is no limit to the approaches you can attempt to resolve the haunt.

Once you know who (or perhaps what) you are dealing with, you need to consider it's motive carefully. If they are merely upset at the new tenants who have moved into 'their' house this could be awkward, and require the intervention of prayer, exorcism, a medium or psychic or just a lot of fast talking and persuasion at empty space! Yet there could be more - what if the ghost is the victim of a murder, for which no evidence survives.

Sadly, ghosts will not materialise in front of your cameras. No matter how good the evidence someone will say it is a fake, and you may as well resign yourself now to the fact that definite irrevocable proof will be forever beyond you. You can't change the world, but you can impress the parapsychological community. Therefore gathering evidence and publishing reports is a vital part of playing a parapsychologist. Try to make your case as watertight as possible.

Ultimately you may have to try to dispose of the ghost. There are many different methods, so be imaginative and just keep plodding away until something works. And always remember a ghost may not be what it seems. In some campaigns it may even be a demonic form sent by Satan to deceive mankind, which is how many Protestant theologians view all such appearances!

Investigating an apparition can be even more frustrating. At least a ghost interacts with you, and maybe even talks back (even if it is only hollow moans). Imagine investigating the Royalston

Ballroom that is haunted by the apparitional smell of violets! How would you proceed? The thing about apparitions is that they replay when the conditions are right. They have no motive, though they have an identity or origin that must be researched. But ultimately, what really matters is ensuring you can work out what is needed to trigger a replay. Once you have identified this, you may wish to gather all the equipment you can and attempt to make recordings, or possibly purchase the property and try to make money by taking tourists on ghost tours! The only problem is that such manifestations have a short life span, and that it may very well 'run out' halfway through the investigation, never to recur!

Crisis Apparitions and Phantasms are equally hard to investigate. Firstly you must identify who the agent who 'created' the haunting is. Then you must attempt to locate them, and in the case of crisis apparitions save them from whatever danger they are in if they are still alive, or deal with the problem if you are too late! This can make for a very interesting scenario. Another even worse possibility develops from the idea of the Phantasm - if the person who is inadvertently appearing as a ghost is alive and well how do you convince them of the situation and attempt to stop the haunting?

Despite all the difficulties ghosts are a fascinating field of study, and Investigators may expect many interesting possibilities and unique game situations to arise out of any haunting scenario. But leave your shotgun at home!

The following brief timeline of hauntings shows the diversity of the ghost story. Cases are included more on the grounds of their interest or fame than their evidential status.

A Chronology of Ghosts

Here are a handful of cases which may inspire further research or be referenced as sources for investigations.

First Century A.D. The Greek philosopher Athenodorus purchased cheaply a house haunted by a chain rattling ghost, and sees the spirit.

1800-1867 Willington Mill, haunted by bizarre noises, footsteps, running, rappings, etc, etc. If it had lasted only a few months it would have been classed as a poltergeist, but this persisted for over sixty years!

1863 The phantasm of American manufacturer's wife seen in his cabin in mid-Atlantic during a storm, by the husband and independently by his cabin mate. She had been worried and had dreamed of visiting him.

1879 No.50, Berkeley Square begins to appear in print as the most haunted house in London. One tenant was excused his taxes on the grounds his house was known to be haunted. The houses macabre reputation continues through to the 1890's, and provided the inspiration for Edward Bulwer-Lytton's classic tale, 'The Haunted and The Haunters; The House and the Brain'. A must-visit for Gaslight investigators, but be wary - legend says most ghosthunters do not leave alive, but drop dead of fright or go insane!

1882-1889 A house in Pitville Circus Road, Cheltenham becomes the focus for investigation as over twenty pillars of Victorian society witness a ghostly lady in black, clutching a handkerchief to her face. Known as the Cheltenham or Morton case, and investigated by the SPR.

1897 The ghost of B--- House makes the London Times and sparks off a heated controversy. The house is Ballechin House, and stands in Perthshire, Scotland. Lord Bute rented the house and a party of 35 psychical researchers, with no knowledge of it's history, descended on it for a year. Would make an excellent scenario for a Keeper willing to do a little research.

1897 Greenbrier, West Virginia ghost. The ghost of Zona Shue returned from the grave to explain that she had been murdered by her husband. The subsequent exhumation showed this to be the case, and he was sentenced to life imprisonment, at least partially on the testimony of the ghost, which was mentioned in court.

1921 The Chaffin Will Case. So called as it involved the appearance of a dead man to his son, four years after his death, to tell him of the existence of a second hidden will. The will was found, and upheld as legal by the Courts of North Carolina. Strong evidence for survival of death?

1929-1938 Borley Rectory makes the headlines as Harry Price gets on the case. Price took enthusiastic amateurs here for a year long vigil in the rented house in 1937, having recruited his forty investigators from an advert in The Times. He refused to include anyone with a background in psychical research, and volunteers were not paid. So much has been written on this case it seems pointless to repeat it here.

1934 The Ash Manor, Sussex, case which was investigated by Nandor Fodor. Eileen Garrett discovers a medieval ghost, and Fodor locates the origins of the haunting in sexual tensions.

1951 The Dieppe Raid time slip. Two English ladies holidaying in France

heard the sounds of the battle at Dieppe a decade before. Reminiscent of the Versailles time slip of 1904.

1968 Zeitoun, Egypt. A vision of the Virgin Mary was repeatedly seen by many witnesses. Marian Apparitions are common throughout the twentieth century, and this was one of the most fascinating cases.

1972 The Ghosts of Flight 401. Following the crash of an airliner in the Florida Everglades the ghosts of crew members began to appear on other aeroplanes of that type, often to warn crew members of some potentially disastrous fault. It was later shown that all the planes on which the ghosts appeared used salvaged parts from the original crash. A very tense scenario could be set on aircraft in appalling

weather, when a ghost appears...

1972-1977 Phillip, the manufactured ghost is created by members of the Toronto Society for Psychical Research. They invented a mythical cavalier and gave him a life history, before beginning a lengthy series of experiments which eventually produced raps from the ghost, who took on a independent life of his own!

1975 The Amityville Horror. While no parapsychologist today takes the case seriously owing to major allegations of fraud this incredibly famous haunting has been novelised and made into a film which may prove inspirational to Keepers looking for a more spectacular approach!

Chapter 6: Investigating Poltergeists

"Michael Phiness slowly opened the door of the youngest child's bedroom, tensed and ready for anything... It was exactly as he had left it, apart from a china doll, moved from its place on the dresser to a position sitting by the fire. The dolls face blankly stared into his, cold eyes vacant yet somehow condemning..."

Poltergeist! A word that conjures up pictures of inexplicable bursts of energy tearing up a house, of vases smashing, inches from the heads of investigators. Indeed, movement of objects is the classic symptom of the poltergeist-type haunting. Doors open and slam, objects fly across rooms and even around corners, people are harassed and quite often scared out of their homes. Such cases are not uncommon in parapsychological literature and seem to happen fairly regularly in the real world, so it is quite likely the investigators will eventually encounter this phenomenon.

Poltergeists through the Ages: A History of Haunting.

The word "poltergeist" is derived from two medieval German words meaning "noisy spirit" and came to be used in the English speaking world slowly in the 1880's and 1890's, gradually replacing the term "Hobgoblin" used before. By the 1920's the term was firmly in use and by the 1950's parapsychologists have christened the poltergeist "RSPK", an acronym for recurrent spontaneous

psycho-kinesis, reflecting the explanation favoured by most modern investigators. This reflects also the changing attitudes to poltergeist phenomena...

1890's

Poltergeist phenomena have been known for centuries (see the chronology later). Traditionally the activity was blamed on witchcraft or demons, although increasingly after the Enlightenment fraud was suspected and victims were as likely to send for law enforcers as a minister of religion.

Amongst the parapsychological community poltergeists were a poor relation, scorned and ridiculed by many. The founding fathers of the SPR were sceptical of their existence, although in 1896 Podmore published an article entitled "Poltergeists" in the journal of the SPR. He drew one vital conclusion, namely that in most cases a prepubescent girl was somehow at the centre of manifestations. Having inferred children had something to do with the poltergeist Podmore went on to accuse them of trickery and fraud, and cited several cases where clear cheating was uncovered by the investigators. He did however allow that one case, the "Worksop Poltergeist" seemed genuine. Other parapsychologists such as Sir William Barrett were however convinced that the phenomena were in some way genuine. At this time Continental investigators were far more open to such events. This was certainly true of Cesare Lombroso, the father of modern criminology, who after encountering a poltergeist in Italy in 1900 turned to parapsychology.

1920's

By the 1920's there had been some revival of interest in the poltergeist. Harry Price the famous English ghost hunter had begun his investigation of a Rumanian girl named Eleanore Zugun and studied her in his "National Laboratory of Psychical Research" in London where he witnessed unusual effects. Price became fascinated by the poltergeist, and yet remained convinced it was the work of spirits or an invisible inhuman type of entity. (The Keeper may well decide this is the case.) By the 1920's the idea had been developed that the poltergeist was a "person centred" event following this agent about, rather than the "area based" effects of a normal haunting. There was a strong body of evidence to this effect, as often even when a family had fled in fear to a new house the "ghost" moved with them... Even as late as 1938 W.H.Salter, President of the SPR, doubted the existence of the poltergeist and this remains true of some parapsychologists.

Contemporary

Playing a parapsychologist today means that you find fraud and hoaxing are still favoured as explanations by some eminent researchers. By far the most popular explanation now is the RSPK or Recurrent Spontaneous Psycho-Kinesis theory, which put poltergeists down to a mysterious force named PKE. What is PKE? Psycho-Kinetic Energy (PKE) is an energy supposedly generated by the human mind that is able to move objects at a distance. The RSPK hypothesis suggests that this talent can occasionally occur spontaneously and without warning humans develop the ability to unconsciously chuck stuff around, resulting in a poltergeist haunting. It has been described by one researcher as the equivalent of "a nervous breakdown occurring outside the victim's head."



"So stop throwing books at me and tell me about your childhood!"

Some parapsychologists hold that there is a sexual factor and suggest psychoanalysis of the agent (person at the centre of the outbreak) may prove useful in terminating prolonged poltergeists. This is one possibility the mature keeper may wish to consider as a basis for an unusual investigation. Today we might expect the agent to be any person placed under great stress, yet forced to repress their emotions. The poltergeist may be a way of letting off steam, an emotional cure.

Poltergeist Effects.

We have looked at what parapsychologists through the ages have thought about poltergeist phenomena. If a keeper wishes to include a poltergeist investigation in his campaign he may wish to familiarise himself with some of the most famous cases for background and ideas, and will find the chronology and bibliography useful. Certain features are common to almost all poltergeists and these can form a basis for the Keeper to work around and the investigator to assess the situation.

Poltergeists seem to follow certain rules or laws. These are well established by research, although endless debate

continues whether the phenomena even exists. Generally the phenomena progress from a very minor nuisance and become steadily more dramatic.

Poltergeist Events

Tapping noises are heard. Was that scratching mice in the walls? Or even rats? Who was walking in the passage at midnight?

Where are my cufflinks? I swear I put them down here. No I haven't moved your scissors. "In my pockets! I checked there twice!" - or in an extremely unlikely location, when they return at all. (This phenomena is called Small Object Displacement or SOD by parapsychologists. Small items up disappear and reappear where they were - or in unlikely places. This may be down to carelessness, but soon even laymen start to blame the "sodding" ghost.)

Loud knocking sounds, detonations and raps spring from the wall. Who rang the doorbell? There is no one outside. Did you move that vase off the table? Aunt Ethel's portrait is at the bottom of the stairs. Anyone would think this house was haunted.

About this point things start to happen in earnest. Objects fly across the room and impact with a great crashing sound. Often they are not broken, or else they're shattered with incredible violence. The object may have become very hot, and one of my research team burned his fingers on the fragments of a supposedly poltergeist hurled cup.

'Curiouser and Curiouser'

One classic poltergeist effects that can be found in any book of "real life ghost stories" is what I term the invisible housebreakers. It generally goes

something like - "I was asleep with my wife, when we were both startled awake by the thunderous crashes from the dining room. Utterly convinced we were being vandalised by a gang of maniacal burglars I listened in horror. Arming myself and recklessly running downstairs I could hear the sounds of the furniture being hurled about with great violence. Throwing open the door, everything became silent. Fumbling for the light switch I flooded the room with a welcome light. Everything was exactly as it usually is. Confused and dazed I searched the house, but to no avail."

This happens often in poltergeist cases. Rarer events are also possible, such as childish scrawling appearing on the walls of a locked room. Often these messages are threats, such as the classic "Esther Cox you are mine to kill", or entreaties for help as in the famous 'Marianne' scripts of the Borley Rectory hauntings.

Voices also feature in a small number of cases. In some instances they come from the unwilling throats of someone in the house, but in other cases they seem to come from nowhere. The Enfield Poltergeist of 1970's London was an example of the first kind, while the latter is demonstrated by a case from Suffolk, England in the 1980's. Such voices often have a metallic or robotic ring to them and are quite eerie to hear. Certain features are especially common. Voices consistently swear and abuse those present, and show a low level of intelligence. The poltergeist voice of the "Watseka Wonder" case in nineteenth century America claimed to be a demon, angel and the deceased spirit of a former resident at different times.

Another odd feature of some cases are pools of water or blood that form about the property. Often rational causes can be found for these, particularly if the dog looks sheepish or the windows are

completely misted over with condensation. More distressing are fire poltergeists that delight in minor feats of pyromania. Even fire resistant materials have been known to ignite. Unexplained fires invariably cause great alarm, and they can eventually reach a climax with the house burning down. These are a subtype of poltergeist and a particularly nasty one.

Stone throwing is another particularly irritating feature of some cases. Stones may fall from nowhere, raining down in a room, bombarding the roof or even smashing windows and breaking crockery. These stones may display interesting features such as bizarre trajectories, and may well be hot or freezing to touch. They rarely strike anyone and if they do hit for minimal damage, at most 1 point of damage.

Perhaps the single most terrifying type of manifestation is the 'biting poltergeist'. This is extremely rare but there are a few cases such as the Eleanore Zugun poltergeist where bite marks, weal's and other physical effects occurred on the victim. These seem similar to stigmata and may be psychosomatic, caused by the person's unconscious mind. Miss Zugun attributed them to a 'dracul', or devil, invisible to everyone else. Of course the Keeper knows better, doesn't he? No? Excellent...

Poltergeists usually begin as mischievous pranksters, yet build up in to something quite terrifying and malevolent. They do seem to follow one unwritten law, which is quite curious. No matter how violent the telekinesis, or how frightening and hostile the entity seems, they never seem to kill or indeed seriously injure anyone. Thrown objects always seem to miss their intended targets, swerving in mid air to do so if necessary. A keeper may frighten, harass and baffle investigators but is

extremely unlikely to kill them, unless this is not another poltergeist case but part of the machinations of a mythos entity. Of course an investigator who insists on trying to catch the flying vase deserves what is coming to her, and there are exceptions to this rule.

One parapsychologist was explaining this rule to a frightened lady during an investigation when he was struck in the head by a flying brick. One wonders if she lost confidence in his ideas! John Bell was killed during the 'Bell Witch' affair in the 1830's U.S. when something swapped his medicine for poison. Almost anything is possible, and the investigators should always be careful. There are some cases which break this rule and great physical harm did occur.

Another interesting feature of the poltergeist is that it sometimes recurs years later. Although most evidence does point towards the RSPK and person centred nature of the haunting there are several cases where the "haunting" recurred 10-20 years after the initial disturbance, even though there was not a single person involved in both outbreaks. Here the poltergeist seems area rather than person based. The Syderstone Parsonage, Norfolk, poltergeist was of this type, as was a recent case I investigated in Warwickshire, England.

Sometimes apparitions are also seen. I find these 'polter-ghost' cases quite common. One theory is that the presence of haunting allows people to manifest psi talents they would not normally do, because they can blame them on the ghost or apparition. These cases tend to last longer than a normal poltergeist, which has a tendency to burn out. It is possible that the ghost somehow allows an agent to create RSPK, whether directly or indirectly as suggested above.

How long does a poltergeist last? In some cases the activity lasts only a few days and then ceases. Often as the phenomena build up to the climax the frightened householders call in "experts" who arrive to find nothing happening.

There is an old German proverb – 'when the ghosthunter arrives, the ghost flies out of the window.' Often the poltergeist will persist for a few weeks, and some rare examples exist of poltergeists which lasted for months or even years. This is a major difference between poltergeists and other hauntings, which tend to continue for decades.

One of the strangest aspects of poltergeist cases is that the poltergeist often seems to be reactive. That is it learns new tricks, develops in strength and personality, and reacts to the actions of occupants. It often seems that it is shy around new people and will not manifest until it has become accustomed to them. The Syderstone poltergeist would knock a specific number of times if requested and would beat out time if a tune was hummed or sung. Fancy singing anyone? The recent Cardiff, Wales, poltergeist apparently materialised money at request, though sadly only in small denominations and a single note at a time.

Hints for Investigating Poltergeists

Almost everything covered in the previous investigation ideas should be applied to a poltergeist haunting, and some additional items must be taken in to consideration.

Obviously the investigator will wish to film or photograph objects in flight, although this can prove difficult. It is usually possible to weigh the object and measure the distance travelled. Here simple maths and a Physics roll can

calculate the force involved. It also worth analysing the fracture patterns. Did the object fall at the end of it's flight or did a force push it in to the ground?

Poltergeist Thrown Objects

It has been observed that any item thrown normally will follow a ballistic trajectory; that is curve in flight.

*An **idea** roll (d20: INT) while witnessing a poltergeist hurled object will note it moves in a flat trajectory, as if carried by an invisible hand, and then falls directly to the floor as if dropped. A **Physics** roll will suggest this is impossible. This effect is very hard to hoax, and may cost sanity.*

More than in even conventional hauntings it is important to control the movements of the occupants, observing them minutely. Could anyone have thrown that item? Marking moveable items initial position on your map is time consuming but invaluable. The geophysical hypothesis is of particular relevance to poltergeist hauntings. Always get a surveyor to check the property over for subsidence, and use Geology skill to check for underground water, mines, caverns and geological faults. Could vibration be causing objects to move?

In general most investigators will suspect RSPK, or at least that one person is the focus of the haunting. Isolating them is half the battle, and then Psychoanalysis skills can resolve their problems by encouraging them to express themselves in another way. Try sending each suspect away and seeing if a lull occurs, or if the problem follows them. The focus or agent is often not frightened by events, although they may be curious. They may even be aware they are in some way involved, at least unconsciously.

Some poltergeists are apparently not entirely the result of one person but

underlying tensions in the family as a whole. Family dysfunction has been cited by many parapsychologists as a cause. I refer you however to Axel's Law, named after a friend who stated that if you examine any family intensely enough you will find stress and conflict. It is hardly surprising we find it in people who believe they are haunted.

The use of **Psychology (d20: Sense Motive)** and **Medicine** skills should be obvious. One possibility worth examining is temporal lobe epilepsy, and some believe squared theta wave production on an EEG reading may be significant.

Extensive background research in newspaper morgues, archives and City Hall is of obvious importance, as is interviewing older residents of the town or district. There is a possibility the haunting is area based and has occurred before. **History, Library Use (d20:Research), Archaeology and Fast Talk (d20: Bluff)** should be fully used. Don't forget to use **Mechanical and Electrical Repair (d20 Repair)** rolls to find rational explanations for seemingly paranormal events.

Be inventive. In the modern era IR beam triggered security cameras can be used to try to gather evidence, but in earlier periods ingenuity can overcome lack of technology. Firearms are more hazardous than useful on a poltergeist investigation for obvious reasons.

Temperature variations and "cold spots" should also be carefully noted. Robertson, a scientific friend of Harry Price, noted that one cubic foot of air when cooled one degree Fahrenheit loses fifteen pounds of energy, equal to lifting a fifteen pound object one foot into the air. Statistically minded and scientific keepers may be employing this formula so carefully weigh any object that moves to calculate the force

involved.

Your aim is to record evidence, work out what is going on and if possible stop it causing further distress. Never lose sight of this...

Poltergeist Case Chronology

1170 A.D St Godfric's hermitage showered with stones and furniture pelts the unfortunate holy man.

1190 Dagworth, a "lost" village of Suffolk, has it's manor frequented by a poltergeist.

1528 Convent of St. Pierre de Lyon in France afflicted by Poltergeist. Believed to be spirit of one Sister Alix who had fled with stolen valuables but died shortly thereafter. Successfully exorcised.

1662-63 Phantom drummer of Tedworth, Wiltshire. After a magistrate imprisons a vagrant drummer and confiscates his instrument the sound of the drum and poltergeist phenomena assail his house.

1682 Long Island home of George Walton attacked by stone throwing poltergeist.

1716-1717 Poltergeist haunting of Epworth Rectory, Lincolnshire and home of Rev. Samuel Wesley. Son John later founded Methodism.

1731 Dortmund, Germany. House and laboratory of Berthold Gerstmann is plagued by poltergeist phenomena. He writes a pamphlet on the subject which is today in the British Museum.

1818 Munchloff, Transylvania. A stone throwing poltergeist and typical object movement occurs.

1819-20 Christchurch, Barbados. Coffins move mysteriously in the Chase family vault.

(See Nickell and Fischer, 1992 in bibliography for very Cthulhoid solution.)

1846 La Perriere, France. *Angelique Cottin "the magnetic girl" begins to demonstrate her bizarre ability to attract and hold objects by an unknown force.*

1850 Stratford, Connecticut. *The Rev. Phelps family experience a poltergeist who as well as more usual phenomena creates bizarre tableau of life sized mannequins out of clothes. The figures were all placed in attitudes of prayer and open bibles were scattered around!*

1875 Calvados, Normandy, France. *Chateau centre of varied poltergeist haunting, unsuccessfully exorcised and relenting only after nine years, though only the last year 1875 - 1876 were incidents major.*

1883 Worksop, England. *Frank Podmore (SPR) investigates young mill worker Eliza Rose and decides her abilities genuine.*

1884 New York, *two young men, George and Albert Sanford, bombarded by stones for two days.*

1887, Appleby, Cumbria. *A mill provides setting for another poltergeist troubling a parson and family.*

1892 Chicago. *Police investigate ransacking of family home but never discover evidence of burglars.*

1897 Controversy in the London Times relating to alleged haunting and Poltergeist activity at Ballechin House, Perthshire, Scotland. *Psychical researchers rent the house for three months and experience many events.*

1900-1901 Two major poltergeist cases at Turin, Italy.

1905 Sweden. *The "Karin" poltergeist acts in accordance with post-hypnotic*

suggestions given to the probable agent, Karin, hence supporting the RSPK hypothesis.

1906 Kent, England. *A stable full of horses are turned around in their stalls and one poor animal mysteriously transported into a hayloft. A partition has to be dismantled to get it out.*

1911 Dale, Georgia. *Two storey telegraph tower on Atlantic Coast Railroad line develops poltergeist. Trapdoor will not remain shut, objects float around room. The operators flee.*

1921 Hornsey, London. *Exploding coal marks beginning of poltergeist case.*

1921 Leidersbruche, Carinthia. *An explosion of poltergeist activity at an inn seems to be centred on the maid, "Hannie". She was taken to London for further investigation.*

1926 Harry Price investigates Eleanore Zugun *at his National Laboratory for Psychological Research. Distinguished, academic or famous investigators assured a warm welcome, providing they support Price.*

1929 Eggenburg, Austria. *Freida Weissl is investigated by the Austrian Society for Psychological Research who witness minor poltergeist activity.*

1929 Poona, India. *Centred on Damodar Bapat a chap whose mother had a history of visions. His adopted father Dr. Ketkar and several colonial British witnessed the manifestations, which included showers of coins and a levitation.*

1930-1940 Harry Price deeply involved in Borley Rectory investigation. *The building burnt down in 1939, but Price named it "The Most Haunted House in England." Investigators ignorant of psychical research welcome and preferred!!!*

1935 Woodside, Wimbledon poltergeist first manifests. It then stops before occurring again in 1940.

1937 Port Louis, Mauritius. A stone throwing poltergeist harassed a household.

1944 Toronto, Canada. Exploding coal marks another case at the Wild Plum School. Investigators baffled.

1960 Sauchie, Scotland. A famous poltergeist centred on eleven year old Virginia Campbell. Her family had just moved to Scotland from Ireland but she missed her dog who was left behind. The poltergeist followed her to school and was

well attested.

1975 Enfield, N. London. House suffers from bewildering array of poltergeist events and is carefully investigated. A classic case.

1986 Rougham, Suffolk. An incendiary poltergeist which spoke with a peculiar "metallic" sounding voice.

1992 Cardiff, Wales. *The Cardiff responsive poltergeist brings money at request!* Dr David Fontana investigates for the SPR.

Chapter 7: Spiritualism and Mediumship

Spiritualism is a major religion with many millions of adherents spread across the USA and Europe. It is a real religious movement, and the Keeper should respect the beliefs of any adherents of the faith who participate in his or her game, while stressing that the game world is not the real world.

Spiritualism takes the reality of the spirit world for granted, and offers more proof than faith to its adherents, by providing communication with deceased friends and loved ones. This communication is via a talented individual called a medium who possesses the ability to contact the dead. The movement has both organised churches and private home circles, and of course mediumship can occur outside the doctrinal and institutional base of Spiritualism. In almost all ways today's channellers are the spiritual heirs of the Spiritualist movement.

History of Spiritualism

Spiritualism began in Hydesville, New York state in 1848. In December 1847 the Fox family, father John, his wife and two daughters, Margaret and Kate moved into a house there, near today's township of Arcadia, Wayne County. There were two more members of the Fox family, Leah and David, both married and living with their partners close by.

Soon the family was afflicted by bangs and raps in the night, which today would probably initiate a poltergeist investigation. Kate however discovered that it was possible to communicate with the 'haunting' entity by asking it to rap a

certain number of times in response to questions. The family established that they were dealing with the ghost of a murdered pedlar buried under the house. Some authorities have claimed that human remains were found there during excavations in both 1848 and 1904. Eventually plagued by sightseers and the curious the family took off to Rochester, a nearby town.

Soon after their arrival in Rochester they discovered the rapping had followed them, and a circle of interested and sensible people began to gather for the first seances. In 1849 three public meetings were held to investigate these phenomenon, and no trickery could be discovered. (Many years later one sister claimed responsibility for the noises but her testimony is considered suspect because of pressure placed on her to confess).

A new craze began and spiritualist circles repeating the phenomena sprang up all over the US in response to the news. By 1853 the movement had reached San Francisco and London, and by 1860 was worldwide. The Fox family were among the greatest missionaries of this new movement, even though as previously mentioned there were later admissions of fraud.

Spiritualism in the 1890's.

For Gaslight investigators there is no shortage of mediums. There was little in the way of national organisation of mediums although some regions of Britain had organised Federations that might have up to thirty circles of similar beliefs, and in 1891 the National Federation of Spiritualists (NFS) came into existence and grew quite large before its name change to the Spiritualist National Union (SNU) in 1902. British spiritualists of this time were often

adherents of the temperance and anti-capital punishment lobbies, often held radical political views and were frequently vegetarians. A few dabbled in Women's rights and a tiny minority espoused free love. Spiritualist characters in this period may come from any social class and may be as radical as the player likes.

"Two Worlds" was the major British magazine of spiritualism and had a fairly large circulation, and it advertised the existence of local circles. Trance mediumship flourished and table turning was a popular craze, reputedly even reaching Buckingham Palace. D.D. Home one of the greatest physical mediums had done much to make spiritualism fashionable and it was common among everyone from the aristocracy down. There can be no doubt that there were many fake mediums and few good ones and the fledgling SPR spent much time investigating the phenomena.

Spiritualism in the 1920's and 30's.

Within Britain the movement was greatly affected by the national trauma of the First World War, 1914 - 1919. Almost everyone knew someone who was killed in the conflict, and thousands of young wives and mothers turned to the Spiritualist Churches for comfort and reassurance. By 1916 a backlash had begun and the media and courts had begun to harass spiritualists, possibly because of the large numbers of fraudulent mediums who sprang up to cash in. Two prominent men, the noted psychical researcher Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes did much to publicise the movement. By the early 1920's the newspapers were beginning to be more sympathetic to the movement. Spiritualism continued to make converts of important and influential men and remained strong until 1939 when it began to go into decline. A second major periodical, "Psychic News" was available.

By 1924 there were 309 Churches who were affiliated to the SNU and many more belonged to the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League or one of the many other organisations.



American spiritualism continued to exist but was more individualistic and anti-organisation than its British counterpart. Harry Houdini, the great stage magician personally debunked many fraudulent mediums in this period, although there is some controversy over at least one of his attempts- the case of Margery, Mina Crandon.

Spiritualism Today.

Spiritualism continues to thrive today. There are still many home circles as well as the institutionalised churches and since the 70's especially a new phenomenon closely allied has developed. This is channelling, still nearly unknown in Britain but quite well known in New Age circles within the US. Channelling works much the same way as traditional trance mediumship, the major difference being in trance mediumship the entity purportedly communicating is usually the deceased spirit of a human, whereas channelled entities may be aliens or energy forms who have never incarnated in the flesh, though others purport to be Atlanteans or great gurus of the past. These entities often provide philosophical and moral teachings and small groups form to promote and study their ideas. Perhaps the earliest example is the White Eagle Lodge, founded to give the ideas of White Eagle - an enlightened spirit that was once human - publicity, and

particularly active from the 1930's to today. Less emphasis is placed on proof of human survival and more on the teachings and guidance from the other side.

Types of Mediumship

There are two main types of mediumship, best classified as mental and physical. Physical mediumship was quite common in the 1890's and 1920's but is very rare nowadays for some reason, though one reason may be that we are now much better at exposing fraudulent practices. It does however produce fairly spectacular and interesting results and makes for a good scenario. The SPR's booklet "*Hints on Sitting with Mediums*" (1956) lists the following types of mediumship.

Physical Mediumship.

Table-turning.

A group of sitters place their hands touching on a table that starts to lift, move, tilt or bang in accordance with a prearranged code. This was a great craze of the nineteenth century with even Queen Victoria rumoured to have participated. It is best performed in a room with either very subdued or red lighting, or in total darkness. Hoaxing is extremely easy. There are rules for this in the Keepers section.

Telekinesis.

Some mediums produce seemingly telekinetic effects, that being remote movement of objects. Again darkness or low light is preferred.

Ouija Board, Planchette

The Ouija board was invented in America in 1891 and for many years was regarded as a harmless parlour game, though nowadays it has acquired a sinister reputation. Opinions are divided as to

whether the cup is moved by unconscious muscular action, as most sceptics believe, or by spirits or demons, as almost everyone else believes. This author strongly discourages the practice.

A Planchette is a piece of wood with a holder for a pen or pencil, which pokes through the Planchette, which is mounted on casters. The users place their fingertips on it, and the pen traces out words on a sheet of paper underneath the Planchette, automatic writing style.

Spirit Trumpets, Banjos et al...

In the early twentieth century and late nineteenth century it was common for physical mediums to have spirit trumpets through which voices spoke. Guitars and other musical instruments played by themselves, and various objects floated round the séance room. These were often marked with luminous paint to allow their movement to be observed in the darkness of the seance room. Eusapia Palladino and Franz Kluski were two famous mediums who seemed capable of producing genuine effects, although controlled RSPK can not be ruled out as a cause (and Palladino was caught cheating at times!).

Ectoplasm.

Made famous by the film *Ghostbusters* ectoplasm is a possibility yet to be substantiated or analysed by modern chemical science. A white, sometimes faintly bluish substance it resembles mucus in consistency, and is probably related to the ichor exuded by the dread Hounds of Tindalos, having its origin in the angles rather than the curves of the space-time continuum! Unlike that ichor it is not corrosive, but some mediums have claimed that it can not stand light. During a séance certain physical mediums can exude this stuff from their bodily orifices. It is quite luminous and may form swirling clouds or waving tendrils before solidifying into human or even animal form. The substance can be used

by spirits to take on bodily form, making them clearly recognisable to all in the room. Ectoplasm is spectacular and the hallmark of the greatest materialisation mediums.

Most ectoplasm that has been witnessed by psychical researchers has borne an uncanny resemblance to muslin or cheesecloth soaked in luminous paint. There is no doubt that in many cases of fraudulent mediumship that is exactly what it was. The medium had either a concealed accomplice who draped themselves before appearing or had hidden the "ectoplasm" within or about their person or clothing. Hoaxing is a major possibility here.

Apports.

These are peculiar appearances of objects apparently brought to the sitting by spirits, sometimes at the request of sitters. It is possible that some psi power allows for the teleportation of these objects but usually I think that hoaxing or a spirit using a SOD type effect is the better explanation. Apports have included flowers, stones, rings, frogs, birds, ornaments and insects.

Spirit Photography.

Quite rare today but very popular in the 1890's spirit photography purported to show the newly deceased standing behind their loved ones in an ordinary photograph. Hoaxing was ubiquitous with actors hired to appear behind the sitter through concealed panels and even double exposures where another photo was super-imposed. One spirit photograph of a remembrance ceremony at the Cenotaph, a London war memorial claimed to show the faces of dead soldiers hovering about. Unfortunately they were instantly recognisable as well known (living) sports personalities clipped from the newspaper!

Requirements for physical mediumship.

Often the séance has a fairly limited attendance, say up to twelve persons. The room is pitch black or lit by a very dim red light. Several objects with luminous paint may be scattered around, including guitars and other instruments. Often all participants sit holding hands and wait for medium to make contact. Hymns or jolly songs may be sung to build up the energy. Sing rolls anyone?

Mental mediumship.

This is by far the most common form of mediumship and is as prolific today as before. Here nothing physical occurs, and all communication is via the medium who either sees or hears the spirit messages. The SPR published invaluable *Hints on Sittings with Mediums* in 1951 which lists three types of mental mediumship. These are:-

The Clairvoyant Medium.

These use the abilities found within the Keepers Section, specifically **Spirit Vision**. The medium can both see and speak with the dead.

The Psychometrist. Someone who claims to be able to read the history of an object by psychic vibrations.

The Trance Medium.

This is probably most peoples idea of a medium. The medium relaxes and apparently goes to sleep, actually passing into a hypnotic self-induced trance. A new personality, or **Spirit Guide** takes over. Spirit Guides are spirits who have attached themselves to a human and protect them from hostile spirits. Normally they are foreign, and each

medium's spirit guide has a unique personality.

Examples of Spirit Guides

Ra-Amen is an ancient Egyptian priest who lived in the 6th Dynasty. He speaks in a stilted, hesitant manner and often refers to popular conceptions of ancient Egyptian mythology. He explains that most souls reincarnate but spiritually advanced spirits, or Ka's as he refers to them, sometimes stick around to help mortals in their spiritual progress. Unfortunately he is totally unconcerned with furthering mortal knowledge of ancient history or archaeology, seeing these things as a waste of time. He is interested in "rescue work", that is in helping earthbound spirits to "move on." He regards his mediums friends as bumbling idiots and constantly encourages them to "strive for the unreflected light" and "love unconditionally".

Bright Eagle was a Red Indian, as indeed most spirit guides seem to have been. He acts like a stereotypical Amerindian from a 1950's western, and has long since forgotten the Sioux tongue and culture. His major concerns are ecology and saving the planet, and he constantly exhorts his medium and circle to greater concern for animals. He gives salutary lectures on moral philosophy from the happy hunting grounds, and tries to put people in touch with their departed loved ones. He frequently berates his medium for drinking, smoking and not being a vegetarian.

Lahm-Psu was an ancient Atlantean sorcerer-priestess, and frequently tells stories of Ancient Atlantis. She warns constantly of the coming end of the age, and explains that the Ascended Masters are trying to gather a circle of faithful initiates who will learn hermetic magics and drive off an unspeakable evil that

threatens the very cosmos. Lahm-Psu occasionally manages to be quiet long enough to find the spirits she is looking for, but most clients find her charming if a trifle moribund and they do get through to their loved ones eventually...

Dr. Otto was a doctor who lived in nineteenth century Germany and practised surgery. A pompous, stereotypical German he blusters and splutters as he tries to find out what is going on. He has Diagnose Disease (pre-5th) or Medicine (5th edtn) at 30%. He also specialises in psychic surgery (see below) and is happy to oblige with any rusty knife. No proof of his existence has ever checked out but he does speak fluent German, although his medium studied it at high school in Pennsylvania years ago.

Psychic Surgery

This is most common today in Hispanic cultures, especially Brazil and the Philippines where many psychic surgeons operate. It is not strictly necessary for a psychic surgeon to be a trance rather than clairvoyant medium, but many are. Like Dr. Otto (see examples of spirit guides) most claim to be spirits of medical men continuing their good work from the other side. They place the patient in a light trance although the patient remains fully conscious throughout, and operate in primitive unsterilised conditions such as the patient's own kitchen. They often use rusty knives and make swift incisions before cutting out tumours and other growths. Others use more traditional methods of psychic healing such as laying on of hands. The patient feels no pain and the scars heal with supernatural swiftness. Many sceptics claim that nothing more than hypnotism, autosuggestion and sleight of hand are involved.

Automatism

Automatism is automatic writing. The automatist creates automatic writing as follows. Sitting relaxed, they hold pen (or

paintbrush if an automatic painter) to paper and wait for sometimes hours for their spirit guide to take over and possess their body. They will then create fine paintings, compose symphonies or write either short messages or even complete novels. Some famous automatists have created in the style of well known masters of the past with considerable success, possibly allowing for a great career in forgery! Shorter transcripts such as those produced by the SPR group of automatists in the famous case of the Cross-Correspondences may provide some of the best evidence we have for short term post mortem survival of personality.

Hints for Investigating Spiritualist Phenomena.

It is of great interest to players as whether or not the Spirits exist in the Keeper's campaign, for if it is they have a useful source of information. If not they can at least avoid self-delusion and wasting time better spent planning and researching. While investigating mediums it may prove useful to purchase the small booklet "*Hints on sitting with Mediums*" from the British SPR. This is inexpensive (about \$3) and gives far more detail than could possibly be included in this chapter.

To start with though two points should be self-evident. Firstly it is possible, at least in the case of physical mediumship, to apply all the standard investigative procedures. The medium should be controlled and if it is not possible to securely rope them to their chair then the sitters on either side should hold their hands and place their feet gently on the mediums. If production of ectoplasm is expected then a competent medical practitioner should be asked to carry out a

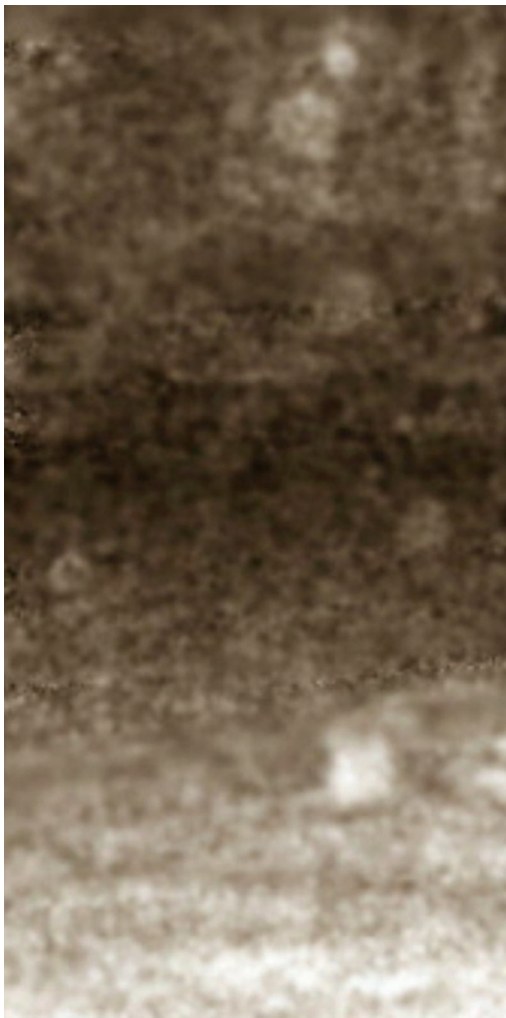
thorough body cavity search of the medium while their clothing is rigorously examined for concealed hiding places. If an apport is expected it may also be necessary to finely comb the medium's hair. Meanwhile the other investigators should thoroughly examine the table, chair and other furnishings of the séance room. Finally the doors, walls and floor as well as the ceiling should be inspected for sliding panels, cavities and other hiding places or ways in which an accomplice could enter once the séance has begun. Whatever the phenomena expected the investigators should very carefully check hearing aids or any other location where a miniaturised radio receiver may be hidden. One very successful medium had an accomplice who went through his clients coats and bags in the cloakroom before transmitting information gathered to the medium. Use common sense and try to meet all rational objections by being prepared. If things are still happening it is vital try to record the phenomena. Infrared photography will show up fraud in a darkened room where our normal senses may well fail us, and some highly amusing photographs have caught out hoaxers dangling objects on strings, etc...

Mental mediumship proves harder to evaluate. Here all we have to go on really is the quality of the information provided. The first question is, was the material lucky guesses or evidence of some sort of communication? To calculate this statistically is almost impossible. Almost everyone knows someone called John, and the chances that an aged relative died of a disease concerned with the chest (heart or lungs), had grey hair and liked gardening may be much higher than immediately obvious. Some if not all mediums "fish" for hints by asking leading questions, especially if floundering or failing to make

contact. For this purpose a "proxy" sitter may be sent instead of the person who wants to make contact, and should know nothing about the person they are trying to contact apart from possibly the name. This also helps against the super-ESP theory of mediumship outlined below. The investigators should try to ascertain how many "hits" or pieces of correct information are related as opposed to "misses" or inaccurate statements.

One problem faced by investigators is verifying that the medium did not come across the information by normal processes of research or by carefully

watching the querent's non-verbal communication (body language and facial expression). Here several possibilities exist. An accurate stenographic or tape recording of everything said, however trivial, should be kept. The querent should restrict their utterances to the bare minimum, saying "yes" or "no" and perhaps "go on." It is useful to smile encouragingly throughout, trying to retain a simple posture. A disguise or pseudonym should always be used if a proxy sitting is not useful, and the pseudonym should be changed to stop mediums from swapping notes on their clients.



Chapter 8: Psychical Research

The major psychical research societies are the institutions from which all parapsychologist investigators will be derived. This section provides rules for membership, and a wealth of detail on the Society for Psychical Research literature from which investigators can gain insights into the nature of the periods research. It is likely that even non-parapsychologist characters will want to join these groups, if only to gain access to their libraries and experts. None of these societies is however aware of the mythos, and investigators talking about dark cults or alien monsters may well be dismissed, or even visited by doctors who fear for their sanity!

A Brief History of Parapsychology

Below are listed a few key events Keepers may wish to include in their campaigns. Please note that the term parapsychologist did not begin to replace the older psychical - researcher until 1927.

1860 The Ghost Club founded at Cambridge University, England. It's members meet to tell stories and to investigate hauntings. The Club exists to the 1990's as a Gentleman's Society, membership by invitation only, before splitting in to two different versions of the organisation.

1882 The Society for Psychical Research (SPR) founded in London. The SPR begins intensive investigation of hypnosis, haunted houses, astral projection, mediumship and other phenomena.

1884 The American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR) founded in Boston, Mass.

1889 Financial difficulties force the ASPR to become a local branch of the London SPR.

1906 The ASPR re-establishes itself as an independent psychical research society, based in New York.

1909-1910 Eusapia Palladino, internationally famous medium visits U.S and gives 31 séances. She is found cheating and the trip proves a dismal failure.

1921 Hereward Carrington sets up the worlds first psychical research laboratory in New York.

1924 Rudolph Tischner, a German researcher, coins the phrase E.S.P. (Extra-Sensory Perception)

1924 SPR investigate mediumship of Schneider brothers.

1925 May - quarrels over the mediumship of Margery lead to the more critical researchers of the ASPR breaking off to form the Boston Society for Psychical Research (BSPR), which remains independent until 1941.

1927 J.B.Rhine begins experimental work in his parapsychological laboratory at Duke University. The term parapsychology enters popular parlance. Zener cards developed, the term parapsychology enters usage as the new experimental science intended to replace the old 'psychical research.'

1929-1938 Harry Price investigates

Borley Rectory, England. His investigations culminate in a year long vigil in 1937, using 40 volunteers from a newspaper advertisement in the London Times.

1932 Harry Price announces he has caught Schneider Brothers (mediums) cheating. It is possible Price's evidence is actually the real fraud.

1941 The BSPR rejoins the ASPR.

This section contains detailed rules for the three two major Psychical Research societies, the London SPR and the New York ASPR and owing to it's importance in the 1920's the Boston Society (BSPR) is also discussed. A variety of smaller groups are also listed, and the Keeper may wish to develop one of these for his investigators to join, as they provide more opportunities for daring research and wild speculation! Finally, there are a few organisations that are still around today...

The Society For Psychical Research (SPR) England & Europe, 1882-present



Gaslight parapsychologists are likely to be members of this organisation above any other, and the Keeper will find the SPR invaluable as a means of sending intrepid researchers off to almost any investigation. The Society was founded in 1882 and it's members were drawn from the educated elite of British Society. Prime minister Gladstone once remarked that the work of the SPR was "probably the most important research being carried out anywhere in the world

at the present time", and membership elevates ones battle against the forces of darkness from eccentricity to acceptable academic research.

History

The SPR was founded in 1882 by some of the best known thinkers of the Victorian age, and was from the beginning scientific, rationalist and sceptical (in an open minded sense). It still exists and actively researches today.

Membership

1890's and 1920's

Membership of the SPR in this period required a certain respectability, though even working class people did join. Any investigator will probably be admitted if of good reputation. This membership is Associate level; the investigator still may not hold office in the Society but may enjoy all other benefits and attend the lectures free of charge. They will however find it hard to gain much attention from the influential and busy full members, beyond occasional friendly advice. After two years a investigator may stand for full Membership, which is automatic with a **Credit Rating of 60+ (d20 is a sixth level character of good reputation in society)**, if the investigator has been published by the SPR (see below) or with a roll in any **academic discipline skill (d20: any knowledge skill at DC15)**. Failure indicates blackball and a wait of 3 years before the next attempt. Committee posts are probably forever beyond the reach of investigators, who have more important things to do with their time!

Contemporary

Associate Membership is automatic on payment of annual dues of £35/\$100. Full Membership still requires the same

procedure as before, although Credit Rating is no longer required, and holding an academic teaching position may well ensure full membership. A Luck roll would suffice after two years; failure indicates uncertainty as to the member's reputation or commitment. Only if they bring the SPR clearly into disrepute will a member face expulsion.

The society maintains a website at www.spr.ac.uk

Publications

Members received the quarterly Journal of the SPR (*JSPR*) in which reports of mediumistic experiments, exposures of frauds, research into Dream, Hypnotism and Thought Transference as well as accounts of investigated hauntings and readers own experiences were published, although often with pseudonyms to protect the innocent. All reports are of a highly academic style, and the research often puts the police and criminal investigations of the time to shame with their thoroughness and examinations of all possibilities. The conventional Occult and the doings of Crowley and the Golden Dawn were not an area of interest, but readers may receive up to 1d3 points a year in a skill through perusing their journals, although to comprehend what they have read a Know roll and an Idea roll must first be succeeded in. Medicine, Geology, Pharmacy, Biology, Physics, Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Anthropology are suitable areas for this increase. The individual investigator may choose which field they are concentrating their efforts upon...

The Keeper may well choose to give clues to mythos activities in the Case reports that are common throughout these publications. The SPR however has no knowledge of the mythos.

As well as the Journal the SPR also

produced an irregular volume of "Proceedings". These cost 3 shillings an issue (1890's), eight shillings / \$2.50 (1920's), or £2.50/\$5.00 (contemporary) and are longer, even more technical, reports on aspects of psychical research. An **English** roll (**d20: Int DC10**) is required to comprehend one of these lengthy and often beautifully written reports, and the investigator must allow at least 1D6 weeks to plough through the volume, check references, research the background and then gain a small skill increase. A complete list of Proceedings of the 1890-1928 with notes for the Keeper can be found in Appendix C, and these may be adapted for other Societies such as the ASPR or periods.

The resourceful Keeper may derive many plot ideas from these articles; it is to be hoped that investigators will enter into the spirit of things and submit equally technical sounding reports on their research. The titles given are this authors précis; an original example reading

"Duplex Personality; An Essay on the Analogy between Hypnotic Phenomena, and certain Experiences of the Normal Consciousness."

Investigators should seek to emulate this style for period feel. A special success (**d20: skill at DC20**) in the skill appropriate and a successful **English roll (d20 Cha DC15)** should be the minimum required to get an article accepted, and if a Luck roll (**d20: and there is a 1 in 3 chance that it**) fails, and it is returned with a request for further research which will take 1D6 months of the investigators full attention. Successful publication results in an invitation to full membership, and a host of useful contacts, as well as a fair degree of criticism and learned debate! Based in Tavistock Square in London, with a library of over 4,000 volumes

covering all aspects of the occult and psychical research this has to be a major resource for all British investigations.

The American Society For Psychical Research

US; 1890's/ 1920's / Contemporary

1890's

The ASPR was founded in 1884 in Boston, Mass. It was an off- shoot of the SPR, and attracted many brilliant American thinkers, including William James, William Barrett, Richard Hodgson and James. H. Hyslop. In 1889 a financial crisis forced the ASPR to become a branch of the SPR, though it achieved independence once more in 1906. 1890's US investigators may therefore use all rules given in the section on the SPR of that period, and receive the same publications, though they will have access to the Boston Offices, meeting rooms, and library.

1920's

Following the death of Hodgson in 1905, Hyslop took up the Presidential position. The society moved to New York, and swiftly became autonomous again. Hyslop died in 1920, and immediately political strife broke out between the membership. The ASPR had divided into two factions, one broadly populist and supporting the Spirit paradigm, indeed often Spiritualists, the other conservative faction supporting psi or sceptical paradigms, which was closer to that of the Society's founders. In 1923 a prominent Spiritualist, Frederick Edwards was appointed President, and the conservative faction led by Gardner Murphy and Walter Franklin Prince declared that the society was becoming less academic. In 1925 Edwards was reappointed President, and his support of the mediumistic claims of 'Margery'

(Mina Crandon) led to the conservative faction leaving and forming the rival Boston Society for Psychical Research in May, 1925. From this point on the ASPR remained heavily committed to a Spirit paradigm until 1941.

Contemporary

Following the collapse of the 'Liberals' in 1941 the Boston Society was once again incorporated into the ASPR. The Society is alive and active today, with a bias towards experimental laboratory work, although much material is once again published on spontaneous cases. Keepers who are especially interested in the ASPR today might join that organisation at the address given in the Appendices. Broadly speaking, the ASPR is once again committed to exploring the psi-paradigm, though individual members beliefs are diverse!

Membership Requirements and Benefits

1890's

As the SPR.

1920's

The populist membership approach means that anyone may join for the subscription fee of \$15 per annum. Full membership is available after two years, and the application process may be represented by a **luck roll (d20 CHA)**, with a +15%/+3 bonus if the member is broadly sympathetic to the Spirit paradigm (after 1925), and a -15%/-3 penalty if the member is also associated with the Boston Society.

The Keeper should use the SPR material as model, but remember that most publications are on the theme of mediumship, though some apparitional and poltergeist cases occur.

Investigators looking for mediums and psychic will find them here, as well as a liberal, tolerant atmosphere. There is an excellent library, and first rate facilities at the New York offices.

Contemporary

Rules for joining identical to those for the contemporary SPR.

The Boston Society for Psychical Research

USA; May 1925-1941

This Society grew out of a schism in the ASPR; review the section on that organisation. Despite its name this was another national organisation, with members all over the US and indeed the world. Inherently conservative, it suits investigators with a psi/sceptical belief system, or who happen to be based in New England. Rather socially conservative, use the SPR 1890's / 1920's membership rules and benefits. The Society was small, with never more than 200 members, but anyone joining should gain +5% in **Credit Rating** owing to useful contacts from WASP society and academia. Membership cost \$35 per annum, and Proceedings and Journals were published irregularly. The Keeper should devise titles and bonuses as required; the most important publications in this period being:-

ESP experiments at Harvard University; A Report by G.H.Estabrooks

(no bonuses) [1926]

Leonard & Soule's Experiments in Psychical Research by Lydia Allison (no bonuses) [1927]

Case Studies bearing on Survival by John F. Thomas (no bonuses) [1929]

Exposure of the Fraudulent Mediumship of 'Margery' by various (no bonuses) [1934]

Extra-Sensory Perception; Experiments at Duke University by J.B.Rhine

(Occult+2%, Psychology+3%) [1934]

The Society was deeply sceptical of mediums and Spiritualism, and no Spiritualist investigator will ever progress beyond Associate. There is an automatic -30% (**d20 -6**) penalty on Spiritualists for all rolls necessary to join.

The Society offices and libraries are open to members, and may well contain overlooked clippings and notes of a mythos nature, relegated to drawers or old files. Keepers may wish to populate the offices with memorable NPC's or real parapsychologists taken from the personalities section.

Other Societies

UK

British College of Psychic Studies 1920-1938

Founded by Mr & Mrs MacKenzie, this organisation is dedicated to scientific study of mediumship, and provides advice and counselling to the public. Based in London.

College of Psychic Studies 1920's - today

Sympathetic to mediumship, this London organisation grew out of the London Spiritualist Alliance.

National Laboratory for Psychical Research 1926-1930

Harry Price's London headquarters. Very plush, well equipped and with a superb library. See entry on Harry Price for details.

Association for Scientific Study Anomalous Phenomena. 1981- present

Based in Southern England, meetings in London. Mainly spontaneous cases.

Canada

The Toronto Society For Psychical Research (TSPR)

Created the manufactured ghost Phillip in 1972 in a famous experiment in parapsychology. Group partially disbanded in 1977.

France

Insitut Metapsychique Internationale (IMI) (1918-present)

Founded by a wealthy Spiritualist, staffed by excellent objective researchers, this Parisian Society was dedicated to exploring mediumship. Has a very small appointed membership, and produced excellent research through the '20's and 30's.

Iceland

Icelandic Society for Psychical Research (ISPR) 1918-present

Grew out of the group formed to study the amazing physical mediumship of Indridi Indridison, who died in 1912.

USA

Parapsychology Foundation 1951-present

Was founded in 1951 by Mrs Garrett, a famous medium, and serves as an educational organisation. It is highly scientific and objective, and the Parapsychology Association (PA) acts as the professional body of parapsychologists. Publishes a Journal, and Proceedings. Membership entitles the member to truly call themselves a parapsychologist and requires at least three or four publications in the scientific parapsychology journals, and a

highly critical and objective stance. Based in New York, it's members are international, and have access to it's superb library.

Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship (SFF) 1956-present

Founded by medium Arthur Ford, based in Philadelphia. A Christian group interested in Spiritualism, and it's possible role in the Christian Church. Very liberal Christians comprise the membership. Has an excellent library. The UK equivalent is the **Church Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies (CFPSS)**, an Anglican organisation.

There are hundreds of smaller psychical research groups, and they are common in all periods. Investigators may well wish to set up their own, which is discussed in the previous chapter.

The International Congresses on Psychical Research

These meetings of parapsychologists may also prove of interest to parapsychologist characters. These began with the first Conference, held in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1921, and continue to this day. They may lead to foreign travel and adventures in unusual locations...

International Congresses On Psychical Research

1st (1921) Copenhagen, Denmark
2nd (1923) Warsaw, Poland
3rd (1927) Paris, France
4th (1930) Athens, Greece
5th (1935) Oslo, Norway

Personalities from the Worlds of Psychological Research

Investigators seeking help with an unusual case quite frequently attempt to search out an expert for advice. The following section deals with some of the most famous parapsychologists of the 1890's and 1920's. Some may be too busy to reply immediately to an investigator enquiry, and none have any first hand experience of the mythos, but such characters are obvious sources of assistance and advice. Their careers also provide fascinating insights into psychological research in the 1920's and Victorian eras.

1920's

USA

Professor J.B.Rhine, Parapsychologist (1895-1980)

Rhine quits his post at West Virginia University in 1927 to study psychological research under William McDougall at Duke university in Durham, North Carolina. Rhine conducts carefully controlled experiments in telepathy, telekinesis, and clairvoyance, and was an early champion of the psi-paradigm. He popularised the use of the term 'parapsychology', replacing the previous 'psychical research'. His wife Louisa Rhine compiled a huge number of reports on haunting, premonitions and religious experience, usually corresponding with witnesses by mail. His department also invented the modern Zener card as a test for ESP. In 1930 he is named Director of the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke. Rhine lives in Durham, near the campus. The Durham Research Foundation into The Nature Of Man

continues his work to this day at that address.

Professor Gardner Murphy, Parapsychologist (1895-1980)

A Yale and Harvard Psychology graduate, Murphy fought in France in the Great War. In 1919, following his discharge from the army, Murphy joined the SPR in London. Returning to the US, he received a position studying psychological research at Harvard, from 1922-1925. In 1925 he received his PhD from and moved to Columbia, where he continued to develop his interest in experimental psychological research, writing numerous books on the subject and following up whatever cases were offered to him. He was President of the SPR in 1949, and later President of the ASPR three times. From 1975 his health sharply declined, and he died in 1980. A generous, warm and likeable man, he in later years doubted the value of the laboratory approach and increasingly turned his attention to spontaneous cases.

Houdini, Harry , Magician and Sceptic (1874-1926)



Probably the worlds greatest escapologist, illusionist and all round showman, Houdini is a household name

in 1920's America and Europe. Born Ehrich Weiss in Wisconsin, son of the local rabbi, he was of Hungarian ancestry. He escaped from a milk churn submerged in New York harbour, from Scotland Yard handcuffs and from every prison cell he tried, all as part of his astonishing act. In 1899 hard times forced him and wife Bess to try out a fake mind reading act - at which they were all too successful. Upset at how easy fraudulent mediumship appeared Houdini began to investigate and expose mediums. Following the death of his mother, his desire to find a true medium and enthusiasm for debunking every fake became fanatical. Soon he reached the painful conclusion there were no real mediums. From 1920 to 1924 he became friends with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his wife (see below), but they argued over the truth of mediumship and eventually became enemies. In 1923 Houdini investigated Margery (Mina Crandon), and apparently used fraud himself to discredit her mediumship. By this time his obsession was possibly taking a heavy toll on his sanity. Conan-Doyle called him a bounder and a cad, and accused him of being the greatest medium on earth, refusing to believe that he was capable of his amazing feats without immense psychic powers. In the last weeks of October 1926, mediums began to pour out messages that Houdini was doomed. (To be fair a lot of them had been doing that for a while!) On the 22nd he was injured by an unexpected (friendly) blow from an admirer, and he died on Halloween, 1926, of peritonitis.

Mina Crandon - 'Margery', Medium (1884-1941)

The women who managed to split American psychical research in two! Born in Ontario, she moved to Boston at the age of 16, and married a grocer. Following an operation she met surgeon Le Roi Goddard Crandon. She divorced her first husband and married Crandon.

A local beauty, she was extremely flirtatious and fun loving. In 1923 she discovered her mediumistic abilities, which took the form of trance mediumship. Her spirit guide was her beloved brother Walter who had died in a railway accident in 1918. From 1923 she was subject to investigation by America's top psychical researchers, and particularly Harry Houdini. Mina is known to the public by the pseudonym of Margery. The Committee investigating on behalf of Scientific American, eventually decided the evidence pointed to fraud. This outraged many of her supporters, including the liberal faction of the American Society for Psychical Research. As a result the more conservative faction broke off in 1925 to form the rival Boston Society for Psychical Research. Margery is an extrovert, quite happy to hold nude séances in the dark, and reputed to have seduced many of her investigators!

Dr. Nandor Fodor, Journalist and Parapsychologist (1895-1964)

A Hungarian lawyer who moved to New York while acting as a foreign correspondent for a newspaper in 1921. There he met Hereward Carrington, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and became deeply interested in the pursuit of psychical research. In 1926 a meeting with a psychoanalyst led him to develop that field as a personal speciality, and from 1927 onwards he investigated

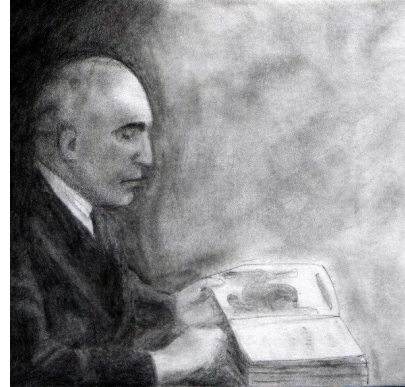
ghosts and mediums using psychoanalytic techniques. In 1928 he transferred to a London newspaper group, and remains there into the 1930's. During that decade he published his theories that many poltergeists and hauntings originated in repressed sexual energies, which led him into bitter disputes with the easily shocked.

Dr. Hereward Carrington (1880-1958)

A precocious child, Carrington was already acquainted with the skills of conjuring and the elements of psychical research by the age of 13, though intensely sceptical. At the age of 20, in 1900, he moved to New York where he lived for the next thirty five years. He was involved heavily with championing the mediumship of Eusapia Palladino, though he freely admitted she cheated if given the chance. In 1921 Carrington established the world's first parapsychological laboratory in New York, as the American Psychical Institute and Laboratory (API&L). It closed in 1923, and only reopened in the 1930's. He attended the first five International Congresses of Psychical Research, and in 1924 was on the Scientific American Committee appointed to investigate the mediumship of Margery, Mina Crandon. He was the only investigator to declare on that committee to endorse her mediumship, although accepting there was some fraud. As it seems very likely he was having an affair with 'Margery' at this time it is hard to be sure about his judgement! In the 1930's he was to renounce his support for Margery's mediumship. A very human, extremely likeable chap, English by birth and education and likely to consider any tale no matter how odd! Author of over 100 books on psychical research, conjuring, yoga, bridge - playing, nutrition, and a host of other topics. A popular author, his psychical research was nevertheless of the highest standards.

UK and Europe

Harry Price, Ghosthunter (1881-1948)



A member of the SPR (though rarely in good standing with the Committee), Price founded his own similar organisation, the National Laboratory for Psychical Research, in 1926. Price's interest in the paranormal started early - he claimed to have investigated his first haunting at fifteen. He had no scientific or academic credentials to speak of, though he quite frequently claimed them! He was however a skilled conjuror and debunker. He was adept at generating publicity for his experiments and findings, and his outspokenness made him many enemies. Price was a meticulous (though at times fraudulent) researcher, always making careful preparations to spot (other peoples) fraud at séances and at sites of alleged paranormal activity. He uses camera with infrared film, motion detecting devices, and a well stocked 'ghost-hunter's kit' in his investigations. Price conducted many séances in the 1920's and investigated the whole range of paranormal phenomena. In 1929 he became involved in the investigation of his most famous case, at Borley Rectory, near Sudbury, Suffolk. Price dedicated more than 17 years to the study of this haunting, and wrote two out of his 17 books on this case.

Elliot O' Donnell, Ghost-hunter (1872-1965)

O' Donnell's first psychic experience was purportedly at the age of five when he encountered an 'elemental spirit'. Terrified of ghosts and the dark, he grew up a nervous yet energetic child, intensely proud of his claimed descent from a noble Irish clan, and the family banshee. He was educated at Clifton College in Bristol, and then at the Queen's Service Academy in Dublin where he was involved in another supernatural struggle, this time with a spectral strangler! On graduation he went to America, where he was a rancher in Oregon and collected tales of ghosts in the New World. By 1894 he had left the ranch and was working as a policeman in Chicago during the great railroad strikes and labour unrest. The brutality of the suppression of the strikes, the Haymarket Bomb outrage and the anarchist and IWW provide a colourful backdrop for a colourful character. O' Donnell was by nature a writer; it is unsurprising that he found employment as a freelance journalist in both San Francisco and New York. By 1900 he seems to have returned to England, and taken up a career as a schoolmaster. This was merely however a means of support as he trained as a thespian, and he soon left teaching to join a travelling repertory company. Eventually he settled in St. Ives, Cornwall, and there wrote his first occult novel "For Satan's Sake" which was published in 1905. Then O' Donnell struck upon the idea that was to make him famous - he would become a ghost-hunter! He had a few previous figures to model himself upon; the early SPR, already over twenty years old, and other collections of ghost stories. He collected stories, visited haunted houses, and

pursued a distinguished career as an author, lecturer, playwright and broadcaster in both radio and later television. He published over fifty books and thousands of newspaper columns in his long career as raconteur and investigator.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Spiritualist and Author (1858-1930)

While best known as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Doyle was also Spiritualism's greatest champion in the 1920's, ceaselessly writing books, articles and lectures on the subject. Doyle was in many ways reactionary, and investigators of low credit rating or non-whites will receive offhand behaviour from the man - unless they are convinced of and enthusiastic about the truth of Spiritualism. A member of the SPR since the late 1880's, he wholeheartedly embraced Spiritualism in 1916, following family losses on the battlefields of the Great War. From the publication of 'The New Revelation' in 1918 until 1930 he tirelessly campaigned for the cause, becoming in 1920-24 first friends, and later enemies with, Houdini. In 1920-22 he was a great advocate of the Cottingley fairy photographs, taken by two teenage girls, and whose truth he believed in until his death, but which made him a laughing stock with the press. A strong supporter of Margery, Mina Crandon's mediumship, he called Houdini a cad and a bounder for slandering her. Oddly enough, he believed in a series of spirit messages from an entity called Pheneas, which were prophecies of global catastrophes due to come true in 1925. Keepers planning to run Masks of Nyarlathotep might want to look these up...

Eileen Garrett, Medium and Parapsychologist (1893-1970)

Of Irish descent, she discovered her extraordinary mediumistic powers after the first world war. She went to the British College of Psychic Science, where she developed her abilities as a trance medium, and became familiar with her spirit guide, Uvani. From 1924 to 1929 she worked with many noted psychical researchers including Nandor Fodor and Hereward Carrington. In 1931 she went to the United States and began work with J.B. Rhine, becoming an American citizen in 1947. In 1951 she founded the Parapsychology Foundation, and she retained a strong interest in parapsychology, continuing to work in the field until her death. Interestingly she saw her abilities as possibly pointing to ESP rather than survival. A strong independent woman, brilliant researcher, charming host, with a strong sense of the mystical ancestry, Eileen Garrett

1890's

Daniel Dunglas Home, Medium extraordinaire. (1833-1886)

Although he died in 1886 before most Gaslight games are set, D.D. Home (pronounced Hume) remains probably the most famous physical medium of all time. Born in Edinburgh, his family moved to Connecticut when he was nine, but already he had shown a gift for prophecy and strange manifestations had occurred around him. Expelled from his foster home at the age of 15, following an outbreak of spirit rappings, he spent the rest of his life travelling and staying as a guest at the homes of his many admirers. Holding séances in brightly lit rooms, he produced visions, made ghostly music play, tables and other objects to dance and on at least one occasion reputedly levitated. He

was courted by the European aristocracy, had an audience with the Pope and caused the spirit of Napoleon Bonaparte to appear to Napoleon III and the Empress Eugenie. An unfortunate matter in 1867 when a wealthy admirer who had supported Home financially turned jealous when he rejected her advances and dragged him through the courts cost him dearly, both emotionally and financially. Following this he became a war correspondent in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, and toured the U.K. performing poetry recitals. In 1871 he married for the second time, and this marriage like the first was to a wealthy Russian aristocrat. In 1873 he took part in a series of experiments with noted physicist, Sir William Crookes, who could detect no fraud and endorsed his mediumistic abilities. After these trials he retired, and eventually died of tuberculosis in France in 1886. Home's mediumship was one of the single most important catalysts for the awakening of interest in psychical research in Great Britain.

Sir William Crookes, Scientist and Parapsychologist (1832-1919)

A scientific genius, with qualifications in chemistry, meteorology, physics and photography. He invented a machine for recording the results of scientific apparatus mechanically on paper in 1854, and in 1864 founded and edited the Quarterly Journal of Science. In 1861 he discovered and measured the element thallium, and in 1863 became a Fellow of the Royal Society, Britain's highest scientific accolade. Following the death of his brother in 1867 he pursued scientific investigation of mediumship from 1869 - 1875 with remarkably positive results. After many experiments with Home and Florence Cook he proved the matter to his own satisfaction and retired from psychical research, although supporting and

joining the SPR at its founding in 1882 and acting as President in 1886. In 1875 he received the Royal Society's Royal medal, and in 1876 invented the radiometer, hence discovering the cathode ray and allowing the subsequent discovery of X-rays and the electron by others. He was to hold almost every major British scientific society's Chair or Presidency in the next few years, and frequently stated that he still upheld the results of his psychical research to the embarrassment of those institutions' more conservative members. The Royal Society was particularly keen to criticise this work, yet he went on to become its President in 1913-1915. He received his knighthood and the Order of Merit, and his many other inventions include an instrument for measuring subatomic particles. Quite a talented chap!

Myers, Frederic William Henry, Poet, Classicist, Psychologist and Psychical Researcher (1843-1901)

Myers was haunted throughout his life by a tragic love affair. He fell in love with the wife of his cousin, who reciprocated, but committed suicide following the insanity of the cousin. This great love affair and tragic ending was known only to a few of his closest friends at the society. A lecturer in Classics at Cambridge University, he resigned his post in 1869 to campaign for the education of women. A great friend of Edmund Gurney and Henry Sidgwick, the Society for Psychical Research was born out of these gentlemen's researches into mediumship. Following the founding of the Society in 1882 he dedicated the rest of his life to psychical research, while developing his brilliant theories of mind, consciousness and psychology. His theory of "subliminal consciousness" predates Freud's idea of 'unconscious' by several years. William James, founding father of modern psychology, ranked Myers as one of the world's greatest

psychologists and a personal friend. He died in 1901 after a bout of flu turned into pneumonia, followed in quick succession by a diagnosis of Bright's disease. Yet even death could not prevent Myers continuing his work with the society; he allegedly was one of the spirits behind the bizarre crossword type mass of clues given by mediums which we know as the cross-correspondences, and there is perhaps stronger evidence for his survival of bodily death than that of any other individual.

Eusapia Palladino, Physical Medium (1854-1918)

Born of peasant stock in the mountains of Southern Italy, grew up in Naples. She is arguably the greatest trance and physical medium of all time, and certainly a colourful character, so renowned that Chaosium's card game Mythos has a card representing her! Her spirit guide was one John King, a pirate. In 1891 she became focus of the investigations of great Italian psychical researcher Cesare Lombroso, father of modern criminology. From that time onwards her mediumship was scrutinised by scientists and psychical researchers the world over, under experimental conditions. Until her death in May 1918 this illiterate woman, described as 'boorish' and charitably as 'plain' caused more scientific controversy than any woman on the planet. Both the SPR and ASPR investigated her, and her talents are along the lines described under the physical mediumship sections of this handbook. The problem with Eusapia is that given any chance whatsoever she would cheat - whether this was laziness, proof of constant fraud or spirits playing tricks depends on who you believe!

Henry Sidgwick, Philosopher and Parapsychologist (1838-1900)

A Cambridge Professor of Moral Philosophy, and one of the most

respected academics of the Victorian age. Together with his brilliant wife, Eleanor Sidgwick (sister of Prime Minister Balfour), he devoted his life to psychical research and was first President of the SPR on it's founding in 1882, retaining that position in 1882 and 1883. He took up the position again in 1888-1892, and tirelessly worked

researching and editing for the societies publications. A truly great Victorian gentleman, he was kind and thoughtful to all he encountered.



Harry Price, 1920's Ghosthunter best known for his study of Borley Rectory, England

Part Three – Secrets Mankind Was Not Meant To Know Resources for Keepers

Hello and welcome to the Keeper's Section of the Parapsychologist's Handbook! If you have just turned straight here in search of arcane mysteries, then I urge you to return and read the players section first. This section is an addendum to that, and while it contains much in the way of advice and useful material, as well as rules and game statistics (Cthulhu and d20 Cthulhu), it will not make much sense unless you are fully acquainted with what has gone before!

Chapter 10: Running a Parapsychological Campaign

You will find much of this material very different to the 'feel' of other adventures; it is very much based on reality, and how investigations are conducted by real world psychological researchers. Keepers should feel free to maintain interest by adding additional excitement in the form of combats, but it is fair to say that the parapsychological campaign is essentially appealing to problem solving roleplayers and those who relish the fear of the unknown. This Handbook should be thought of as a toolkit; you take from it and use whatever you want for your game. You may choose to merely use some of the background material to make your séance scene more realistic, to use the rules within to simulate a poltergeist, or to find out about the learned researcher the investigators consult. You may choose to go the other extreme and run an entire campaign focussed on a paranormal research society and their adventures, and to incorporate the paradigm option leaving your players trying to work out where the truth lies, and ignore the mythos and have very little combat.

Also the handbook offers a change of pace. Sometimes, after years of adventuring against the minions of Cthulhu, there comes a time for a change, and when something different is needed to challenge investigators who have been to Celeano and back. It is entirely possible to run an entire campaign based in the 'conventional' supernatural, in which the Mythos never features. Obviously most campaigns will retain the mythos at their heart, yet vary the pace with other supernatural manifestations. Lovecraft did this in his fiction, where he did not confine himself to the mythos, and so you should feel free to do as well.

There is one final bonus in running a game with a parapsychological tone; players live in a world where people claim to encounter ghosts and apparitions, and where respected University professors really do stake out haunted houses and confront poltergeists. We all probably know someone who claims to have had a paranormal experience. A game which deals with classic hauntings and similar phenomena touches a nerve with players, in a way that Deep Ones may not. ... after all, does not your own hometown have a ghost story or two?

A Note for d20 system Keepers

One of the interesting things about the d20 system is the level system, in which more experienced investigators are physically tougher (owing to increased hit points) as well as more experienced. First level investigators with around six hit points are particularly vulnerable and combat is likely to be incredibly lethal. Beginning a campaign with low level investigators working in parapsychological stories, facing poltergeists or investigating ghosts, is an excellent way to run exciting adventures without great physical danger. The threat to sanity and occasional injury should maintain atmosphere, and then as the characters are at third or fourth level, perhaps they stumble on a strange cult while pursuing an investigation, leading to greater and greater perils as they become terribly aware of the mythos...

Forming a Research Group

One excellent rationale for a Call of Cthulhu campaign is the formation and activities of a psychological research group, formed by the investigators to unravel the mysteries of the unknown! The investigators have a reason for grouping together, namely a common interest in parapsychology and the supernatural and a ready made excuse then exists for them to become involved in a case. This can prevent scenarios beginning with the death of yet another "friend" the players have never heard of, and means that when a prominent NPC is slaughtered by cultists the loss is felt more. It also prevents all the scenarios beginning by the investigators accidentally stumbling into mythos activity or discovering that yet another of their number is heir to a bizarre family curse.

If the investigators have already confronted the mythos they have a definite reason to form an investigation society, and if not the Keeper may still find their players more than willing to accept this rationale for the campaign. It is certainly not necessary for the party to contain any professional parapsychologists, and neither is there a need for any of the investigators to possess psychic powers. The group may well be entirely amateurs dedicated to the search for truth, a truth loosely defined as 'out there!'

The first scenario of such a campaign may well consist of the players organising their group, purchasing or inventing useful equipment and then arranging publicity to bring in cases. This in itself can prove both interesting and quite enjoyable, especially watching how different personalities interact and clash over ideas. Does the medium really have to put up with that ranting fundamentalist? Perhaps they will both unite against the sceptical Secretary? The Keeper should play out the process of the establishment of the Society, perhaps with a knowledgeable NPC who helps to fund or to provide the impetus to set up the Society, and is able to provide advice on investigations. The first sample scenario, 'The Borderlands Club', in this handbook deals with just such a situation, and may provide some ideas for Keepers in organising this part of the campaign.

Once the group is organised the investigators are ready to attempt their first scenario. The Keeper should then draw a scenario to their attention, and allow them to set about it. He may choose from any published Chaosium material or perhaps devise his own scenario for the players to start off with featuring either a hoax or genuine psychological occurrence. Sooner or later the party will stumble across the mythos and their days will probably be numbered...

Amateur parapsychologists are bedevilled by their 'real' jobs and thus unable to always be available when needed. The Keeper may wish each player to generate two characters, with only one involved in each game session, allowing for diversity of skills and for a back up when as inevitably happens one of the characters is killed, drive insane or spending eight months reading that musty old book they found in the haunted house basement.

Another option which the Keeper may prefer is having the investigators join a large psychical research society such as the ASPR or if British SPR and having them commission and possibly fund investigation. Full details on joining these societies and their work can be found in Appendix A: The Psychical Research Societies.

Preparing a Parapsychological Scenario

Devising a Scenario

Firstly relax. In many ways it is easier to write great paranormal scenarios than any other type. You may not know much about exotic locations, espionage, secret societies or the occult but the chances are that as a child you heard at least a few good ghost stories. Were you were scared one night by the legend of the old deserted house on the edge of town? Spooked by a strange noise in the night? Remember what it was that gave you shivers, and use that in your game. Why not try to write a scenario based in a real ghost story from your own hometown? An hours real life library research in the local studies section may throw up all kinds of inspiration, or just browse the classic accounts of real life paranormal investigations in books or on the web.

Why not take an idea from a great film you saw?

Then, there is the whole wealth of fictional ghost stories to draw from. Rather than just mining Lovecraft for inspiration, what about Henry James, Arthur Machen, Stephen King, MR James, Saki, Charles Dickens, and the many anthologies of excellent ghost stories? Lovecraft's *Essay Supernatural Horror in Literature* deals with a whole selection of excellent authors and is almost a guide to running this kind of game!

Whatever you decide, bear in mind that no matter how obscure your source your players may have seen it to, so change details. Most real ghost stories don't explain why the phenomena occur in any detail, so feel free to get creative, and do try and introduce some red herrings and plot twists.

When devising a scenario you need to think of a good hook to gain the players interest, and involve them in the plot. Secondly a very good plot device is a time limit of some kind to increase pressure – a particular date coming up, a character struck down by a weird curse or illness, or a developer waiting to bulldoze the haunted house. Don't over use the time limit to the point where it becomes a cliché, but do try and write in some kind of time pressure – or have the entity start to take a personal interest in the home lives of characters who spend too long dallying! While this is true in any game in a parapsychological game where the emphasis is on research and preparation it is vital to be able to menace the characters and force them to get involved. Having innocents at risk or inadvertently stumbling in to the danger is one good way of forcing a fast reaction – so the haunted wood may have been there for 150 years, and the characters may be happy to observe it by binoculars. What happens when a party of Girl

Scouts carrying tents are seen heading walking towards it?

Preparation

Once you know what you want to do with your story, you need to prepare! The characters are going to search libraries, newspaper morgues, museums, family papers, genealogical archives and the internet for clues. You can prepare some of this in advance, but should be prepared to make up responses in line with his back story, and to improvise extensively. If the players are asking the right sort of questions reward them with a clue; if they try something totally off the wall go with your instincts! The work involved is no greater than that faced by the Keeper in running any other investigative scenario. However it is a really good ideas to make some player

handouts – these may be letters written on paper aged by being smeared with tea or coffee and left to dry. Newspaper articles can be typed up and snipped ready to hand to the players, excerpts from books, family trees – either complete or fragmentary snippets the characters (and players must piece together) and so forth. Once all of this research is done and is pieced together the characters should have a pretty good idea of the kind of thing they face, though you should always prepare a sting in tail plot twist to throw them, unless they are really clever!

To help with preparation the following checklist of questions that you may wish to quickly work through while designing scenarios, obviously biased towards a Haunted House style case.

- Who owned the property in the past?
- What are the inhabitants personalities like?
- What do the neighbours/police/local churches think?
- What is the geology of the area?
- Are there underground streams, sewers, subsidence etc?
- What is the state of physical repair of the property?
- What does local legend and folklore say about the area?
- What is the local history of the area?
- What records, floor plans, deed, wills etc, etc can be gained from City Hall?
- What other paranormal events have occurred in the area in the past?
- Is there any important material in the newspapers archives?
- Can Professionals - Doctors, Ministers, Social Services- provide insights in to the family?
- What is the natural fauna and flora of the area?
- Is the weather significant?
- Are the graves of previous inhabitants local? Do they have living relatives?
- House Adverts in old newspapers may reveal significantly lower prices for a reputedly 'haunted property'.
- Is any major construction work occurring in the vicinity?
- When and how has the structure been rebuilt or renovated?
- Do animals react strangely in the property?
- Have you prepared floor plans for the investigators as well as yourself in case they make a map?
- Have you prepared a map of the town or region for them?

All of these questions can provide inspiration and ensure the Keeper is well prepared before running the scenario. The investigators may never ask but preparation helps!

Remember that in the players section it states that it is important that the team prepare an accurate scale map of the property, and mark the exact positions of each person present at the time of each event, as well as the location where any phenomena occurred? The Keeper should prepare these for the scenario, and also consider preparing floorplans to hand to the players when the characters draw a map to prevent the tedium of describing each rooms dimensions in detail. Some players however do enjoy making their own maps, so you should go with what you feel best.

Prepare Useful Non Player Characters

These are characters who will crop up again and again in your campaign, and whose involvement need not be limited to just one scenario. The characters may actually seek them out, and it is a good idea to prepare a few so that when they ask you don't have to invent skills and a personality on the fly. This is particularly important in what d20 Cthulhu a Hometown Horrors type campaign, where the scenarios are all set around the characters home locale – think Sunnydale or Arkham... While the librarian, Local police, Mayor, and Local Historian may well turn up in adventure after adventure they are not likely to need statistics – just a name and some interesting personality quirks. However there are a few professions who it really is worth developing as detailed non-player characters in this kind of game...

Clergy

Prepare a few notes in advance on which religions and denominations are present in town, and what there ministers are like. Many investigators will call upon them.

Psychics and Mediums

A few of these should definitely be prepared in advance; even in a game where psychic powers are real many of them should not really have any, though they may well believe they have!

Journalists

The exploits of a psychical research team can easily attract the attention of newspaper, radio or TV journalists. Draw up some notes on a couple of reporters who can befriend the team, and maybe another who is a scathing critic or just plain annoying. Don't forget TV and Radio journalists, who are likely to be very interested in the case if word leaks out and make the investigators job ten times as difficult. Sensational misquotes follow!

They may also wish to engage clipping agencies who cut out all the stories from a whole range of papers on a particular topic, so you may well wish to prepare a few red herrings or articles which tie in to later adventures. Charge about \$20-\$100 a week depending how narrow the requested area of interest is – the smaller the cheaper.

Designing Witnesses and Bystanders

One of the problems in this sort of game is that a lot of tracking down witnesses and checking testimony is required, and you have to play all those witnesses! It is easy to slip up and give the wrong information, or to forget something the character they are playing would know. One way round this is to tape record in advance long accounts, and then just play the tape as the characters meet and ask what happened. Getting a friend to do the voice can be amusing, and allow a little variation. You play that as the witness relates their story, and assuming

the characters have a Dictaphone or wax cylinder recorder it can be made available later. After the witnesses questioning, it is possible for the team to ask the many questions which will doubtless occur to them, but you've had a few seconds to reflect and prepare.

Players should strive to think of pertinent questions, and you should role-play to the hilt. Choose a favourite character from life, TV, movies or a book and base each individual's personality on that. Give them a quirk or interest not relevant to the scenario to help make them memorable – a hobby, dress sense, accent, physical build, whatever occurs. **Psychology (d20 Sense Motive)** rolls are often abused as "detect lie"; try to avoid such simplifications by giving instead hints as the person's state of mind, personality, relations with others or motives rather than a direct "they are telling you the truth" or "they made it all up." People who have had odd experiences may well be confused as to the truth themselves. Letting the players roll their own dice is always a good idea if possible, so allow the player to roll the dice into a box so only you see the result! Cultivate uncertainty...



If the players do not ask the relevant question, and there is no reason why the

person they are dealing with would think to give them that information, then do not volunteer it. Make them work for clues. Obviously if the game is bogging down, the players are stuck and there is no way to advance the plot, then you must give them fresh hints or leads, but generally make them work for what they need to know. Use of **Persuade (d20 Gather Information)** rolls should not replace roleplaying! If the players act well and come up with good questions and suitable incentives, give them a bonus to the dice roll or let them try more often. Only if the player lacks social skills their character possesses should you be forced to rely on the dice, but allow such characters to rely on the dice and attempt the skill roll more often. Bear in mind that a Journalist or Parapsychologist character is trained and skilled in interviewing, and the player is not, so in short, as always, reward ingenuity and entertaining roleplay by not letting the dice get in the way too much, but allow the character the benefit of their skills.

They will finally conclude interviewing, and try to piece together what is actually going on. If you have good players, then the discussions may go on for a while. If one of your players is becoming bored or disinterested, give them an **IDEA (d20 int)** roll to come up with something or have a agitated phone call from a fresh witness, or anything to keep the game moving! Games run in the style suggested by this book are designed to be realistic, slow and character heavy, rather than pulp fire fights, but that style may not be everyone's cup of tea! A sudden call to a team half way through preparation forcing them to act may well increase the pressure and pleasure of the scenario.

Another important factor is the interrelationship of the various non-player characters. How do they feel about

each other? As noted in the player section the inter-relationships of these people may be of crucial significance to the investigation of the case. Draw a diagram showing all the people involved, and then arrows showing who knows who, and their hates, loves, likes, frustrations and indifference or whatever, to create a realistic emotional backdrop to events. Extreme stress or unresolved conflicts may trigger phenomena. It is easy to draw a little flowchart with arrows between the people saying how they feel about each other, and may give your non-player characters added realism and depth. Obviously this is only important for the central characters, not every passing individual the investigators meet.

Review the Players section of this Handbook to see what they may come up with and prepare accordingly, but do not prepare to the point where you can't easily find what you want or running the game becomes a chore rather than fun! I have run great scenarios off notes on the back of an envelope and hasty improvisation, but generally preparation makes for better sessions.

Running an Investigation.

The players section offers a brief summary of how field investigations work, but a practised Parapsychologist or journalist may have more ideas than their player and you should help out as required by giving advice and allowing **KNOW** rolls (or **d20 INT roll**) to provide occasional insights. One does not expect a player to be able to practice Medicine in order to play a Doctor after all. When using detailed medical or psychological material a Keeper must be careful not to assume his players have a great knowledge of these fields just because their investigators do. The Keeper may wish to improvise here or do some basic research in to interesting (and often irrelevant) medical conditions that have featured in the witnessed medical

histories. **Medicine** and **Psychoanalysis** may prove very useful! Do not rely on the players having read this handbook, though hopefully they will find it interesting – there is a lot to take in!

In the players section there is a suggestion for using psychics to mark on a map where they believe phenomena to be based. You can photocopy the map you have prepared for the players multiple times, and then make notes, misleading or useful as desired, on each map to reflect what has been given by the psychics and sceptics to the team. You can hand the investigators a single copy of the map, or have them make one, and play through what happens. Whatever it is useful to have several copies of the floorplans of the area being investigated to hand.

Rules for Equipment Use

Photography & Video

Call of Cthulhu has a skill called **photography**, and d20 Cthulhu has a **Craft: photography** skill. Obviously it is quite possible for anyone to take a photograph without any real training, and for it to turn out OK. Yes a few shots may be wasted by forgetting to take off a lens cap, a thumb over the image, wrong focus etc, etc, but basically most people can operate a modern point and click, or even with a little familiarisation a 1920's Box Brownie. Yet photography has a base of only 10%, or in the d20 being a craft requires at least one rank. What is going on?

Well there is a big difference between taking a family snapshot on a bright sunny day and attempting to snap a ghost as it manifests in the dusty confines of a haunted house even as your blood turns to ice. The skill covers the ability to produce clear pictures, to develop them,

analyse them, and use digital imaging technology as well as to use video and digital motion cameras. Failing your roll allows you to get a blurry image, or an image which shows something – it's just not that elusive clear shot of a paranormal entity, and isn't going to convince anyone. Some ghosts and mythos creatures do not show up on film anyway – special lenses or weird science films or imaging chips may be needed to get them on camera at all.

Finally, only call for photography rolls under extreme circumstances. When the ghost appears, let the player roll the dice, but if they are just taking shots of the location or the team, don't bother with dice at all, even if they have no skill. If a player is particularly interested in photography they will help by providing you with details of what equipment is available and what they are interested in. Give bonuses to photography skill for well thought out preparation.

Nonetheless, a professional (skilled) photographer is a real asset to the party, as is decent equipment – see below for rules.

Cameras & Skill: Optional Cthulhu Rules - A handy rule of thumb is that you are limited with your photograph skill by a maximum of five times the dollar value when new of your camera, with a minimum of 5%. So a \$25 dollar camera gives you an effective skill of 5% maximum, whatever your skill is, and a \$450 camera works for someone with a photography skill of 95%. However very advanced cameras may actually give skill penalties to inexperienced users – keeper's call. This is not a realistic simulation of how cameras effect photography as a skill, but instead a game mechanic designed to make the investigators consider their equipment and become attached to their cameras.

Optional D20 rules: Take the number of ranks the character has in the skill Craft Photography. Multiply it by \$25. If the camera they are using costs less than that total give them a –1 situational modifier, and if it costs \$50 or more less then give them a –2 modifier, as the cheap camera impairs their ability. If the camera is worth \$100 or more above than the ideal total give them –1, and \$200 more give them a –2 situational modifier. It's too complicated for them to use

Chapter 11: Parapsychology In the Lab

In this section rules are given for the experimental procedures outlined in The Professional Parapsychologist part of the Players' Section.

Simulating Zener Card Tests

If the investigators are going to do it, the Keeper needs a rapid way of simulating the results. Here follow both Cthulhu and D20 Cthulhu mechanisms.

In Cthulhu latent psi ability (psychically gifted and non-psychically gifted characters alike) is best simulated by the use of the POW characteristic. Characters with high POW are by definition more in tune with the universe, and this test provides a rough way in the game for the investigators to assess that potential...

The system works as follows - for each properly conducted set of twenty five cards, make one Luck roll. Then look at the result, assume three successes and for every 10% (round down) the character or NPC made the roll by give them one additional success. On a roll of 96-99 roll 1d3 and that is the number of success gained, and on a roll of 00 there are no successes at all. After four tests, and four rolls, the parapsychologist can average the results and make a reasonable guess as to the subject's level of psi ability. . One theory states that psi and luck may actually be one and the same thing, so a particularly lucky person may simply be using some form of psi unknowingly.

Example: Bob Cherry is disturbed by the strange dreams which his friend Alex Rothwell has been having, involving a terrible calamity about the befall the city. Alex has never shown any psychic potential before, and somewhat bemused, agrees to Bob's suggestion of a Zenner Card trial. (In fact the dreams are sent by a mythos entity to cause a slow erosion of Alex's sanity after he unwisely handled an ancient artefact, and Alex is rather average in matters psychic - he has a POW of 10.)

Bob takes out the cards and makes Alex guess the first twenty five. The keeper rolls against Alex's luck of 50 and gets 89. Alex scores four successes. The second run of 25 results in a roll of 05, which is 45 points lower than Alex's luck. He therefore gets 8 successes and manages to impress Bob! The third result is 48 - four again, and the final test run results in a roll of 73 - four once more. Over four trials Alex scored 20 hits out of 100 cards, exact average. Bob discounts the idea of the dreams being premonitions and recommends his friend to the care of a good psychoanalyst...

Later that week Bob is visited by Anna Washington, a New York psychic. She claims she has had terrible visions of something huge moving far below the city... He repeats the process (Anna has a POW of 18 and a luck of 90). The first trial results in a roll of 55, which gives Anna seven successes (4 + 3 for the roll). The second trial is less significant - Anna is distracted by the mental sendings of the Thing and rolls 91, for four successes. Bob smiles cynically but continues and Anna rolls 40 for 9 successes. Slowly Bob becomes alarmed - the final roll is 10 allowing Anna 12 hits, for a total of 32 out of 100 cards guessed, or an average of 8 per trial. Even Bob has to admit she may have some psychic potential, and he ruefully prepares for further tests...

D20 Zener Tests: Make an untrained (usually impossible) psychic focus roll (d20+wisdom modifier) unless you have the skill. If the character has psychic focus roll a total for that instead. If your total is between 1 & 5 that is what your score was for that run. Otherwise, take the resulting total, divide by 3, rounding up, and add two to calculate to the total number of cards guessed out of twenty five. That represents your results from one run so, test four times! The Zener Cards are reproduced in Appendix C, and Keepers may wish to photocopy them five times and stick them on card to make a fully functional pack, which is an interesting handout for the players and can also help greatly in demonstrating the mechanics of the test to those who are unfamiliar with it...

D20 Example of Zener Cards

Respected mystic Albert Smith has been asked to take part in a trial of psychic abilities at Brichester University. He has a wisdom of 17 and a total of four ranks in his core skill of psychic focus, giving him a psychic focus skill of 7. His girlfriend Samantha decides to take part as well, but despite her bewitching looks and pagan beliefs she has no skill in psychic focus and a wisdom of ten, leaving her with just a d20. Albert goes first, and each of his trials has a total calculated by the formula above – a d20 roll + 7 as always for psychic focus, which is then divided by three round up and add one to get the number of cards correctly guessed. The player rolls totals of 25, 12, 21 and 15, which calculate out as 10, 6, 9 and 7. Dr Luke Princeton, parapsychologist looks at the amazing results! They average out at 8, well above the chance expectation of 5. Clearly further testing is called for. He then shifts his attention to Samantha. Her player rolls, and gets 11, 16, 13, and 8. Her totals are 6, 7, 7 and 5. She is marginally above average but apparently not psychic!

Drawing Tests

Can be simulated in the game readily by the Keeper looking at the target image and drawing as close a resemblance as they feel appropriate (with a luck roll to modify) or sketching the target after the player has drawn their guess! Obviously this works equally well for either version of the game mechanics!

Ganzfeld Tests

Best simulated by the Keeper just providing the narrative of what is 'seen', and the screaming as eldritch horrors invade the subjects mind... Can be very dramatic!

RNG Experiments

Not the most exciting possibility, but investigators may decide to try and see how it turns out. To calculate results, make luck rolls to simulate deviance from probability as in the Zener Test: each 10% increment rolled above or below luck is equal to a 1% deviation from chance over the test in that direction.

Example: Bob Cherry is eager to see if his friend Alex has any ability in the field of PK. Alex has a POW of 10, and is made to sit in a room trying to influence the direction a ball bounces on a computer monitor; the computer is generating true random numbers from a radioactive decay source, so theoretically it will result in a truly random distribution. For three mind numbing hours Alex watches the ball bounce 72,000 times - he has to will it to bounce left, and it will on average 50% of the time. the keeper rolls against Alex's luck, and score 09 - 40 percentiles less than his luck of 50, so astonishingly the trial results in a 54% veer to the left. Bob insists they repeat the experiment, so after a cup of coffee Alex is once more locked in the room. This time the Keeper rolls 58, only 8% more than Alex's luck, and the result is 50% -average. Bob is irritated, and suggests one more trial, and after a futile argument Alex gets a final session of utter tedium. The keeper rolls 85, and Alex scores 47% on the last trial. Overall he achieved a 1% against chance result in his favour, and Bob sadly lets Alex go out and get a pizza, while Alex curses the awful headache he has developed...

Cthulhu d20: make a psychic focus test (even untrained). Every point above ten is equal to a 2% variation from average in the desired direction, and every point below ten is equal to a 2% variation against. Record the four scores and average them to get how successful the character was.

Dr Princeton decides to try Albert and Samantha on the RNG test. They sit and watch the monitor, each in turn doing four one minute trials in which they try and get the pointer on the screen to move to the right. Albert's scores are 13, 17, 10 and 12 for a +4%, +14%, average and +4% result. Albert shows an overall average of just under 5% above chance. Samantha now tries and rolls 18, 15, 14 and 15. This calculates out at 11% above chance (randomness gave her high results!) and elated she declares that she is more psychic than Albert. Dr Princeton smiles and suggests further testing is necessary..;

Remote Viewing: Untalented individuals trying this approach should be fed garbage in line with their preconceptions - random descriptions of your childhood holiday locations work well... Rules for those who do possess the

talent are given in the Psychic Abilities and Feats section later in this Handbook.

Dream Experiments An excellent scenario on this subject can be found in *Cthulhu Now*. Sooner or later such researchers may stumble upon the shared imagery of the Dreamlands and begin a fascinating search for the literary/cinematic or mythic origins of this bizarre shared experience, perhaps in the process themselves stumbling in to the lands of Dreaming... *HP Lovecraft's Dreamlands* by Chaosium contains detailed rules and background for the Dreamlands.

There are many other types of laboratory experiment, but Keepers should feel free to draw inspiration from films and television. Possibilities in campaigns range from departments filled with eccentric academics in highly reputable universities to hi-tech psi labs.

Chapter 12: Ghosts: A Keepers Guide

Considering the vast wealth of ghost stories that have been produced by every human society, it is odd how little they have been used in our Cthulhu scenarios. Perhaps it is because ghosts are spiritual entities, alien to the materialist/technological world of the Mythos. Yet the atmosphere of a good ghost story is exactly what every Keeper must aim to create if his Call of Cthulhu game is to be more than any other roleplaying experience.

Typology of Haunting – Notes for the Keeper

Apparition: The apparition may appear for a variety of reasons, probably keyed in to some environmental factor, such as time, date, humidity, rock type, electrical fields, etc, etc. The Keeper may be as devious as he likes in determining how this works, but it should be fairly inevitable that the investigators will spark it off and get to experience the haunt!

Crisis Apparition: There are many, many cases of this type, and no game mechanics are necessary. An excellent way to begin a scenario with the maximum shock value - rather than hearing of the murder of yet another friend, have their 'ghost' appear to the players and maybe mumble a few cryptic words before vanishing forever...

Phantasm: The Vanishing Baker example in the players guide may suggest some ideas. Other ways in which phantasms may be generated might be weird mythos drugs or via astral projection; in all cases the witness is seeing 'the spirit' of his friend. Keepers will doubtless see many opportunities for interesting scenario's here - see '*The Tram*

Driver' in the Sinister Seeds (p.102) for one possibility.

Running a Haunting Scenario

In utilising the ghost it is always worth remembering that there is a huge body of atmospheric fiction just waiting to be pillaged for ideas. There are hundreds of books on 'true-life' ghosts, which can be pillaged for scenarios, and many real life cases have no simple solution. In the game however such open-endedness is to be avoided - players expect a story, with a definable beginning middle and end to develop. Leaving the players unsure and unable to resolve the mystery of the haunting of Grimplake Power Station because you yourself do not know why the ghost is there makes for a frustrating and unrewarding game experience. This is why reading the parapsychological case files is inferior to a well written ghost story - in reality we all too often have no idea about what was really going on.

Having said that, be generous. Your players will probably not want to merely investigate the haunting, they may also want to remove or exorcise it (see rules below). Allow for many possibilities, and let your players proceed at their own pace and in their own way, so long as the game remains fun. Try to structure scenarios so that information is available from a number of sources, and make the scenario involved enough that the players can't outguess you and solve the case in thirty minutes, leaving you unprepared for the next adventure!

Prepare non-player characters carefully. Think about how much each witness might know, and how their attitudes and convictions colour that evidence. Never give straight facts to the investigators without imposing a little colour or distortion based on that particular non-player characters own beliefs and personality. Truth should be hard to pin down in a good game!

There are thousands of fictional tales of terror which can be adapted into game plots. Always try to change the details enough to render them unrecognisable to well read players, and give them a couple of new twists so as to confuse those who identify your source. Even better, write your own completely unique plots. Ghost fiction however can prove to be an excellent way to learn how to develop narrative tension, suspense and above all else atmosphere.

Game mechanics for each type of ghost are straightforward. The excellent section on ghosts in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook (p.131, 5th edition; in the Sourcebook section of earlier editions) needs no additions. Here we see the true **Ghost**, with a possible attack in the form of POW drain. Less lethal ghosts might prefer to attempt spirit combat - see page XX of this handbook for details. Ghosts which drain POW use that to further their own undead existence, and bind themselves more firmly to this plane of existence. Ghosts who attempt spirit combat plan to possess their victim, and thus recover the life they have lost.

D20 Cthulhu provides an even more lavish treatment of designing and using Ghosts in your campaign - see the Ghost Template on page 192 of the d20 Cthulhu rules. This template again reflects the True Ghost, not the apparition.

The Bestiary (or Sourcebook in earlier editions) provides another terrifying spectral entity, the **Wraith** (p.137). Less subtle than ghosts in many ways, they can be used for particularly malignant spirits, the ghosts of non-human creatures, spirits of disease sent by cultist shamans and witchdoctors, or anything else the Keeper feels fit. Wraiths can easily be designed using the Ghost Template in d20 Cthulhu. Take a look at *Randolph and Carter, Deceased* in the Sinister Seeds for one interesting story idea some Keepers might enjoy running: what if a player character

is a ghost, and only the other characters can see them?

Apparitions need more thought. They are usually bound to a place or an object, and the keeper should decide the precise conditions when they manifest. Although apparitions seem singularly pointless, they must have some role or meaning in the scenario - trying to spot an apparition by finding the right conditions makes for very dull scenarios if that is the whole adventure. Let them serve as clues to some greater secret or mystery, such as a hidden treasure, or ancient mythos tome. Or maybe they record an incident that leads the party into grave danger as they research its meaning?

For example, the ghostly cavalier of Wake House appears only under very specific conditions. The Keeper decides upon moonlit nights at midnight in the month of August, when it is raining heavily, and then only to women. The Cavalier however appears through the wall where there used to be a door, and in that sealed up chamber is a horror awaiting the curious...

Apparitions fade with time. They are repositories of magic points with no POW, but with a starting magic point total determined by the strength of the energy which created them – for example a murder may generate a total equals to three times the POW (**d20 wisdom**) of the victim in magic points. Each time an apparition replays, charge it a single magic point. Once all the magic points run out it disappears forever, and colours and noise fade as it gets low on magic points, so that as is suggested by the findings of some psychical research it diminishes over the years. In **d20** terms just make up what seems appropriate number of magic points to fuel the apparition (30-50 when first created?). No statistics are required for an apparition. Bear in mind that mediums

and psychics can not talk to an apparition a sit is not really there – it is not a being, just a 'picture' or 'sound'. Nor can it react in anyway to investigators or it's environment – it just replays whatever it does.

Some apparitions are rechargeable owing to an oddity in the time space continuum. A cold spot manifests near the ghost, in a static position such as 'just by the Grandfather clock.' Once a day it leeches a single magic point from each new person who enters it, and these go into powering the apparition. Cold spots can of course also appear for many other reasons, natural and supernatural. You can not exorcise a cold spot, though it could possibly be removed by an imaginative creation of a magical Gate, (as in the *Create Gate Spell*) as a **Cthulhu Mythos** check might suggest. However, it is impossible to know the 'depth' of the cold spot, and it will drain **1D10 permanent POW (d20: 1d10 permanent damage to Wisdom)** to create such a Gate, which will be destroyed along with the cold spot. Hardly worth the bother when you can walk around it!

Oddly enough the spell *Find Gate* will reveal cold spots, which show up as swirling vortexes of energy.

No game mechanics are necessary for crisis apparitions - which, confusingly, unlike true apparitions can communicate – or phantasms. The Keeper should simply invent whatever appears suitable, and use them to further the story.

Exorcism - the Religious approach

Almost all religious traditions feature spells or rituals designed to allow the driving out or away of ghosts. They will not help with phantasms or crisis apparitions, and will prove ineffectual against apparitions, but against the true

ghost they prove extremely useful. The following rules are not specific to any given culture or religion, and the Keeper should attempt to create details appropriate to the tradition with which the investigators are working. Roman Catholic exorcism is very different to Protestant deliverance and the spells of an Inuit shaman, but the essential principles underlying them are similar.

Firstly, proper authorisation must be granted by the appropriate figure in the religious hierarchy. In the Roman Catholic Church this normally means from the Vatican, unless you are an appointed exorcist, in which case a Bishop or Cardinal for that area might authorise the exorcism. A blessing requires no permission, but is not an exorcism. Episcopalians, Anglicans and members of some other hierarchical churches will require permission as well . Evangelicals, shamans and witchdoctors do not suffer from this problem! It is worth noting however that all reputable exorcists will consult with colleagues and other authorities before proceeding. Each year sees a number of tragedies and court cases arising from abuse or death brought about by over enthusiastic homegrown exorcisms, and the courts are not sympathetic with good reason.

The components necessary for the ritual vary from tradition to tradition. The Roman Catholic tradition, for example, calls for bell, book and candle - the book being the Bible. Holy water is used in many exorcisms.

The ritual costs 1d3 sanity to attempt, and is a lengthy process, taking one hour per POW (**d20: WIS**) point of the possessing entity. The exorcist of course does not know the game mechanics, and the Keeper may make the roll for success or failure in secret. The exorcist may just carry on inadvertently into a second attempt, or give up before the crucial point.

The process is extremely physically demanding. After the exorcists (and any assistants) CON in hours has passed, the character must roll each hour to find the energy to continue. A roll of CON times 5 (**d20: Con**) is necessary, failure costing 1 HP through exhaustion. A roll of 96-00 triggers (**d20: roll of 1 exactly**) minor heart failure, physical exhaustion or nervous collapse, and a loss of 1D6 HP and 1D6 sanity. The exorcist may choose to press on regardless. Remember that assistants (see below) must also make these rolls.

At the culmination of the ritual the exorcist matches their **POW versus the POW (d20:WIS vs WIS)** of the possessing entity. An assistant, who must be an ordained member, trainee shaman, or initiate of the faith in question, may add half their **POW (their WISDOM bonus)** to the exorcists. On a roll of 96-00 (**d20: on a natural roll of 1**) the exorcist or assistant with the lowest **POW (d20: WIS)** is possessed, though the victim is freed! The Keeper should make this roll secretly, and then play through the entire exorcism, not revealing it's success until the victim is saved...

Each attempt at exorcism costs 10 magic points (**d20: 10 temporary wisdom**) from each participant. Inadvertent second attempts may drain the exorcist to zero magic points, at which point they collapse into unconsciousness for six hours. Lay exorcisms always fail; and

often result in disaster.

While the exorcism is going on the possessing entity is in no way restrained, and will throw everything it has at the exorcist, attempting to slay them or drive them from the house. Even poltergeist thrown objects, which normally never strike home, may hit and damage an exorcist conducting a ritual. Possessed victims should be securely tied down for the ritual, as their **strength, con and hit points** are effectively fifty percent higher during the rite (**D20: +4 CON, +4 STR, +4 HP per level**). These return to normal when the exorcism ends, and damage accumulated can kill a victim at this point.

Example: Felicity has been possessed by the spirit of Nophru-Ka, an ancient Egyptian sorcerer. Father Mason is attempting a rite of exorcism. Nophru-Ka has a POW of 21, so it is twenty one hours before the ritual culminates. For that period Felicity's statistics are enhanced as she struggles to overcome the good Priest. Normally her stats are STR 10, CON 12, and HP 11. While possessed she has STR 15, CON 18 and HP 17. During the course of the ritual, the reverend is forced to club her unconscious with his crucifix, doing 16 hit points damage. After twenty one hours the exorcism succeeds - but Felicity screams and falls dead, killed by the blows from the priest!

Chapter 13: Running a Poltergeist Scenario

It is important the Keeper remembers the elusiveness of the phenomena in staging these effects. Do not have the investigators walk in to a room and find every object floating around the ceiling as in the well known film *Poltergeist*, but instead try to replicate the conditions that would prevail in a real investigation. It is highly unusual for anyone to see an object begin to move, and this makes ruling out hoaxing difficult. Things should often occur in the next room, or just when the investigator was distracted. Call of Cthulhu is a game of mood, and the horror should always be subtle and intriguing, not a blood and gore splatterfest.

The Keeper may be worried that poltergeists are in reality so dull as to make a poor scenario. In truth investigation can be tedious but game time is not real time and the five hours spent before the teacup flies can be reduced to a few words, or some passages of atmospheric description to build tension. Many poltergeists produce other, much more spectacular phenomena than the movement of objects.

One interesting possibility is raised by the psi theory that poltergeists are 'nervous breakdowns taking place outside the head'. If a character fails a sanity roll badly enough to go insane, but also fails the Idea roll and hence misinterprets or represses the experience, why not let them generate a poltergeist? It may remain fairly quiet, until there is some reason for the characters to believe there may be a spook around – at which point additional effects begin, blamed by the investigator (and probably the rest of the team) on the ghost or whatever, but

actually centered on and unconsciously caused by the afflicted character himself.

For example, Arthur Knight, intrepid journalist encounters something terrifying in the ruins of the Drake Mansion and fails his SAN roll. He then goes on to fail his IDEA roll and the Keeper rules his mind is unable to comprehend the full horror of what he has witnessed. (See COC 5th ed. p. 48). As a result he forgets what he saw and instead runs in panic from the building. Usually this would be the end of the matter, except maybe for a few nightmares. What if however the psyche of Arthur begins instead to produce RSPK? His home is suddenly full of bumps in the night, and eventually his colleagues may have to be called in to deal with a fully-fledged poltergeist!

What is the poltergeist?

In my opinion the RSPK hypothesis does not fully explain the bizarre nature of all poltergeist cases, but this paradigm is widely accepted and fits well with Lovecraft's materialistic view of the universe. However certain other explanations are quite acceptable, and only the Keeper should know which is in use. Game mechanics for these are given in the following sections.

PSI Paradigm - (RSPK).

Recurrent Spontaneous Psychokinesis may be a bit of a mouthful but when it comes to a 'rational' explanation of poltergeists it's probably the best we have. How can it be addressed in game terms? To devise a scenario using this form of poltergeist the Keeper should start by designing a family, perhaps using a family from their neighbourhood or favourite

soap as a model. The term family is used loosely, as neighbours, lodgers, frequent visitors and even the milkman and postman should be considered.

While full character sheets may not be necessary statistics and a few key skills help, and each person should be awarded a physical description, distinct personality and a guilty secret or two. Designing ten characters takes time, but is nothing compared with the hassles of playing them, as the investigators try to interrogate them in search of the "focus." One idea I might suggest is that other role-playing friends who are not usually involved in the campaign be invited round, given a detailed briefing on "their" family and relationships with one another and set loose as the non-player characters. Unlike most people invited to play bit parts in the plot they will know no more than the investigators apart from an insider's view of the family dynamics, obviously biased and distorted, and may thus participate fully in the game. This method can work very well indeed, especially if one player is hoaxing and the family and investigators are both trying to co-operate yet getting in one another's way and trying to outsmart each other by solving the case first.

The crucial factor is the Keeper's choice of *focus* or *agent*, the person who is unconscious source of the disturbance. This person should be under extreme stress in some way, yet unable to show it. They may help the phenomena out a little by clumsy hoaxing, but are usually fairly indifferent, occasionally fascinated but almost never frightened, or at least not as much as the others. The investigators will have to interview everyone to try and sort out who is actually the agent. The agent should always be present in the building or very close by when the effects occur, and the referee should go to pains to prevent the agent's identity from becoming obvious. At least one or two red herrings should be included so as to make

the scenario interesting. Don't forget to use the notes on interview techniques and the game rules in the earlier chapters.

After the people the second most important factor in a poltergeist scenario is the environment. It is normally wise to select a building you know well personally, and then adjust minor details as you see fit. You can fictionalise the location, but it is easier to visualise say the furnishings of your grandmother's house rather than a fictitious building. Sketches or photographs may also be used to illustrate the property, and give your investigators clues. As long as you obtain permission it is reasonably simple to wander round and map the building, and you may pick up valuable ideas. What sinister possibilities lie in a goldfish bowl balanced on top of the TV? The Keeper may even be able to arrange for the game to be played in situ, with the players actually exploring the building though this may be beyond your resources.

To make the scenario as rich and rewarding as possible the keeper should provide clues which point at several of the paradigms so the investigators are not totally sure as to what is going on. It is vital that the keeper prepares notes on a few things the players will check out if any are professional parapsychologists. See "Scenario Considerations" for details on how to set up this material.

So how does RSPK function in the game? I strongly advise the Keeper to design their own parameters and procedures, which the investigators can only learn through play.

Simulating an RSPK Poltergeist

To simulate RSPK it is important that an energy decay curve should exist, even though objects do not fly in accord with the laws of physics. To represent this it is easiest to decide that the focus is creating

a battery or pool of energy which can be represented by a pool of magic points. (Which in d20 terms are equal to temporary wisdom). Each night while asleep the agent adds three magic points to this pool, and for each two days the effect last they may add one extra point which is drained at any point in the day, up to a maximum of six. The draining may never take the poltergeist agent below three magic points. Each magic point will throw a 2lb item up to three feet, so ten magic points will throw a twenty pound object three feet or a 2lb object up to thirty feet. However RSPK poltergeists should never hit anyone, or do real damage to living people – because in ‘real’ poltergeist cases they seem to follow this rule. It is possible that the poltergeist can also draw a magic point from any person who has to make a sanity roll while in the building, so scaring people may be a more efficient tactic. Read the section in the Players section on what RSPK may be and what poltergeists represent and it may give you some useful ideas for playing your poltergeist!

For example, Felicity has become an agent. She has a POW of 8 and thus 8 MP available. On the first night 3 MP are drained and "given" to the poltergeist. That day 1 MP is added meaning it's pool increases to 4. That night another 3 are drained increasing the number to 7 and so on, gradually building up the (non-regenerative but cumulative) magic points until they are expended. With 7 magic points she could throw a SIZ 2 (14lb) chair 3 feet or a 2lb candlestick up to 21 feet, even round corners!.

Magic Points can be directly converted to STR points on a one for one basis to push investigators and slam or hold shut doors. Other events such as pyrokinesis and writing should be based on the rules for spirits.

d20 mechanics for poltergeists: Use Wisdom instead of POW and give the poltergeist a number of ‘magic points’ equal to it’s wisdom. Otherwise follow the rules above.

Another possibility is the "cold spot". Anyone passing through notices it on a roll of **POW times five or less (d20 Wisdom check)** and shivers. The Cold Spot may act as a trap to drain extra magic points (**d20: temporary wisdom**). The poltergeist matches its current magic points against those of anyone moving through in the cold spot in a (**magic point total**) versus **POW (d20: wisdom)** struggle. If it succeeds it gains **1D3 magic points.(d20: WIS)** from the victim. If it loses it must expend one magic point. The referee should be certain to mark cold spots on his map in advance. They are rarely more than one or two feet in diameter. Cold spots of a different variety may also fuel apparitions - see page 74.

Spirit Paradigm

This paradigm is simple to operate in game terms. Utilise Ghost statistics and allow certain special powers for the entity. Keepers may wish to select one or two powers from this list:-

Telekinesis – Each three magic points expended move **one SIZ point (d20: about 14lbs will do as a conversion)** up to two yards. Each additional magic point may move another SIZ point or extend the distance by one yard. Each time the spirit uses telekinesis it must make a **Luck roll (d20 WIS)** or lose one pt of POW (d20: WIS) permanently. In this way the spirit will eventually burn out as usually occurs. It is more powerful for lower cost than the movement associated with RSPK.

Levitate spell (*Call of Cthulhu*, 5th ed,

p.155, *d20 Cthulhu* page 143.) Many other spells may be used as unique powers for these entities or ghosts – Keepers can also design unique abilities for their creatures.

Pyrokinesis - 6 Magic points will ignite a small fire, 12 will ignite something which will not usually burn providing it is inorganic.

Apportation (SOD) To displace an object simply allow 3 magic points. This should remove a SIZ 1 (up to 14lbs) object for up to ten minutes, bring a SIZ 1 object from up to a few miles away, or cause it to fall somewhere out of sight. Keepers may devise special forms of apportation, such as rain of stones.

Communication. If a pencil is available one word may be scrawled on the wall per magic point expended. Rodent blood makes a reasonable surrogate pencil... The Borley Rectory, England case and the Amherst Poltergeist both saw scrawled messages purportedly from the 'haunt'.

Rain of Stones

A rain of stones from nowhere costs 10 magic points initially and then one magic point per combat round. Each round each investigator must make a Luck roll or take a single damage. They can avoid this by taking shelter behind something solid. "Quick, everyone under the table!" Stones may rain down from near the ceiling of one room, fly in through windows or just clatter harmlessly on the roof and garden of the whole house at the Keeper's discretion. The stones do not impact with anything like the expected force though, as a Physics roll will confirm. Keepers should not limit themselves to stones – rains of blood, frogs or fish are also traditional weird events!

The Revenant in the "*Haunted House*"

scenario in all editions of the *Cthulhu* rules can be used as a model.

Demons

If the Keeper wishes to use a paradigm where such activity is the work of demons it is simple to convert the above. Replace the word ghost with demon and ignore the loss of permanent POW. Exorcism is the only solution, see page 74, and the notes at the end of this section. A divine mandate explains why poltergeists never kill or maim, only frighten. Possession is almost certainly an ability of these entities. The inventive Keeper may use his religious ideas to create as many classes of demons as he chooses, but must not neglect Angels and the power of prayer. The reason for burn out is probably business elsewhere! A mature roleplaying group may wish to explore the possibility of such a campaign, in which the Cthulhu mythos probably does not exist at all but traditional religious beliefs are true.

Faerie

There is no reason why the Faerie folk or elemental spirits should not be behind this particular type of haunting. Gauge your players carefully before springing pixies, leprechauns and brownies on them. Rules for psychism become important. You may wish to stipulate that only psychics with Celtic or Romany blood (luck roll for white US citizens?) can see the little folk. I have given statistics based on the Sourcebook, but negotiation and friendliness are more the order of the day than combat, exorcism or other unpleasantness. Even the most evil fairy might be vanquished by a riddling contest, though cold iron, salt or holy water may also work. The Haunted House scenario in *Trail of Tsathogghua* (now republished in *Curse of Cthulhu*) may be pillaged for hints. Lest this seem ridiculous I have members of my research

team who use this paradigm and in at least one case it helped 'cure' the poltergeist. Elliot O'Donnell the great ghosthunter whose career spanned the 1890's and 1920's certainly believed in Elemental spirits, and in fiction Arthur Machen's writings can be pillaged for ideas. See "*Plant Y Daer*" in "*Sacraments of Evil*" for a fine treatment of the themes of Machen's work.

Statistics for Pixies can be found in the earlier editions of the rules. For the convenience of Keepers using the 5th Edition I reproduce them here.

PIXIE (Sandy Petersen)		
Pixies are diminutive elves capable of flight with small transparent wings. They are naturally invisible, although they may be visible to some psychics. These Imps tend to use the sling but are natural pranksters.		
Characteristics		Average
STR 2D4		5
CON 3D6		10-11
	Hit Pts: 7	
SIZ 1D6		3-4
INT 3D6		10-11
POW 2D6+6		13
DEX 4D6		14
APP 3D6		10-11
Weapon	Attack	Damage
Sling	30%	1D8
Throw	50%	varies
Other Skills - Move Quietly (Sneak) 50%, Spot Hidden 40%, Practical Joke 80%.		

The Keeper should readily spot the benefits of a Pixie-poltergeist. Harmless unless irritated, the poltergeist is merely the upset Pixie getting his own back. Many homes in the Celtic world used to have their own Pixies or Brownies who brought luck and helped with the household chores. They are partial to a small saucer of milk or a little cake left out

for them now and then. Small Object Displacement (SOD) is best dealt with by politely asking for the objects back - here the Pixie paradigm makes sense. Also remember how objects move as if carried by an invisible hand! At worst a fairy makes an excellent red herring in a more normal scenario, if you can get the players to consider the idea.

d20 Cthulhu Pixie

Tiny Creature

Hit Dice 2 (8hp)
Initiative: +2 (dex)
Speed: 20' (fly or leap)
Armour Class: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 Size)
Attacks: Throw +4
Damage: depends on object thrown
Face/Reach: 2 ½ feet square/ 0 ft
Special Attacks:
Special Qualities:
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10
 Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16
Skills: Balance +10, Climb +10
 Gather Information +3,
 Forgery +3
 Hide +18, Listen +5,
 Move Silently +15
 Sleight of Hand +15, Spot +5, Tumble +10
Feats: choose based on personality

Curses

I had never seen a scenario where an ancient curse is slowly and inexorably working itself out until Penelope Love wrote the superb *Masterwork of Nicholas Forby* (in *Sacraments of Evil*) but the idea is common in supernatural fiction. Certain hostile spell casters could produce some such results in the present, and the Keeper could design new spells. The ancient curse motif will provide an excellent scenario, and I suggest the

Keeper handcraft the curse which has afflicted generations of the same lineage. Perhaps only red heads or eldest sons are affected, and the means to foil the curse can be elaborate as the keeper desires. Might I suggest Oscar Wilde's beautiful *Canterville Ghost* and M.R. James' supernatural fiction for ideas. William Hope Hodgsons' *Carnacki the Ghost-finder* stories are inspirational.

Hoaxes and Genuine Mistakes

This is always amusing. Make the hoaxer cunning but give the players a chance. The SPR used to end all investigation of a case when fraud was detected but today many parapsychologists accept that often children like mediums and some faith healers may resort to fraud when phenomena fail to occur, helping them out and trying to retain the investigator's attention. This is especially likely if the team seems to be losing interest. Remember that several series of the cartoon *Scooby Doo* were based on this explanation of hauntings!

Cthulhoid Entities

Ultimately it is quite possible that what appears on the surface to be a standard poltergeist is in fact a manifestation of some mythos entity. The prime candidates must be the Lloigor, and certainly many cases in the British Isles seem to occur at or near the nexus of ley lines.

Fortunately investigators from the 1920's onwards will be aware of Earth Mysteries if they have consulted this handbook, and may be ready to try to thwart this terrible threat. The Keeper could read "*The mystery of Loch Feinn*" by Glenn Rahman (*Call Of Cthulhu*, 4th ed, p.115) for further ideas. A whole campaign could be based on the machinations of these terrible entities. Their telekinetic and other gifts are fully explored in COC 5th Edition, pages (113-114). Their telekinetic powers

are weak compared with those of a spirit, demon or even RSPK but they can combine to create potent effects and their energy patterns are an alien organisation of matter reducing their efficiency.

Without any doubt the Fire Vampire, perhaps unconsciously summoned, is the basis for many Pyro-poltergeists. Perhaps the agent demonstrates physical side effects from their expenditure of magic points, or perhaps the building stands on an ancient site dedicated to Cthugha posing as a benign fire or sun-god.

Mysterious apports and SOD could be connected to a Dimensional Shambler, and perhaps ancient gates could take the investigators on a trip through time and space to confront the entity. Perhaps it and not the television has abducted the family daughter; only the Keeper knows why it is visiting this part of the multiverse.

The possibilities are endless, and almost any mythos entity could be behind events. Choose which poltergeist effects are appropriate and use them exclusively. One final word of advice; do not allow the property to become a menagerie - Deep Ones in the basement, Shantaks on the roof and Ghouls in between. This debases the entire game.

Psychism and the Poltergeist.

If psychism works in your game how do psychics perceive poltergeists? Psychic Sensitivity if used correctly picks up a feeling like an impending storm; the atmosphere crackles with latent energy. Nothing more, but it may identify the case as poltergeist rather than a haunting. If spirits are the cause it is possible their motive, say 'jealousy', 'hostility' or 'love' may also come through with an exceptional result.

Aura reading will show a poltergeist agent with a black aura, and any one recently

drained with a black halo to their aura. It may prove useful. The agent is likely to try to prevent their aura being checked by direct action!

Spirit Vision and Second Sight are invaluable if ghosts or fairies are behind the manifestations and useless otherwise.

All forms of psychic defence are completely useless against thrown objects, though it is possible an amulet or talisman will prevent magic point draining, and they will protect against spirit combat if they work at all.

Psychics should always be the poltergeists first targets. Poltergeists should relax their usual scruples about hurting people and go for it if they get the chance, dropping pianos, hurling plant pots and raining stones.

Spiritualism and the Poltergeist.

Obviously useful if a spirit is concerned. Even if it isn't, and RSPK is the cause, if the medium is deluded into thinking they have made contact with the spirit and proceeds to successfully move it over (exorcism) and convince the agent of that then the phenomena stop for 1D6 months. The Keeper should make this roll secretly, and everyone should think the medium did a fine job, until one night...

Exorcising Poltergeists.

The rules for exorcism earlier in this section provide a framework for clerical attempts to deal with the unknown. If demonic forces, spirits, some curses and possibly fairies are involved then this may prove to be the most effective method. It is very likely that the players will sooner or later attempt this strategy. Sadly poltergeists do not seem to like being exorcised and the exorcist should be subjected to endless attacks and horrific sanity loss. If the Psi paradigm is in use and RSPK is at work then use the suggestions in the previous section.

If the agent is not convinced allow the poltergeist to enter a POW vs POW (**or d20 WIS**) struggle with the exorcist, referred to as **Spirit Combat**. If it wins it gains 1D6 of the priest's magic points (**d20: does 1d6 wisdom damage**). If it fails it must expend one magic point. Whatever the result activity should step up drastically, and it may drain the agent at up to twice the previous rate for the next 1D3 days. Anti-religious writings and inverted crucifixes scrawled in excrement might appear at this point. The magic point depleted priest should crawl from the house shaking, vowing never to return, or to call his Bishop...

The Poltergeist is a superb plot hook for an entertaining adventure or even a campaign

Chapter 12: Mediumship Explored

If Spiritualism is real in a game then the Keeper must be a little careful. Murder victims are no longer silenced, for instance, as dead men may very well tell tales! The ghost of Jackson Elias may be consulted for example at the beginning of *Masks of Nyarlathotep*, or perhaps the players will try to contact Roger Carlyle instead! Of course certain mythos entities may well thwart this cunning plan and other Chaosium scenarios such as *Fungi from Yuggoth* already use this mechanism and apparently endorse the reality of spirit visions at least to a certain extent. For my game I might decide that the Eater of Souls had already destroyed the spirit (with grapefruit, for breakfast) of one who had gone so far into the darkness, or that Elias' spirit has been driven to screaming permanent insanity by his foul death, and will engage the guide in spirit combat before possessing the medium and wreaking havoc. Have fun with this idea!

So how does mediumship function in the context of the game?

Clairvoyant Mediums can use the Spirit Vision ability given in the Psychic rules below, (**d20: Second Sight**), and may also use it in an improved manner. If the ability is being used in the context of mediumistic setting increase the chance for communication to be established to POW times three and re-rolls must be made only once every ten minutes instead of every round. The medium must be relaxed (no sanity rolls required in the last week) and in a secure setting such as their home or a Spiritualist Church or the usual rolls apply. The clairvoyant medium remains fully conscious and still runs the risk of self-delusion.

Representing mediumistic phenomena often is simply down to the referee creating Spirits and playing out the

relationship between them and the medium. Rules for various sorts of Mediumistic Practice follow.

Table Tipping

To simulate in a game I offer the following suggestions. If the table is being moved by a spirit, then allow all participants to total their POW and divide by 3. No more than ten persons should participate in the experiment. Next roll secretly against this figure, which is the percentage chance of a spirit being contacted. Rolls of 96-00 should result in unfriendly spirits being summoned and a subsequent severe poltergeist outbreak or even possession attempts.

Even if a spirit is summoned there is still a long delay before the séance makes contact. Roll 1D100 and multiply by three, the result being the length of time in minutes the investigators must maintain concentration. This may be reduced to 1D100 minutes for experienced mediums. For every hour past the first everyone must make luck rolls or they lose concentration and the séance fails.

If there are no spirits about or the Keeper is not using them in his campaign then surprisingly table turning may still prove effective. The Toronto experiment in manufacturing a ghost (see Chapter 7) provides a model for this, suggesting the movement originates in latent PKE (see Chapter 8) powers of the experimenters. Simply use the above rules but delude the players by creating whatever "spirit" you feel appropriate to their unconscious minds. This holds true for almost all the phenomena we are dealing with here.

Ouija Board, Planchette.

I would suggest that use of these by unskilled investigators can result in lasting mental damage, best simulated by

1D6 SAN loss, and strongly advise against attempts in real life. Within the game results may be achieved faster than table turning, in perhaps 1D20 minutes, but failed rolls result in the usual delusion and messages from the participant's unconscious minds. I assume most people are familiar with the Ouija board but it is essentially a piece of wood decorated with the letters of the alphabet and often "yes", "no" and "maybe". The participants place their fingers lightly on a glass tumbler that moves around the board spelling out messages. This undoubtedly works but is not really proof of anything. At the simplest the effect may be created by someone hoaxing, that is consciously pushing the glass or Planchette. A second possibility is that the messages are created by the querent's unconscious mind and the glass moved by involuntary muscular action. It is also of course possible that one is contacting demons or spirits!

Ectoplasm

In game terms it is hard to simulate. The medium must be genuinely gifted, the spirit contact must have occurred, the spirits must be willing and the medium relaxed. Total darkness, except for luminous objects that give off no real light, must prevail. I would suggest that to generate ectoplasm the player must roll under the mediums POW divided by 5 (round up) + (number of magic points they wish to expend) + 1 magic point per other sitter contributing. If the roll succeeds then ectoplasm is created, and spirits, normally the Spirit Guide first, will wrap themselves in it like a sheet, hence becoming visible. Normally only one spirit will take form at a time. The spirits feel cold and clammy to the touch, but try to resist the temptation of 'sliming' investigators!

Several mediums have told of the terrible dangers of this process. At the end of the sitting the medium must reabsorb the ectoplasm into their body, and this can damage them if not done properly. This

requires a CON times 5 roll or 1D3 damage. Far, far worse, indeed almost murder is to allow light to fall on the ectoplasm, whether by flash photography, turning on a lamp or any other method. The ectoplasm immediately recoils into the medium and inflicts 4D6 damage. Purportedly several mediums died in the early days of the movement when police or sceptics broke up séances and allowed this to happen. Heart failure would be the doctors verdict from the symptoms.

Apports

Bringing or taking away objects by spirits is not easy! A POW times one roll might compel a willing spirit or perhaps it requires a sacrifice of a point of permanent POW to persuade the spirit to perform the task. This is a particularly fascinating phenomena, and probably due to the creation of temporary gate spells in some form.

Spirit Photography

It is of course possible that a talented medium could actually cause a spirit to appear on a photographic plate if that spirit so wished. To resist for once the unhealthy urge to write rules for everything I will leave the mechanism of this to the imaginative Keeper, if she can find a game application for this. In the 1960's an American, Ted Serios developed the talent of *thoughtography* where he apparently placed images on unexposed negatives by concentration alone. Although Serios is controversial several other psychics seem able to cause photographic plates to develop peculiar markings.

Trance Mediumship

If a player is playing an investigator who happens to be a medium then the Keeper and Player should design the Spirit Guide as a character of it's own, with a POW (d20: WIS) of 2d6+6 and with 30 skill points to the guides skills, (or 6 skill ranks in any ability in d20 Cthulhu). The player may choose to sacrifice some of

their skill points (**d20: skill ranks**) during character creation to the spirit's skills instead. It is possible that the guide is nothing more than a secondary personality, and the skills and talents possessed are those produced by the medium's unconscious mind. The moment the medium slips into trance the investigator becomes a non-player character and the Spirit Guide takes over, played by the referee. The guide will protect the medium automatically from unfriendly spirits. The medium does however require a witness, because when they come out of trance they will have absolutely no idea what happened or what was said.

The ability is either genuine or not and only the Keeper knows as he plays out the entranced medium. He should use this as an opportunity to create atmosphere, build suspense and further his story. Certain additional features need to be considered, as trance mediums sometimes demonstrate truly odd abilities. Spirit Guides will usually possess Knowledge Skills, as they have no body nor can they cause the medium to move while entranced. Spirit guides can not learn or cast spells! They can however attempt to gather information from the Other Side by locating departed spirits – this is **Fast Talk** skill in Cthulhu (**d20: Gather Information**) and is every Spirit Guides most important skill.

Psychic Surgery

Firstly the patient must be calmed by being put into an altered state of consciousness. A POW versus POW struggle is necessary. Once this is successful, and each attempt takes about ten minutes, a roll is made against the spirits Medicine skill. If the roll is successful the bullet, tumour or whatever it is removed and the patient recovers 3 HP that week and 2 per week until fully recovered.

Automatism

The Keeper simply decides what the outcome of the automatic writing is to further the plot.

Other explanations beyond the obvious spirits may work for mediumship...

Demons.

If the keeper is basing his campaign's real truth on a religious system then it may be that the spirits are nothing more than demons, who enjoy furthering their plans by confusing gullible humans. All the phenomena may be real, or some hoaxed, but the demons are deliberately going to cheat occasionally to put the medium under real pressure and discredit and embarrass them. This bleak perspective may well allow the medium to be driven insane, possessed or just imprisoned for fraud. Once the demons have finished playing his powers may well desert him forever...

Delusion.

As with Psychism it is possible that no conscious fraud is intended, but that the belief system held bears little relation to objective reality. A shared delusion soon forms a paradigm and each new convert or coincidental success strengthens the medium's delusion. The Keeper should be careful to provide evidence that is real to the medium, who interprets everything in terms of their beliefs. The player should have no way of telling they are deluded as the Keeper feeds them what seems reasonable information and ideas.

The Medium and the Mythos

How does mediumship fit in with the Cthulhu Mythos? Unlike their unfortunate cousins the psychics, mediums do not face huge sanity point

losses from encountering certain mythos creatures. This is because mediums are practised at excluding their talents - they are only actively psychic, when they want to be, not psychic all the time like other psychics. When in trance or another altered state, mediums are terribly vulnerable.

At any time after a medium has gained the Cthulhu Mythos skill, there is a chance they will be possessed while attempting to use their talents. If their roll for their ability is greater than their maximum sanity - that is 99 - Cthulhu Mythos, this eventuality may come to pass. In d20 simply have this occur on any natural roll of 1 on a d20 when using the Medium Feat.

Firstly, the Keeper should choose an appropriate mythos entity to attack them, probably based on the campaign. (Their surface thoughts have strayed to the case and opened up a gateway in another plane!) possible possessing entities include Nyarlathotep, Yig, Y'golonac and Hastur, as well as any other entity on the psychism dangerous entity list. Determine as the Keeper feels appropriate. Other possibilities include long dead sorcerer's spirits, etc, etc. If possession by Y'golonac or Hastur takes place there will also be a physical transformation as the victims body transmogrifies into a hideous avatar.

Possession is not automatic. If the medium makes an idea roll they may realise what is happening, and make a **sanity roll** as if they had encountered that entity. If they remain sane, they may then decide to break off contact. Such a course succeeds on a roll of anything but **96-00 (d20: on a natural roll of one)**, but they suffer terrible dreams and nightmares for weeks, and may have real trouble using their psychic abilities. If the medium had a spirit guide, it is destroyed

utterly, having lain down it's life for it's medium. The medium may eventually find (generate) a new spirit guide. 1D10 san is automatically lost however.

If the medium decided to try and face the entity, then Spirit Combat results. If the medium loses they are possessed by the entity. Undead sorcerers and many minor entities will never leave the medium, unless forced out by spell or exorcism. Exorcism is useless against Great Old Ones, but they will vacate the body after 1D20 hours, leaving the possession victim to account for whatever acts they committed while possessed, and an equivalent san loss - an automatic 1pt per hour. The Keeper may of course choose other ways of handling this.

There are two special cases:-

If possessed by Y'golonac, the medium must follow the rules on p.125 of Call of Cthulhu (5th Edition), as if he had fallen victim to Y'Golonac's psychic attack. This can only occur to investigators who have read at least one page of the dread tome, 'The Revelations of Glaaki'.

If possessed by Hastur, the medium suffers the effects as given in the spell The Unspeakable Promise, when Hastur finally claims his victim. These may be found in the last chapter of Cthulhu Now, or improvised by the referee. The character swells up, their body distorts into a horrific octopoid creature, they lose all sanity and become an avatar of Hastur. This is covered in d20 Cthulhu on page 190, with the template *Chosen of Hastur*.

The possibilities of such possessions in the game should be obvious to every Keeper. A later section, *Cthulhu and the Psychic*, (p.96) deals with Mythos Magic and the paranormal world...

Chapter 13: Psychics

Are you psychic? In most cultures, globally, there have been traditions that some people possess extraordinary powers. Psychism is therefore defined here as 'the belief is held that some or all of humanity have certain powers beyond those experienced by everyone which can be awoken and possibly trained.' These powers are diverse and there is not universal agreement on what is or is not possible, even amongst psychics.

This chapter looks at psychic powers and tries to render them accessible in game terms, providing the possibility for psychic player characters if the Keeper so desires. The problems and uses of psychic investigators are given later.

Traditionally Cthulhu has not had much emphasis on psychic player characters, although some rules have been published in non-Chaosium supplements, but following Cthulhu d20's acceptance of Psychic Feats (although still at the option of the Keeper) a full treatment is overdue. To be psychic in game terms a POW of 16+ is required and I strongly suggest that if you do use these rules you limit the powers to a few extraordinary investigators. The world is probably not ready for astrally projecting Deep Ones! This entire section is optional, and many Keepers will decide that they do not wish to have psychic characters in their games.

If however, the keeper is willing to consider allowing a mature player a chance to play a psychic, and if that investigator has a POW of 16+, then they may be psychically sensitive and possibly possess a single speciality psi power, but no more than one, as well. Only the Keeper should know if the psi-power really works, or if the psychic is deluded, in which case make all the rolls but just invent whatever you think the investigator

might dream up. Players should avoid reading this section if possible, and will not be aware of exactly how their psi-power works. All psychic abilities also drain magic points, whether successful or not, even if the psychic is deluding themselves and really has no psychic ability. This represents fatigues, headaches, exhaustion, etc, brought on by intense concentration, and the cost prevents the psychic investigator from constantly using their powers and leaving the rest of the party bored. Another unfortunate side effect of being psychic which severely limits their usefulness in the campaign is covered in the Cthulhu Rising section at the end of this chapter. Make sure you read it before deciding on a psychic character.

Psychic Sensitivity.

This is probably the simplest psychic talent to employ. Anybody with a POW of 16 or more is in tune with the universe to the extent where they can sense psychic impressions, assuming psychism works and assuming the Keeper allows psychic powers. The sensitive may feel that a specific location is 'melancholy', 'feels violent', 'hostile', 'peaceful', or whatever else as appropriate, picking up the residue of any strong emotions left in the building. If there are spirits nearby then the investigator may sense the rough location and hostility of any spirit in the vicinity. This ability may also be usefully employed to determine if an item is enchanted, and roughly how much. ('Strongly magical', 'faint aura', etc The Keeper should be very vague in their descriptions, and it should never be clear how accurate the impressions are. Pass notes to the player in question; this renders the other investigators a little jealous and suspicious that they are not being told something. In Cthulhu d20 this ability is included in the feat **Sensitive**. Simply use the rules associated with that feat.

In *Call of Cthulhu* allow the investigator to roll POW times 2 or less as a percentile roll. They must spend at least one minute without distractions and standing still to concentrate on the environment. If the roll is made there is still the danger that visual or other sensory cues are interfering with the information, contaminating it with unconscious logic which leads to a false conclusion. The Keeper should secretly make an IDEA roll for the psychic, and if it fails, then they receive accurate psychic impressions. If it succeeds then try to slightly mislead based on environmental cues. It is also a dangerous practice; for purposes of spell resistance etc, the psychics POW and magic points are treated as if halved. This tuning in makes one very susceptible to possession or psychic attack. There is also a cost of one magic point per attempt.

*EXAMPLE: Juliet Shanks, (POW 16) is trying to detect the "vibes" of what she thinks is a bloodstained underground chapel to Nyarlathotep. She must stand still and let her mind blank for a minute or two. She must then roll 48 or less (her Pow *3) to pick up the atmosphere. She rolls 32 and the Keeper rules she feels something. Now the Keeper makes her idea roll, 50%, and rolls 34! Unfortunately the rust stains which Juliet believes are blood influence her reading. The Keeper informs her "Your head swims for a second. You feel no atmosphere of evil, so this temple is not in current use, but somewhere you here the scream of a baby being sacrificed. You know this place was once consecrated for evil." She fails her SAN roll and flees in panic from the completely mundane coal cellar...*



Divination.

Probably the single most commonly practised psychic art. A magical practice, it is difficult to deal with in game terms, as it means predicting the future, which is of course reliant on the players actions. Almost any method can be used, but a proper interpretation always takes time. Tarot cards, runes, I Ching, chicken entrails, whatever is used is just window dressing. There is nothing more irritating than trying to devise a reading for a real tarot reader playing in your game, as they read much more in than you intended. So just say "the cards indicate madness from above, death from below" and let them get on with it. You know about the Byakhee and the Shoggoth in the basement. Be very vague, and stick to what you know might happen. Be general and extremely woolly so as to allow the investigator to read absolutely anything in to what you say. It works for most professional diviners, and it will work for you... Seriously though, a POW times two roll should be made. Failure indicates confused omens or misleading information. Costs 2 magic points per reading, and takes up to an hour.

As a parapsychologist I would guess that if divination works its because we can all see in to the future, whether psychically or by complicated unconscious calculations, or maybe lucky guessing. The cards, stones

or whatever are then effected by PKE allowing them to convey information to our conscious mind. Que sera, sera. Whatever the mechanism it is important to remain neutral during the reading and not will a particular outcome, or a false reading is obtained. Bible-believing and Orthodox Jewish investigators will note that this practice is specifically forbidden in Deuteronomy 18.

Divination is handled in d20 as a new Feat. See the New Psychic Feats section for the rules in the Cthulhu d20 system.

Specialty Talents.

An investigator may possess one of these talents at the Keeper's discretion. The player should not know exactly how these rules work...

Psychometry.

This is a speciality talent. The psychic with psychometry may handle an item and "read" something of its history and owner from its "vibrations". The psychic should be comfortable and undistracted when they handle the item and should spend five minutes trying to tune in. There is little chance of unconscious bias with this process so a straight roll of POW times one should suffice. If the roll is made then a few vague but possibly useful hints should be given. If the roll fails then a few vague but slightly misleading clues should be provided instead. It is important that the Keeper makes the roll so the psychic is not aware of the usefulness or otherwise of their impressions. Each 'tuning-in' costs a magic point. The d20 Cthulhu rules already include a version of this feat.

EXAMPLE: Alexei handles the dagger found near his murdered colleagues room. As he concentrates he closes his eyes, and within his mind a screen lights up like an internal cinema. A strong impression of a small shop, full of camping gear flashes past. Obviously this is where the item was purchased. He sees a short sandy haired man with a missing tooth, who he is sure he would recognise if he saw him again. Finally he sees the terrified face of Patricia as the knife slashes across her throat...

Alexei (POW 18) failed his roll, as the Keeper rolled 20. The shop part is accurate, but the short chap was a bus conductor he saw earlier today and forgot about, and when he reads the police report he will find Patricia was stabbed through the heart. Bad, but even worse, he has now put his finger prints all over the murder weapon...)

Aura Reading.

This talent is so powerful I suggest it is considered a speciality, although lots of psychics claim to possess it. The psychic is able to "see" an aura of energy projecting anything from a few inches to a foot out from another's body in all directions. This aura is coloured and it is primarily by this and patterns within it that an investigator can judge the persons mood and state of health. There are various ways people can learn to see auras, but for game purposes one combat round of undistracted concentration while staring at the target should suffice.

Rules: A POW times three roll is needed to tune in, but may be retried each round. Each attempt costs **3 magic points** A **96-00 roll** results in completely false information being fed to the psychic. The following simple table should provide a few ideas, but each psychic tends to have their own associations based on their experiences.

In D20 this is a new feat: Aura Reading,

given later in this chapter.

Whichever version of the rules is in play this table is very handy for the Keeper if an investigator has aura reading ability.

RED - anger, lust, hatred
ORANGE - passion, lust, greed
YELLOW - sickness, madness, magic.
GREEN - health, passive, happy.
BLUE - love, goodwill, calm
PURPLE - romantic love, spirituality, depression.
BLACK - uncontrolled psychic energy (Poltergeist agent for example or possessed)
SILVER - magically affected
COPPER -total (permanent) insanity
GOLD - under influence narcotic, optimism, praying
GREY - extremely ill, under psychic attack, cursed, etc.
BROWN- confusion

The predominant colour is the persons prevailing emotional state, though rays or specks may pollute this, showing a secondary effect. Be imaginative, and give colourful descriptions. The degree of brightness of an aura will provide a hint as to the POW (d20: WIS) of the owner.

FAINT, barely visible POW 1-6
WEAK, colours faded and small, POW 7-9
NORMAL, what you would expect, POW 11-12
BRIGHT, a vivid and large aura, POW 13-14
STRONG, very striking aura, POW 15-18
INTENSE, this person is a magician or inhuman, POW 19-24
DAZZLING, the psychic equivalent of fireworks, POW 25+, SAN roll or lose 1D3/1pts.

It is entirely up to the keeper if a non-human mythos entity should have a visible aura, but unless vaguely humanoid I would advise against it. I have never met a psychic who can see a cat or dogs aura. This talent is powerful but correct interpretation (Is he lying to me?) should still require successful Psychology rolls, and a lot of faith in their psychic powers!

Spirit Vision.

The psychic with Spirit Vision can see spirits, which are invisible to everyone else, as clearly as the spirit's POW allows. Use the intensity table from the section on Aura reading. However this talent requires the investigator to be relaxed and concentrating, at least when they start! The psychic clearly sees the ghost or spirit, and may even try to speak with it via mental (telepathic) communication. A POW times two roll allows the psychic to tune in successfully, but a further POW times three roll is necessary to gain communication and then the spirit may well choose to lie or deceive the psychic. The cost is three magic points, and if the psychic is attacked by the spirit there POW and magic points count as halved.

A further roll of POW times three and one magic point is required every 12 seconds or communication is broken off and may not be attempted again for an hour. Any roll of 96-00 should automatically provoke self delusion, so as with all psychic powers the Keeper should make the dice rolls.

An investigator with spirit vision should be allowed to try a form of exorcism called "moving on" a spirit. This relies not on force but on gentle persuasion, and a Persuade roll, Fast Talk, burial of bones, righting of ancient wrongs or whatever else the Keeper deems necessary. The

spirit still has an automatic 20% chance of returning anyway to talk further. In d20 Cthulhu rules this power is part of the Feat **Second Sight**

Clairvoyant Mediums may use this ability with greater results, in an appropriate setting. If the ability is being used in the context of mediumistic seance or circle increase the chance for communication to be established to POW times three and re-rolls must be made only once every ten minutes instead of every round. The medium must be relaxed (no sanity rolls required in the last week) and in a secure setting such as their home or a Spiritualist Church, and finally have a sincere belief in the Spiritualist faith, or the usual rolls apply. The clairvoyant medium remains fully conscious and still runs the risk of self-delusion.

Second Sight.

This speciality is here used to refer specifically to the ability to see fairies, elves, and the little folk. It may require the psychic to possess Romany (Gypsy) or Celtic blood, probably best simulated by a luck roll for a white American investigator, or be limited to women, children, virgins or seventh sons. (Non WASP's would have a similar chance to be aware of beings from their own culture. They would be able to "see" native spirits if transported to another country. But the rolls would be harder and the psychic would have problems understanding other cultures spirits. Native Africans and Australians would certainly be able to deal better with their own spiritual races.) It requires a POW times two roll to see the elusive fairy, unless it wishes to be seen, in which case communication is automatic. 1 magic point will suffice. This gift should be rare and of course is subject to the problems of delusion. If the

Keeper has a suitable investigator go mad he may wish to curse them with this gift, at least till they get better. The player should never be certain if his investigator is mad or really seeing that Pooka in the shape of a six foot tall invisible white rabbit! In d20 Cthulhu rules this is part of the Feat **Second Sight**.

Psychic Self-Defence.

The title of a classic book by noted western hermetic occultist, Dion Fortune. All psychics will want to be able to protect themselves from psychic vampirism and spirit possession. This is normally done by either creation of a temporary shield or a permanent amulet or talisman carried about. The shield involves visualisation of either a protective circle, the aura turning in to a mirror, or some other method, taking one combat round of static concentration, and the expenditure of a number of magic points. The consecration of a talisman or amulet takes time, elaborate preparations and the expenditure of permanent POW. Shields are an active defence, available to protect only if the psychic has the foresight to put them up. An amulet or talisman will work at all times. Devised by a psychic these defences are personal, a shield protecting only the psychic and an amulet becoming worthless if passed to someone it is not attuned to. This section is not personally to my taste, but some players may enjoy experimenting with it if the Keeper feels it is permissible.

Amulets

Talismans and amulets are strictly speaking the province of the Occultist and may well require hours of research in dusty tomes along with several Library Use and Occult rolls. Finding the necessary items may take a short scenario in itself, as those who have this

information will not let it fall in to outsiders hands. All popular books on the subject may be considered worthless.

To construct a talisman or amulet the investigator must first find a suitable receptacle for the power. A brooch, ring or other personal item is best so as it can be kept to hand at all times. The amulet must be within the psychic's aura, that is on their body or clothing, to function at all. The object is enchanted during a ritual which will take at least one hour per POW point invested. The ritual may be based on any ritual the investigator believes in as it is a psychic not a truly magical operation, or may be a difficult process as outlined above, at the Keeper's discretion. Once constructed each point of POW invested in the amulet will add 10% to the psychics chance of resisting any spell or psychic attack on the POW versus POW roll, but costs cost 1D3 points of SAN. The aim of the amulet is to give the Psychic some protection. If the talisman falls in to enemy hands it might boost a psychic or magical attack by the same amount as it affords protection if used to act as a focus.

EXAMPLE: Harriet Jones is a natural psychic. She decides to invest 2 points of POW in her crystal necklace and loses only 3 points of SAN in a lucky dice roll. Sometime later she meets a crazed worshipper of Nyarlathotep who attacks her with the spell "Dread Curse of Azathoth". She has a POW of 11 now and he has a POW of 13 given her only a 40% chance of resistance, but her talisman gives her a 20% bonus, making her actual chance 60%. She rolls 57 and gets lucky. A few days later her necklace is torn from her throat while on a bus. It soon finds its way to the cultist who concentrates on it as he confronts her a second time. Because her talisman is being used against her she has only a 20% chance now, and the spell takes effect.

Creation of Amulets is a magical practice in Cthulhu d20. Keepers might adapt the rules above if they wish to allow it as a feat.

Psychic Shielding

Shields are an active defence. The psychic imagines a blue circle or other barrier around themselves, another option being to visualise their aura turning to a mirror. Each two magic points invested reduces the magic points of incoming spells by one magic point, which may result in them failing to effect the psychic. Magic points used are immediately lost. The shield lasts until the psychic moves or is distracted, but the magic points are not lost unless an attack occurs.

EXAMPLE: Eric is in the same party as Harriet when the cultists jump them. Eric has a POW of 16, thus 16 magic points. A cultist throws a five point shrivelling spell at Eric. The spell fails, but Eric's magic points are now 6, as 10 were used by his shield. If his magic points had been reduced to zero he would have passed out.

The above rules make innate psychic shielding more powerful than amulets. But remember, shields require a combat round to put up and last only as long as concentrated upon (luck roll if hit or distracted), whereas a talisman is always there (SODs and apports excepted!).

Against spirit combat, a shield will mean an investigator resists as if there POW and magic point total was 5 higher than it is. But each round of spirit combat uses up five magic points, and shielded psychics will hence drain themselves or pass out.

If the shields are a delusion they simply have no effect, but the player believes they do, and still loses magic points through exertion! I have provided a variant of these rules for d20 Cthulhu called Psychic Self Defence in the new feats for d20 section.

Channelling.

This psychic ability does not really come into prominence until the 1970's and is essentially the same as Spiritualism. Channellers are rarely aware of what messages they communicate when in their normal state. Use the rules for trance mediumship. I would suggest that this power is limited to Keeper controlled characters. See the chapter on Spiritualism for the **Trance Mediumship Feat** for *Cthulhu d20*.

Psychic Attack.

This speciality procedure sometimes called psychic vampirism can be used to replace expended magic points by leeching them off others. The psychic may try to leech one MP off a non-magically or psychically capable person, or 1D3 points off someone possessing these powers. This form of attack requires two complete rounds of undisturbed concentration within 10 feet of the victim and costs 1d3 points of SAN, and a POW versus POW struggle to succeed is still required. It should only be used in emergencies by all but the most depraved! There is a *d20 Cthulhu* version of this feat outlined later.

Remote Viewing.

This power allows the psychic to perceive events in another location while in trance. The location, or at least someone at that location, should be known to the psychic and the Keeper must then make a POW times one roll for that investigator. If the roll succeeds then the investigator gets a strong impression of the location, as if they were actually physically present there. Small details may remain invisible, and it proves impossible to read any symbols unless another POW times one roll is made. A second possibility is going to a location where someone known to the psychic is attempting to contact them. This is difficult and also requires a POW times one roll. Trying to describe a

location known to the psychic only by its longitude and latitude as some psychics have reputedly achieved requires a roll of under half POW as a percentage. There is a *D20 Cthulhu* version of this Feat in the main rulebook.

EXAMPLE: Bruce is anxious to return to the forest where he discovered the ancient indian standing stones. Are they still in use? It is midnight, and he lies on his bed and concentrates hard. His POW is 18 and hence he has a 18% chance of success. The Keeper rolls 65% and decides to feed Bruce misleading information. He describes the still night, the whippoorwills and the gnarled misshapen oaks. Suddenly the trees start to stumble forwards, branches waving like sinister tentacles... Bruce has seen Dark Young before and starts awake. Meanwhile twelve miles away a freshman clutches a co-ed passionately amidst the old native stones, with not a mythos entity in sight.

Trying remote viewing raises several problems. Firstly it is exhausting, and requires the expenditure of 10 magic points for at most 1D6 rounds of vision. The psychic counts as discorporately visiting the spot and may if they reach it be engaged in Spirit combat by any discarnate entities there and thus run the risk of possession.

If a fellow investigator is captured then it may be extremely useful in locating them and is a good way of visiting remote spots. Please note that the psychic is not visible at their destination and may not physically interact in any way with their environment.

Astral Projection.

The psychic has learnt how to detach her spirit from her body and is thus able to move around in discorporate form, engaging in spirit combat with other spirits and taking the risks inherent therein. The astral projector imagines

they have an 'etheric' or spirit body which must find its way across the physical terrain to the location they wish to visit, by simply willing themselves in that direction.

The etheric body is often connected to the physical one by a silver cord, and the cutting of this prevents the spirit from returning to the body and thus physical death. Certain types of evil spirit may possess the ability to sever this cord, making astral travel a risky prospect. One advantage of astral projection over remote viewing is that the traveller may attempt to make themselves visible. If they succeed in a POW times one roll and so desire they may appear as an apparition, costing SAN to witnesses as normal. On a further POW times 1 result they may even speak, although the communication will actually be telepathic.

While astrally projecting allow two miles travel per minute. The projector must make a luck roll each minute or be forced back into their body. If any of those rolls is 96-99 then disaster occurs and the psychic encounters another spirit who has hostile intent. It is up to the Keeper what the spirit is or how it attacks or is dealt with, but spirit combat is one option. If a roll of 00 is made then the spirit follows the silver cord back and possesses the psychic's body, and spirit combat is necessary to reclaim it or the psychic's poor spirit must just drift around and watch the mayhem caused by their body. The imaginative Keeper might find a scenario in this option. If such a spirit is capable of severing the silver cord it will do so, animating the body and trapping the psychics' spirit as a ghost wherever it may be.

Each attempt at astral projection must take place while asleep (once per night maximum) and costs 12 magic points. There is a *d20 Cthulhu* version of this feat described below.

Psychic Characters - Notes for the Keeper

What will allowing investigator- psychics do to your game? *Call of Cthulhu* attempts to steer clear of the 'flash, bang, nonsense, comic book' magical effects of certain other games and wisely so. In writing this chapter I have been careful to point out the problems and disadvantages of each power, and to restrict them slightly more than those who possess them would claim reasonable. Despite the power and exotic nature of these abilities they are not arbitrary inventions but careful attempts to render certain powers said to exist in game terms. The Keeper should carefully consider each ability and decide which, if any, are real in his game world, and which are delusional products of the character's imagination. *Cthulhu d20* however adopts a more sympathetic element to the idea of psychic powers being possessed by investigators, and certainly much Mythos fictions does use this idea – August Derleth's hero Dr Laban Shrewsbury has preternatural powers, so it is ultimately the decision of the Keeper.

As to psychic investigators, I would only recommend this to experienced Keepers, who have time to review the psychic's chosen speciality before the start of each session, until completely comfortable with its use. Players will unfortunately forget the limitations. Also limit psychism to one or two investigators, as only a very few of POW 16+ can be truly called psychic. Never tell a player that a certain psychic power does not function in your universe, as this gives away some of the truth (which should remain out there!). Players should work to discover this, and remember that just because a psychic ability works in your campaign it does not follow that just because a player believes his investigator has that ability, that she will. All players will want to try their hand at psychism initially so just roll the

dice and let them be deluded by their imaginations whatever the results if a specific ability is not real in your game world. It will happen that parapsychologist characters will start to devise tests to try and find out the usefulness of their psychic colleagues abilities, which makes for some great sessions!



Chapter 14: Cthulhu Rising; Cthulhu and the Psychic

'The subject, a widely known architect with leanings towards theosophy and occultism, went violently insane on the date of young Wilcox's seizure, and expired several months later after incessant screaming to be saved from some escaped denizen of hell.'

H.P.Lovecraft, 'The Call of Cthulhu'.

Lovecraft's mythos already contains a built in safety clause that prevents psychics from ever being overly strong investigators. The *'Call of Cthulhu'* opens with a description of a worldwide mania of nightmares, weird visions, insanity and religious revivals which afflicted the population from the 23rd March to the 2nd April, 1925. Practical down to earth New Englanders are not effected by this, nor are men of science. Psychics on the other hand are far too sensitive to deal with such mind-numbing cosmic horror.

What caused this great outburst of insanity? Later in the story we discover that during that period Ry'leh had risen, and Great Cthulhu was once again freed upon the Earth. It seems that the Great Old Ones with their dream sendings might well inflict terrible san losses on psychic characters, if freed again.

It seems likely psychics will suffer a 1/1d6 san loss for each day that Ry'leh is above the waters, Hastur stalks the Earth, the character is in the frozen North and the winds of Ithaqua blow round their tent, etc, etc. Apart from the 1925 incident, which will drive many investigator psychics permanently insane. If a Keeper draws tired of psychic characters or they

grow unmanageable in his campaign the awakening, however temporary of another Great Old One will probably put the character out of the campaign, while leading the rest of the party into an interesting scenario.

If psychics are particularly susceptible to mythos horrors then it seems only reasonable that they should be affected badly by encountering the mythos entities which are reservoirs of great psychic malignancy. Herein lies the most terrible threat to any investigator who happens to be psychic:-

The Secrets Mankind Was Not Meant to Know Rule:- if a psychic has to make a san roll through encountering any of the following entities their sanity counts as halved for purposes of making the roll. It is at full strength for subsequent evaluation of how the loss effects them however.

Entities which cause this effect are:-

**All Outer Gods
All Elder Gods
All Great Old Ones
All Avatars
Chthonian
Star Spawn
Lloigor
Brothers of Chaugnar Faugn*
Fosterlings of the Old Ones*
The Million Favoured Ones*
Inhabitants of Yekub*
Sons of Yog Sothoth***

Entities marked with a * are found in Chaosium's fine product, *Ye Booke of Monstres* (Vol.1) Keepers should feel free to add other entities, particularly those with telepathic abilities, to this list.

Jean Roche Goignet staggered through the seaweed draped ruins, marvelling at the strange perspective which left him dazed and confused. Hearing a great rumble, he span around, only to realise the sound came from the direction he was originally facing! Suddenly he saw the ultimate horror - the cyclopean bulk of Great Cthulhu, barely thirty yards away! - Jean has a SAN of 84, but he is also a noted clairvoyant. He therefore makes his SAN roll against 42, halved because Cthulhu is a Great Old One. He rolls 56, and his mind is filled with nightmare images of the depths of interstellar space and a terrible yearning to ravage and destroy. He must now lose 1D100 sanity, but his SAN counts as 84 again. He rolls 9, less than 20% of his sanity so he avoids indefinite insanity, which would have overtaken him if his san was really only 42. Instead he is plunged into temporary insanity. Such subtle distinctions however, prove academic as Cthulhu notices his presence...

This rule preserves game balance, and must be rigorously enforced by the Keeper. Such limitations can prove frustrating but don't make psychics any less fun to play.

The Grimoire and the Psychic

How does mythos magic effect the various entities and powers covered in this book? The following guide is designed for the attention of Keeper's alone; investigator's should avert their eyes lest they detract from the uncertainties and hence excitement of the game. Keeper's should remember these are no more than guidelines - and should feel free to alter or abandon them, as they feel fit.

The Greater Grimoire

Summon/Binding Spells. These spells work by alien (epiphenomenalist) science, not magic as we understand it. It is possible they leave a residue which could be detected by a psychic, but such traces would be too faint to be noticed after a few hours or even next door...

Call/Dismiss Deity spells. These spells will leave a perceptible aura, a feeling of utter loneliness, meaninglessness and cosmic insignificance that will affect any psychic within a mile at the time of the summoning. (1D3 san loss) Such traces will persist for up to a month or two at the actual place where the ritual occurred. The arrival of the Deity will also trigger terrible dreams and nightmares in psychics for many miles.

Contact Deity. These spells are in themselves psychic operations, and san losses are as given in the spell description. A faint unpleasant aura surrounds the caster for a few hours after the ritual, a feeling of contamination or pollution which is very unpleasant to sensitives.

Powder of Ibn Ghazi May, or may not, at the keepers option, make a true ghost visible.

Create Gate. Ghosts which walk through walls and appear and vanish in locked rooms may be perfectly tangible humans (or worse) utilising this spell.

The Lesser Grimoire

Cast Out Devil This African tribal magic may save those who are suffering from spirit possession. It is a form of exorcism, but not all forms are so effective against Y'Golonac or Yithian possession as this spells rulebook description implies.

Command Ghost A heinously powerful spell in many scenarios, Keepers

are advised to reserve it for Keeper controlled characters. Only works on true ghosts or spirits though, and the vindictive Keeper may wish to allow the ghost to initiate spirit combat if the POW vs POW roll to force it to speak fumbles, or even fails!

Create Fetch Stick, Dust of Suleiman Works just fine against extra-planar creatures, but is useless against your common or garden ghost.

Enchant Cane Works against ghosts and other entities with POW, but a to hit roll is probably required and the spirit may flee.

Implant Fear Some supernatural entities might have this spell as a special ability.

Journey to the Other Side A form of

trance mediumship; use it as you will.

Levitate A form of telekinesis, these game mechanics are simple and elegant and useful in Poltergeist cases or hauntings as a special ability.

Remortification Summons forth an apparition, not a true ghost. (See Chapter 7)

All of these spells and the others listed in the Grimoire may or may not be in some way perceptible to psychic characters, at the Keeper's option. Good sense should apply, but feel free to ensure investigators with psychic gifts are penalised by additional san rolls - they can comprehend parts of the terrible truth there thicker skinned colleagues can not even imagine!

Appendix A: New Psychic Feats for Call of Cthulhu d20

Call of Cthulhu d20 already possesses Psychic Feats, so here I have expanded the available options with adaptations of the Call of Cthulhu systems offered above. The use of any of these is entirely optional, and at the discretion of the Keeper. In Cthulhu d20 they are more reliable than in the versions used in the standard rules, but that is in keeping with the spirit of the d20 version of the rules. Keepers may wish to include the chance of failure and misinformation given in the above rules, in which case simply substitute the characteristic Wisdom for POW or Luck rolls and INT for Idea rolls. A disastrous roll of 96-00 is a natural roll of one in the d20 system. With these notes the Keeper should have little trouble using the more detailed rules above for the feats listed here.

Divination

You can attempt to divine the future by casting lots and interpreting omens.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive, plus at least one rank in Spellcraft ability.

Benefit: This is technically not entirely a psychic power, but also partly a magical one. Firstly the psychic performs some short such as using Tarot Cards, a crystal ball, etc, etc, to gain an idea of future events. A Spellcraft check (DC:10) allows a successfully carried out reading, ritual or tuning in. Then a Psychic Focus check (DC variable see table below) must be made to gain a cryptic and often confusing impression of what the future may hold. Depending on the Keepers idea of how the universe works, that future foreseen may be changeable or not. It is even possible that seeing in to the future actually in some way causes the future events! However all futures predicted by

divination are vague and allow for several interpretations. The term Good or Bad Omens refers to attempts to ascertain whether a planned course of action will have a generally favourable or generally unfavourable result. However, if the Keeper says good and then the investigators are all killed, the Keeper may need to think fast. 'It could have been worse – you could have all died slowly, but the monster tore you in two with one bite rather than letting you suffer first' is always a good standby.

Action: This takes at least ten minutes to do properly. Any distraction results in a Concentration check.

Cost: Sanity loss depends on the future foreseen and is at the Keepers discretion, one point of temporary wisdom damage on a success or failure.

Circumstances	DC
Own future	20
Friends future	25
Strangers future	30
Good or Bad Omens	15

Aura Reading

You can learn something about the nature of a subject by examining their aura, a glowing field of energy which surrounds all human beings.

Prerequisite: Cha15+, Sensitive

Benefit: You may learn something about the targets emotional state and magical or psychic potential by using this power. It requires one full round of looking directly at the target, and a DC15 Psychic Focus check.

Action: This power requires a full-round action to use.

Cost: 1d3 sanity points and one point of

temporary wisdom damage per successful use, one point of sanity loss if failed.

AURA TABLE – CTHULHU d20

RED - anger, lust, hatred
ORANGE - passion, lust, greed
YELLOW - sickness, madness, magic.
GREEN - health, passive, happy.
BLUE - love, goodwill, calm
PURPLE - romantic love, spirituality, depression.
BLACK - uncontrolled psychic energy (Poltergeist agent for example or possessed)
SILVER - magically affected
COPPER -total (permanent) insanity
GOLD - under influence narcotic, optimism, praying
GREY - extremely ill, under psychic attack, cursed, etc.
BROWN- confusion

The predominant colour is the persons prevailing emotional state, though rays or specks may pollute this, showing a secondary effect. Be imaginative, and give colourful descriptions. The degree of brightness of an aura will provide a hint as to the current wisdom score of the owner.

FAINT, barely visible WIS 1-6
WEAK, colours faded and small, WIS 7-9
NORMAL, what you would expect, WIS 11-12
BRIGHT, a vivid and large aura, WIS 13-14
STRONG, very striking aura, WIS 15-18
INTENSE, this person is a magician or inhuman, WIS 19-24
DAZZLING, the psychic equivalent of fireworks, WIS 25+, SAN roll or lose 1D3/1pts.
END BOX

Psychic Self Defence

Allows your character to defend themselves against other psychics powers.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive, Mind Reading

Benefit: This feat allows the psychic to shut down their psychic talent, and actively block all incoming psychic attacks and probes. It is unusual, as it requires a Concentration check (DC equal to opposing psychic focus roll) rather than a Psychic Focus check. You lose an amount of temporary wisdom equal to twice the temporary wisdom fuelling the hostile spell or psychic power. If reduced to zero exactly it succeeds but you fall unconscious and if this would take you to negative wisdom you in fact stop at zero and the shield fails. If your Concentration total is less than the opposing Psychic Focus roll you lose no magic points but the shield has no effect.

Is someone initiates magical or psychic combat which requires a WIS versus WIS struggle, your Wisdom Score counts as five higher while using this power. It is a useful defence against possession attempts and the like.

Action: This is a free action, though it takes a full round action to raise the power, and another one to drop it. You can use no other psychic feats while your defences are active.

Cost: Costs no sanity and one temporary wisdom to activate, but if used costs 1d3 sanity points.

Psychic Attack.

Sometimes called psychic vampirism can be used to replace expended psychic energy by leeching it off others. As it leaves the victim feeling drained it is often considered malevolent.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive, Mind Reading, and Mind Probe.

Benefit: A Psychic Focus check (DC:15) allows the psychic to drain two points of temporary wisdom damage from a character with no psychic feats, and replace one point of their own wisdom damage.

Anyone with the psychic feat Sensitive can protect against this power and is aware if it is used on them.

Action: This is a full round action.

Cost: Using this power costs a single point of sanity per use.

Astral Projection

Allows the character to travel on the Astral Plane, leaving their body and moving around at will.

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Sensitive, Telepathy

Benefit: The psychic has learnt how to detach their spirit from their body and is thus able to move around in discorporate form, engaging in spirit combat with other spirits and taking the risks inherent therein. The astral projector imagines they have an 'etheric' or spirit body which must find its way across the physical terrain to the location they wish to visit, by simply willing themselves in that direction. The etheric body is often connected to the physical one by a silver cord, and the cutting of this prevents the spirit from returning to the body and thus physical death. Certain types of evil spirit may possess the ability to sever this cord, making astral travel a risky prospect. One advantage of astral projection over remote viewing is that the traveller may attempt to make himself or herself visible. If they succeed in a Psychic Focus check (DC 25)

and so desire they may appear as an apparition, costing sanity to witnesses as normal. On a Psychic Focus check (DC30) they may even speak, although the communication will actually be telepathic.

While astrally projecting allow two miles travel per minute. The projector must make a Psychic Focus (DC 10) check each minute or be forced back into their body. If any of those rolls is a natural 1 then disaster occurs and the psychic encounters another spirit who has hostile intent. It is up to the Keeper what the spirit is or how it attacks or is dealt with, but spirit combat is one option. It is also possible that the spirit follows the silver cord back and possesses the psychic's body, and spirit combat is necessary to reclaim it or the psychics poor spirit must just drift around and watch the mayhem caused by their body. If such a spirit is capable of severing the silver cord it will do so, animating the body and trapping the psychics' spirit as a ghost wherever it may be.

Each attempt at astral projection must take place while asleep (once per night maximum) and costs 12 magic points.

Appendix A: Sinister Seeds

A short selection of plot ideas for games using the *Parapsychologist's Handbook*.

Nine to Five Haunted.

The characters arrive at work one day to discover the dead body of their much disliked employer. They are all subject to police investigation, and perhaps suspicious of each other. However a new boss is appointed, but leans heavily on the characters to help him save the company as he is inexperienced. Soon they are brought together however by their old employer appearing to them and haunting them! The ghost will not rest until his murder is avenged, but the person it names is the local Police Chief, very much alive! Should the investigators trust the ghost? They can't exactly gun him down on a flimsy tale of spirits, as the courts would at best have them committed to an asylum. See Shakespeare's *Hamlet* for a similar situation.

Randolph & Carter, Deceased.

Derived from the brilliant 60's British show, *Randall and Hopkirk, Deceased* this one works well with a small group. The characters are Private Eyes, or Police, or whatever appeals – it could work just as well with High School Students. Let your players design characters as normal, but then in the first session allow one of the characters to face certain death and be brutally killed. However that is not the end: the killer must be brought to justice, or the alien menace defeated, or Saturdays Big Football game won. The character returns as a ghost to save the day, and is still played by the same player – only now they have weird powers, and the only people who can see the ghost are the other player characters.

The Tram Driver

One of the characters keeps having a dream about a man they do not know. At first the dreams are vague, but there is a feeling of menace, or perhaps sorrow. The character half remembers the face from her childhood, and other memories keep flooding back, in a disjointed series of flashbacks. The Keeper may wish to get the other players to briefly play other members of the dreamer's family in these scenes, and cut backwards and forwards from flashback to the current day. Soon, other characters start to have dreams of this same man, but each time in some context with the original dreamer. One day, while making an urgent journey, the dreamer finally locates the man from her dream – he is the driver of a tram she is about to get on, or in modern settings, the pilot of a plane. What does it mean?

The Turn of the Screw

After a particularly catastrophic loss one of the characters starts to have nightmares, and hear scratching noises from the walls in their house. After a while they begin to experience strange smells, loud banging noises, and then objects start to move or vanish. It becomes plain to the character that they are at the centre of a poltergeist outbreak. The trick here is that no one else ever witnesses the phenomena – is it real, or is it all in the character's head? *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James or *The Rats in the Walls* by H.P. Lovecraft may prove useful inspiration for Keepers, as might reviewing the poltergeist sections of this book.

The Psychic

The investigators befriend a psychic, who uses their powers to help out in investigations. It soon becomes apparent the psychic has romantic intentions on one of the characters – so when they are

wake up in their room one night to find the psychic there they may be only a little surprised – until he or she suddenly starts silently screaming, flailing around, and then vanishes. The next day the psychic is hard to reach, and appears if caught up with to be acting very oddly. Is this just embarrassment or have they been possessed? Or even replaced? The psychic insists the investigator who saw them must have dreamed the whole episode, but they also have developed a strong interest in local history and parish records which is totally out of character...

The Medium

Ernest J Witherspoon, world famous medium is due in town. He will be debating with Harry 'Amazing' Hopper, famous debunker of mediums and Rationalist who champions the cause of scientific scepticism tomorrow. It is known both men detest each other, though the popular science fiction author Sandy Willis is in town, and gets on well with both men. The Regal Hotel is the scene for a joint press briefing that night, and afterwards the three men and some

local dignitaries retire to the Excelsior Suite for further discussion (and maybe a few drinks.) Just before midnight a shot rings out – and Hopper is found dead. Witherspoon is found to have a gun in his jacket pocket, and he had opportunity and motive. Bailed in the morning, he suggests to the investigators there is one real chance of proving his innocence – a seance to contact the spirit of the dead man. Will dead men tell no lies?

Aunt Agatha

Aunt Agatha is a committed believer in Mediumship, and has been a member of a private circle for many years. She is also a sweet and kind old lady, and as gentle as a lamb. So when she starts carrying a shotgun about her property, refusing to answer the door, and attending the local Church you wonder what has happened. And why have several of her old friends from the spirit circle quit town or suddenly died of heart failure? And why have big black limos been seen parked across the road, and men in dark suits apparently started to take an interest in Auntie?

Appendix B: A Summary of Proceedings of the SPR, 1889 – 1928



In the interest of space the following list includes only a brief mention of articles of particular interest... if you are interested in reading the articles, you may wish to consider joining The Society for Psychical Research, as all the Proceedings and Journals are now available on the web to members. The address is www.spr.ac.uk

This section is provided so Keepers can understand key themes of the period and crib article titles for use in their own games, or simply allow their 1890's or 1920's investigators to enjoy the benefits of membership. The ASPR Proceedings are extremely similar, and modern parapsychology abstracts can be easily gained from the internet so I have not reproduced them here...

The percentages are for Cthulhu, D20 players should be awarded experience points if they are developing a particular skill and are putting ranks in it next level. Give twenty times the knowledge bonus granted below in experience under those conditions if the character spends time reading them. Each issue requires one week to study in detail.

1889 - 90

Part XV

Evidence in Psychical Research; The Census of Hallucinations (Prof. Sidgwick); Apparitions Occurring One Year after Death (FWH Myers); Experiments in Hypnotism and Clairvoyance (Prof Richet);

Multiple Personality Cases (T Barkworth); Experiments with Medium D.D.Home (W. Crookes, FRS).

Notes: May allow +2% to Psychology and +1% to Psychoanalysis if studied.

Part XVI

Phantasms of the Dead - a debate between F. Podmore (con) and FWH Myers (pro); Miss X's psychic experiences; Clairvoyance; Statistics and analysis ESP results (Lt.-Col.Taylor).

Notes: No appreciable skill gains.

Part XVII

More on The Census of Hallucinations (Prof Sidgwick); Experiments with Mrs Piper, Medium (Prof O. Lodge,FRS, W Leaf, LittD, Prof William James and FWH Myers.)

Notes: This volume looks at length at trance and secondary personalities. +3% Psychoanalysis.

1891

Part XVIII

Thought Transference Experiments (Baron Von Shrenck-Notzing,MD); Automatic Writing Experiments (T. Barkworth); Clairvoyance Evaluated (Mrs Sidgwick); Visions of the Virgin Mary in Dordogne, France (L. Marillier)

Notes: Anthropology +2% for the Virgin articles insights into folk religion and miracle cults.

Part XIX

Poltergeist phenomena (FWH Myers); Clairvoyance (Dr Backman); A Multiple Personality Case - Ansel Bourne (R. Hodgson); Spirit Photography (Mrs Sidgwick)

Notes: Psychoanalysis +3%, Photography +3%

Part XX

Subliminal Consciousness (FWH Myers); Thought Transference (O. Lodge, FRS); Poltergeist Phenomena (FWH Myers).

Notes: Myers theory of the mind predates Jung and Freud.
+3% Psychoanalysis.

1892

Part XXI

A Study of Mrs Pipers Mediumship (R.Hodgson,LLD)

Notes: Again on trance. +1% Psychoanalysis, but only if that skill is currently below 25%.

Part XXII

Continued Knowledge by the Dead (FWH Myers); Conjuring Tricks Used by False Psychics (R Hodgson,LLD); The Cheltenham Ghost - report by occupant (R.Despard under pseudonym Rose Morton); Subliminal Consciousness and Dreams (FWH Myers)

Notes: An extraordinarily interesting issue. Readers should be able to appeal to Keeper when witnessing psychic fraud and be allowed IDEA roll to see the trick. The Cheltenham Ghost article includes excellent advice for investigating hauntings; and Myers article is worth +2% Psychology for his insights into the mechanics of dream.

Part XXIII

The Nature of Time in Dreams (M. Delboeuf); Thought Transference (Dr Blair-Thaw, Mrs Sidgwick and Miss A. Johnson); Induced Hallucinations (FWH Myers).

Notes: Delboeuf's article require R/W/S French, being in that language, and grants +1% Psychology. Myers article may give +1% in Medicine and +1% in Pharmacy.

1893

Part XXIV

Hysteria (FWH Myers); Theosophy (R Hodgson); Faith Healing, Psychosomatic Cures and Lourdes (Dr A. & FWH Myers).

Notes: An excellent and varied issue. The generous Keeper might allow Medicine +2%, Psychoanalysis +2% and Occult +2%, the latter deriving from the study

of the Theosophist's beliefs.

Part XXV

Partial Anaesthesia (Prof. Ramsay); Indian magic critically examined in light of conjuring tricks (R Hodgson).

Notes: Probably Pharmacy +2%, Anthropology +2%, and the reader learns how to fraudulently duplicate the Indian Rope Trick and a variety of other illusions.

1894

Part XXVI

Theory of analysing source of "Spirit" messages under experimental conditions (Prof O. Lodge, FRS); Presidential Address by Arthur Balfour, MP (and soon to be Prime Minister of U.K.); Further Report on the Census of Hallucinations.

Notes: No appreciable skill gains.

1895

Part XXVII

Alcoholism and Hypnotism (Dr.Dill, MA); Sources of "Spirit" Communications (Miss X); Experiments in Thought Transference (H.Rawson)

Notes: The first article is popular with investigators!
Hypnotism +1%

Part XXVIII

Experiments in Mediumship (Mrs Verall); The Voices of Joan of Arc (Andrew Lang); Discussion of Myers theory of Mind (A Pierce and F.Podmore)

Notes: No skill gains.

Part XXIX

Paranormal and Time; Retrocognition; Precognition (FWH Myers).

Notes: No skill gains.
1896

Part XXX

Presidential address (Prof William James); Subconscious Reasoning (W. Romaine-Newbold); Poltergeists (F Podmore); Glossary of Psychic Research (FWH Myers).

Notes: Podmore's article first draws attention to links between poltergeists and children; he concludes most are childish pranks, though finds one possibly genuine case!
+1% Psychology

Part XXXI

Involuntary Whispering in ESP Tests (Prof.H Sidwick); A Case of Speaking in Tongues (Albert Le Baron); Hypnotism (Dr Bramwell).

Notes: Psychology +2%, Hypnotism +3%.

1897

Part XXXII

On the Divining Rod (Prof. Barrett)

Notes: From this investigators may pick up the basics of water divining or dowsing.

Part XXXIII

A Study of the Mediumship of Mrs Piper (R Hodgson).

Notes: Like much else on this remarkable lady.

1898

Part XXXIV

Reports on Mrs Piper's mediumship (various); Lectures given to British Medical Association on Hypnotism (Dr. Bramwell).

Notes: Hypnotism +3%, Psychology +2%, Medicine +1%.

1899

Part XXXV

Coincidences (Miss A. Johnson); Ghosts in West Africa (Mary Kingsley); Study of Visions (FWH Myers).

Notes: Anthropology +3%

1900

Part XXXVI

Fire Walking (Andrew Lang); Mrs Piper's Mediumship (Mrs Sidwick, Andrew Lang); Philosophical Reflections on Afterlife (FCS Schiller).

Notes: Lang's article may well inspire the investigators to try Fire -walking. A roll of anything but 96-00 means success and perhaps as much as 1D6 san points back for the elation and confidence boost of the first success; a roll of 96-00 and the investigator panics, freezes and takes 2D6 points burn damage. Fire walking requires strict conditions not found in "real" fires...

Part XXXVII

Presidential Address (FWH Myers)

Part XXXVIII

Dowsing (Prof Barrett); Pseudo-Possession (FWH Myers)

Notes: May allow for +5% in Dowsing if it was learnt previously.
Myers' article is +2% psychology, +2% occult.

Part XXXIX

In Memory of H. Sidwick (FWH Myers)

Notes: A lengthy obituary.

Part XL

A Case of Multiple Personality - the Misses Beauchamps (Dr Morton-Prince)

Notes: +3% psychoanalysis; may help the therapist treating multiple personality much more.

1920's

Throughout this period Psychical Research was closely allied with Psychology and Psychoanalysis and the Proceedings carried very lengthy (30- 150 page) essay reviews of the Psychoanalytic Societies papers. Each proceeding may hence give an automatic +1% to either of those skill (investigator's choice), except where noted below.

1920

Part LXXIX

Obituaries of Lord Rayleigh and Sir William Crookes (various); Doris Fischer
Case of Multiple Personality (Dr. Mitchell);
Psychological Foundations belief in Spirits
(Dr. Carl Jung).

Notes: An additional +3% psychoanalysis and +3% psychology may be gained from this volume, featuring a superb essay by Jung, one of the fathers of Psychoanalysis.

Part LXXX

Presidential Address (W. McDougall,FRS,MB); Apparent ESP Cases (Hubert Wales).

Notes: Standard gains only.

Part LXXXI

Experiments in mediumship Mrs Leonard (Mrs Sidgwick); Suggested Methodologies in Psychical Research (W. Whately-Smith).

name might raise a few eyebrows in Dunwich County based investigators! Standard gains.

1921

Part LXXXII

Mediumship of Mrs Leonard (Mrs Salter).

Notes: The reviews of German and French publications in this issue are all concerned with mediumship; no skill plus to psychology or psychoanalysis, but a thorough grounding in Spiritualist history is gained.

Part LXXXIII

Problems of Hypnotism (Dr. S.Alrutz); Stigmata (Rev.Herbert Thurston, S.J.).

Notes: Hypnotism +3%; also a knowledge of stigmata from the Jesuit Thurston's brilliant survey. (See boxed text on Stigmata, p.XX.) No reviews so no gains to psychology or psychoanalysis.

1922

Part LXXXIV

Mediumship of Eva C., Nature of Trance (Lady Troubridge).

Notes: Standard gains from lengthy review

section.

1923

Part LXXXV

Presidential Address (Dr.Mitchell)

Notes: No skill gains as no reviews.

Part LXXXVI

Phantasms of the Living - an update on cases since 1886. (Mrs Sidgwick)

Notes: Excellent review section, +2% gain instead of +1%.

Part LXXXVII

Cross Correspondences - Scripts apparently predicting Great War (1914-1918) including sinking of Lusitania and bombing Fenchurch St. station, London. (J.G.Piddington)

Notes: No skill gains.

Part LXXXVIII

Time in Dreams (S.Hooper,MA); Possibility of Fraud in Mediumship of Eva C. (Dr.F Von Schrenck-Notzing).

Notes: Additional +1% psychology

1924

Part LXXXIX

Presidential Address (Camille Flammarion); Hindrances to Telepathy (Mrs Sidgwick).

Notes: No skill bonuses from this issue.

Part XC

The Case for and Against Survival of Bodily Death; (Sir Oliver Lodge [pro] and Prof Richet [con]).

Notes: No skill bonuses from this issue.

Part XCI

Presidential Address (JG Piddington); Cross Correspondence Scripts analysed (Various); Mediumistic Trance (Dr.S Alrutz); Playing Card ESP tests (R.Fisher,MA)

Notes: +1% psychology only, for the study of trance and consciousness.

Part XCII

Obituary G.Geley (1868-1924) (Sir O. Lodge); Experiments in ESP (Mrs Sidgwick); Mediumistic Trance (Lady Troubridge); Memories of Fifty Years Psychical Research, Sir William Barrett, FRS.

Notes: Standard gains.

1925

Part XCIII

A Study of D.D.Home's mediumship (Earl of Dunraven)

Notes: No Skill gains

Part XCIV

A Study of near-sleep imagery (F.E.Leaning)

Notes: Standard gains.

Part XCV

Obituaries: Camille Flammarion, Sir William Barrett.
On Scientific certainty (Charles Richet); Mrs Piper's mediumship (A.W.Trethewy).

Notes: standard gains.

Part XCVI

Mrs Cooper's mediumship (S.G.Soal).
Notes: No skill gains

1926

(From 1926 Roman numerals were replaced with modern numbers for designating parts.)

Part 97

Willy Schneider's mediumship. (E.J.Dingwall); Mediumship of George Valentine (V.J.Wooley)

Notes: no skill gains.

1927

Part 101

Philosophy of Plotinus. (G.W.Lambert)

Notes: no skill gains.

Part 102

Report on Experiments in Hypnotism (R.H.Thouless)

Notes: Hypnotism +1% only.

Part 103

Trance phenomena (Rev. W.S.Irving); Statement by Margery (Mrs Crandon); The Chaffin Will Case.

Notes: Standard gains.

1928

Part 105

Radio mass-audience telepathy experiment (V.J.Woolley, M.D.)

Notes: No gains.

Part 106

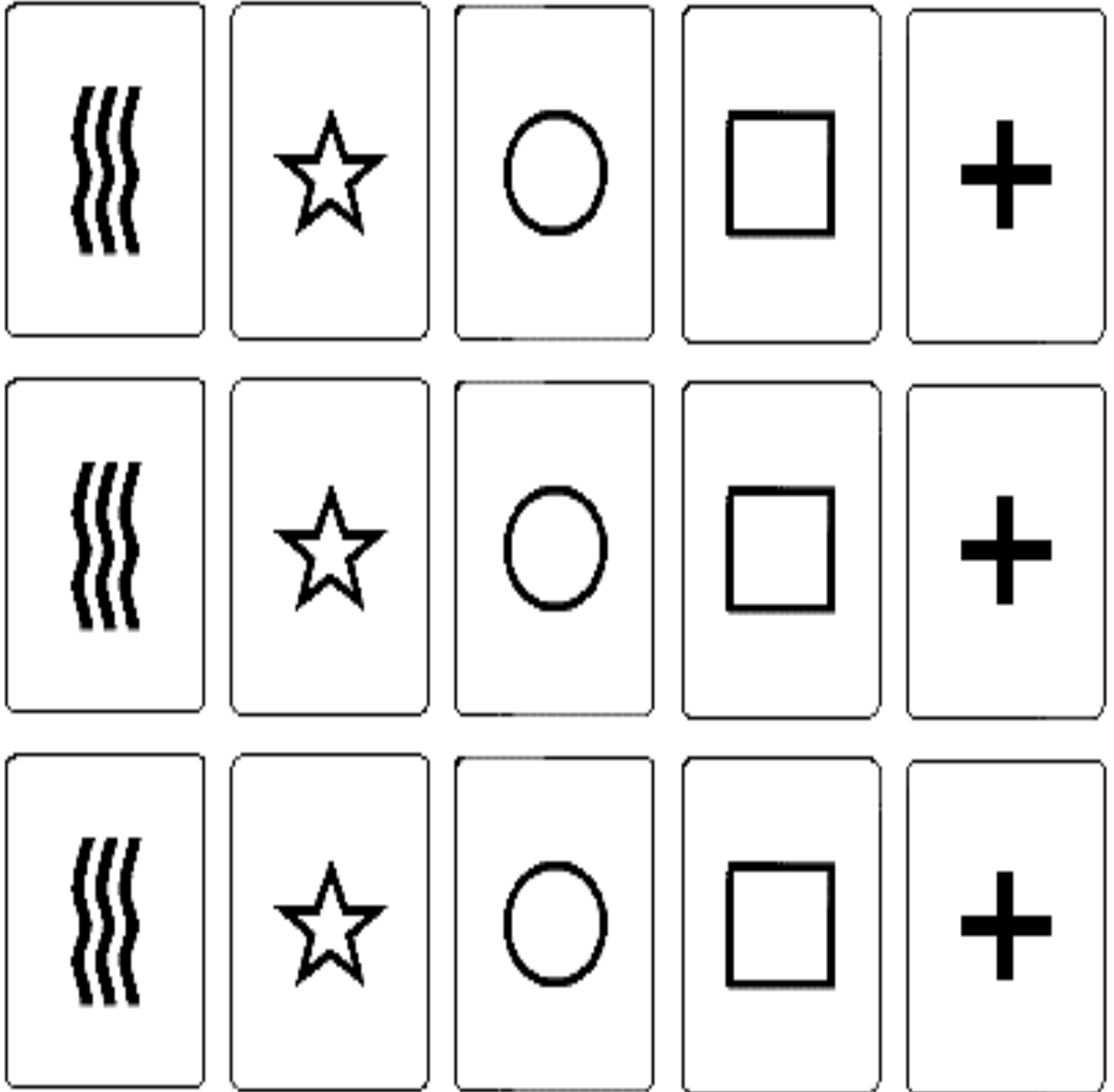
Presidential Address (Lawrence J. Jones)

Notes: No gains.

Appendix C – Zener Card

The Keeper may find it amusing to photocopy these card designs and mount them on thin card to make a functional pack of Zener cards for use as a handout in some scenarios. You

will require 25 cards, five copies of each design, which obviously then need shuffling!



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Worlds of Adventure

CHAOSIUM MONOGRAPHS have proven remarkable popular with fans of *Call of Cthulhu* and *Cthulhu Dark Ages*. More importantly, they're a lot of fun. Here is a selection chosen from the fifty currently available.

A CTHULHIAN MISCELLANY (CHA0342): This book explores a number of optional expansions to the original *Call of Cthulhu* rules—primarily in the areas of new, specialized skills; new spells, books, and magical artifacts; and new (or expanded) insanities to inflict upon hapless Investigators. It also introduces a few new Mythos creatures for your playing enjoyment (for those of you who actually like dying horribly or ending up gibbering insanely in a asylum), along with several NPCs to complicate your Investigators' lives.

THE RAVENAR SAGAS (CHA0348): a collection of three *Cthulhu Dark Ages* scenarios spanning a thirteen-year period between 989 AD and 1002 AD. The Sagas take place across Scandinavia and what will later be known as Nova Scotia. Players take the roles of the crew of a small knorr (a Viking longship), facing many adventures during the Sagas, honing their skills as they conquer countless challenges.

GATSBY AND THE GREAT RACE (CHA0324): *You know Julian Gatsby. He recently inherited the family home following the sad demise of his father. Julian is a free-spirited young man, in his mid-20s, and a new fan of the horse races. You arrive for a fabulous garden party and are shown to your room. Other guests arrive shortly after. In a few hours you will gather in the garden for an enjoyable afternoon of food, drink, stimulating conversation, and the radio broadcast of the Great Race. This scenario has the capacity for up to 32 people to be involved, playing in several overlapping games.*

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