

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Psychic Sciences in France: Historial Notes on the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*

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Abstract—This paper is an overview of aspects of the French journal *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* (ASP, 1891–1919). The ASP was founded by Charles Richet and Xavier Dariex. The development of the journal was assisted both by the prestige and influence of Richet as a scientist and of Félix Alcan as a publisher. For the nineteenth-century period the journal emphasized cases and experiments over theories. Much of this was about spontaneous telepathy and physical mediumship. Some of the authors included in the pages of the ASP were Émile Boirac, Ernesto Bozzano, Albert de Rochas, Giovanni Battista Ermacora, Paul Joire, and Julian Ochorowicz. The journal provided a forum in France to argue about standards in psychical research, discuss controversies, and to bring in information on the topic from foreign countries. This included translations of the work of members of the Society for Psychical Research, such as Frederic W. H. Myers. In 1908 the ASP was affiliated with the Société Universelle d'Études Psychiques, becoming its official publication. The ASP was important in establishing standards and in providing a forum for the development of psychical research in France.

Keywords: *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*—French psychical research—history of psychical research—mediumship—Charles Richet

The March 1891 issue of the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* announced the forthcoming appearance of a French periodical—the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* (ASP)—to discuss psychical research “under the strictest conditions obtainable by accuracy and care” (*Annales des Sciences Psychiques* 1891:46). The ASP, discussed in recent writings (e.g., Alvarado, Biondi & Kramer 2006:67, Lachapelle 2011:88–91, Monroe 2008:207–209), represented an important effort in France to record and disseminate observations

and research related to psychic phenomena. In the current paper we will present additional information about the journal focusing on its content, orientation, publisher, and reception. While the journal was published between 1891 and 1919, in some parts of the paper we will focus on its nineteenth-century period. It is our hope that our discussion of the *ASP*, which is meant to present a panoramic view of the topic, will inform *JSE* readers of aspects of the history of French psychical research that may be difficult to study due to language barriers.

French Interest in Psychic Phenomena

By the time the *ASP* appeared, there was already a long history of French interest in mesmerism and spiritism.¹ These developments were instrumental in defending the existence of, and in popularizing, ideas such as the action of animal magnetism and spirits of the dead.

Physician and popular science writer Louis Figuier (1819–1894) summarized developments from antiquity to the mid-nineteenth century for the French public in his four-volume work *Histoire du Merveilleux dans les Temps Modernes* (1860). Figuier represented the skeptical position, arguing both for humankind's innate love and need for the "marvelous," and for explanations of magnetic and spiritistic manifestations assuming that the "lights of physiology and of medicine suffice" to explain the supposed mysteries (Figuier 1860, Vol. 1:XI). Others such as philologist Emile Littré (1801–1881) similarly reduced phenomena such as table turning and possession to a variety of manifestations showing the "weakening of the nervous system" (Littré 1856:871). In later years philosopher (later physician) Pierre Janet (1859–1947) discussed mediumship as an example of dissociation, as seen in his influential monograph *L'Automatisme Psychologique* (1889).²

But others took a different approach, explaining phenomena through forces said to be directed by discarnate (Kardec 1863) or human agency (De Gasparin 1854). Later in the century there was much positive interest and research on mental suggestion at a distance, as seen in physiologist Charles Richet's (1850–1935) classic paper in which, in addition to his celebrated use of statistical evaluation, he reported experiments with various methodologies, and discussed conceptual issues (Richet 1884, see also Alvarado 2008b). Richet, one of the founders of the *ASP*, became known during the nineteenth century for his important experimental studies of clairvoyance and related phenomena (Richet 1888, 1889) (see the photograph of Richet).³ Other observers documented examples of distant mental influences such as the induction of trance (Janet 1886), and the effects of drugs at a distance (Bourru & Burot 1887).

The impact of the mesmeric movement continued during the late part of the century, as seen in the writings of several individuals defending the reality of

animal magnetism (Alvarado 2009). A good example of this line of work was Alexandre Baréty's (1844–1918) *Le Magnétisme Animal: Étudié Sous le Nom de Force neurique Rayonnante et Circulante dans ses Propriétés Physiques, Physiologiques et Thérapeutiques* (1887).

From the early nineteenth century on there was a need to have periodicals for the discussion of unexplained phenomena (Alvarado, Biondi, & Kramer 2006). Examples of French responses to this need were the *Journal du Magnétisme* (started in 1845), and the *Revue Spirite* (started in 1858). In later years French physicians and others recorded their observations in scholarly and scientific journals such as the *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* (starting in 1876), and in the *Revue de l'Hypnotisme Expérimental & Thérapeutique* (starting in 1887, later the journal changed its title). The creation of the *ASP* provided French researchers with a specialized forum of discussion, and one modeled to some extent on the influential *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, published in London since 1882 (Alvarado, Biondi, & Kramer 2006:65–66).



CHARLES RICHEL

The *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*

Beginnings and Founding Principles

An important force behind the *ASP* was the above-mentioned Charles Richet. Although Richet was well-known for his scientific research in physiology, among other areas, he also was interested in scientific journalism and in the popularization of science. According to one biographer:

Richet immersed himself in this journalistic undertaking with great enthusiasm. He immensely enjoyed his work as an editor and, according to his grandson, Gabriel, he was as enthusiastic about journalism as about science. (Wolf 1993:56)

Richet had considerable experience as an editor since he edited the *Revue Scientifique* between 1880 and 1902. This was a semipopular science journal addressed to both educated laymen and scientists.

The *ASP* appeared in 1891, and was the joint project of Richet and Xavier Dariex, an ophthalmologist at the Hôpital des Quinze-Vingt in Paris. In some ways the *ASP* was a continuation of Richet's interest in disseminating scientific work in the pages of the *Revue Scientifique*, but this time the emphasis was psychical research. However, the initiative did not come from Richet himself but from Dariex. Initially, Richet was reluctant to get involved in the journal. He did not seem to have much regard for Dariex, whom he described as "a small

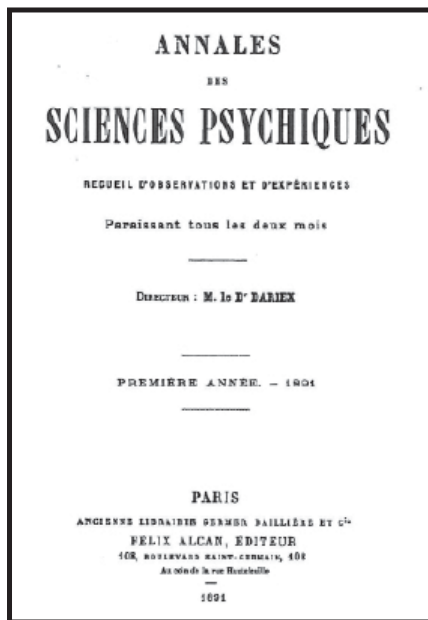
man, thin, timid, hesitant, and lacking in charm” (Richet, unpublished Mémoires, quoted by Wolf 1993:59). But collaboration ensued and the first issue of the journal appeared in 1891 (see photograph of title page).

Before the journal was published, Richet had been the general secretary of the Société de Psychologie Physiologique. This society had the famous neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893) as President, and its purpose was the examination of psychological phenomena, among them those of hypnosis and psychical research, following the model of the London-based Society for Psychical Research (SPR). But the Société de Psychologie Physiologique did not fully achieve its agenda and disappeared soon after having organized the International Congress of Physiological Psychology in 1889, the first international meeting of psychology.⁴

The ASP was another attempt by Richet to develop French psychical research. He hoped that the journal, similar to the publications of the SPR, would serve as a repository of observations of “so-called occult facts” that had supportive evidence (Richet 1891:4). In 1890 Richet founded the Société des Annales Psychiques with Dariex to publish the ASP.

While the term “psychic sciences” was used in the journal, “psychical research” also appeared in the text frequently. This was probably an attempt to separate the field, and the ASP, from French spiritism. In fact, writing many years later, Richet (1922) argued that, like the SPR *Proceedings*, the ASP established a proper “balance between the credulity of the spiritist journals and the blind ignorance of the compendiums of official psychology” (p. 37).

The ASP addressed a more popular audience than the one targeted by more academic journals such as the influential *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*. While the journal included articles written by known figures from psychology and from other fields, the contributions were shorter in length and less scholarly than those presented in the *Revue*.⁵ The ASP was open to everyone, a situation reflecting the status of psychical research. As stated by Lachapelle (2011):



TITLE PAGE OF THE *ANNALES DES SCIENCE PSYCHIQUES*

Psychical research would be a science in its presentation, and its rigor, but it would be a different kind of science. It would be accessible and inclusive: an open enterprise. Anyone could subscribe to the *Annales*, which was aimed at a broad audience rather than a restricted group with specific disciplinary credentials. Psychical phenomena could be observed or experienced by everyone, and readers were encouraged to participate by reporting their own psychical experiences to the *Annales*.⁶ (Lachapelle 2011:86–87)

Dariex (1891) discussed how to produce a reliable report about psychic phenomena and asked readers to prepare written reports of psychic phenomena. However, Dariex warned them to be aware of problems such as the unreliability of memory.

The first issue of the journal opened with a letter Richet (1891) addressed to Dariex. Such an introduction was important for at least two reasons. First, Richet's association with the journal probably gave respectability to the enterprise and attracted both subscribers and writers. This was the case because Richet was very prominent during his lifetime. Not only did he belong to French high society, but he was a recognized figure in areas such as physiology and literature, not to mention psychical research (Carroy 2004, Wolf 1993).

Second, Richet set the tone for the new journal. He acknowledged the many methodological issues involved in the study of psychic phenomena, thus presenting the *ASP* from the beginning as an attempt to contribute to solving this problem. Most previous work, he argued, consisted of “incomplete facts, defective observations, ridiculous experiences, rough and weak attempts . . .” (Richet 1891:2). While he believed that conventional explanations could not account for all claims of psychic phenomena, he cautioned readers that the journal would contain only raw facts. Theory, he stated, was simply premature. Richet believed that, while it was easy to propose theories, it was hard to establish a fact well. Theoretical explanations would come later, as more facts were established.⁷ Consequently, experiments and observations of cases would be emphasized.

Following the example of the *SPR*, and their *Proceedings*, Richet stated that the *ASP* would report “all the serious observations” addressed to them about “so-called occult facts” (Richet 1891:4). He listed the following topics to be discussed in the journal: telepathy, lucidity, presentiments, movement of objects, and objective apparitions, or those apparitions that were unaccountable by hallucination. This included “photographs of phantoms” and collectively perceived apparitions (p. 6). However, Richet recognized that the classification was incomplete.

Dariex (1891) commented on the topic along similar lines:

Our ambition . . . is to contribute to throw a bit of light on the profound darkness that still surrounds psychic phenomena, and to encourage their study. . . . (Dariex 1891:10)

Like Richet, he emphasized research over theory:

We will not be spiritists, swedenborgians, nor theosophists, nor occultists. We will be modest researchers of facts and very humble worshipers of the truth . . .
(Dariex 1891:29–30)

In a later communication Dariex (1894) argued that the purpose of the journal was the search for truth through science. He expressed the hope that others would follow the *ASP* in the “cult of truth” (p. 2).

Reports of Cases, Experiments, and Séances

An editorial note stated that the *ASP* started with mental phenomena but would include physical manifestations later as new evidence for the phenomena accumulated (Dariex 1892a:64). Indeed, and as mentioned below, later volumes included other topics, such as more séance reports.

The first year of publication showed much activity. An analysis of the first volume of the journal, published in 1891, revealed that out of 48 articles 40% were reports of cases of such phenomena as telepathy and apparitions. The rest consisted of performances or tests of telepathy and clairvoyance (19%), book reviews and notices of publications (19%), editorial comments (10%), discussions of methodology (6%), theory and concepts (4%), and séance reports (2%).

Many of the papers were reports of cases. One of the most remarkable cases published was lawyer M. G. Morice’s (1892–1893) account of an auditory haunting. Other contributions—some of which appeared in later years—included presentations and discussions of cases of “bilocation” (Bozzano 1911), premonitions (Desbeaux 1899), telepathic hallucinations (Hallucinations Télépathiques 1891), presentiment (Héricourt 1895), and faces seen on a wall (Maxwell 1905b).

There were also papers about telepathy and clairvoyance experiments. German physician and psychical researcher A. von Schrenck-Notzing (1862–1929) reviewed recent studies on the topic (Schrenck-Notzing 1891). Others presented observations of psychic dreams (Ermacora 1895), and mental suggestion at a distance (Joire 1897), among other topics. Richet’s pupil Jean-Charles Roux (1872–1942) (1893) conducted card studies, and Richet (1893b) analyzed them statistically in a note on chance and probability.

Writing from the United States some years after the period considered here, Hereward Carrington (1880–1958) pointed out that most reports about Italian medium Eusapia Palladino (1854–1918) were to be found in the *ASP* (Carrington 1907:11). The journal, indeed, was required reading at the time to be able to evaluate Palladino’s mediumship. The report of the famous Milan Commission,

formed by Alexander Aksakof (1832–1893) and others such as Carl du Prel (1839–1899) and Giovanni Battista Ermacora (1869–1898), Richet, and Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909) appeared in the journal (Aksakof et al. 1893). The studies were held in 1892 and involved the use of instruments such as balances to weigh the medium. The report included phenomena observed under light and in darkness. These consisted of movements of the table while the medium was touching it, and movements of objects at a distance. Table 1 lists many papers about Palladino that were published in the *ASP*.

TABLE 1
Examples of Papers about Eusapia Palladino
Published in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*

Reference	Topic
Ciolfi (1891)	Seances
Lombroso (1892)	Theoretical ideas
Aksakof et al. (1893)	Seances
Richet (1893a)	Seances
Dariex (1896)	Seances
Ochorowicz (1896)	Fraud and dissociation
Sabatier et al. (1896)	Seances
De Rochas (1897)	Seances
Bottazzi (1907)	Seances using instrumental recording
Morselli (1907)	Variety and reality of phenomena
Imoda (1908)	Action on an electroscope
Lombroso (1908)	Seances and clinical observations
De Fontenay (1908)	Photo of materialized hands
De Rochas (1908)	Materialized hands

Physical phenomena were also discussed by Dariex (1892b, 1893, 1900). In the later paper he noted that the supposed agent behind the phenomena was a servant suspected to be a medium. This servant had a delicate health and suffered from gastro-intestinal problems of possible nervous origin.

Theoretical Papers

While theory was not emphasized, it was discussed more frequently than the journal founders recognized. For example, Albert de Rochas (1837–1914) mentioned his interest in concepts of force, a topic he had discussed before the

ASP was founded (e.g., De Rochas 1887). He argued for the existence of a fluidic body capable of leaving the physical body to produce physical phenomena:

1. There is in man a spiritual and fluidic body destined to serve as intermediary between the soul and the material body . . .
2. This fluidic body, which during life is the mold of the material body, can under some circumstances momentarily abandon the material body, and be perceived, even at a distance, by some of the human senses.
3. Some persons enjoy the property of secreting the substance that forms the fluidic body in fairly great quantity and with enough density for this substance to be perceived in the form of a luminous cloud. . . . (De Rochas 1895b:125)

Some ideas of emanations believed to come from the body of mediums were briefly discussed in papers about Palladino (e.g., De Rochas 1897, Lombroso 1892). Polish philosopher Julian Ochorowicz (1850–1917) speculated on nervous forces, dissociation, and the ideas of the circle to explain Palladino's phenomena (Ochorowicz 1896).⁸

Others discussed similar ideas to explain telepathic manifestations (e.g., Baudoin 1900, A. Denis 1895, Goupil 1897, Héricourt 1891). Léon Denis (1846–1927) wrote that:

Thought vibrations may propagate through space like light and sounds and may affect other organisms that are in affinity with the one manifesting. The psychic waves, like hertzian waves in wireless telegraphy, propagate at a distance. . . . (L. Denis 1900:291)

There were other theoretical discussions, such as a review of theories of premonitions (Ermacora 1899). Finally, psychologist Théodore Flournoy (1854–920) presented speculations about mediumistic communications. He referred to the “subconscious imagination of the medium, working through recollections or latent worries” (Flournoy 1899:19).⁹

Philosopher Émile Boirac (1891–1917) presented a classification of psychic phenomena, which he called “parapsychic” (Boirac 1893). He divided them into those that could be explained by known principles, and those that required other explanations. The first group included “psychopathy” (mental and physiological effects of suggestion and the manifestations of hysteria) and “cryptopsychism” (or intelligent subconscious action expressed through automatism). The second order were phenomena consisting of action on matter or on biological organisms under the name of “psychodynamism.” Boirac believed these effects were caused by a force different from the known forces of nature. When the action took place at a great distance the phenomena were called “telepsychic,” such as cases of telepathy. Finally, “hyloscopy” included phenomena where matter seemed to exert an influence on humans. This included

agents such as “atmospheric currents,” and magnetism from the ground and from magnets, metals, and other substances.

Overviews and Controversies

As seen in Table 2, there were papers on many other topics. Such variety shows that the *ASP* was open to practically all topics of psychical research.

The *ASP* also presented notices and reviews of the work of the *SPR* and other foreign societies.¹⁰ Regarding the *SPR* this included a long review of Richard Hodgson’s (1855–1905) writings about medium Leonora E. Piper (1857–1950) (Mangin 1898), reprints of cases of telepathic hallucinations (Hallucinations Télépathiques 1891), and papers about various phenomena such as physical mediumship (Myers 1896), poltergeists (Podmore 1897–1898),

TABLE 2
Various Topics Discussed in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*

Reference	Topic
De Rochas (1894)	Perceptions of “effluvia” during the hypnotic state
Boirac (1895)	Exteriorization of sensibility
Boirac (1896)	Induction of trance at a distance
Boucher (1895)	Healing case at Lourdes
De Rochas (1895a)	Exteriorization of the double
Erny (1900)	Case of premonition
De Rochas (1901)	Levitation of human body
Regnault (1901)	Role of vasomotor system in religious healing
Petrovo-Solovovo (1902)	Seances with Sambor
De Rochas (1902)	Long fasts
Joire (1903)	Case of crystal vision
Lombroso (1904)	Thought-transference
Waller (1905)	Crystal visions
Wijk (1905)	Rapping poltergeist
Durville (1908)	Projection of double
Duchatel (1914)	Psychic photography
Osty (1914)	Psychometry
Geley (1916)	Self-premonition of death
Lodge (1917)	Personal conviction of survival of death
Flammarion (1918)	Seeing the future and free will

and clairvoyance (Sidgwick 1891–1892). Furthermore, one of Frederic W. H. Myers' (1843–1901) multi-part papers about the subliminal mind was also translated and published in the *ASP* (Myers 1897–1903).

In fact, Myers received much attention in the journal, something that helped to spread his ideas in France (e.g., Mangin 1903, 1904, Review 1903). When Myers died, two obituary notices of him appeared in the *ASP* (Erny 1901, Richet 1901). Richet made it clear that he admired Myers, and pointed out that the man combined the “faith of the mystics” with “scientific sagacity and precision” (Richet 1901:173).

In addition the *ASP* provided a forum for the discussion of controversies and differences of opinions. A good example was Ochorowicz's (1896) strong critique of Richard Hodgson and other SPR researchers' investigation of Palladino at Cambridge. Another was the polemics about Richet's (1905b) observations of materializations (e.g., Maxwell 1906).¹¹

Also interesting, and showing differences of opinion about conceptual and methodological issues that are part of every serious discipline, were Bozzano's (1905a) defense of critiques of the mediumship of William Stainton Moses (1839–1892), and critiques about such topics as the views of Frederic W. H. Myers (Mangin 1903), Camille Flammarion (1842–1925) (Erny 1900), and Enrico Morselli (1852–1929) (de Vesme 1908).

Frequent Authors

Some individuals were frequent authors in the journal. Richet was prolific, as seen in Table 3. French physician and jurist Joseph Maxwell (1858–1938) also contributed several articles on various topics, among them the work on the automatism of Michel Eugène Chevreul (1786–1889), a haunting, and intuition (Maxwell 1904, 1905b, 1913). Another frequent contributor, Italian scholar Cesar de Vesme (1862–1938), wrote many papers about such topics as specific mediums, publications, and the phenomena of phantom armies and battles (see, respectively, de Vesme 1905, 1908, 1915–1916).

A remarkable series of multi-part papers was published by the above mentioned Julian Ochorowicz. The papers were about the physical phenomena of Polish medium Stanisława Tomczyk. Ochorowicz included in the papers many observations about telekinesis, the photographic detection of “fluidic” hands and forces, and speculations about a variety of forces believed to exteriorize from the medium to produce phenomena (Ochorowicz 1909a, 1909b, 1910, 1911, 1911–1912, 1912). Another example was Italian student of psychic phenomena Ernesto Bozzano (1862–1943). He published several papers about topics such as animals and psychic phenomena (Bozzano 1905b), deathbed visions (Bozzano 1906), symbolism and psychic phenomena (Bozzano 1907), “bilocation” (Bozzano 1911), and premonitions (Bozzano 1912–1913).

TABLE 3
Examples of Papers published by Charles Richet
in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*

Year of Publication	Topic
Richet (1891)	Introduction to the journal
Richet (1892a)	Reply to a critic
Richet (1892b)	The future of psychology
Richet (1893b)	Statistical analysis of an ESP test
Richet (1900)	Case of a musical prodigy
Richet (1901)	Obituary of F. W. H. Myers
Richet (1902)	Case of near-death experience from antiquity
Richet (1903)	Case of premonition
Richet (1905b)	Materialization phenomena
Richet (1905c)	Automatic writing in Greek
Richet (1908a)	Call for premonition cases
Richet (1908b)	Incredulity
Richet (1914)	On reason and science
Richet (1919)	Lucidity

The *Annales* and the Félix Alcan Publishing House

Up until 1904 the *ASP* was published by Félix Alcan, a well-known French publishing house that produced and disseminated countless works in philosophy and in the natural and social sciences (Tesnière 1990, 2001). In addition to the *ASP* the press published several journals such as the *Annales de l'École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, the *Bulletin de la Société de Psychologie Physiologique*, the *Revue Historique*, the *Revue de Médecine*, and the *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*.

Alcan published several series of books. Some of them were the Bibliothèque de Philosophie Contemporaine (Library of Contemporary Philosophy), which in addition to philosophy included psychiatry, criminology, and sociology, as well as the Collection Historique des Grands Philosophes (Historical Collection of the Great Philosophers), the Bibliothèque d'Histoire Contemporaine (Library of Contemporary History), and the Bibliothèque Scientifique Internationale (International Scientific Library). Many eminent authors were represented in these collections. Among the Frenchmen, and in addition to Charles Richet and

Pierre Janet, were Gilbert Ballet (1853–1916), Henri Bergson (1859–1941), Alfred Binet (1857–1911), Charles Féré (1852–1907), Paul Janet (1823–1899), Etienne J. Marey (1830–1904), and Hippolyte Taine (1828–1893). Foreign translated authors included Alexander Bain (1818–1903), John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), James Sully (1842–1923), John Tyndall (1820–1893), and Wilhem Wundt (1832–1920).

In addition, the press published psychical research books. This included abridged translations of Gurney, Myers, and Podmore's *Phantasms of the Living* (1886, 1891), and of Myers' *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903, 1905). There were, of course, other works on the topic published by Alcan that were originally written in French (e.g., Flournoy 1900, Gylé 1899).¹²

The prominence of the publisher helped bring attention to the *ASP*. Alcan advertised the journal widely in the catalog of its works included at the end of many books.¹³ In addition, there were advertisements of the journal in English-language publications such as *Mind* (Advertisement 1896), and the *Philosophical Review* (Advertisement 1898).

Citations of the Annales

In France, the journal was criticized for having the word “science” in its title, because the *ASP* was seen as a publication “which contains but tales” (Verdier 1892:707). However, the critic recognized that the editors would perform a good service for science if they could uncover the laws behind telepathy and other phenomena.

Most books on psychic phenomena published in France after the founding of the *ASP* cited or mentioned the journal. Examples include the publications of figures associated with spiritism and psychical research (e.g., Bois 1907:22,175,369, Delanne 1897:60, Flammarion 1900:159,160, Maxwell 1905a:16,93,170). Even critics paid attention to the journal (e.g., Grasset 1908:21,22,52,57). Attention to the *ASP* continued even after the journal had ceased publication (e.g., Richet 1922:19,735, Warcollier 1921:40,55,128,184).

While the *ASP* was very important in France, it also received some attention in other countries. In England it was mentioned in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* (*Annales des Sciences Psychiques* 1891). In the United States a writer in the *Monist* showed some reservations about the cases reported in the journal (Arreát 1891). Some years later another writer in the same publication considered that, like the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, the *ASP* presented a “record of the highest distinction for observations of this kind” (Vaschide 1902:282).

“The French,” wrote someone in charge of news on the journal *Medical Record*, published in New York, “have joined in the investigation of ghosts, telepathy, haunted houses, etc., and have begun the publication of a journal called *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* in which to record their work. . . . We trust that their work will be fruitful” (News of the Week 1891:46).

Several writers paid attention to the nineteenth-century issues of the *ASP*, as did Frederic W. H. Myers in his *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903: Vol. 1:533, Vol. 2:136,212). Some, like Andrew Lang (1894:159), Edmund Parish (1897:85), and Frank Podmore (1894:80–81,19–20,140–142) cited cases from the *ASP* in their writings. William James (1894) reviewed an 1893 issue of the *ASP* in the *Psychological Review*, bringing the publication to the attention of American psychologists.

Issues of the journal were listed in some library catalogs (e.g., *A List of Periodicals* 1897:9). It was also included in several bibliographies (e.g., *Bibliographie der Psycho-Physiologischen* 1898:353–354, Fletcher 1891:283). Articles from the journal were listed in the *Revue Scientifique*. The *ASP* was featured in the journal among the publications of disciplines such as biology, geography, physiology, and zoology in a section about the main periodicals presenting original essays (*Bibliographie: Sommaires* 1891:223). All of this shows that the *ASP* was known beyond psychical research circles.

One can only speculate on the impact the journal had on specific individuals, particularly those involved in psychical research. One individual about whom we have information is Italian student of psychic phenomena Ernesto Bozzano. He wrote in an autobiographical essay:

In the year 1891 . . . I had my initiation into metapsychical research, Professor Ribot, director of the *Philosophical Review* [*Revue Philosophique*], having sent me the first number of “The Annals of Psychical Science,” to read and send him my judgment upon. I read: Therein was talk of telepathy, of clairvoyance, and of telekinesis. I was scientifically scandalized! I wrote in this tone to Professor Ribot. He answered, exhorting me to re-read and reflect more quietly, for he saw that the existence of the facts could not be denied. In deference to the Director of the *Revue Philosophique*, I re-read, thought it over, and decided to acquire works of this nature. Result: the complete defeat and demolition of my *misonieism*. (Bozzano 1924:153–154)

A Look into the 1901–1919 Period

During the twentieth century the role of the *ASP* in French psychical research grew and changed in quality. Dariex wrote in 1901 that the journal, initially created to examine psychical phenomena with impartiality, and to present them to the scientific world with credibility, had succeeded in its mission by careful consideration of phenomena with little theoretical discussion. The *ASP* was now ready to enter a new phase of existence:

We will not abandon this line of conduct and the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* will continue to be what they have been; but now that the goal has been accomplished, now that we have done all that we could to bring attention to these phenomena and their study, we will abandon our strictness—what some impatient minds would say is our exclusiveness—and we will widen our program. (Dariex 1901:2)

In 1904, the *ASP* incorporated the *Revue des Études Psychiques* and began to appear every month (as opposed to every two months). Dariex was the only person listed as director but it was stated that Cesar Baudi De Vesme (1862–1938), formerly director of the *Revue*, became editor-in-chief of the *ASP* (Dariex 1904).¹⁴ A new editorial committee was formed. It consisted of Camille Flammarion, Marcel Mangin (1852–1915), Joseph Maxwell, and Albert de Rochas for France. In addition, the following men represented other countries: William Crookes (1832–1919), Cesare Lombroso, Enrico Morselli (1852–1929), Julian Ochorowicz, Francesco Porro (1861–1937), and Albert von Schrenck-Notzing. However, Richet's name continued to appear on the cover of later issues as one of the directors of the journal.

An English edition of the *ASP* appeared between 1905 and 1910 (Crabtree 1988:302). The cover of the first bound volume (January–June 1905) lists De Vesme as editor, but in subsequent years the editor is listed as Laura I. Finch.¹⁵ Dariex and Richet are listed as Directors and there is an editorial committee of eleven individuals, among them the above-mentioned De Rochas, Lombroso, Maxwell, Ochorowicz, and Schrenck-Notzing. While there was overlap between the French and the English editions, they were not identical. The order of the articles varied and the sections of news and comments were also somewhat different.

In 1908, the *ASP* became the official publication of the Société Universelle d'Études Psychiques (SUEP), a society founded in Lille in 1901 by physician Paul Joire (1856–1930) to study psychical phenomena scientifically (La fusion . . . 1914). The journal included many accounts of conferences, meetings, and research related to the SUEP (e.g., *Actes de la Société* 1908a, 1908b).

With this new format, the *ASP* became more popular and accessible for the French general public. Its pages now had evocative pictures and illustrations, news, and a more varied content. Lachapelle (2011) has argued that such changes led to a loss of the original purpose of the journal. She wrote:

Gone were the days when the journal limited most of its activities to the sober discussions of telepathic occurrences; it had become a truly popular enterprise. The more accessible it became, however, the less likely it was to incorporate the scientific world. Ultimately, the creators of the *Annales* failed in the mission they had set out for themselves. (Lachapelle 2011:91)

While it is true that the topics were more varied and that there were many illustrations, Lachapelle's perspective is somewhat exaggerated. Even reports of sensational phenomena, such as papers about materializations and their photographs in the cases of mediums Marthe Béraud (Richet 1905b) and Eusapia Palladino (de Fontenay 1908), were attempts to learn about these phenomena. In other words, the phenomena, and some of the illustrations, may have been sensational in appearance, but the intention of the authors was a serious and critical one, even if many were not convinced. While it is possible to criticize methodology, it is problematic to equate seriousness and scientific outlook on the basis of "sober discussions of telepathic phenomena" when the subject matter of the field also included physical phenomena that appeared incredible to many. Was the journal supposed to ignore some topics just because they seemed sensational to some, or because they were difficult to investigate scientifically?

Regardless of methodological and interpretation aspects, and of the illustrations, several twentieth-century authors presented various attempts to learn from the phenomena. In addition to the above-mentioned work by Bozzano and Ochorowicz, we may mention publications about premonitions (Geley 1916) and lucidity (Osty 1914). The investigations of Ochorowicz (1910, 1911, 1911–1912, 1912), in which he tried to determine empirically the characteristics of a force he believed was exteriorized by medium Stanislaw Tomczyk, represent one of the most systematic observations published in the *ASP*.

The *ASP* lost Dariex, its founding editor, after his having been involved with the *ASP* for twenty years. He was replaced by De Vesme. In later years, during World War I, the journal's activities were considerably slowed down and only a few issues appeared between 1914 and 1918. The last issue was published in 1919. At that time, the Institut Métapsychique International (IMI), which had just been created, took over the affairs of the *ASP* and the SUEP (De Vesme 1924).

The transition from the *ASP* to the *Revue Métapsychique (RM)*, the journal published by IMI, was difficult because IMI wanted to have a high intellectual content with articles and experimental reports written by the elite researchers.¹⁶ The place left to popular science, more prominent in the *ASP*, was reduced. It was suggested that readers of the *ASP* would subscribe to the *RM*, with no competition between them. But De Vesme (1921–1922) tried to negotiate with the board of IMI a merging of the *ASP* and the *RM* in which he would obtain some financial compensation. Although by this time the *ASP* was no longer published, De Vesme affirmed that he would start its publication again because it was his "moral duty."

Concluding Remarks

Like so many other journals dedicated to psychical research, the *ASP* belongs to a previous generation and thus has been forgotten by many current students of the subject. The same may be said about the work of authors represented in the journal such as Bozzano, Boirac, Dariex, de Rochas, Ermacora, Ochorowicz, and Richet, among many others.

Our comments by no means represent all that can be said about the journal. Certainly more can be written about its content. This not only includes a discussion of the topics emphasized, but also of the methodologies and approaches represented, and the affairs of the SUEP. In addition, there is more to say about the contributors. Even the papers of such a frequently discussed figure as Richet have not been studied in detail (see Table 3).

The journal, or its editors, did much to inform French readers about foreign developments. For example, there were many news reports about the SPR, and translations of articles written by SPR members. In fact, it may be argued that the *ASP* was one of the vehicles by which British psychical research was spread in France.

It is a matter of speculation how much influence the *ASP* had on the development of French psychical research. One author has stated that the journal assisted in the process of bringing together “scattered and non-centralized researches” about psychic phenomena (Marmin 2001:157). Another was more emphatic and perhaps overstated her case when she said: “Psychical research officially began in France with the founding of the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* in 1891” (Lachapelle 2011:86). There is no question that the journal stimulated and supported the field in France by providing a forum of discussion separate from spiritist and occult periodicals. In addition, the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* was one of the factors that assisted the development of later French studies of psychic phenomena, when the former “science psychique” was called “la métapsychique,” showing the continuous influence of Richet.¹⁷

Notes

- ¹ For reviews see Brower (2010), Edelman (1995), Lachapelle (2011), Méheust (1999a, 1999b), Monroe (2008), and Plas (2000).
- ² On conventional explanations of mediumship in France, see Le Maléfan (1999), and, to some extent, Alvarado, Machado, Zangari, and Zingrone (2007). On Janet, see Ellenberger (1970) and Carroy and Plas (2000).
- ³ For general studies of Richet see Estingoy (2003), Lewer (2006), Schneider (2001), and Wolf (1993). His involvement with psychical research has been discussed by several authors (e.g., Brower 2010:Chapter 4, Le Maléfan 1999:85–88,273–278, Lachapelle 2011, Monroe 2008:208,211,253, Plas 2000:54–55,89–93,99–109,125–126,150–154, Tabori 1972:98–132).

- ⁴ On the Société, see Plas (2000). Regarding the Congress, see Alvarado (2006a, 2010b) and Nicolas and Meunier (2002).
- ⁵ The *Revue* was founded by philosopher and psychologist Théodule Ribot (1839–1916). In addition to papers about topics such as philosophy, sociology, and education, the journal represented the new empirical psychology in France (Bertolini 1991, Nicolas 2002:113–118). The *Revue* carried important papers about psychic phenomena during the nineteenth century, such as those of Janet (1886) and Richet (1884).
- ⁶ In England SPR leaders asked the general public to send them cases, as seen in the pages of *The Times* (Advertisement 1883, Gurney, 1883). They also issued instructions to conduct experimental work (To Members 1883).
- ⁷ To some extent, such an attitude toward theory was followed by Richet in later publications (e.g., Richet 1922). But this does not mean that Richet was completely theory-free, as one of us has discussed before (Alvarado 2008a, 2008b).
- ⁸ This paper has been summarized elsewhere (Alvarado 2010a). On the topic of magnetic, psychic, or vital forces used in the past to explain psychic phenomena, see Alvarado (2006b).
- ⁹ Flournoy (1900, 1911) is well-known for having developed these ideas further in later publications.
- ¹⁰ SPR work was also disseminated in France through the translation of works (Gurney, Myers, & Podmore 1891, Myers 1905), and through discussions of investigations in other publications (Delanne 1897:91–93, 143, 145–149, Gibier 1891:36–39, Richet 1884:633–635).
- ¹¹ This was probably the most controversial episode in Richet’s career in psychical research. For an overview, see Le Maléfan (2002).
- ¹² E. Gyel was the pseudonym of French physician and psychical researcher Gustave Geley (1868–1924).
- ¹³ Some examples include Berthelot (1891), Binet (1892), Lefèvre (1893), and Proal (1892).
- ¹⁴ The *Revue* was the French version of the Italian *Rivista di Studi Psicici*, which was founded in 1895 by Giovanni Battista Ermacora and by Giorgio Finzi (Alvarado, Biondi, & Kramer 2006:67–68). During 1902–1903, the *Revue* was the French version of the *Rivista*, and it ceased publication in 1903 (we owe these last two points to Massimo Biondi). On De Vesme, see Warcollier (1938).
- ¹⁵ Finch was said to be the Mme. X who produced automatic scripts for Richet (1905c). See Bozzano (1932:46) on her psychic abilities. See Fodor (n.d./1966:61).
- ¹⁶ The first volume of the *Revue Métapsychique* appeared under the title *Bulletin de l’Institut Métapsychique International*.
- ¹⁷ Richet (1905a) presented the term *métapsychique* in his Presidential Address to the Society for Psychical Research. While he admitted there was a precedent for the use of the term (Richet 1905a:13, footnote), it was popularized by his influence. His later and extremely influential *Traité de Métapsychique* (1922), published by Félix Alcan, also helped to popularize the term in later years. The term was adopted by the Institut Métapsychique International (founded in 1919), and used in its journal. Many French authors used the term in articles and books (e.g., Maxwell 1907, Sudre 1926).

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