

## CAT'S PAW: MARGERY AND THE RHINES, 1926

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**ABSTRACT:** J. B. and L. E. Rhine had a single sitting with the medium Margery in July 1926. Their skeptical report of this experience was published in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. Historians have assumed that this report was first rejected by the *Journal of the American Society for Psychological Research*. Moreover, it has generally been assumed that J. B. Rhine made contact with critics of Margery only after the séance. Documents in the ASPR archives show these assumptions to be wrong. Rhine met with both William McDougall and W. F. Prince before the séance, and the paper he submitted to the ASPR *Journal* was accepted for publication several days before he withdrew it.

Rhine's actions may have heightened tensions between the ASPR and the Boston Society for Psychic Research and helped delay the merger of these societies, with important historical consequences for parapsychology.

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The formative years of J. B. Rhine are of special interest because those same years were the formative years of modern parapsychology. The course of events is well known. Rhine originally intended a career in botany but became sidetracked by psychical research. In the summer of 1926, he and L. E. Rhine left Morgantown, West Virginia, for Cambridge, Massachusetts, where they became associated with Walter Franklin Prince of the Boston Society for Psychic Research. In 1927, they followed William McDougall to Durham, and soon thereafter Rhine and McDougall established the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University. (For fuller accounts of this period, see Brian, 1982; Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980; and L. E. Rhine, 1983.)

Rhine initially intended to study mediumship (Brian, 1982; Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980; L. E. Rhine, 1983), and an understanding of the factors that led him to explore the workings of psi in the laboratory instead is crucial to our understanding of the history of our field. Perhaps the chief reason for the change of direc-

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An earlier version of this paper was read at the 30th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association, August 4-8, 1987, in Edinburgh, Scotland. I wish to thank the following for their helpful comments and suggestions: Carlos S. Alvarado, George P. Hansen, Seymour H. Mauskopf, Thomas R. Tietze. Thanks are due also to Sally Rhine Hendrickson for permission to quote from her father's letters.

tion was the sitting with Margery<sup>1</sup> in July 1926. Mauskopf and McVaugh, Brian, and L. E. Rhine all discuss this episode in some detail, as does Tietze (1973). These accounts are mutually consistent; however, documents in the ASPR archives show them to be deficient in important respects.

In particular, the paper about the Margery sitting (Rhine & Rhine, 1927) that Rhine published in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* was not first rejected by the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* as earlier writers (e.g., L. E. Rhine, 1983; Tietze, 1973, 1985) have held. In fact, it was accepted *unanimously* by the ASPR Board of Trustees, to whom Rhine had submitted it. Earlier writers (e.g., Brian, 1982; L. E. Rhine, 1983) are also wrong in maintaining that Rhine had no direct contact with McDougall and W. F. Prince—both critics of Margery—before the séance.

The period 1925 to 1940, during which Rhine's experimental paradigm was becoming established (Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980), coincided with a major rift in American psychical research. The Boston Society for Psychic Research broke away from the American Society for Psychical Research in 1925 and was not reunited with it until 1941. A key reason for the tensions between the two societies was the ASPR's advocacy of Margery. At the beginning of 1926, however, it seemed possible that the conflict could be resolved and that amalgamation could be brought about. I shall argue that Rhine's actions with his Margery report hardened positions on both sides and helped to delay the amalgamation for more than a decade.

#### EVENTS PRECEDING THE SÉANCE WITH MARGERY

##### *The Margery Controversy up to July 1926*

The Margery mediumship began in May 1923 as a home-circle activity of the Crandons. The first of the several investigations it provoked (conducted by William McDougall and his graduate student Harry Helson) ended inconclusively, with McDougall trying in vain to get Margery to confess to fraud (Tietze, 1973).

Most likely, Margery would have faded from the limelight after this were it not for a \$2,500 prize offered by the *Scientific American* for a demonstration of mediumistic physical phenomena under con-

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<sup>1</sup> "Margery" was the séance name of Mina Stinson Crandon, the wife of a Boston surgeon. Bestowed by Bird (1924a), this was the name by which Crandon was known throughout her career.

ditions acceptable to a special Psychic Committee (Bird, 1922).<sup>2</sup> The prize was the inspiration of J. Malcolm Bird, then an associate editor of the magazine. The committee included Hereward Carrington, Daniel Comstock, Houdini, McDougall, and Prince, with Bird as secretary. It sat with Margery throughout 1924 (see Tietze, 1973, for the colorful story of its deliberations) and attracted much media attention (see Bird, 1924c; Tietze, 1973). Although Bird (1924a, 1924b) published stories favorable to Margery, all the committee except Carrington eventually reached adverse conclusions (see Free, 1924, 1925).

In the spring of 1925, Margery was investigated by a group of Harvard under-instructors, one of whom was Hudson Hoagland. This second Harvard group began its sittings with a favorable point of view but came to the conclusion that at least some unconscious fraud was involved. Hoagland published an account of the investigation in the *Atlantic* (Hoagland, 1925) and then submitted a slightly fuller report to the *ASPR Journal*. The paper was rejected on the ground that most of its contents had already appeared in the *Atlantic*.

Meanwhile, Margery had managed to garner the support of some influential members of the ASPR. The Margery inner circle responded to the Hoagland investigation in a privately printed pamphlet (Richardson et al., 1925). Bird, who joined the ASPR staff in January 1925, published a book on the case (Bird, 1925b). Under Bird's editorship, the *ASPR Journal* began to run many papers sympathetic to Margery (e.g., Edwards, 1925; Richardson, 1925), while critical articles were disposed of with his comment (e.g., see Bird, 1925a).

Prince reviewed this publishing history in a paper he submitted to the *ASPR Journal* in January 1926. Because the *ASPR Journal* had reprinted and summarized many articles that had appeared elsewhere, the rejection of Hoagland's paper appeared to Prince to be an attempt to suppress negative commentary on the case (Tietze, 1973). Unfortunately, the ASPR just at this time called a moratorium on articles on Margery, pending the outcome of its own committee investigation, and George Hyslop (who alone might have assisted the publication of Prince's review) advised against its acceptance at that time (in a letter to Chairman of the Publication Committee, J. R. Gordon; see Hyslop, 1926b).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A second prize of \$2,500 was to be given for a spirit photograph (Bird, 1922). Neither prize was awarded.

<sup>3</sup> Hyslop (1926b) wrote: "I still feel that at the present time it would be wrong to

Prince did not take the rejection well. "A dark chapter in the history of the American Society for Psychical Research is being written," he remarked in a letter to Hyslop (Prince, 1926a), "and it will be long in retrieving its former reputation." Subsequently, he published a revised version of his paper in the *American Journal of Psychology* (Prince, 1926e).

#### *Relations Between the ASPR and the Boston Society*

By the time he wrote the letter just cited, Prince had left the ASPR for the Boston Society for Psychic Research.

From 1906 to 1920, the ASPR had been led by James Hyslop, who strove to uphold the scientific principles with which the ASPR had been created in 1885 (see Anderson, 1985; Berger, 1985). James Hyslop had been succeeded by William McDougall, for whom the Society's scientific reputation was also important. Following the election of the Spiritualist Frederick Edwards to replace McDougall as President in 1923, however, the ASPR had followed a populist course that Prince had found less and less congenial (Tietze, 1976).

Prince was pressured by McDougall and others to accept the position of Principal Research Officer of a new society, dedicated to the ASPR's original principles. With the appointment of Bird to be a research officer on the same level as he was, in January 1925, Prince took them up on their proposal (Tietze, 1976).<sup>4</sup> In his correspondence during this period, Prince frequently maintained that the ASPR's support for Margery was not the reason for the break, which would have come anyway. However, the Margery controversy was symptomatic of the problems that had caused the break.

The Boston Society attracted many of the ASPR's more scientifically oriented members, although George Hyslop, James Hyslop's son, remained on the Board in an effort to influence its direction

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publish anything on the case. However it seems to me that the manuscript might well be accepted for future publication, to be used in conjunction with whatever report our own committee might issue." Hyslop clearly did not perceive the rejection in the same terms as did Prince. As we shall see, Hyslop at this time actually was optimistic about the course of the controversy.

<sup>4</sup> The information about pressure from McDougall and others to leave New York for Boston comes from a letter Prince wrote to the ASPR Board of Trustees in January 1925 (Prince, 1925a). Dissatisfaction with Edwards's policies had been mounting since his election in June 1923 (A note of remonstrance, 1923). Tensions grew throughout 1924, leading to a meeting between representatives of the Boston group and the ASPR Trustees in May of that year ([Hyslop], 1925). That meeting seemed to resolve the major problems, but the breach was opened again—this time not to be closed—with Frederick Edwards's second election in December.

from within. Hyslop hoped that the breach could be crossed and that a reunion of the two societies could be effected. He told Prince (Hyslop, 1926a) in a letter of January 6, 1926, that at the recent annual meeting of the Board, J. I. D. Bristol "was elected President with the understanding that if we should find a better man during this current year he would yield his place." Moreover, "Dr. Frederick Peterson has accepted a place on the Board and we have one other very good man in mind. If he accepts, one of the present members of the Board in New York will resign to provide a vacancy."

Hyslop (1926c) was equally sanguine in a January 21 letter to Prince. "I am sure that within six months [the Margery case] will be settled as far as we are concerned. I also feel hopeful that those of the A.S.P.R. who in the past have adopted a partisan attitude, will not have occasion for continuing to be partisan."

#### *J. B. Rhine's Early Association with the ASPR*

By June 1923, Rhine was intent on a career in psychical research. At that time, he wrote for advice to three persons—Joseph Jastrow, Frederick Edwards, and McDougall. Jastrow, a skeptic, tried to discourage him, while Edwards took him under his wing and introduced him to members of the ASPR's New York Section (Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980). (I will deal with McDougall's response below.) Rhine joined the ASPR the next year.

Rhine had been following Bird's (1924a, 1924b, 1924c) stories about Margery in the *Scientific American*, and when Bird joined the ASPR staff at the beginning of 1925, Rhine wrote to congratulate him and to offer his services as a reviewer and investigator (Rhine, 1925c). By that summer, Rhine was abstracting foreign periodicals for the *ASPR Journal* (e.g., Rhine, 1925a, 1925b) and he and Bird had entered into a steady correspondence. Bird filled his letters with glowing testimonials to Margery, all of which Rhine apparently accepted uncritically (see Brian, 1982; Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980; L. E. Rhine, 1983; Tietze, 1973).

However, Rhine did notice that the ASPR appeared to be going through something of an upheaval. He questioned Bird about this development (Rhine, 1925d), and Bird (1925c) replied that the upheaval had begun with the *Scientific American* investigations. The situation at the ASPR he blamed on Prince, who he said was cantankerous and deaf and, moreover, prejudiced against the possibility of physical phenomena. Bird (1925d) suggested that Rhine write to

Prince to see if he could obtain a copy of a pamphlet Prince had written on the formation of the Boston Society. He did not want to write himself because he feared Prince would not be forthcoming with him. Rhine (1925d) wrote to Prince as requested, and Prince (1925b) replied promptly, enclosing the pamphlet, which Rhine then passed on to Bird (see also Brian, 1982; L. E. Rhine, 1983).

Prince (1925b) closed his letter to Rhine with a caution about Bird. However, Rhine appears to have ignored this warning, and I have found no indication that Rhine and Prince corresponded again before Rhine moved to Cambridge in the summer of 1926. Rhine did keep up his correspondence with Bird, though, and when Bird heard about the Rhines' plans, he asked Rhine to acquaint himself with Prince and McDougall and to pass on to him what he could of the goings-on in their camp (Bird, 1926a).

#### *The Rhines' Move to Cambridge*

In 1923, Gardner Murphy was the beneficiary of Harvard's Hodgson Memorial Fund, and McDougall (1923) wrote Rhine that Murphy would retain it for another two years at least. Consequently, in May 1926, as he was preparing to leave Morgantown, Rhine wrote to McDougall again.

A May 18 letter from McDougall (1926a) brought the news that the Hodgson "fellowship" was to be vacated in September and that "there is every prospect that it may be awarded to you." Rhine (1926b) wrote on June 3 to ask whether McDougall would be in Cambridge during the summer, and McDougall (1926b) answered on June 7 that he would be leaving on sabbatical at the end of the month. Later in June he added (McDougall, n.d.), "I regret that I shall be out of town from June 25 to 30 and then back only just for a day before sailing." Now it is clear why McDougall kept his taxis waiting (for 20 minutes,<sup>5</sup> say Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980, p. 76) when Rhine showed up at his house unannounced.

All sources agree that there was such a meeting between Rhine and McDougall, but there is disagreement over whether it occurred before or after the sitting with Margery. Mauskopf and McVaugh (1980, p. 76) place it before, Brian (1982, p. 48) and L. E. Rhine (1983, p. 103) place it after. In his introduction to *Extra-Sensory Perception* (Rhine, 1934), McDougall says the meeting occurred "one

<sup>5</sup> Three times in his correspondence in the fall of 1926, Rhine (1926g, 1926h, 1926j) says that the meeting lasted no more than two minutes.

morning in June, 1926" (p. vi). If this is so, then it must have been at the very end of June, and I think it was most probably the morning of June 30.

The talk with McDougall appears to have been confined to the subject of the Hodgson Fund. More important to our discussion than the date of the meeting with McDougall, therefore, is the date of the meeting with Prince. L. E. Rhine (1983, p. 103) tells us that she and Rhine called on Prince later in the same day Rhine met McDougall, but she places these events on the day after the séance, rather than the day before. Quite possibly Rhine did meet with both McDougall and Prince on the same day, although I know of no information that allows us to be definite about this. What is clear, though, is that Rhine met with Prince—and discussed Margery with him—before the séance.

In a letter to Hyslop two weeks after the séance, Prince (1926b) said:

He saw me and I told him some things to be on his guard about, but expressly and impressively said, "Do not let anything I have said prejudice you. And be assured that if there is anything genuine about this case, I want to know it." I also warned him, when he told me of some control-requests he thought of making, to wait for some sittings before he made them lest his first sitting be his last. As it proved, his first sitting was indeed his last.<sup>6</sup>

According to L. E. Rhine (1983, p. 98), it was the disillusioning séance that caused the Rhines to see through Bird, and to approach Prince and McDougall. Brian (1982, pp. 37, 48) agrees with her on this point. These writers portray J. B. Rhine as entering "the Margery séance room in a rosy glow from Bird's propaganda" (Brian, 1982, p. 40). Although I do not dispute that Bird's influence on Rhine was strong at this time, I think this is an overstatement. A fairer description of Rhine's state of mind may be that given by Prince (1926c) in a letter to Hyslop, where he says simply that Rhine "was prepossessed in [Margery's] favor and hoped to make constructive studies of her work."

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<sup>6</sup> Our knowledge of Rhine's meeting with Prince before the séance does not depend entirely on Prince's letter. Rhine himself, in a letter to the ASPR Trustees (Rhine, 1926h), says, "I had a talk with Dr. Prince but I had long known his stand on the case and he did not move me."

## THE SÉANCE AND ITS AFTERMATH

*The Séance of July 1, 1926*

Who arranged the Rhines' sitting with Margery? Tietze (1973, p. 107), Brian (1982, p. 34), and L. E. Rhine (1983, p. 101) state that it was Bird, whereas Mauskopf and McVaugh (1980, p. 75) say (without citation) that it was J. B. Rhine himself.

It was not Bird, because Rhine (1926f) wrote on July 16 to tell him, "Naturally we lost no time in arranging a sitting . . ." A letter from Crandon (1926b) to Bird on July 6 confirms that Bird had no part in the arrangements: "A person named Rhine and wife . . . sat here last week . . ." If not Bird, then it could have been Prince. Among the peculiar features of the Margery controversy is Prince's influence with the Crandons. Although he was *persona non grata* in the Crandon home, his recommendations of sitters continued to be honored.<sup>7</sup> However, if he had introduced Rhine to the Crandons, I feel sure that he would have broadcast this information loudly in his correspondence, and he says nothing on the subject.

I think that Mauskopf and McVaugh (1980) are almost certainly right that Rhine made the contact himself.<sup>8</sup> This, again, suggests that Rhine was more independent of Bird than other writers have portrayed him as being. It is clear from Crandon's (1926b) letter to Bird that Rhine did not use Bird's name in making the arrangements. One may suppose it unlikely that he used Prince's name either, and so we may read Rhine's action as an effort to distance himself from both sides.

The sitting was described in detail by the Rhines (Rhine & Rhine, 1927). Because other writers (Brian, 1982; Tietze, 1973) have summarized their report, I shall not take space to do so here. Briefly, Rhine observed some outright fraud and he presents reasons for believing fraud to have been committed at several other points.

<sup>7</sup> Prince did in fact offer to arrange a sitting, according to Rhine (1926j).

<sup>8</sup> Mauskopf and McVaugh (1980, p. 75) say that the Rhines wrote from Morgantown to arrange the sitting. Their source for this statement may be a March 30 letter from Rhine to Crandon (J. B. Rhine, 1926a) preserved in the Duke University Library, in which Rhine inquires about the possibility of a sitting "in Sept." Crandon (1926a), in his reply, asked that they "let us know some days ahead." I have found no indication that Rhine did this, however, and I think it more likely that the Rhines merely called and went over, once in Boston. It is possible that they did not even call ahead, as occurred with McDougall.



Rhine was not the first person to be suspicious of the Crandons, nor was he the last. He was able to describe the Crandons' apparent techniques more clearly than others were, but he had an advantage in that the sitting he attended was a "standard" one for beginners," and not "scientific" (Rhine & Rhine, 1927, p. 401). Moreover, it incorporated a novel feature: a glass cabinet in which Margery sat. "It must have been wide open," Prince (1926b) told Hyslop, "for there were never given me opportunities to see so many betraying signs . . . What they saw in relation to the glass cabinet fully supported the theory [of fraud] that some of us had entertained, though we had not been allowed to see it in operation."

It is difficult to read the published report (Rhine & Rhine, 1927) without agreeing with Rhine that the séance was an act from beginning to end. However, it is worth noting that L. E. Rhine did not observe the same things. Some writers (e.g., Tietze, 1973) have assumed that because both names were signed to the paper the Rhines must jointly have detected the fraud, but L. E. Rhine (1983) makes clear in *Something Hidden* that this was not the case. She was caught up in the séance until they had left the Crandon residence, when Rhine explained to her how it had all been done.

L. E. Rhine was not the only one who did not see what Rhine saw that night. As Daniel Walton (1926) informed Rhine, "None of the other six sitters corroborate you in any particular." My purpose in bringing out this fact is not to question the accuracy of Rhine's description—I think it was probably accurate enough<sup>9</sup>—but to show how difficult it was to appraise the Margery mediumship. The Margery controversy would not have dragged on so long had the Crandons been easy to catch out.

There is also the possibility that genuine phenomena were involved on some occasions (see Inglis, 1984; Tietze, 1973). If we understand this, we will have an easier time understanding the attitude toward Rhine of Margery's supporters at the ASPR. Rhine was fairly

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<sup>9</sup> The final paper seems to have been composed from two sets of notes, the originals of which are in the ASPR archives ([J. B. Rhine], 1926c, 1926d). The first of these sets of notes is written on the front and back of a sheet of notepaper. I cannot be certain that these notes were made during the séance—I have found no other indication that Rhine made notes that evening—but it seems to me likely that they were. If I am right in this, these notes are of interest not only as a contemporary record of the séance, but also for what they reveal about Rhine's attitude from the start of the proceedings. After giving the date and the Crandons' address, Rhine wrote, "Medium supposedly searched." To this he added, evidently at a later time, "by Mrs. DeW. and Mrs. G." Sometime later he also wrote in the names of all the sitters on the line above. The second set of notes is written on seven full-size sheets and represents a rough draft of the report that was submitted and published.

inexperienced in psychical research, and he claimed to have seen it all during a single sitting. "I think you might in all modesty distrust your own alleged observations and the inferences you draw therefrom," suggested Walton (1926). Others were less polite. Joseph DeWyckoff (1926), who with Walton had been present at the Rhines' sitting, called Rhine "a knave or a fool or possibly both." "Perhaps, however," DeWyckoff went on, "it would be more charitable to assign you to the specie of homo which the Spanish speaking people designate as 'completamente loco'."

#### *The Publication of Rhine's Paper*

In considering the publication of Rhine's report, Mauskopf and McVaugh (1980) say: "Rhine wrote an account of his sitting with Margery, intending it for the *ASPR Journal*; but when Bird and the Crandons began to accuse him of prejudice and treachery, the likelihood of its ever appearing there seemed remote. At the suggestion of Hudson Hoagland . . . Rhine submitted it instead to the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*" (pp. 76-77). Brian (1982, p. 47) and Tietze (1973, p. 113; 1985, p. 361) state that the paper was rejected by the *ASPR Journal*.

In preparing to submit his report, Rhine sent (on July 15) a circular letter to each of the *ASPR* Trustees to describe his observations at the séance and his disillusionment with Margery, and to say that he would send his paper "first to the *Journal* if I have assurance that it will not be followed by a damaging counter article to which I will have no opportunity to reply" (Rhine, 1926e). Receipt of the letter was acknowledged by several Trustees, including Peterson and Hyslop. Peterson (1926) wrote Rhine on July 22 to say: "I think the *Journal* ought to publish a report from you, and I am strongly in favor of their reprinting if it is allowable the whole of Prince's review in the *Am. Journ. of Psychology*."

On July 20, Hyslop (1926e) wrote to thank Rhine for his letter and said, "I feel that you should prepare and submit for publication in the *Journal*, a detailed and careful report of your experiences." Hyslop then made some suggestions for the paper. Also on July 20, Hyslop (1926d) wrote to Prince, enclosing a copy of the letter to Rhine. He said further, "I think that [Rhine] should by all means prepare a detailed and carefully written report of his experiences and submit it to us for publication. I believe it should be published by us if he submits it, and shall do what I can to make my attitude understood."

On July 22 the ASPR Board of Trustees passed the following resolution: "Resolved: That the Secretary be instructed to write to Mr. [sic] Rhine and inform him that any article which he might care to submit to the Society for publication in its Journal would be considered on its merits" (Pierson, 1926a). This sentiment was officially conveyed to Rhine by the Secretary, T. H. Pierson, in a letter dated July 30 (Pierson, 1926b).

Rhine (1926g) wrote to Peterson on August 2 to thank him for his support, saying "but I must confess that I do not have much hope of any success." On August 5, Rhine submitted his article to the Board of Trustees with a covering letter that began, "Attached, please find Margery article. I do not expect you will publish it, but if you do, there must be no changes or notes without my consent" (Rhine, 1926h). Rhine (1926i) does not express the same pessimism in an August 5 letter to Hyslop, but it comes up in nearly every other communication of this period.

Yet, the publication process seems to have moved smoothly (although in an unorthodox way because Rhine sent his paper to the Board of Trustees rather than to the Publication Committee), and Rhine was given every reason to believe that it would be accepted. Secretary Pierson (1926c) wrote on August 13 to tell Rhine that the manuscript had been referred to the Publication Committee. Hyslop (1926f) wrote on August 14 to Prince to tell him that Rhine's paper had been received and that "it is my impression that his article will be accepted for publication." Hyslop (1926g) sent Rhine three pages of detailed comments on August 22. Rhine (1926j) submitted an additional footnote, whose receipt was acknowledged by Pierson (1926d) on August 26.

On August 31, Bird (1926b) wrote to say, "I anticipate that in the case of your contribution acceptance will follow." In this letter, Bird also put forward the suggestion that he and Rhine "get together and try to agree upon a statement of the two sides that will permit the whole matter to be dismissed with its appearance in one issue." Hyslop (1926h) took the step of telling Prince, in a letter of September 9, that Bird had written to Rhine with the suggestion that they get together to work out a joint statement, and that, "I do not know what the Board will decide, but my impression that [the paper] will be accepted for publication holds."

On September 20, Rhine (1926k) wrote to the Board threatening to withdraw the paper if he did not receive a reply from them "without further delay." On September 23, the paper was accepted by a unanimous vote of the Board (see Pierson, 1926e), and Bird was

directed to so inform Rhine. Unfortunately, Bird was called out of town for several days and—a weekend intervening—was unable to write to Rhine until September 28 (Bird, 1926c).<sup>10</sup> The news did not reach Rhine in time. In a letter dated September 29 (but actually mailed by Special Delivery on the 28th), Rhine (1926l) wrote to the Board to ask that the manuscript be returned. "You have had our report on the Crandon case eight weeks and have given me no official notice of action on it." He also resigned his membership in the ASPR.

On September 30, Pierson (1926f) wrote to explain that the delay of which Rhine complained was due to his having sent the report to the entire Board rather than directly to the Publication Committee. He acknowledged receipt of Rhine's letter requesting return of the manuscript and announcing his resignation, and asked for confirmation, in light of the Board's decision to accept the paper. Rhine, however, would not change his mind. He explained his position in an October 4 letter to the Board (Rhine, 1926m), which he signed "Sincere mourners":

Your evident hesitation to accept the report, the blazing antagonism it aroused in some of you, the manifest design on your part to have it properly countered by Bird, led me to think that it was an extremely embarrassing thing in your hands. I felt that the seven to eight weeks possession of the manuscript by you satisfied my feelings of duty as a member of the Society, and therefore immediately upon writing to you on the 28th, I accepted one of the other avenues of publication available. That step was already taken when I received Mr. Bird's and Mr. Pierson's letters.

The chosen avenue of publication was, of course, the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. Clearly the paper had been under consideration by both journals simultaneously, something which (as Hyslop, 1926g, pointed out to Rhine) was hardly appropriate under the circumstances. Privately, Hyslop had heard from Prince about the dual submission in a letter of September 4. "I don't know that I do right to tell you this," Prince (1926d) had added, "but will risk it."

According to Rhine (1926n), writing to the ASPR Trustees on October 13, the paper had been offered to the *Journal of Abnormal*

<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to escape the suspicion that the delay on Bird's part was deliberate, intended to give Rhine the chance to take just the action he did take. However, I can find no reason to generalize this suspicion to others at the ASPR, who seem to me to have acted in good faith—although perhaps somewhat in fear of the consequences if they did not accept the paper.

and *Social Psychology* by "friends tho not officially so." One of these friends must have been Hudson Hoagland. On September 18, Hoagland had sent a copy of Rhine's paper to Morton Prince,<sup>11</sup> the editor. "I am enclosing the manuscript on the Margery case that I spoke to you about," he began the accompanying letter (Hoagland, 1926), suggesting that the process of submission was already in progress at this time. (Indeed, as I have noted, W. F. Prince had told Hyslop two weeks earlier that such plans were afoot.)

On October 20, the ASPR Board of Trustees accepted the withdrawal of Rhine's manuscript and passed a resolution "that the Committee on Publication be requested to consider the advisability of publishing a suitable article adverse to the genuineness of the Margery mediumship" (Pierson, 1926g). However, such an article was not to appear for some years.<sup>12</sup>

#### THE EFFECT OF RHINE'S ACTIONS

The ASPR leadership has been characterized (e.g., by Brian, 1982) as united in a pro-Margery stance. This, however, was far from the case, at least in 1925 and 1926. Hyslop and Peterson clearly were not Margery partisans, nor evidently were others. In his letter of January 21, 1926, Hyslop (1926c) reminded Prince that "some of the Board [were] opposed to the articles which appeared in the *Journal* as far back as last June."<sup>13</sup>

Margery's major support came from Malcolm Bird and from members of the ASPR's New York Section, who, during this period, controlled several seats on the Board (DeWyckoff and Walton were both New York Section members). If the influence of the New York Section on the Board could have been reduced, it might have been possible for the Board to have exercised greater control of Bird's editorship of the *Journal*. Here is the significance of Hyslop's reference (in his January 6 letter to Prince [Hyslop, 1926a]) to "one of the present members of the Board in New York" resigning in favor of the "very good man" he had in mind.

In the same letter, Hyslop (1926a) had said that President Bristol had agreed to resign should "a better man" be found. This may

<sup>11</sup> Walter F. Prince and Morton Prince were not related.

<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Tietze's (1985) article appears to be the first critical review of the case in the ASPR *Journal*.

<sup>13</sup> Ironically, one of those opposed was Frederick Edwards, the man who had started the ASPR on its downhill slide by initiating various populist policies in 1923 (see Edwards, 1926).

have been a reference to Prince himself. The possibility of electing Prince had been raised once before, at the end of 1924, but Edwards had won a second term and Prince had left the ASPR soon after.

This last speculation is perhaps reading too much into the record. Nevertheless, it is clear that in 1926 both sides were looking toward a time when the ASPR and the Boston Society could be united. Hyslop (1926a, 1926c) expressed his hopes in his January letters to Prince. On July 14, in the aftermath of the Rhines' sitting, Prince (1926b) wrote to Hyslop that "I would like to see the two Societies amalgamated, but that can never be until the principles of James H. Hyslop are again triumphant." Even Rhine (1926f) wrote (to Peterson) in these terms.

The acceptance of Rhine's paper by the ASPR Board of Trustees—by a unanimous vote, no less—represented something of a triumph for George Hyslop. He had worked hard to return the ASPR to that state of scientific respectability that would have made amalgamation possible. Although the publication of Rhine's paper by the ASPR *Journal* would not have accomplished this by itself, it would have been an important step in that direction. The appearance of the paper in *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* instead invited all the invective from Bird and others (see Tietze, 1973) that Rhine had claimed to want to avoid, and only made matters worse.

The Rhines' paper quickly became a rallying cry for both sides. For Prince, McDougall, and influential members of the Boston Society generally, the ASPR's perceived stonewalling was but the latest in a series of efforts to block negative views of the Margery case from appearance in the ASPR *Journal*. For Hyslop, and especially for DeWyckoff, Walton, and other Margery backers, Rhine's insistence upon his exposure after a single sitting and his rather peremptory withdrawal of his manuscript showed how much he was under Prince's thumb. "You have unwittingly been made a cats-paw for others," Walton (1926) had warned Rhine soon after the séance.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In adopting this image of Walton's as the title of my paper, I do not mean to endorse it as appropriate. I believe that Rhine as Prince's and McDougall's cat's paw accurately reflects the *perception* of ASPR personnel—and I think that perception had much to do with how the ASPR behaved during this episode—but I think it is only partly accurate. Although they were highly skeptical of Margery's claims, I do not think Prince and McDougall were the active antagonists of the mediumship that many at the ASPR considered them to be. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that Rhine's pessimism about his paper's chances of acceptance was influenced

Any lingering hopes for rapprochement would appear to have been extinguished by the beginning of 1928, when the Chairman of the Publication Committee, Mary Derieux, was able to speak of "starting a new era." After James Hyslop's death, it was inevitable that the ASPR would pass through "a period of adjustment," Derieux (1928, p. 1) said, but this was now over.

George Hyslop eventually (in 1933) resigned from the ASPR Board and joined the Boston Society.<sup>15</sup> The controversy dragged on until 1941, following L. R. G. Crandon's death and shortly before that of Margery herself, when the amalgamation of the two societies was finally brought about (see Tietze, 1973).

The Margery controversy divided the international parapsychological community and crippled traditional psychical research in the United States; and while I do not want to minimize the importance of Rhine's experimental paradigm, I think that had the Parapsychology Laboratory existed side by side with a stronger and more unified psychical research, we would have a more pluralistic and less polarized parapsychology today.<sup>16</sup>

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by his acquaintance with Prince. We know that Rhine had access to Prince's files on the history of the Margery case, because he says as much in a letter to Hyslop (Rhine, 1926i). In the end, however, it was Hoagland, not Prince or McDougall, who initiated the contact with the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*.

<sup>15</sup> Hyslop's resignation was preceded by Bird's. In May 1930, Bird sent to the ASPR Board a report in which he admitted that he had known of fraudulent activity from the beginning, but nevertheless had defended Margery because he felt there to be genuine features in the mediumship as well. Bird resigned from the ASPR staff in December 1930. The story is told by Tietze (1973, pp. 136-143).

<sup>16</sup> Full support for this conclusion will have to await another occasion. In general terms, Margery had many supporters in continental Europe and few in Great Britain, although she was controversial everywhere. Certainly psychical research was moving toward a greater use of the experimental method during this period, and the shift to an experimental paradigm might have come in the absence of Rhine and the Parapsychology Laboratory. However, I believe that the damage done to traditional interests by the Margery affair had much to do with the quick ascendancy of the experimental paradigm and, indirectly, with the popularity that paradigm enjoys today.

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