
PROF. MULACZ RESPONDS

Stephen Braude in his letter to the editor in this issue is quite right in several points yet not in others. He is right in stating that I declined to take part in a strip search of Kai Mügge to which I was invited but neither does he mention that meanwhile I took part in checking the room nor does he reflect on the rationale of my decision. If he only had deeper insight into the psychology behind stage magicians' tricks he would have known that those items a conjurer offers for close inspection (including his body) are always clean and innocent.

It is incorrect that I 'had only attended Kai's public demonstrations' unless Stephen Braude labels the Hanau family circle a 'public demonstration'. It is very telling that he slurs over that very séance as this was the one during which I first discovered a strong indication of fraud of which I informed him the next morning, a fact he never quoted.

It is correct that Stephen Braude and I had some 'lengthy correspondence' on a few issues, particularly the fact that in Vienna a plastic water bottle had remained unchecked and could possibly have served as a container for the ostensible ectoplasm, hence particular attention on such an item might be not undue. Upon this, Stephen informed me that in his séances in the Austrian farmhouse 'the only bottles allowed in the otherwise locked seance room were those supplied by the experimenters' – a statement I never called into question. However, I would not subscribe to Stephen's statement 'Peter knows full well that Kai can produce various phenomena without recourse to an allegedly suspicious bottle of water or tea'; rather I know well that Kai can produce his ostensible 'ectoplasm' only if he avails of any kind of

container for his Hallowe'en spider web, a container that is not necessarily a water bottle. One might remember the case of the fraudulent medium László who even used the pocket of Baron Schrenck-Notzing's coat in order to conceal some items temporarily.

Stephen Braude continues in saying 'Peter adopts the dialectical tactic [...] of considering only weak pieces of evidence' yet he does not reflect on the fact that clearly without any ambiguity the strongest piece of evidence is the Hallowe'en cobweb affair.

I like Stephen's reference to the 1908 Naples sittings with Palladino as they are an excellent example of appropriate conduct. I quote from my article: 'During the day they tried to please her as much as possible, driving her around in a carriage, etc., but during the sittings they applied the strongest possible control measures.' The researchers conducted their investigation according to their very own protocols while there was nothing like 'the medium's requested protocols' as Stephen permitted in the Mügge case. Allowing for a protocol as requested by the medium is the cardinal sin in such investigations, in the FEG case augmented by the fact that lessons from the past have been neglected (e.g., referring to physical control of the medium's limbs as illustrated by the picture accompanying my article) and, moreover, that my observation of something 'fishy', an early warning, has been ignored. All this resulted in four years of fruitless efforts lacking any progress and eventually in disgrace when Kai Mügge's deliberate fraud came to light.

Prof. Peter Mulacz
Vienna, Austria