

Article

The “realm of the dead” and Modern Media: The Strange Case of W.T. Stead

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Abstract

This article centers on an account of the textual and publishing history of “Letters from Julia,” apparently received via automatic spirit writing by the British journalist W.T. Stead, which appeared in both magazine and book form during the 1890s. The analysis underlines the damage done to Stead’s reputation as a modern journalist on account of his increasingly frequent recourse to metaphysics. At the same time it engages with Friedrich Kittler’s *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1986), a post-humanist study of the three media inventions seen as defining modernity, which offers a general discussion of the relationship between this “realm of the dead” and modern communications. While Stead’s mystical view of the “realm of the dead” contrasts starkly with Kittler’s materialist conception, here it is argued that the German theorist’s own technological determinism cannot completely escape teleology. The creation of a significantly new media device does not automatically drive out the old, and the social and psychological consequences tend to be less than immediate. Clearly factors other than technological ones are involved. If the “Letters from Julia” provide less than convincing evidence of their origin in the world of spirits, they also suggest that the aura of manuscript was not lost quite so precipitately on the invention of the writing machine. In fact, the Remington typewriter remained for many decades predominantly a device for commercial rather than personal use. Indeed, many households did not own a device with a QWERTY keyboard before the personal computer boom of the 1980s, and until that period at least the hand-writing of personal documents such as letters and diaries remained the norm. The strange case of W.T. Stead thus suggests that cultural continuity can exist side by side with technological cleavage.

“The realm of the dead is as extensive as the storage and transmission capabilities of a given culture ... media are always flight apparatuses into the great beyond.” (Kittler, 13)

Like other physical goods, the printed products of the Gutenberg revolution could be distributed only at the speed of the swiftest stage coach or sailing ship. Indeed, it has been argued more generally by John Carey that, until the invention of the electric telegraph in the mid-nineteenth century, “transportation and communication were inseparably linked” (Carey, 12). Since this overlooks not only the existence of pre-modern telegraph systems such as smoke or drum signals, but also that the early telegraphic cables followed the railroads and shipping routes, Carey’s point is perhaps not quite valid on either side of the historical divide. Nevertheless, he does note that telegraphy may have “ended the identity but did not destroy the metaphor” (Carey, 13), thus emphasizing the continuing connection between Western concepts of communication and the discovery of new worlds. More strictly speaking, it was the development later in the century of wireless telegraphy, which replaced the linear transmission of electrical pulses with the radial broadcasting of electro-magnetic waves, that permitted the abandonment of the transportation model. At the same time, the loss of a spatial limitation to communication in the case of these modern media seems to have encouraged the formation of new metaphors of contact with imagined worlds beyond the physical. Perhaps the most striking example is provided by the popular adoption of the mythical term “ether,” the refined element believed to be breathed by gods and angels in the heavenly realm, to describe the medium through which radio waves are assumed to be dispersed (OED, “ether” *n.* 1.-3.), though it should be noted that this coincided with the rejection of the concept in physical science. Of course, the second half of the nineteenth century was witness not only to rapid developments in communications technology, but also to the flourishing of the doctrines and practices of Spiritualism (Wilburne), with the high point perhaps located in the 1870s (Owen, 1-5). Though the term “Spiritism” was preferred by many adherents (OED, “spiritualism” *n.* 3., “spiritism” *n.*), both words refer generally to the belief that the spirits of the deceased are able to communicate with the living, most typically through the intervention of a human “medium.” In other words, Spiritualism is concerned with a particular mode of virtual transcommunication.

A fascinating discussion of the relationship between this “realm of the dead” and modern communications can be found in the extraordinarily wide-ranging introduction to Friedrich A. Kittler’s *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1986), his post-modernist study of the three media inventions seen as defining modernity. There Kittler notes the uncanny

rapidity with which those beyond the grave take up the latest communicative devices of the material world: spirit rapping in *séances* immediately follows the introduction of Morse code in electric telegraphy; spectral images begin to infest photographs even before celluloid film replaces glass plates; and ghostly voices intrude into both radio signals and tape recordings soon after they become technically available. Moreover, the technological innovators are not slow to reciprocate, with Edison recommending that his phonographic cylinder be used to capture the last words of the dying, while, in fiction at least, telephone companies anticipate the needs of revenants by establishing lines to link mortuaries and cemeteries to the network (Kittler, 12-13). Perhaps the only form of communicative mimicry overlooked by Kittler is the boom in automatic spirit writing which follows the invention of the teleprinter and telefacsimile machines. The likely explanation is that the German theorist is committed to a model founded on an abrupt cleavage between modern media and the communication systems coming before and after.

Indeed, in contrast to Marshall McLuhan, who employs the concept of "media" in the broadest historical and technical sense ("Money" and "Roads" are both covered in *Understanding Media*), Kittler chooses to restrict the use of the term to the technological devices of the industrial era which increasingly rely for their effects on neurophysiological processes. According to Kittler, what follows modernity is a post-media and finally post-human era, where the different channels and interfaces disappear when all signals are transmitted only as digital data between machines. More importantly for our argument, while what comes after is this "monopoly of bits," what came before was "the monopoly of writing" (Kittler, 4). Then, verbal texts and musical scores represented the only means of registering the flow of time, albeit via a signifying system that could not capture the raw sensory data of movement and sound. The resulting forms are thus referred to by the German theorist as arts rather than media: "That is the whole difference between arts and media ... [the former] do not rely on neurophysiology." (Kittler, 37). Therefore, unlike Walter Benjamin, who sees the defining characteristic of modern media as the capacity for mechanical reproduction, Kittler identifies the ability to register acoustic and optical data in real time as the more radical innovation (Kittler, 3). In support of his model, Kittler notes the parallels between his three modern machines, gramophone, film and typewriter, and Jacques Lacan's "methodological distinction" between three psychoanalytic orders, respectively, the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic (Kittler, 15-16). The most significant consequence of the change Kittler emphasizes is the loss of the illusory sensuality that formerly characterized the symbolic processes of writing and reading. In the Gutenberg universe, the only way to make contact with those no longer living was to read the books that they had written, but with the invention of the phonograph and cinematograph, the "realm of the dead has withdrawn from the books in which it resided for

so long” (Kittler, 10). Thus, according to the German theorist, who shares with McLuhan an underlying commitment to technology as the key determinant of change, the aura of manuscript inevitably fades in the age of the typewriter.

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This helps to explain why Kittler avoids the topic of automatic writing, the form of *post mortem* communication particularly associated with William Thomas Stead (1849-1912), the British journalist whose later career was increasingly defined by his public engagement with Spiritualist theory and practice (Luckhurst, 117-47). Stead nevertheless long remained among the most critically aware and professionally innovative of Victorian editors. According to Laurel Brake (58), “More than any of his contemporaries, Stead wrote about his profession as well as practising it,” constantly trying “to pin down the significance of current practice through critical reflection.” Born in Northumberland, and mainly educated at home by his father, a minister of the Congregational Church, while still a teenager Stead began to contribute to the local liberal daily, the (Darlington) *Northern Echo*, taking over the editorship at the age of only twenty-two. With Stead at the helm, the paper soon developed a lively national reputation as a proponent of Gladstone’s brand of evangelical socialism. In 1880 Stead was called to London to act as assistant to John Morley at the liberal evening paper, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, taking over the editorship on Morley’s election as Member of Parliament in 1883. There, along with other radical journalists such as T.P. O’Connor, Stead continued to develop the forms of social and political campaigning, at once personalized and sensationalist, that were soon to become known to friends and foes alike as the “New Journalism” (Mulpetre). (Elsewhere, I have argued that this late nineteenth-century British phenomenon, if seen in the context of changes in the economic organization of the press leading to the commoditization of news, can be understood as a specific manifestation of what the German social theorist Jürgen Habermas has analyzed more generally as “the structural transformation of the public sphere” (Law & Sterenberg).)

Stead’s most controversial investigative crusade was that of 1885 against child prostitution in the capital, reported in the *Pall Mall Gazette* as “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon,” which led not only to Parliament raising the legal age of sexual consent, but also to a three-month prison sentence for Stead himself. Whilst serving his time in Holloway, the editor composed a pair of articles to appear in the *Contemporary Review*, setting out a detailed agenda for a new form of representative journalism that would take over the democratic role of Parliament itself. The proprietor of the *Gazette* eventually tired of Stead’s provocative stance and the editor left the paper in late 1889. Though there

were a couple of failed attempts to launch a daily national journal (Brake), the remainder of Stead's editorial career was devoted in the main to his *Review of Reviews*, founded in January 1890. This was a monthly magazine designed not as a rival, but rather as "an index and a guide to ... the mighty maze of modern periodical literature," offering a "compendium of all the best articles" ("Programme," *Review of Reviews*, 1:1, 14). At the same time, though, it advocated a radical imperialist agenda based on the union of all anglophones ("To All English-Speaking Folk," *Review of Reviews*, 1:1, 15-20). The success of the venture can be measured by the fact that American and Australian editions had been created within a couple of years (see the cover illustrations in Luckhurst, 142). In addition to many special numbers and annuals, nearly 270 regular issues of the magazine had appeared when the editor lost his life aboard the *Titanic* in April 1912.

According to Grace Eckley's rather circuitous account, though "[n]ot inclined to mysticism in his early years," Stead's "purposeful exploration" of psychic phenomena began as early as 1880 (Eckley, 158-61). However, it was not until after he had parted company with the *Pall Mall Gazette* and founded his own monthly that there was any public declaration of a commitment to Spiritualism. At the end of 1891, just before its second anniversary, the *Review of Reviews* issued a controversial special Christmas number, entitled "Real Ghost Stories: A Record of Authentic Apparitions." It was headed by a sensational "Caution to the Reader," but, while there was a recognition that some might object to the contents, it insisted on the scientific possibility that "the telegraph may be to telepathy what the stage coach is the steam engine" ("A Prefatory Word," 7-8). In fact, the narratives included in the number ranged widely over many psychic manifestations, including clairvoyance and second sight, and throughout the editor stressed his personal commitment to research on such phenomena. Indeed, the third chapter was entitled "Myself," and began with a detailed account of three accurate premonitions of future personal events that Stead claimed to have experienced, concerning in turn his move from Darlington to the capital, his promotion to the editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and his prison term following the "Maiden Tribute" affair. (The 100,000 copies printed were snapped up in a couple of days, and there was a follow-up in "More Ghost Stories: A Sequel to 'Real Ghost Stories'" (New Year's Extra Number, February, 1892), with a greater emphasis on haunting though less personal material from the editor ("Why the Sequel?" 7-8)). In spring 1893, after delivering a lecture on the subject at a meeting of the London Spiritualist Alliance (Harper, 46-57), Stead published a lengthy article in the *Review of Reviews* entitled "Through; or, On the Eve of the Fourth Dimension," explaining in painstaking detail how he had acquired the ability to perform automatic telepathic writing, that is, receiving reliable written information from a living acquaintance at a distance, unconsciously and without any physical channel of communication (*Review of Reviews*, 7:4,

426-32). To guard against the risk of such Spiritualist material gradually taking over the *Review*, the following July Stead was to found *Borderland: A Quarterly Review and Index*, which followed the physical format of the monthly review and was issued from the same office, at Mowbray House, off the Strand, but was dedicated entirely to psychical research. The magazine began with a manifesto abounding in media metaphors, for example:

If mankind had investigated steam and electricity in the haphazard, intermittent way in which it has investigated the spiritual world, we should still be travelling in stage coaches, and the telegraph and telephone would have been scouted by all our wise men as the fantastic imaginings of a disordered brain.

("How We Intend to Study Borderland," *Borderland*, 1:1, 5)

Adapting the democratizing techniques outlined in his articles for the *Contemporary Review*, Stead envisaged the magazine creating multiple circles of readers with specific study interests (such as Hypnotism or Palmistry), each with its own secretary and contact list, which in time would evolve into a virtual "College of the Occult Sciences" ("*Borderland*", *Review of Reviews*, 7:6, Jun. 1893, 675-76). However, judging by the published lists of "Our Circles and Members" (e.g. *Borderland*, 2:7, Jan. 1895, 66-92), despite the fact that the magazine circulated internationally, it seems throughout to have attracted less than a thousand subscribers, and folded in October 1897 after only eighteen issues had appeared. This though the final issue had announced only a "temporary suspension" due mainly to reasons "of a personal nature" (*Borderland*, 4:4, Oct. 1897, 339).

While, as we have seen, Stead claimed proficiency in both premonition and automatic telepathic writing, and also mentions occasional experiences of clairvoyance and spirit photography (for example, in Stead, "How I Know That the Dead Return," 60-63), his most long-standing commitment was to automatic spirit writing. Though he mentions acting on occasion as a medium in this form of transcommunication for a number of other departed souls, he claims to have acted in this role first and most consistently—continuing for around twenty years—on behalf of an American woman. With the medium more likely to be female and the communicating spirit often that of a male celebrity, this was a reversal of stereotypical Victorian gender patterns (Owen, 1-40). Though Stead concealed the family name, the American woman in question was Julia A. Ames of Illinois, an unmarried temperance reformist and journalist who had met Stead in London during a visit to Europe during 1890, but had died while attending a convention in Boston, Mass., in late 1891 at the age of only thirty-one (*A Young Woman Journalist*). According to Stead, he was first requested to act as a writing medium for the deceased Julia by her

intimate friend Ellen, who had met him during a visit to Britain in summer 1892, when for the second time the spirit of her deceased friend had appeared silently before her. As detailed in Table 1, the process began with a series of tests to check the authenticity of the information received, notably including an accurate foretelling of the result of the Newcastle-on-Tyne by-election of August 25, 1892, where John Morley won by an surprising margin (reported in “My Experience of Automatic Writing,” *Borderland*, 1:1, Jul. 1893, 40-44 [#1]). Then Stead’s automatic hand began to transcribe a series of letters from “Julia” addressed to Ellen, mainly descriptive of the afterlife ([#3]-[#5]), but soon was receiving dated communications addressed directly to himself, often dwelling on moral instruction, and apparently on the understanding that they might be published in Stead’s magazines ([#7], [#9]-[#13], [#16]-[#17]). While a short extract had appeared earlier in 1893 in the *Review of Reviews* ([#2]), nine complete articles prominently featuring letters from Julia appeared in *Borderland*, including in the first and last issue, though they did not appear with the regularity of, say, the episodes of a serial novel. In his farewell to the magazine’s subscribers, Stead confirmed that nothing published there had “had attracted so much attention as the Letters from ‘Julia’” (“Letters from Julia: A Parting Word,” *Borderland*, 4:4, 343). Late in 1897, just after the magazine had folded, Stead reissued the series in a volume from Grant Richards entitled *Letters from Julia; or, Light from the Borderland*, which omitted three magazine fragments ([#1], [#2], [#8]), but added two that had not appeared in serial form ([#6], [#15]); the cheaper edition of 1907, with a new title and preface, added a third short fragment ([#18]).

In the transmission of the messages from “Julia,” complicating questions of gender relations, Stead problematically takes on the dual role of medium and editor. Especially in the case of the messages addressed to Stead, that is, the large majority, there is much to suggest that the writing is far from automatic. This as defined by Stead himself when he explains that, in acting as a medium, his “hand writes almost invariably when it is disconnected ... from my conscious brain” (“My Experience of Automatic Writing,” *Borderland*, 1:1, 39), or when he describes the printed letters as “reproduced from the automatic manuscript of the invisible author who used my passive hand as her amanuensis” (*After Death*, viii). Yet, in comparing the process to a telephone conversation, Stead notes that, with his automatic writing, “I am never rung up by the Invisibles” (*ibid.*)—that is, the initial call has to be made by the living medium rather than the deceased messenger. Indeed, the published letters tend to take the form of a dialogue between “Julia” and Stead, sometimes stycomythic but more often platonic, sometimes antagonistic but more often cooperative. The editor’s contributions to the conversation, printed in italics in the early volume editions, are characterized there as “questions which I ask, or mental observations which I make, as I read what my hand is writing” (*After Death*, 36). While failing

to capture the interactivity of the written text, this description of the process still makes it sound far from automatic. As well as via direct quotation, the messages received are occasionally summarized through indirect speech, and not infrequently there is at least temporary confusion whether the first person pronoun employed refers to the dead correspondent or the living amanuensis (see Crofton). In the Introduction to the volume edition dated December 1897, Stead claimed that the style of Julia's writing was very different from his own ("I only wish my conscious self could write so well," *After Death*, xxviii), though in the remarks that prefaced the first letters to appear in *Borderland*, he had acknowledged frankly that, "as was remarked by a friend, my spook writes Steadese" ("My Experience of Automatic Writing," *Borderland*, 1:1, 40). These dialogic effects tend to stand out even more in the serial versions, where each letter or set of letters is embedded in editorial material, whether Stead's own introductory and concluding remarks, or the responses of third parties, as, for example, in the letter assigned to July 12, 1897 (*Borderland*, 4:3, 230-33, [#16]). There, not only is the correspondent's text interrupted repeatedly by interjections from her amanuensis, but it is also prefaced by four explanatory paragraphs from the editor (e.g. "when my hand wrote the opening sentence, it seemed to me so much an echo of my own ideas that I half thought of laying down the pen", 230), and followed by a page of responses to "A Message from Julia" in the previous (April) issue in letters received or other periodicals, with that in the *Illustrated London News* written off peremptorily by Stead as "fatuous impertinence" (232).

Moreover, the many differences evident between the texts of letters appearing in both serial and volume versions suggest that the process of editing can be quite intrusive, including changes of substance as well as of accidentals and format. In his 1905 Preface to *After Death* (vii-viii), Stead claims not to have "changed a word or a syllable in the letters themselves. They stand exactly as they were printed in the original edition where they were reproduced from the automatic manuscript," but this is patently not the case. There are acts of omission as well as commission: in the message indicated as transmitted on June 18, 1893 ([#7]), the final five paragraphs of the letter as transcribed in the magazine (amounting to around 450 words) are silently deleted in the volume version, while Julia's comments about the ambiguous gender of her angelic guides on the other side are altered on more than one occasion (e.g. in the letter assigned to December 23, 1894, in [#9]). In the editorial material prefacing the description of his first experiments in automatic writing, Stead claimed that "all corroborative particulars" had been submitted to the Psychical Research Society ("My Experience of Automatic Writing," *Borderland*, 1:1, 40), though F.W.H. Myers of the society subsequently encouraged Stead to "set forth his evidence—whether for publication or not—in a more complete form" (Myers, 614). In particular, no specific example of the handwriting is ever reproduced in facsimile in *Borderland* to allow

the reader to compare the original with the edited version; this, despite the fact that in the initial issue of *Review of Reviews*, the first ten pages were devoted entirely to facsimile copies of manuscript letters from celebrities supporting the founding of the magazine ("Some Autograph Introductions," *Review of Reviews*, 1:1, Jan. 1890, 3-13).

Arranged in principle according to the indicated periods of transmission of the letters from "Julia," Table 1 provides an overview of the relationship between those periods and the dates of serial publication. Given that the quarterly numbers of *Borderland* were officially issued on the fifteenth day of January, April, July and October, we can see that the groups of published letters are typically indicated as received during the previous month, often quite close to its end. There are, of course, exceptions. With one or two of the fragments there is a gap of months before publication (e.g., [#1] or [#2]); on the other hand, quite extraordinarily, the letter assigned to July 12, 1897 ([#16]), must have been set up in type within hours of being received in order to appear in the July issue. One wonders how the three-page gap in the magazine would have been filled if the correspondent had not been available when the amanuensis called. In her farewell letter "Julia" is reported as understanding that perhaps only "a hundredth part" of the messages transmitted to Stead have been included in the magazine ("Letters from 'Julia': A Parting Word", *Borderland*, 4:4, 344 [#17]); if this is the case, it is remarkable that those selected for publication should generally arrive so close to the deadline.

From the beginning, in insisting that the automatic letters received should be subject to formal verification, Stead objectively recognizes three possible explanations: that the messages emanate from a source in the world of spirits, from his own subconscious mind, or from his conscious mind, which would of course make them fraudulent ("My Experience of Automatic Writing," *Borderland*, 1:1, 39). In the Introduction to the first volume edition, while declaring his belief in the first, Stead firmly denies the third, but recognizes the theoretical possibility of the second, at the same time suggesting that, in such a case, this "would in no way impair the truth or diminish the force of the eloquent and touching pleas for the Higher Life" (*After Death*, xxviii). Judging from the material history of Stead's "Letters from Julia," the process of transmission thus seems much more subject to the conscious control of the amanuensis than the theory of automatic writing would suggest, so that, in a sense not anticipated by McLuhan, here the medium becomes the message. Indeed, in reviewing the 1897 volume edition of the *Letters from Julia* for the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, F.W.H. Myers concluded that "the general style and contents of the book convey for me no real indication of origin external to Mr. Stead's mind" (Myers, 612).

Around the first anniversary of the passing, at the age of only thirty-three, of his son and heir, Willie, and little more than three years before his own death in the *Titanic*

disaster, Stead wrote an emotionally charged testimony, entitled “How I Know That the Dead Return,” which appeared in the first issue of the *Fortnightly Review* for 1909. Though he once again begins with a metaphorical flourish, comparing the experience of death to Columbus’s voyage to the New World and the discoveries of Spiritualism to Marconi’s invention of the wireless telegraph, the rest is presented as a plain record of personal experience of such transcommunication. There, dwelling on what is presented as incontrovertible anecdotal evidence, Stead recaps his role as writing medium for “Julia” and his experience of clairvoyance and spirit photography. Yet, in concluding the article, he places the greatest emphasis on the impact of the death of W.T. Stead, Jnr. There he finally acknowledges the advisability of distinguishing between the roles of medium and editor, but seems to assume that his personal involvement obviates the requirement for objective evidence. Stead, Snr., states that, because of the closeness of their ties, he refrained from acting as writing medium himself, not only because what was written might represent “unconscious echoes of converse in the past,” but also because it would be impossible for him to be deceived by “fabricated spurious messages” from his “beloved son” (Stead, “How I Know That the Dead Return,” 63-64). Strangely overlooking the strength, reflected throughout the published “Letters from Julia,” of his commitment to “the truth of the persistence of personality after death, and the possibility of intercourse with the departed,” Stead presents his *post mortem* communication with his son as a moment of conversion: “After this I can doubt no more. For me the problem is solved, the truth is established, and I am glad to have this opportunity of testifying publicly to all the world that, so far as I am concerned, doubt on this subject is henceforth impossible.” (Stead, “How I Know That the Dead Return,” 63-64).

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The above account of the textual and publishing history of the “Letters from Julia” thus underlines the damage undoubtedly done to Stead’s reputation as a modern journalistic practitioner and theorist on account of his increasingly frequent recourse to metaphysical transcommunication. Grant Richards, who during the 1890s worked on the *Review of Reviews* as well as acting as Stead’s publisher, later suggested that “the thing that operated most strongly in lessening Stead’s hold on the general public was his absorption in Spiritualism” (Richards, 306). The many claims by devotees to have received diverse forms of communication from or about Stead after his drowning, including a second automatic book from “Julia” describing the editor’s arrival on the other side (see Eckley, 181-82), have clearly not served to enhance his posthumous reputation. But, if the published “Letters from Julia” provide less than convincing evidence of their origin in the

Tab. 1. Stead's "Letters from Julia," published in volume (1907)* and/or in his periodicals (mainly *Borderland*, 1893-97), arranged by indicated date of transmission

#	Volume Section	Chapter Title(s) in Volume	Vol. pp.	Trans. Date	Article Title(s) in Periodical	Periodical Issue, pp.
1	-	-	-	Jul-Sep. 1892	My Experience of Automatic Writing: Story of "Julia" and Others	<i>Borderland</i> 1:1, Jul. 1893, 39-44
2	-	-	-	Aug. [1892]	Record of Experiments in Telepathic Automatic Handwriting	<i>Review of Reviews</i> 7:4, Apr. 1893, 428-29
3		I Crossing the Bar	1-8	1892-1893	How I Began to Write	<i>Borderland</i> 1:1, Jul. 1893, 44-46
4		II The Surprises of the New Life	9-15	1892-1893	How I Began to Write	<i>Borderland</i> 1:1, Jul. 1893, 46-47
5	1st Series: To Her Friend ¶	III On the Bliss of Heaven	16-20	1892-1893	How I Began to Write	<i>Borderland</i> 1:1, Jul. 1893, 47
6		IV On Mourning for the Dead	21-26	?	-	-
7		V The Law of Spiritual Growth	27-34	Jun. 18, 1893	How I Began to Write	<i>Borderland</i> 1:1, Jul. 1893, 47-49
8	-	-	-	[Feb. 1894] in Chicago	Automatic Handwriting: Some Sources of Error	<i>Borderland</i> 1:4, Apr. 1894, 340-41
9		I After the Border has been Crossed	35-52	Dec. 17-25, 1894	Life on the Other Side: Letters from Julia	<i>Borderland</i> 2:7, Jan. 1895, 6-9
10		II Life on the Other Side	53-74	Mar. 10-31, 1895	Life on the Other Side: Letters from Julia (continued)	<i>Borderland</i> 2:8, Apr. 1895, 102-105
11		III How to Widen the Chinks	75-93	Sep. 18-27, 1896	Letters from "Julia": How to Widen the Chinks	<i>Borderland</i> 3:4, Oct. 1896, 386-90
12	2nd Series: To the Writer	IV The Use and Abuse of Spirit Communications	94-114 [94-102, 107-10] [102-7, 110-14]	Dec. 5-13, 1896 Dec. 12-20, 1896	Letters from the Other Side by "Julia" Letters from "Julia": (2) On the Proposed Bureau of the Borderland	<i>Borderland</i> 4:1, Jan. 1897, 7-9 4:4, Jul. 1897, 345-47
13		V The Open Door to the Open Secret	115-134	Mar. 14-18, 1897	A Message from "Julia": The Open Door to the Open Secret	<i>Borderland</i> 4:2, Apr. 1897, 118-22
14	Appendix: Notes on the Open Door to the Open Secret	Julia's Reply: (1) To Mr. Leadbeater (2) To Mr. Lock	168-171 [168-69] [169-71]	[early Apr.] 1897	Notes on the Message: Julia's Reply (1) To Mr. Leadbeater (2) To Mr. Lock	<i>Borderland</i> 4:2, Apr. 1897, 122-23 4:2, Apr. 1897, 123
15	Fragment	On Life Here and Hereafter	154-162	Apr. 12, 1897	-	-
16	2nd Series: To the Writer	VI On the Losing and Finding of the Soul	135-144	Jul. 12, 1897	Letters from the Borderland: "Julia" on the Losing and Finding of the Soul	<i>Borderland</i> 4:3, Jul. 1897, 230-32
17		VII Parting Words	145-153	Sep. 19, 1897	Letters from "Julia": (1) A Parting Word	<i>Borderland</i> 4:4, Oct. 1897, 343-44
18	Preface	[Byline: WTS, Moscow, October 10, 1905]	xv-xvi	[early] Oct. 1905	-	-

* *After Death: A Personal Narrative* (New York: John Lane, 1907)

¶ 1st Series: Chapters IV & V are in fact not addressed to "Ellen" but to another friend in mourning and to Stead himself, respectively

world of spirits, they also suggest that the aura of manuscript was not lost quite so precipitately on the invention of the writing machine. The mystical view of the “realm of the dead” common to Stead and his adherents, of course, contrasts starkly with Kittler’s materialist conception. But we also need to recognize that the German theorist’s own technological determinism cannot completely escape teleology. In their introduction to *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, the translators summarize Kittler’s approach to media studies: “Just as the formalist study of literature should be the study of ‘literariness,’ the study of media should concern itself primarily with mediality and not resort to the usual suspects—history, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and literary and cultural studies—to explain how and why media do what they do.” (Kittler, xiv). Yet the creation of a significantly new media device does not automatically drive out the old, and the social and psychological consequences of such a change tend to be less than immediate. Clearly factors other than technological ones are involved. If, as Kittler suggests, the aura of manuscript withered following the appearance of the typewriter in the mid-1860s, it was during a similar period that celebrity autographs, along with the albums in which they were collected, became valuable commodities (Munby). In fact, as Adler shows, the Remington remained for many decades predominantly a device for commercial rather than personal use. Despite the editor’s telepathic bent, Stead’s own office had the latest business machines. According to Richards (125), “There were typewriters. I had not seen such a machine before. There were also young ladies to operate them. I had no experience of women in business.” Lengthy secretarial training remained necessary for the typewriter’s efficient usage in what was long denigrated as women’s work: that is, the male executive was in charge of the message and the female typist acted as medium. Indeed, even in the developed world many households did not own a device with a QWERTY keyboard before the personal computer boom of the 1980s, and until that period at least the handwriting of personal documents such as letters and diaries remained the norm; at the same time, the use of typewriters for school compositions was much less prevalent in the rest of the anglophone world than in the United States (Cothran & Mason).

It remains unclear why Kittler sees the invention of machines for registering sound and movement as entailing the complete withdrawal of books from “the realm of the dead,” rather than their simply forming powerful rivals as storage media. Strangely, in support of his point Kittler cites the ancient Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, whose works preceded the codex, as advancing the far less radical claim that “it is no longer only through writing that the dead remain in the memory of the living” (Kittler, 10). Even today, well over thirty years after *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* was first published, when “movies and music, phone calls and texts” can indeed all “reach households via optical fiber cables” (Kittler, 1), far from all reading experiences take place on digital networked

devices. Amazon still distributes many more paper than Kindle editions—indeed the gap may be widening (“The Future of the Book”)—while the continuing popularity of the Portable Document Format (PDF) suggests that, even if periodical publication in analogue form may not have much of a future, the linear sequential structure of pagination, first introduced in the codex, has put down deep psychological roots. The strange case of W.T. Stead rather suggests that cultural continuity can exist side by side with technological cleavage.

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