

# **How To Make the Spirit-Being Stand on the Ground**

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## Abstract

*How To Make the Spirit-Being Stand on the Ground* focuses on the electronic voice phenomenon (EVP) experiments conducted by Latvian parapsychologist Konstantin Raudive, who was active in the latter half of the 20th century. This thesis aims to explore the relationship between the mediums necessary for communicating with spirits and the immaterial entities themselves. EVP follows the historical trajectory of spiritualism, which began with the human mediumship of the Fox sisters in 18th century America and later evolved into a part of mainstream culture through technological advancements like Morse code. Raudive's EVP experiments capture the voices of immaterial entities using material devices such as tape recorder, involving various processes of recording and replaying these voices and conversations. Technology enables the recording and repetitive playback of spirit voices, allowing humans to experience them without relying solely on physical senses or memory. Through this case study, I aim to explore the illusion evoked by the tape recorder in Raudive's experiments—namely, the illusion of disembodied spirits that seem alive by being externally stored and reproduced. I investigate the role of the tape recorder in Raudive's supernatural experiments, particularly how it invokes the "liveness" of beings that no longer physically exist.

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## 0. Introduction: Spiritualism as a channel for communication

At the *Sonic Process: A New Geography of Sounds* exhibition held at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2002, American artist Mike Kelley and musician Robin Rimbaud presented an intermedia installation that paid musical homage to the pioneers of electronic voice phenomenon (EVP). The term EVP refers to *voices*, generally assumed to be those of the dead, discovered in ambient audio recordings.<sup>1</sup> Without using any traditional instruments or conventional sounds, the installation showcased a series of documentary recordings of visual and acoustic environments from various locations in Paris believed to possess supernatural qualities.<sup>2</sup> Mike Kelley noted that Friedrich Jürgenson and Konstantin Raudive diverged from the 19th century pioneers of spiritualism in that they replaced the human medium—a conduit for the voices of the dead—with electronic devices. Kelley regarded this shift, aimed at removing subjective human intervention, as a significant development.<sup>3</sup> From the modern perspective of a society increasingly replacing the material with the immaterial, what role do physical, space-occupying technological devices play in Raudive's experiments?

As Jeffrey Sconce states in his book *Haunted Media* (2000), “spiritualism was a philosophy that proposed the dead were in communication with the living through mediums who ‘channeled’ the spirit world”<sup>4</sup>, and began with mediums who used their own bodies to communicate with spirits. With the advent of technological advancements, electronic devices assumed the role of mediums connecting the living with the dead, giving rise to visible and audible entities. While spiritualism is often dismissed today as pseudoscience from a scientific and rational perspective, the human desire to see and hear what no longer exists remains powerful.

In Korea, there is a ghost called a *jibakryeong*, a spirit bound to a specific location, unable to leave even after death, and endlessly wandering within that space. I found the concept of a spirit emotionally tethered to the earthly plane, even after leaving its physical body, to be both deeply ironic and fascinating. This *jibakryeong* can be translated to the *Stone Tape Theory* in English, which posits that human emotions or trauma can imprint themselves onto inanimate objects, like stones, resulting in supernatural phenomenon that replay repetitively, much like a tape recorder. I was captivated by the idea that supernatural occurrences could be experienced repeatedly, and my interest in communication with immaterial entities through recording devices began here. How paradoxical and poetic it is that the immaterial spirit of a living could be connected to a material, inanimate object? If my body were no longer breathing but someone could revisit my voice and image from when I was alive, would I really be considered dead? Recording, preserving, and bringing the past into the present—what role does technology play in defining what it means to be

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<sup>1</sup> Kelley, M., & Scanner. (2002, May 7). *Esprit de Paris*. Bandcamp. <https://scanner.bandcamp.com/album/esprits-de-paris>

<sup>2</sup> This work is an intermedia installation featuring 12 screens mounted on a wooden structure. The visual elements of the piece reference the original recording events that took place in “mysterious” historical locations, while also projecting images filmed in a club filled with dancing people. This approach maintains a connection to both spiritualism and pop culture, offering a contemporary perspective.

<sup>3</sup> Kelley, Mike. “An Academic Cut-Up, in Easily Digestible Paragraph-Size Chunks; Or, the New King of Pop: Dr. Konstantin Raudive.” *Grey Room*, no. 11 (2003): 23–43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1262621>

<sup>4</sup> Sconce, Jeffrey. *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. - p.24



alive? When the subject recorded by an electronic device exists only as a record beyond its tangible, material form, which one can be truly identified as the real subject?

Konstantin Raudive, a Latvian parapsychologist active in the 1960s, made the unheard voices of spirits audible through repeated playback on a tape recorder, bringing into existence what did not exist before. By preserving these recordings, he allowed that the voices of spirits could still reach my ears today. He archived his conversations with these voices into text, publishing them in books. The processes of recording, playback, documentation, and preservation in his research further expand the concept of repetition, a central element of his experiments. This is precisely what differentiates his work from other spiritualist experiments and discoveries, highlighting the characteristics of electronic devices. The preservation and reactivation of spirits' voices require technological devices, enabling humans to relive the same moments endlessly without relying on memory. As acoustic ecologist R. Murray Schafer stated, "hearing is a way of touching at a distance," and it can also be considered as a way of touching across time.<sup>5</sup> Among sensory experiences, hearing someone's voice is an especially intimate act because it requires physical proximity and a closing of distance. Furthermore, recording and replaying a voice is, in a sense, an act of defying time. By resurrecting what is no longer alive, Raudive sets these voices back on solid ground, reanimating them in the here and now.

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<sup>5</sup> Donnelly, Kevin J, and Aimee Mollaghan. *Haunted Soundtracks: Audiovisual Cultures of Memory, Landscape and Sound*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. - p.2

# 1. Material: Spiritualism mainstreamed by technology

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## 1.1 Konstantin Raudive: The Master of Tape-recording Experiments

In 1964, Konstantin Raudive encountered Friedrich Jürgenson's book *Voices from Space*, which had been released in Stockholm. Jürgenson, a Swedish opera singer and painter, published this work to document his methodology for capturing voices originating from what he described as a realm beyond the physical world, in his research on electronic voice phenomenon also known as EVP. Raudive, who had been deeply engrossed throughout his life in questions surrounding death and the possibility of existence beyond, reached out to Jürgenson, eventually deciding to collaborate on the investigation of his findings. In the early phases of their jointly conducted experiments, with ears not yet trained, Raudive struggled to discern recognisable voices. However, on June 10, 1965, at 9:30 PM, after participating in several experiments and becoming familiar with the voices on the tape recorder, he successfully recorded a distinct voice. In the recording, he heard a female voice asking him, "Konstantin, do you know Margarete?" — a phrase that left a profound impression on Raudive. Margarete was his close acquaintance who had worked as the secretary for his wife, Dr. Zenta Maurina, for many years, and her death from cancer had significantly impacted both Raudive and Maurina. This coincidence provided Raudive with sufficient motivation to pursue a rigorous investigation into this parapsychological phenomenon. By June 1965, to determine whether the voices of spirits could be heard due to Jürgenson's presence, he began conducting independent experiments without Jürgenson's mediation. To give a clear account on the experimentation, let's look into the recording session in which Raudive attempted to engage in a conversation with Margarete, one of the 72,000 voices he claimed to have successfully recorded.<sup>6</sup>

On 10th February 1966, at 1:45 in the morning, exactly one year after Margarete's passing, he proceed on a recording which brought astonishing results.

Raudive: "Hallo, hallo, Margarete! This is the exact hour of your death a year ago."

**A female voice: "One mustn't act like this."**

**A female voice: "Konstantin, number one, our Konstantin."**

Raudive: "God help my Margarete."

**A female voice: "What for? On the lawn."**

**A female voice: "You pray for me, you believing. You wild one."**

**A male voice: "Margarete stands by your chair. She despairs. Give her kiss immediately!"**

Raudive: "I wish to establish contact with Margarete."

**A female voice: "That's right, I am."**

**A female voice: "Help, help ... look at me. Yes, help me."**

Raudive: "I pray for you, Margarete."

**A female voice: "Kost ... Konstantin, put on shoes!"**

**A male voice: "The girl grew up outside."**

**A female voice: "Good evening to you. I wish to drink your wine."**

**A female voice: "Love, love her – love her!"**

**A female voice: "Here I stand week in, week out. Help Jürgens ... tidy. Be gracious."**

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<sup>6</sup> Out of 72,000 recorded voices, 25,000 have been established and indisputably proved to exist; and these have been deciphered and verified by various participants in experimental listening-in tests.

The recording was conducted using a microphone,<sup>7</sup> and Raudive primarily used a Telefunken 2-track machine with two speeds along with BASF tapes.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the session, a few faint voices pass by almost inaudibly. Raudive had to replay the recordings multiple times to hear the voices, and as a result, voices that were initially inaudible gradually became perceptible. During the recording session, Raudive was able to hear both female and male voices, made possible by the tape recorder's capability of repeated playback.

The recording session took place approximately eight months after Raudive first began his experiments in June 1965. The coincidence of hearing Margaret's name during a session and her recent passing due to an illness motivated Raudive to investigate this phenomenon further. After he has acquired further experience,<sup>9</sup> he listened to his early tapes again, and found that there were in fact a number of voices of spirits. Raudive was fascinated by the idea of communicating with spirits, and his passion for exploring supernatural phenomenon was able to be tested in a non-human and objective way because of technological devices that had become accessible in everyday life.



**Fig.1** Konstantin Raudive and his electronic devices

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<sup>7</sup> The conversation of this recording is transcribed in his book *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*, on page 48.

<sup>8</sup> Raudive used a combination of various electronic devices, including equipment from other experimenters. Based on the experimental photographs of Raudive, it can be assumed that one of the tape recorders he used appears to be a portable Magnetophon released by the Telefunken brand in the early 1960s. Telefunken produced reel-to-reel tape recorders from 1954 to 1980, which were manufactured in Germany.

<sup>9</sup> Raudive conducted his experiments for about 10 years, from 1965 to 1974, and it took him approximately three months to train his ears to hear the voices of spirits.

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## 1.2 Materiality in spiritualism

In Raudive's experiments, unlike many mediums who are considered to possess such ability, the human body alone was not sufficient to hear the voices of spirits. To study electronic voice phenomenon, he actively utilised various technological devices such as microphone, radio, and antenna. Examples of using such materiality can be easily found in modern spiritualism as well. The history of medium reception has shown that from its modernist advent onwards, the dead has achieved to express themselves through all sorts of vocal technology, such as electronic devices, material objects, from trumpet to telephone, television or tape, and all these media have supported medium to finally access the voices of dead. Thus, it is already quite well-known that the history of spiritualism is closely tied to invention and technology.

One of the most famous example dates around 1844, when Samuel Morse publicly debuted Morse code. Morse code is a communication method composed solely of dots and dashes, creating an international system that could be transmitted through telegraphy device made of metal or magnets.<sup>10</sup> It enabled communication through immaterial elements such as light, sound, and voice by means of the tangible electric telegraph, allowing messages from entities not physically present to be transmitted more quickly across physical distances. On this similitude, cultural historian of film Jeffrey Sconce underlined in his book *Haunted Media* (2000) the fact that “conceptually energised by Morse’s new technology, spiritual telegraphy gave voice to previously ‘invisible’ beings, be they ghosts or women, whose consciousness could flow through the medium’s magical wire and into the public world’s material arena.”<sup>11</sup> This facilitated communication with invisible entities horizontally across the seas and, furthermore, became a model of vertical channel for communication with the deceased in modern spiritualism.

In spiritualism, it is not difficult to find demonstrations involving physical objects such as séance tables or Ouija boards, and even those related to the human body. Spiritualism was particularly popular in 19th century America, where the Fox sisters, Margaretta and Catherine, succeeded their career as mediums in Rochester, New York. On 14 November 1849, the Fox sisters first demonstrated their spiritualist through repeated acts of rapping or knocking and made the inaudible voices of spirits audible as if they were speaking through Morse code.<sup>12</sup> The connection between the Fox sisters and Morse code lies in their use of a simple communication method composed of two different rhythms, like dots and dashes, representing short and long signals. Although electronic communication may not be the direct origin of spiritualism, its power influenced spiritual and supernatural interventions in communication, much like Morse code was used as part of communication in séances.

Modern spiritualism began to take hold in mainstream culture from the 19th century through the early 20th century as technology advanced. Moving beyond the period when communication with spirits relied on the medium’s own body, a new era of electronic communication emerged,

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<sup>10</sup> In 1832, Morse met the American scientist Charles Thomas Jackson and discovered the concept of the single-wire telegraph.

<sup>11</sup> Sconce, Jeffrey. *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. - p.14

<sup>12</sup> The Fox sisters heard unexplained rapping sounds in the house where they lived and began to mimic and play along with them. One day, the youngest sister, Kate, clapped her hands three times, saying, “Here, Mr. Split-foot, do as I do.” Shortly afterward, three rapping sounds were heard in response. This marked the beginning of the Fox sisters’ communication with an unknown presence through rapping and knocking sounds.

exemplified by figures like Thomas Edison. Edison is an essential figure among those who maintained a relentless interest in communicating with spirits. In October 1920, he revealed in an interview with *Forbes* magazine that he was working on creating a "spirit phone" that would allow the living to communicate with the dead. Edison stated that he had been developing this device to see if individuals who had departed the Earth could connect with those who remained. He argued that when humans die, they continue to exist in another form and place.<sup>13</sup>

Spiritualism, originating from mediumship using the body as a medium, developed into the idea that communication with spirits could be achieved through technological means. By partially satisfying humanity's desire to glimpse the world beyond death through technological advancements, spiritualism became part of mainstream culture. Particularly after World War I, when many family members in America experienced physical separation for the first time, there arose a need for wireless communication technologies that could connect them to those across the ocean. The trauma of war further fuelled a proliferation of stories about ghosts, clairvoyance, and spiritual phenomenon, which eventually evolved into the concept of psychic telegraphy.<sup>14</sup> Technological devices helped foster the belief that a connection to the afterlife was possible, merging scientific invention with metaphysical questions. The fact that one must rely on the visible power of technology to connect with invisible, immaterial entities is, in a way, paradoxical. Raudive also had a deep interest in post-mortem manifestations for 25 years and was passionate about exploring the boundaries between life and death, as well as life after death. His experiments required meticulous and step-by-step processes, and I plan to analyse them in three parts. In the next chapter, I will talk about the perspective of the listener—living individuals who hear the voices of the dead—and how they should approach the experiments.

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<sup>13</sup> Tablang, Kristin. *Thomas Edison, B.C. Forbes And The Mystery Of The Spirit Phone*. Forbes. 28 October 2019. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kristintablang/2019/10/25/thomas-edison-bc-forbes-mystery-spirit-phone/>.

<sup>14</sup> Sconce, Jeffrey. *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. - p.74

## 2. Listener: How to listen to the dead

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### 2.1 The mindset and listening skills required

When Raudive first listened to Jürgenson's recordings, he and his wife, Zenta Maurina, could hear the ordinary tape noise but couldn't identify what those sounds were. They had to train their ears by repeatedly listening to the same recordings in order to hear the voices. Additionally, it was considered advisable to maintain an emotionally neutral state when starting experiments with electronic voice phenomenon. Being overly emotional or having a desperate desire to reconnect with someone who no longer exists is not the ideal mental state for conducting such experiments. A balanced and open-minded approach, free from emotional bias or intense longing, is essential for objectivity and for obtaining clearer, more reliable results in the experiments. According to British parapsychologist Richard K. Sheargold's *Hints on Receiving the Voice Phenomenon* (1973), "the 'right' persons to experiment the EVP are those with level heads and lively minds; possessing good average hearing and—preferably—some electronic knowledge",<sup>15</sup> such as adjusting microphone frequencies, connecting radio circuits, etc. Raudive also tried to approach his experiments with as objective a mindset as possible, and indeed, in his book *Breakthrough* (1971), he remarks that "whilst listening-in one should try, as far as possible, not to be emotionally affected by what one hears and to keep one's own feelings, thoughts and wishes well under control."<sup>16</sup> Since electronic voice phenomenon research is based on electronic devices, the way the experimenter interprets the sounds delivered by the device is crucial.

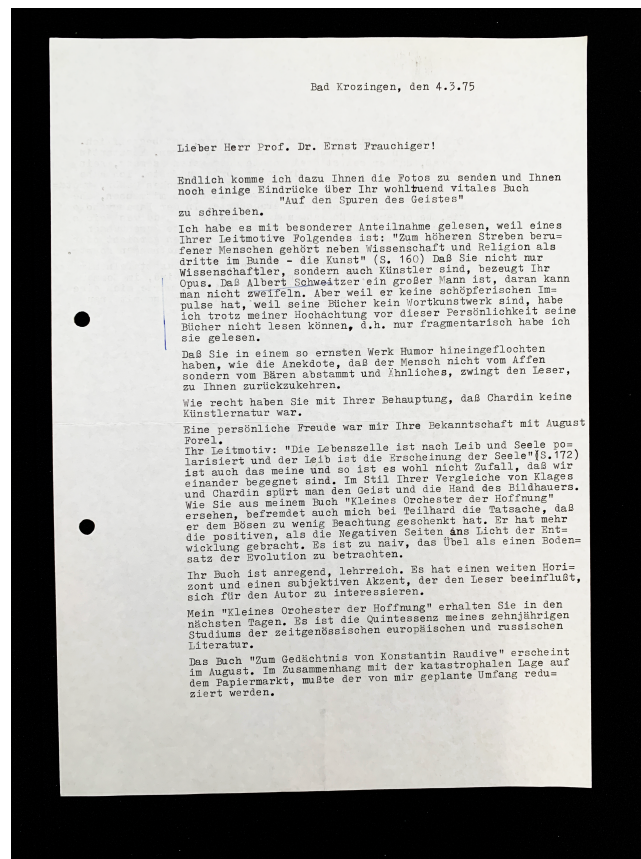
The clarity and accuracy of the voices heard on the tape depend on who is listening and with what kind of attention and mindset. Even Raudive could only hear many voices after carefully listening to the same recording repeatedly. In a letter dated March 4, 1975,<sup>17</sup> written in Bad Krozingen by Raudive's wife, Maurina, to Swiss neurologist Professor Ernst Frauchiger, she mentions that it also took Konstantin three months to hear the voices himself. (Fig 2.1 and 2.2) Despite his excellent hearing, he had to go through numerous sessions before he could discern meaningful words. All of this is made possible by the ability to repeatedly listen to the recorded voices through a tape recorder. Thus, while these voices may already be recorded on the tape, their presence is audibly revealed depending on how many times the experimenter listens and how trained their ear is in detecting them.

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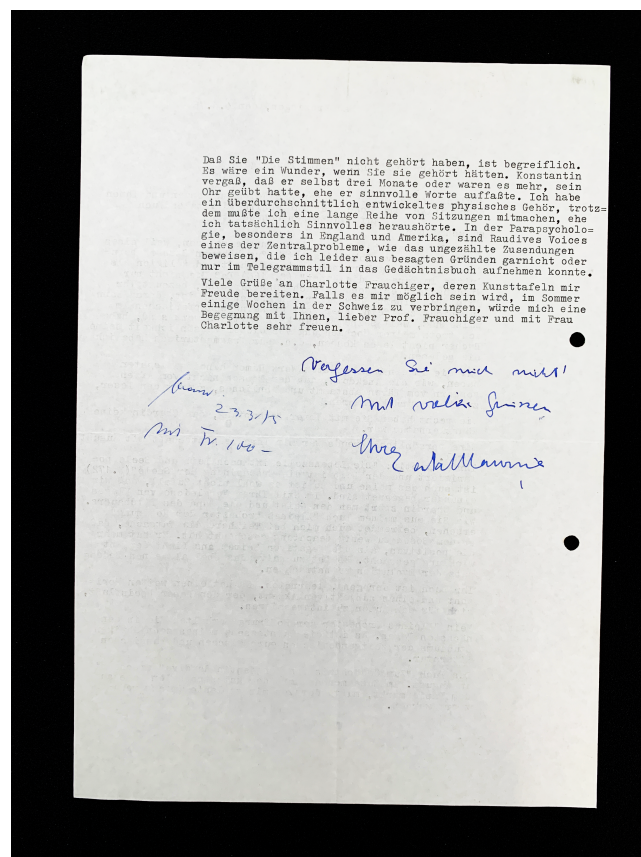
<sup>15</sup> Sheargold, Richard K.. *Hints on Receiving the Voice Phenomenon*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1973. - Chapter PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

<sup>16</sup> Raudive, Konstantīns, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.32

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Zenta Maurina and the neurology professor Ernst Frauchiger often exchanged letters with each other.



**Fig.2-1** The front side of Zenta Maurina's letter to Professor Ernst Frauchiger, dated March 4, 1975.



**Fig.2-2** The back side of Zenta Maurina's letter to Professor Ernst Frauchiger, dated March 4, 1975.

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## 2.2 Distinguishing the voice of spirit

Raudive categorises audibility of voices into three levels, A, B and C. Group A consists of voices that are audible to anyone with normal listening abilities and a basic understanding of the spoken language. Group B features voices that speak a bit faster and more smoothly, which can be heard clearly by those with listening skills honed through practice and a trained ear. However, since the process of repeatedly listening to the same sound and identifying the voices within it is slow and tedious, participants who do not regularly take part in the experiments may find it difficult to hear the voices in Group B. Group C is the most intriguing group of voices, as these sounds often fall beyond the typical range of hearing, and appear fragmented rather than forming complete sentences, even to those with trained ears. Voices in this group sometimes reference objects present at the experimental site, predict the future, or make statements speculating about the past. Raudive noticed that “their sentences are compressed, the meaning is usually obscure, and in all languages used grammatical rules are ignored”;<sup>18</sup> for instance, the German word “binde,” meaning “to bind,” becomes “bindu,” a compound of “bind” and “du,” the German word for “thou” in English. According to Raudive, the most interesting and paranormal information comes from the C level voices, and most of the spirit’s speeches transcribed in his book are either B or C level voices.<sup>19</sup>

Despite developing exceptional listening skills during a decade of exploring electronic voice phenomenon, Raudive never relied solely on his own ears to interpret the voices. He would always make his own notes and interpretations of the recordings and then hold a second listening session with other participants from different background – physicists, psychologists and electronic experts, as well as doctors and representatives of the church. This session took longer than Raudive’s initial interpretation, allowing participants to freely share their interpretations without seeing his notes. The primary challenge in Raudive’s experiments was the interpretation of the voices. Even clear and distinct voices sometimes led to differing opinions among the participants. As Raudive says “the radio’s humming may be transformed into words, and a blurred shout may sound like a name, but these errors can be eliminated in time, because everything recorded on tape can be repeated until the ear is sufficiently well-trained to make sharp, accurate distinctions”,<sup>20</sup> the participants had to listen to Raudive’s recordings multiple times, engaging in a very careful and thorough process of listening. Therefore, a sound that was inaudible the first time may become clear the second time, and what initially seemed like mere noise may begin to sound like a word or a name, because of the repeated playback enabled by the materiality of the tape recorder.

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<sup>18</sup> Raudive, Konstantīns, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.25

<sup>19</sup> A more detailed explanation of how spirits speak to Raudive and the kinds of things they usually say will be covered in Chapter 4.

<sup>20</sup> Raudive, Konstantīns, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.32



### 3. Recorder: Raudive's material recording

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#### 3.1 Electronic Voice Phenomenon

Why did Raudive become interested in electronic voice phenomenon among the many material methods of contacting spirits? The most intriguing aspect of EVP is that voices which were inaudible during recording can be heard during playbacks. EVP is often found within white noise,<sup>21</sup> and was accidentally discovered by opera singer and artist Friedrich Jürgenson in the summer of 1959 while he was recording birds in his garden. He believed he heard his deceased mother saying, "Friedel, my little Friedel, can you hear me?" calling him by his childhood nickname, and he became convinced that it was her voice. Fascinated by this experience, Jürgenson began researching EVP and in 1964, he published a book on the subject titled *Voices from Space*. Inspired by Jürgenson's work, Latvian parapsychologist Konstantin Raudive began his own EVP experiments.

So, how did Raudive's approach to investigating this phenomenon differ from that of other parapsychologists? The supernatural phenomenon observed in Raudive's experiments are based on two key characteristics of EVP. First, the experiments are conducted through audio recordings, and second, the voices of spirits become audible through repeated playback. Raudive's methods were not a form of real-time communication like a telephone. During an EVP session, the experimenter asks questions while recording, and only upon playback does the spirit's voice become audible alongside the original recording. Therefore, complete silence is essential, as any noise could interfere with the recording. Additionally, EVP allows for repeated playback of voices through electronic recording devices, and Raudive always held a separate interpretation session following each recording session. Since interpretations could vary subjectively depending on the listener, he emphasised that repeated listening of the same recording was necessary to ensure accurate and objective interpretation.

Raudive's claim that he had contacted spiritual entities, or the deceased, through tape recordings may sound irrational. However, he argued that the technical devices he used in his experiments—tape recorders, radios, and microphones—were impersonal in their function and simply conveyed facts, thus making the objectivity of the results indisputable. Raudive stated that "it is necessary to stress that the verification of the voices depends on repetition, and the ear cannot hear the voices without technical aids. Tape-recorder and microphone are as essential for the investigator of the voice-phenomenon as microscope and telescope are for the natural scientist and the astronomer."<sup>22</sup> In this way, technological electronic devices played an indispensable role in Raudive's experiments. By using a tape recorder, he made it possible for sounds to be played back repeatedly, and through this repeated playback, he was able to hear the voices of spirits.

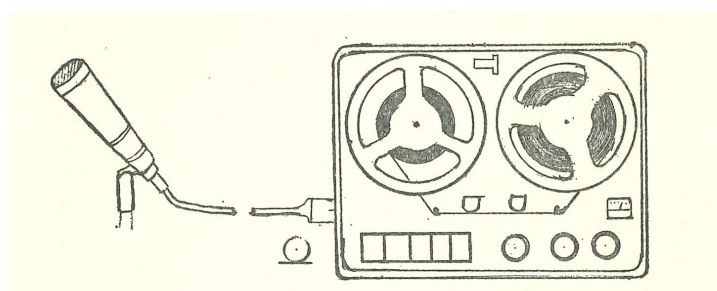
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<sup>21</sup> White noise is a random signal with equal intensity across different frequencies, used in 'inter-frequency' method. This type of signal sounds like a hissing noise to the human ear, resembling a continuous aspirated /h/ sound. Raudive's different recording methods will be treated in next chapter.

<sup>22</sup> Raudive, Konstantīns, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.18

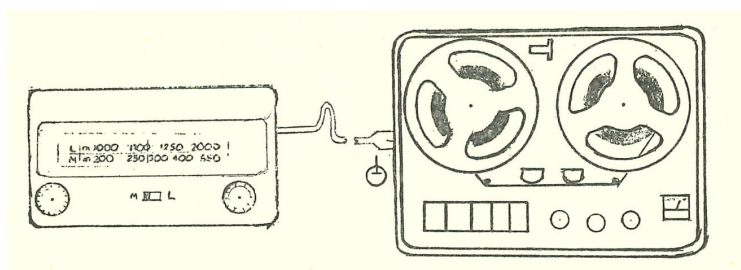
## 3.2 Raudive's different recording methods

To conduct an EVP experiment, certain physical and material elements were to be needed. Among the various recording methods he used, the microphone was used for recording sound vibrations such as voice or music or any sound in a room; it is connected to the tape recorder which is set for ordinary recording. Sound waves are picked up by the microphone which converts them into electronic impulses. These are amplified in the tape recorder and passed through the recording head which gives out a magnetic impulse. Microphone-voices is very soft, quick as lightning, and often drowned or made unintelligible by voices of people talking part in the experiment. Therefore, the participants are encouraged to speak slowly, quietly, and to take time to pause.



**Fig. 3-1** Illustration of microphone recording method in *Breakthrough* (1971)

Another method he used is radio recording, which involves using a portable radio to find an empty frequency which is also called inter-frequency,<sup>23</sup> that is not used by a radio station. However, it is almost impossible to find a wave length which is not being used by a radio station. A true inter-frequency would be where nothing but a general atmospheric static noise is audible, and this noise is then fed into the tape recorder. An interesting aspect of this method is that once a voice is generated, its speed can only be altered after it has been recorded. This implies that the voice of a spirit, which often speaks faster than a typical human, is captured in its original, unaltered speed. Friedrich Jürgenson maintains in his book *Voices from Space* that “no radio-voice recordings can be made without a ‘mediator’”.<sup>24</sup> If the experimenter is relying on this “mediator”, one has to listen carefully for a voice that will hiss ‘Now’, or ‘Make recording!’, or some such



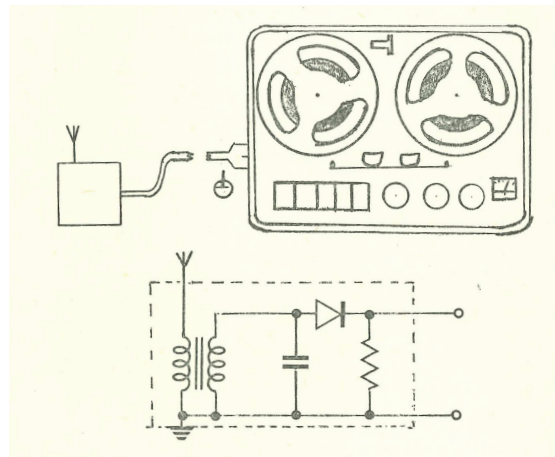
**Fig. 3-2** Illustration of radio recording method in *Breakthrough* (1971)

<sup>23</sup> It is not known exactly which radio model Raudive used, but according to David J. Ellis's book *\*The Mediumship of the Tape Recorder\**, it can be inferred that he often used a portable Radio Riga.

<sup>24</sup> Raudive, Konstantīns, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.22

hint.<sup>25</sup> Afterwards, when the tape is being played back, all extraneous noises resulting from radio-transmissions have to be carefully eliminated, so that possible voices may be discerned.

Since April 1968, two new recording-methods have been developed in co-operation with physics professor Alex Schneider.<sup>26</sup> First, there is the frequency-transmitter recording method. This method removes noise from the radio and microphone, responding only to the carrier frequency used to send a particular signal over long distances. Thus, voices recorded with this method have good audibility and are not disturbed by other frequencies. Second, there is diode recording method which requires a slightly more complex setup than previous ones. The antenna length must be precisely adjusted to 6-8 cm, and the vibrations sent by the voices are received by this antenna. The voices received this way are most similar to typical human voices, allowing even untrained or unprepared listeners to hear them without much difficulty. The result of diode recording gives the impression that the voices are speaking directly onto the tape, with remarkably clear pronunciation and immediate reception, free from atmospheric interference.



**Fig. 3-3** Illustration of diode recording method in *Breakthrough* (1971)

But whether Raudive uses microphone, radio, or other methods of recording, the voices always keep the same rhythm, the same peculiarities of speech. Thus, the voice phenomenon is closely linked to radio waves that generate an electromagnetic field within the physical world,<sup>27</sup> and in Raudive's experiments, the recorder acts as an indispensable medium connecting electromagnetic waves and sound waves. Therefore, the voices of spirits can only be conveyed to the experimenter through the medium of sound waves with the aid of the recorder.

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<sup>25</sup> The content regarding the mediator will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

<sup>26</sup> Alex Schneider was a professor in physics in St. Gallen, Switzerland. He heard 95 percent of the 350 voices he listened to.

<sup>27</sup> "Electromagnetic fields within us continually make music or speeches—and perhaps these voices from 'beyond' also cry out for contact within us and we fail to hear them. Many things are inaudible to our unaided ears, but a sensitive radio or microphone receives these subtle vibrations and creates electromagnetic fields on tape which are transformed into sound-waves and made audible." - Raudive, Konstantins, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.24

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### 3.3 Process of recording

Let's take a closer look at Raudive's experimental process. First, the tape recorder is set to "record" mode, and the session leader might begin, for example by stating the date. They can then continue by mentioning the names of participants and calling the names of deceased friends or acquaintances. The person who conducts the experiment is free to say whatever they like, ask questions, or specify what they wish to learn. While there is no guarantee that the spirit of the person called upon will appear on the recording, it may still be possible to obtain some information about them. Recording sessions should ideally not exceed 10 to 15 minutes, as analysing the received voices may take several hours. The best time for recording is late at night to early morning, as there are fewer radio broadcasts during these hours, which minimises the effect of radio frequencies. For the recorded voices to be considered reliable as paranormal phenomenon, there must be no interference.

When the recorded tape is played back, the experimenter listens carefully to capture the spirit voices that emerge amidst the white noise. This process requires very precise and repetitive work. In each recording, the experimenter focuses on addressing specific individuals, as this approach allows each person called upon at intervals to respond in the same voice and retain the same characteristic features in their statements. However, it is difficult to maintain a consecutive dialogue, as other voices, eager to express themselves, tend to break into the conversation. Since each participant may hear different languages or voices, it is essential to interpret the results objectively. Raudive documented each fragment of voice discovered during his experiments, noting its original language and the position on the tape where it was found. For example, "38g : 547" would mean the green track of reel 38, with reference number 547 on the recorder's revolution counter.

In the recording process, there are sometimes voices that appear to assist. During the experiment of Jürgenson, turning to the right wavelength was effected with the help of a guide called Lena; he turned the dial and she whispered 'Now' at the appropriate point. Raudive was able to hear Jürgenson's mysterious mediator on one of his tapes. She asked him to wait for recording til 9 p.m; hints about people and events also came through in her strangely hissing voice. Raudive had to wait six months before such a mediator appeared on his tapes. It was at the end of 1965 when at last he heard a voice reply to his query as to who his mediator might be. It said 'Spidola' as its name, spoken in Group B audibility. Then a male voice added in Latvian; "We have heard. The Latvians will help you."<sup>28</sup>

As we follow Raudive's experimental process, it can be confusing to discern whether the voices are actually speaking to him or if he is merely eavesdropping on spirits conversing among themselves. This is because the extensive effort required to hear the voices suggests that the spirits may not be particularly cooperative in their communication. Why don't the spirits use a clearer method of communication or repeat their words to make themselves heard more distinctly? The answer may lie in the fact that communication is inherently a challenging task. With that in mind, let's explore what the voices interpreted by Raudive are actually saying.

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<sup>28</sup> Raudive, Konstantīns, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.23

## 4. Speaker: Immaterial voices from the other side

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### 4.1. immaterial speaking

How do spirits respond to questions, and how do they interact with Raudive? Through repeated experiments, Raudive identified and categorised the number of voices he conversed with. It became evident that the same voices responded with distinct intervals, and each voice maintained its unique characteristics.<sup>29</sup> For instance, Raudive frequently called upon his mother during almost every recording session, and responses were often given in a female voice. An interesting aspect of his experiments is that the voices frequently made statements suggesting a distinction between this world and the other world. They often used terms like “bridge,” “custom,” or “crossing,” evoking the idea of transitioning from one place to another. The voices also used expressions to affirm their existence, saying things like, “We are alive,” “I see,” or “I am here,” thus confirming their presence and existence. These voices reinforce the notion that humans do not live only in this world but go through multiple lives.

The voices heard in Raudive’s experiments are distinctly different from those of living people. Spirit voices speak very quickly and often mix multiple languages within a single sentence—sometimes up to four or five languages, including Latvian, German, Swedish, English, Spanish, and Russian. Generally, the language spoken by the spirits aligns with the one most familiar to the experimenter, often their mother tongue. For example, when Raudive conducted experiments, the primary language was Latvian, while during Friedrich Jürgenson’s experiments the spirits primarily used Swedish or Italian. Dr. Zenta Maurina, after participating in Raudive’s experiments multiple times, wrote the following: “At first one has the impression that these voices do not know how to speak properly. They sound as if they were stumbling through alien languages they have not mastered.”<sup>30</sup> Raudive also claimed that spirits speak in phonemes arranged within sentences, which is why they sometimes omit letters or speak in grammatically incorrect sentences.

In this way, the voices of spirits, made audible through the power of technology, speak and attempt to converse in ways distinct from humans. The experiments conducted by Raudive and his collaborators were highly systematic and detailed. The experimental process reflected an interconnected dynamic of statements and counter-statements, questions and answers, agreements and disagreements, helping to recognise a world that exists independently of the living and operates according to its own rules. The recording devices he used added depth and substance to what might otherwise be dismissed as just noise, enabling immaterial entities to be heard audibly.

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<sup>29</sup> Contrary to Raudive’s intention, numerous uninvited politicians or dictators would occasionally appear during recording sessions. Among them, Adolf Hitler displayed a personality in his spirit voice that was strikingly similar to his traits in life, characterised by a sense of self-glorification and a desire to pushing himself forward. – Raudive, Konstantīns, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.88

<sup>30</sup> Raudive, Konstantīns, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.313

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## 4.2. The meaning embedded in mediated voices

Voice phenomenon are not merely an adjunct to spiritualism but constitute the primary subject of Raudive's experiments. In his work, the focus is not only on the voices themselves but also on the characteristic of recording devices, the interpretation of unknown languages, and collective research with like-minded individuals. The tape recorder method used by Raudive gives form to the unseen and voice to the unheard, with its form subjectively changing depending on what one expects and brings into the experiment. It holds the ability to capture and preserve the immaterial, allowing the same sounds to be heard repeatedly.

Additionally, Raudive's experiments are closely tied to the concept of time. The recorded voices can be replayed multiple times, requiring a certain amount of time for listening, and there is also a temporal delay in his experiments. Since Raudive's experiments rely on recording methods, there is a time gap between the moment when the spirits speak and the moment their voices are heard. At the time of recording, Raudive cannot hear the voices. The voices become perceptible only when the recordings are played back, emerging through Raudive's listening skills and the mediation of technology, creating yet another layer of temporal difference. Therefore, the moment when the spirit speaks coincides with the moment of recording, not with the moment of replaying. This cyclical timeline reflects the indispensable role of the tape recorder in Raudive's experiments. The continuous movement of the tape between two reels to record or play sound symbolises the linear flow of time, acting as a device that visually manifests the passage of physical time. When the tape reaches its end, it can be rewound and replayed from the beginning, reflecting the cyclicity of time and the possibility of revisiting the past or reconstructing memories. The phenomenon of voices being played faster or slower depending on the tape's speed resembles altering the flow of time. This demonstrates that the tape recorder serves as a medium for experiencing the passage of time both visually and aurally.

Those who attempt electronic voice phenomenon experiments have a desire and expectation to hear something, enabling them to perceive the voices. According to Raudive, these voices always exist, and his tape recorder transforms pre-existing sounds into audible forms for humans. Thus, Raudive is not encountering the original sound but rather information mediated through electronic devices. Many things, including the voices of spirits, are inaudible to the human ear, but the sensitive electronic devices used in Raudive's experiments detect subtle vibrations and convert them into sound. Raudive's experimental process involves deeply intimate acts. Listening to the voices of spirits requires attention, proximity, and readiness to understand and accept what is being said. When technology brings unfamiliar voices from beyond the ordinary perceptual capabilities of humans into the present, and the presence of those voices is repeatedly revived, the dead moments of time left in the past are rewound like a tape.

## 5. Conclusion

Through *How To Make the Spirit-Being on the Ground*, I analyse the components of Raudive's experiments by their respective roles, emphasising the necessity of technical devices in the process of supernatural experimentation. The three key elements—listener, recorder, and speaker—each possess distinct materialities, existential grounds, and states of being, yet converge around electronic voice phenomenon. These technical devices transcend the limitations of human perception, making the unseen and unheard perceptible. They also enable the separation of the recorded subject from its physical form, allowing entities that are absent to be brought to life through the medium. *How To Make the Spirit-Being on the Ground* underscores how technology allows the subject to be experienced even in its absence, relieving reliance on the human body and memory alone.

In this case study, I examine the illusion evoked by the tape recorder—namely, the illusion of disembodied voices stored externally and reenacted as though the spirits themselves are *alive*. Raudive approaches these voices with a prepared mindset and a trained ear, carefully drawing out pre-existing voices through the medium of the recorder, making them perceptible only to those who listen with intention.

Just as the *Stone Tape Theory* explores the connection between material inanimate objects and immaterial emotions, Raudive employs tangible, visible medium to bring intangible and elusive entities closer to human perception. This reliance on technological devices to analyse phenomenon that defy scientific explanation is deeply paradoxical. Within this paradox, I believe there is a profound beauty inherent in the act of recording. Voices of the disembodied are resurrected from the past, audibly reconstructed, and repeatedly experienced, all because they have been captured and preserved by the tape recorder. Just as sound has no physical form and is invisible, the existence of spirits is also immaterial, yet they possess a force that fills space. The acts of calling, replaying, listening to, and recording these voices transport the experimenter and audience to a specific time and space.

After four months immersed in his extensive research, I would like to conclude with one of Raudive's quotes, in his book *Breakthrough* (1971).

*“One thing is clear even now: the voice-phenomenon offers the means to break through the confines of a purely physical existence, for it has breached the material barriers surrounding our world. Death is not final, so the voices assure us; it is but a transition to a new state of being, and the impressions we receive from the voice-entities allow us a glimpse of that farther shore to which we all must cross through death. No ‘eternal bliss’ awaits us there, but an intensely active new existence in which we feel and react much as we did on earth. Perhaps the day will dawn when a kind of ‘telephonic communication’ between the two worlds, such as Sir Oliver Lodge envisages, will become possible. I would like to close the chapter with a thought expressed by this great scientist: that we do not live in order to die; that humanity is still young and our knowledge of the mysteries of the universe still very limited; and that many a century may yet have to pass before mankind will be able to grasp the full meaning of life.”<sup>31</sup>*

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<sup>31</sup> Raudive, Konstantīns, and Joyce Morton. *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*. Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1971. - p.302

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