

Leslie Kean
Excerpt from Chapter 24
“The Enigma of Full-Form Materializations”
(Regarding physiologist Charles Richet and physician Gustave Geleys’
experiments with Polish physical medium Frank Kluski)

Through ingenious experiments that may provide the most convincing evidence ever for the reality of materialized forms, Geley and Richet created a permanent record of their existence. For the Paris sittings and later in a series of sittings in Warsaw in 1921, the researchers placed a circular tank containing a layer of hot liquid paraffin wax floating above electrically heated water in the center of the séance circle. They then asked the beings to dip their materialized hands into the hot wax, making thin gloves around them. The sitters could hear the sound of something splashing in the wax, and wax would splatter on the floor and onto people nearby. Sometimes a wax-covered hand would touch them after dipping into the hot pot. The forms would then dissolve their hands from the dried wax, dropping the empty gloves in the sitters’ laps or onto the table. They were fragile—thinner than a sheet of paper. Geley writes:

We had the great pleasure of seeing the hands dipping into the paraffin. They were luminous, bearing points of light at the finger-tips. They passed slowly before our eyes, dipped into the wax, moved in it for a few seconds, came out, still luminous, and deposited the glove against the hand of one of us.

It was not possible for Kluski or anyone else in the room to have produced these seamless gloves. A human hand could not slide out of the narrow wrists because the necessary movement would damage the very thin layer of wax. In the Warsaw experiments, gloves were produced with interlocking fingers, with two hands clasping one another, and with the five fingers spread wide apart. Needless to say, removal of a human hand from such formations would be impossible. Dematerialization was the only method that would leave the molds intact. The investigators also made sure that no wax gloves could have been

smuggled into the room ahead of time. Unknown to anyone else, in one instance Geley and Richet added a bluish coloring agent to the paraffin just prior to the séance; for another experiment they secretly added cholesterin. These additions assured the identity of the specific wax as being from the séance room only.

After the gloves dried, the investigators poured plaster into them, and once this hardened, they submerged them in boiling water and stripped away the thin wax layer. The Paris experiments yielded nine molds—seven of hands, one of a foot and one of a mouth and chin. The hands and foot were the size of a five- to seven-year-old child and had no resemblance to those of the medium. Although miniature, the perfect anatomical details of the hands were those of adults, and not smooth and round like a child. The molds were extensively photographed for publication by Geley in 1927, and they remain to this day at the Institut Métapsychique International in Paris.

“We were able to obtain objective and formal proofs, absolutely incontrovertible, of the reality of the materializations,” Geley states, and “to secure absolute certainty of the supernormal origin of the moulds.” I find these molds to be so compelling—physical copies of materialized entities whose nature is a profound mystery—that I spent much time staring at the photographs and reading Geley’s descriptions of their formations. If one studies the literature on this, it is impossible to refute the authenticity of the molds. How wondrous is this? Even Geley let his scientific guard down at one point: “In these rough forms the enigma of universal life—the relations of the Idea to Matter—is revealed in the splendour of its beauty,” he wrote in 1927.

But does this documentation of full-form materializations tell us anything about survival past death? Zofia Weaver, a contemporary expert who has researched Kluski in his native language, likens his manifestations to those of sophisticated poltergeist cases, simply involving more advanced, refined, and spectacular phenomena. Like the physical phenomena resulting from conjuring up the fictional Philip, the manifestations might have been created by the thoughts, moods, focus, and intention of the sitters—“a group mind at work . . . united by enthusiasm, mutual rapport, lack of inhibition, and a common

goal,” as Weaver describes it. But in addition, they “interact with the world in a very physical way that requires physical energies.” It is impossible to explain or interpret them with any certainty.

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