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To the Editor,

Members of the Comitato Italiano per il Controllo della Affirmazioni Paranormale, and members of their sister US organization, usually pay great attention to detail in their criticism of parapsychologists' reports. How is it that at times they completely overlook some important but inconvenient information?

In the July 1998 issue of *JSPR*, Messrs Polidoro and Garlaschelli, in a Letter to the Editor, write that Kluski's paraffin wax moulds smaller than human hands could have been made by children's hands. Since children were not present during the session at the Institute Métapsychique in Paris during which two moulds of child's hand were obtained, the implication is that Kluski smuggled into the séance-room a model of a child's hand and immersed it in the molten paraffin wax.

During this session on December 27, 1920, Kluski's left hand was controlled by Richet and his right one by Count Potocki. The controllers were loudly reporting "I am holding firmly the left hand; I am controlling firmly the right hand". In addition, in the red-light illumination of the room, any movement of Kluski could have been easily detected. With the tight physical control of Kluski's hands and body position by the two controllers and the general visual control, it was not possible for Kluski to get out of his chair, to approach the paraffin wax container and immerse in the molten paraffin wax the model of a child's hand.

The authors of the letter also write that a too-tight bracelet can be removed from a hand without changing the diameter of the bracelet. This is an incorrect statement. A bracelet can be removed from the hand only if it is loose and not tight. A too-tight bracelet has a circumference smaller than the circumference of the longitudinally bent palm; it cannot be removed from the hand without being opened.

On removing a finger from a paraffin wax mould of a fist hand Messrs Polidoro and Garlaschelli write that "human fingers do not need to be straightened to perform such a task". One cannot remove a hand from a gloved fist without straightening the fingers. Any statement to the contrary is a striking fallacy that puts in question the scientific competence of its authors.

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To the Editor,

There seems little virtue in entering into a lengthy debate with Michael Coleman (letters, April issue) on the extent of Geley's ignorance of the normal methods by which moulds of alleged spirit hands can be produced or over his use of the word 'partial'. The salient point is that Geley, as I made clear in

my original note (*JSPR*, October 1998), was unaware of the fact that clasped hands could be produced by such methods, and therefore of the fact that the production of 'spirit' hands cannot by themselves be taken as evidence for paranormality. On this Michael and I would seem to be in agreement.

However, conclusions as to the genuineness or otherwise of the Kluski hands rest on very much more than the existence of the hands themselves. As I also made clear in my Note, the conditions under which the phenomena were obtained are of paramount importance. I listed some of these conditions—the distance between Kluski and the bowl of molten wax during the sittings, the fact that Kluski's own hands were held by experienced investigators when the phenomena were produced, the lack of places of concealment in Geley's laboratory, and the fact that Kluski and his room were both searched prior to the Warsaw sittings. In addition I drew attention to the fact that some of the moulds were of feet, that some of them were of children's hands and of a child's foot, that the fingerprints on the moulds tested by M. Bayle of the Criminal Identification Department in Paris were not those of Kluski, and the difficulty of any attempt to fake his results by using artificial hands and feet and/or accomplices. I concluded by drawing attention to the fact that we need to know the conditions under which moulds are obtained before taking any claim of paranormality seriously.

Rather than discuss the issue any further, I invite those who doubt the authenticity of the Kluski moulds just to reproduce the full range of them by normal means under the conditions and subsequent test procedures employed by Geley and his colleagues.

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DAVID FONTANA

To the Editor,

#### "A New Theory for ESP"

I have read with great interest Mr Jon Taylor's article on "A New Theory for ESP", which appeared in the April 1998 issue of the *Journal of the SPR*.

I am indeed surprised at the importance given to Precognition over Telepathy and Clairvoyance as, if we are able to prove the existence of ESP at all in a laboratory by reproducing these phenomena under controlled conditions, it will, in my opinion, be in the area of Telepathy and Clairvoyance. In a paper I read in Mumbai (Bombay, India) in May 1977 I brought out the parallels between Telepathy and modern communication theory.

Mr Taylor's statement on Precognition will not stand close scrutiny. Assuming as per Taylor's suggestion that the Percipient can change the future after having 'predicted' ("foreseen") the same; then, in the first place, what was foreseen first as a future event would not have been there at all as it did not eventually take place. Further, if the Percipient is not personally concerned with the future event, although the same may be of concern to somebody else, why should he, the Percipient, become involved in trying to prevent that event from happening? Finally, if Percipients of future events all decided to change future events then there would be no future as conceived now; and there can be a progression of future events being changed at the will of such Percipients, resulting in utter confusion about the 'unknown' future.