

Historical Notes on Psychic Phenomena in Specialised Journals

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Abstract

This paper presents brief information about the existence and orientation of selected journals that have published articles on psychic phenomena. Some journals emphasize particular theoretical ideas, or methodological approaches. Examples include the Journal du magnétisme and Zoist, in which animal magnetism was discussed, and the Revue Spirite, and Luce e Ombra, which focused on discarnate agency. Nineteenth-century journals such as the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research and the Annales des Sciences Psychiques emphasized both methodology and the careful accumulation of data. Some publications, such as the Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research and the Dutch Tijdschrift voor Parapsychologie, were influenced by the agenda of a single individual. Other journals represented particular approaches or points of view, such as those of spiritualism (Luce e Ombra and Psychic Science), experimental parapsychology (Journal of Parapsychology), or skepticism (Skeptical Inquirer). An awareness of the differing characteristics of these publications illustrates aspects of the development of parapsychology as a discipline.

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Introduction

With the rise of modern interest in psychic phenomena, several specialised journals were created both to put on record the existence and investigation of such happenings, and to provide a venue for serious discussion of them. Our paper is not meant to be a complete history of such journals. The paper should be understood as an impressionistic discussion that reflects the interests of the authors. We are limiting ourselves to a small number of journals and have included on purpose a few journals published in languages such as Dutch and Italian that are usually forgotten because of language barriers, as well as to some of the methodological and theoretical perspectives that are embedded in the editorial policies of these journals. It is beyond the scope of this paper to place these journals fully in their historical context, nor to consider all aspects of the publications in question. We do not write for historians and sociologists of science, instead we are writing for researchers in parapsychology who generally are unaware of the journals on which we focus.

Not all publications we mention are parapsychology journals. Some focus on mesmerism and spiritualism, and include differing viewpoints about the phenomena. But regardless of the concepts discussed, or of the terminology employed, all of the journals that will be highlighted in this paper were concerned, at least in part, with phenomena that required the assumption that knowledge may be obtained without the use of the senses, and that the physical world may be influenced but by other than the usual means.

Nineteenth Century Journals of Mesmerism and Spiritualism

Mesmerism

During the nineteenth century many journals were founded for the purpose of discussing mesmeric phenomena such as trances, healings and clairvoyance. Among the mesmeric periodicals were *Annales du magnétisme animal* (1814-1816), *Archiv für den thierischen magnetismus* (1817-1824), *Blatter aus Prevorst* (1831-1839), *Journal du magnétisme* (1845-1860), *Magikon* (1840-1853), *The Magnet* (1842-1844), and *The Zoist* (1843-1856).

In England, the *Zoist* was edited by physician-mesmerist John Elliotson between 1843 to 1856 in London. The *Zoist* recorded numer-

ous examples of what seemed to be mesmerically induced healings and clairvoyance phenomena.¹ In a period when other British periodicals, such as the medical journal *Lancet*, were antagonistic to mesmerism (Parsinnen, 1979), a publication that would present the opposite view was needed. Elliotson utilized the *Zoist* as an instrument of pro-mesmeric propaganda and as a way of defending mesmerism from its critics. Evidence for this may be found in his frequent criticisms of the medical profession's opposition to mesmerism, opposition which Elliotson considered to be a "disgrace to their intellect" (Elliotson, 1843b, p. 208). He described them as "practitioners who go their daily rounds gossiping their ignorant nonsense against mesmerism" (Elliotson, 1844b, p. 393).

Elliotson frequently criticized the medical profession by opening his papers with epigraphs against mesmerism, quotations from opponents that covered such points as the inefficacy of mesmeric cures. The paper that followed typically answered these points in great detail. Two good examples of Elliotson's style of ridiculing the critics by exposing their ignorance are papers in which he prefaced his discussion with comments made by Thomas Wakley, editor of the *Lancet* and an acerbic critic of mesmerism (Elliotson, 1843a, 1844a).

In France, the Baron Jean du Potet de Sennevoy edited the *Journal du magnétisme* starting in 1845. While the journal covered all aspects of animal magnetism, its editor had a particular interest in healing. As stated in an editorial in the first issue of the journal presumably written by the Baron: "A therapeutic agent of great power exists; it is within the reach of everyone and it can heal the most desperate ones" (Appel, 1845, p. 3, this, and other translations, are ours). The journal, Du Potet (1845) wrote in the following contribution to the first volume, was "concerned with the *art* of magnetizing maladies..." (p. 8).

The first volume includes many examples of medical uses of magnetism. In one of them, the amputation of a leg while the patient was magnetized was reported (Opérations, 1845). Other papers discussed healings that had presumably been accomplished by magnetic action (e.g., Cutter, 1845; Goux, 1845). One of these (Cutter, 1845) reported on medical practice in the United States in which bronchitis, dyspepsia, neuralgia, paralysis, and ulcers were treated by mesmerism.

In Italy the two main mesmeric journals in the nineteenth cen-

¹For a review of the contents of the *Zoist*, see Dingwall (1968, pp. 90-113).

ture were *Cronaca del Magnetismo Animale* (1850-1860) and *Gazzetta Magnetico-Scientifico-Spiritista* (later called *La Salute*; 1865-1890). These journals were published by physicians who practised hypnosis (Bernardini, 1890). Both journals devoted a good part of their articles to the discussion of theoretical aspects of hypnosis, while also presenting case-histories (e.g. surgical interventions with hypnotic analgesia, resolution of neurological and psychiatric troubles). Sometimes articles on psychical phenomena were published in the form of narratives of spontaneous cases such as apparitions of the dead during dreaming, thought-transference after the production of the hypnotic trance, and the transposition of the senses. Such phenomena were covered from a point of view favourable to Spiritism (Gallini, 1983). It is interesting to note that mesmeric periodicals, as well as the physicians who practised hypnosis at the time, were vigorously opposed to clairvoyance. They used this term to indicate the powers of some hypnotized persons who claimed to be able to perceive the interior of their bodies so as to make medical diagnoses.

Spiritualism and Spiritism

Many spiritualist and spiritist periodicals appeared in the nineteenth century, among them *Annali dello Spiritismo* (1864-1898), *Banner of Light* (1857-1885), *Light* (1881-present), *Revue spiritualiste* (1858-1869, which continued with different title), and *The Spiritualist* (later *Spiritualist Newspaper*, 1869-1882), *Spiritual Magazine* (London, 1860-1877), and *Spiritual Telegraph* (New York, 1853-1857).

The *Revue Spirite* (Figure 1) was founded in France in 1858 by Hippolyte Léon Dénizard Rivail, better known as Allan Kardec. Its purpose was to publicize spiritism in France. Kardec felt that there was a need for “a special organ that could inform the public of the progress of this new science and prevent the exaggerations of credulity, as well as of skepticism” (Kardec, n.d./1858, p. 2). Kardec saw the function of his journal as twofold. First, it was founded to publish cases of phenomena such as somnambulistic lucidity, second sight, presentiments, visions and apparitions, and “psychological” phenomena taking place at the moment of death (Kardec, n.d./1858, p. 6). Second, it conveyed the doctrinal content of spiritism. In addition, Kardec used the *Revue* to organize the spiritistic movement. He published speeches given at spiritistic conferences by himself and others, the proceedings of the meetings, and news of developments both in France and abroad (e.g., *Bulletin de la so-*

cité parisienne d'étude spirites, 1860).

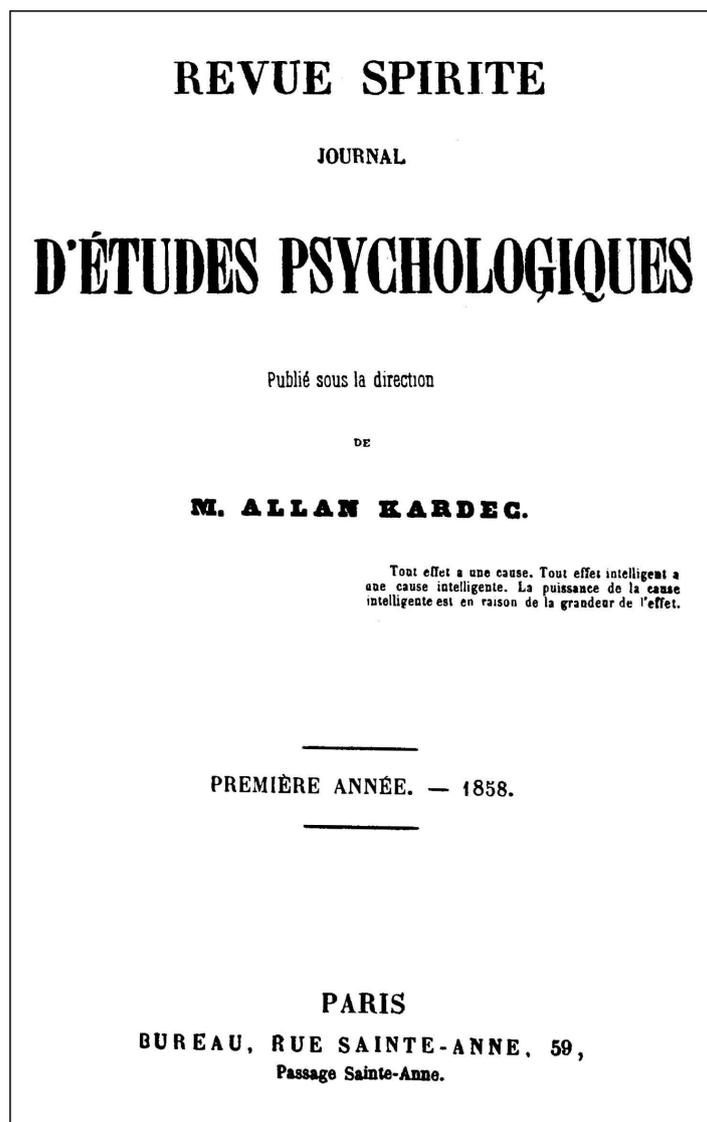


Figure 1. Cover of first volume of *Revue Spirite*

Spiritism was also promoted through discussions of poltergeist and possession phenomena, believed by Kardec to be spirit interventions from the other world. Kardec presented spiritism as a system of great utility because in possession cases mediums could communicate with the entities to put a stop to the manifestations (Biondi, 1986).

Kardec clearly conceptualized his journal as an instrument through which he could spread spiritism as a philosophy as well as promote such concepts as reincarnation and such phenomena as mediumistic communication, both of which presupposed the acceptance of survival of bodily death. The journal devoted considerable space to the tran-

scription of those spirit communications that were moral and philosophical in character because Kardec assumed humankind could benefit from the knowledge of advanced spirits. This was a key element in his philosophy, the whole of which was based on a simple system: questions and answers to and from spirits of deceased individuals.

In other countries, among them England, various groups founded many spiritualist journals and newspapers to promote their causes because, as Oppenheim has stated: “By and large, the nonspiritualistic press reported the world of séances and spirits in a tone of condescension repeatedly questioning the judgment and critical faculties — not to mention the honesty — of spiritualists in general” (Oppenheim, 1985, p. 48). Consequently, a variety of journals such as *The Spiritualist* and *Light* were founded in England to provide a non-hostile forum for the movement.²

However, there was more to the founding of these spiritualist publications than the need to provide a favorable context for discussion. As Barrow (1986) and Podmore (1902) have reminded us, the journals reflected different orientations to Spiritualism as a philosophy and as a social movement. Some British publications, such as the *Spiritual Magazine* (founded in 1860), were conservative in that they were Christian and distanced themselves from reform movements and such political positions as socialism. In contrast, the journal *Human Nature* (1867-1878) served the popular movement in that it was non-Christian but committed to social reform and ideas of human equality.

The Spiritualist (founded in 1869), later called *The Spiritualist Newspaper*, had a different orientation. In Podmore’s words this publication “was avowedly intended to represent the scientific element. It essayed primarily to record the phenomena, to analyse the evidence, and discuss the explanations, and proposed to defer theological and Socialist speculations until a more convenient season” (Podmore, 1902, Vol. 2, p. 168). This emphasis on the recording and analysis of the phenomena was evident in the reports of William Crookes (1874) and Cromwell Varley (1874) on the materialization phenomena said to take place around the medium Florence Cook. Many reports of seances with other physical mediums were published as well. Among these were reports on mediums D.D. Home (Aksakof, 1871), William Eglinton (Harrison, 1876), and

²For a list of American spiritualist journals and newspapers, see Braude (1989). There were also many articles and reports published in general newspapers presenting both positive and negative images of the phenomena (e.g., *Bogus Spiritualists Exposed*, 1888; *Curious Phenomena*, 1852).

Francis Ward Monck (Oxley, 1876). This does not mean that other spiritualist publications ignored the use of mediumistic and other phenomena to validate Spiritualism. But the *Spiritualist Newspaper*, as stated by Podmore, seemed to emphasize phenomena over other concerns.

The leading journal on Spiritism in Italy during the nineteenth century was *Annali dello Spiritismo in Italia*, published monthly between 1864 to 1898. It was edited by Niceforo Filalete, who believed Spiritism was a philosophy of life and a religion, somewhat different but not contrary to Christian belief. Filalete used the journal to reply to the continuous attacks launched by Catholic priests and bishops against Spiritism.

Every issue of the journal published at least one long article on philosophical, ethical, or doctrinaire themes, many mediumistic “communications,” and brief excerpts of dialogues with the “deceased.” In the final decades of the *Annali* mediumistic poems and books were published which were said to have been dictated by Dante’s spirit through a well-known painter of Dante’s themes, Francesco Scaramuzza (Scaramuzza, 1880).

In the Netherlands, Spiritualism became very popular from 1860 onwards. By the end of the nineteenth century there were several journals dedicated to the topic. In 1877, Mrs. Elise van Calcar, an author and early activist for women rights, started the magazine *Op de Grenzen van Twee Werelden*. Over the years, 28 volumes of this journal were published. Mrs. Calcar did not encourage her readers to experiment themselves with the world of spirits as she was of the opinion that such things should be left to real mediums. Religious ministers were also greatly interested in Spiritualism. Some associated spiritualistic phenomena with the devil. Others, such as the reverend Martinus Beversluis, promoted the movement. Around 1900 the Rev. Beversluis found a journal called *Geest en Leven* of which 25 volumes were published. Its intended audience were other members of the clergy.

In 1896, the Dutch spiritistic society Harmonia began to publish their journal *Het Toekomstig leven*. From about 1900 to 1920 this was the most important and influential journal in Holland. The Editor-in-Chief was J.S. Gobel. The second editor, N.H. de Fremery, was known for his critical mind and an advocate for the experimental testing of mediums. In May of 1914, De Fremery resigned as editor of the journal because his series of in-depth debunking articles on the famous medium Mrs. Harris were not appreciated either by J.S Gobel or by many readers of the journal (De Fremery, 1914).

Psychical Research Periodicals

The Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research

The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth saw the founding of a variety of journals devoted to psychical research in different countries, a process that has continued to our time. Some of those founded in the nineteenth century are: *Psychische Studien* (1874-1926), *Annales des sciences psychiques* (1891-1919), *Psychical Review* (1892-1894), and *Rivista di Studi Psicologici* (1895-1901).

No other periodical of the nineteenth century was as influential for the development of psychical research (at least between the 1880s and the 1920s) as the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* (PSPR, 1882-present).³ Founded in London in 1882 the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) gave order to the study of psychic phenomena by defining and identifying the research problems of the times. One of its instruments in this endeavour was the *PSPR*. The first evidence for this is the opening document in the first issue of the *Proceedings* in which the Society printed its statement of purpose. The SPR set as goals for itself the investigation of such phenomena as thought-transference and apparitions (SPR, 1882). This statement, an early attempt to chart the field in terms of particular areas of study, provided a rudimentary outline of the desired research program. From 1882 the *PSPR* was the main way in which the Society reported its work and communicated with the lay public and with the scientific community.⁴ In its pages the methodological approach to the field was articulated in such a way that the periodical became very influential and served as a model for other journals and groups interested in psychic phenomena. The importance and impact of the *PSPR* is apparent in the high number of citations to its articles contained in European introductory books about psychical research published during the 1920s and the 1930s (e.g. Driesch, 1932/1933; Sudre, 1926).

An overview of the types of papers published in the *PSPR* between 1882 and 1900 show a variety of approaches to the field. These were experiments (23%), theoretical or conceptual papers (23%), multiple case

³The *Journal of the Society*, published since 1884, was distributed only to members until 1948. It included shorter articles than the *PSPR*, as well as correspondence and the minutes of the SPR meetings. Today the journal has taken over the purpose of the original *PSPR*. It appears regularly while the *PSPR* appears occasionally.

⁴Some SPR members also discussed psychical research in newspapers (Gurney, 1883) and in the intellectual review magazines of the times (e.g., Myers, 1885).

reports (14%), séance reports (9%), methodological reviews (8%), general literature reviews (6%), single case reports (4%), and other (12%). These approaches were not novel in 1882, but they represented the beginnings of systematic and organized psychic research. By focusing on these topics a small number of SPR members hoped to actively reorganize the field along the empirical lines that characterized nineteenth-century science at large. In the pages of the *PSPR* such individuals as Edmund Gurney, Frederic W. H. Myers, Eleanor M. Sidgwick, Henry Sidgwick and others prescribed methodology and recommended potentially fruitful lines for future research. They did nothing less than redefine research standards to focus on methodological concerns.

For example, early SPR researchers discussed a number of evidential problems in detail with such spontaneous phenomena as apparitions of the dead (Mrs H. Sidgwick, 1885), and general ESP experiences (Barrett, Massey, Moses, Podmore, Gurney, & Myers, 1882). The latter paper emphasized the importance of interviewing witnesses and of obtaining independent corroboration of their statements. There were also prescriptions about how to conduct thought-transference experiments. An early circular on the subject mentioned the importance of recording the results of every trial as opposed to selected ones, the necessity of absolute silence during the test, and it recommended the use of such simple targets as cards and numbers (SPR, 1883). In addition, the SPR writers were concerned about such potential artifacts as the inherent problems of taking testimony in seances (Davey, 1887; Hodgson, 1887, 1892), sensory cues such as those provided by hyperesthesia (Myers, 1887), and fraud in physical mediumship (Mrs H. Sidgwick, 1886).

Other European and American Journals

Other journals fulfilled functions similar to those of the *PSPR*. Founded and edited in Germany by Russian imperial Councilor of State Alexander Aksakow, the journal *Psychische Studien* (*PS*, 1874-1926) was very important in bringing together the community of Germans concerned with the study of psychic phenomena. The journal provided a forum for the discussion of methodological and theoretical issues, as well as a place to discuss controversial issues (e.g., Wittig, 1884). In addition, as Wolfram (2005, p. 62) has argued, *PS* provided German students of mediumship with information about foreign developments, such as the work of William Crookes and Alfred Russel Wallace, and

Akakow's (1887) discussion of spirit photography in England. Wolfram summarized Aksakow's plans for the content of the journal. He hoped to include the "phenomena of the waking state, including sense deception, hallucination, second sight and intuition . . . phenomena such as dreams, visions, somnambulism, hypnotism, clairvoyance and ecstasy . . . [and] more subjective and problematic phenomena, including spiritualism, which occurred in both waking and non-waking states . . ." (Wolfram, 2005, p. 62).

Many prominent authors wrote for *PS*, among them Carl du Prel, Max Dessoir and Albert von Schrenck-Notzing. The latter published many important papers in *PS* in later years, some of which have been reprinted in his collected works (Schrenck-Notzing, 1929). For example, he published reviews of the work of other researchers such as Oskar Fischer (February 1925) and W.J. Crawford (July 1921), and reports of poltergeist phenomena such as "Spukphänomene bei Johanna P." (May-June 1923).

Annales des sciences psychiques (*ASP*) was another important European journal, published in Paris between 1891 and 1919. In the introduction to the first issue of the *ASP*, French physiologist and psychical researcher Charles Richet (1891) emphasized the importance of focusing on facts as opposed to theories, which he considered premature. Ophthalmologist Xavier Dariex (1891), the editor of the *ASP*, took a similar approach. Referring to telepathy, he assured the readers of the *ASP* that the journal was going to center on research and on the observation of facts, but not on theory. With this in mind they presented many original case reports (e.g., Morice, 1892-1983), as well as some case discussions reprinted from the *PSPR* (e.g., Mme H. Sidgwick, 1891/1891-1892). This emphasis on facts and observations was also evident in séance reports, such as those which recounted the performances of Italian medium Eusapia Palladino (e.g., Sabatier, de Rochas, de Gramont, Maxwell, Dariex, & de Watteville, 1896). While the *ASP* published some theoretical papers (e.g., Denis, 1895), for the most part the journal focused on the compilation of evidence, at least during the first decade of its existence. An empirical orientation was not unique, as can be seen in the content of other journals such as *PS* and *PSPR*. But in general, theory was more often discussed in the *PSPR* than in the *ASP*.

In 1895, Giovanni Battista Ermacora, a young physicist, and Giorgio Finzi, a spiritist, founded the *Rivista di Studi Psicici* (*RSP*, 1895-1901), a monthly journal devoted to psychic phenomena, as defined and

studied by members of the English SPR. In the foreword they wrote that the purpose of the journal was to search for the truth in this area, based on positivist and scientific principles, and not to seek wonders as other publications did (Ermacora & Finzi, 1895). During the following years the *RSP* dealt with psychic phenomena with a rigorous attitude. There were discussions about telepathy, precognition, and poltergeists from a critical point of view, and analyses of mediumistic phenomena that did not refer the doctrine of spiritism.

The first volumes of the *RSP* also include a detailed review of English experiments on telepathy (later published as a book, Ermacora, 1898), and original research on phenomena such as poltergeists (Ermacora, 1897). Ermacora was almost the only Italian author during this period to conduct original research. He filled the pages of the *RSP* with high quality material often drawn from SPR publications. When Ermacora died in 1898, the *RSP* changed its mission under the editorship of authors interested in survival and mediumship. The first four years of the journal's life represented the best Italy had to offer, and was close in quality to the standards set by the *PSPR*.

In line with the European tradition Inglis (1984) has described, such journals as the *ASP*, the *Revue Métapsychique* (*RM*, first called the *Bulletin de l'Institut Métapsychique International*, 1920-1982), and the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie* (1926-1934), published more reports about physical phenomena than did the *PSPR*. A comparison of articles about mental and physical mediumship published in the *PSPR* and in the *RM* from 1920 to 1930 shows that the French journal published more papers about physical than mental mediumship, while in the pages of the *PSPR* the opposite was true. Seventy-five percent of the mediumship papers published in the *PSPR* ($N = 36$) focused on mental mediumship, and 25% on physical effects. In the *RM* ($N = 68$) the proportion of papers was 21% and 79%, respectively (the difference was statistically significant, $N(1) = 104$, $\chi^2 = 26.95$, $p < .001$). These journals articulated the research traditions of two very different groups of researchers, expressing their basic assumptions, presuppositions, and preferred subject matter.

As other periodicals discussed here, the *RM* was heavily influenced by the personalities and interests of its editors and main contributors. In the first period of its history, physiologist Charles Richet, and subsequently, physicians Gustave Geley and Eugène Osty influenced its content (Lachapelle, 2005). These men engaged in the study of biological and psychological dimensions of man as part of their professional

lives and work. Consequently, in keeping with their interests the journal published articles about such phenomena as materializations (e.g. Geley, 1924). The *PSPR* likewise followed the preoccupations of the *SPR*. Drawing on the nineteenth-century psychological tradition that was apparent in a good proportion of the *SPR* work (Gauld, 1968), later work focused more on mental phenomena and the issue of survival of death (e.g., Saltmarsh, 1929; Mrs H. Sidgwick, 1922).⁵

In the United States the American Society for Psychical Research published two periodicals that helped to develop American psychical research; the *Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research* (*PASPR*, 1885-1889, 1907-1974), and the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* (*JASPR*, 1907-present). The new series of *PASPR*, under the editorship of philosopher James H. Hyslop, published remarkably detailed studies of mediumship, particularly those Hyslop conducted himself (e.g., 1910). An analysis of *JASPR* during the period in which Hyslop was its director and editor (1907-1920) shows that, to some extent, *JASPR* was a one man journal. Out of 331 articles for this period, 220 (67%) were authored by Hyslop. In addition, out of 156 issues for this period, 73 (47%) carried only one article, of which Hyslop was the only author. Hyslop's domination of *JASPR* is also evidenced by his strong promotion of his personal views of psychic phenomena and their study. For example Hyslop published long discussions defending the validity and logical consistency of the survival hypothesis (e.g., 1913), and arguing the weakness of telepathy as an alternate explanation for mediumistic communications (e.g., 1907). In his words, survival was "proved and proved by better evidence than supports the doctrine of evolution..." (1913, p. 88). Hyslop also devoted a considerable number of pages to criticisms of other psychical researchers' publications (e.g., 1917).

After Hyslop's death in 1920, *JASPR* changed. From the mid 1920s onward the journal slowly came to be dominated by supporters of the Margery mediumship, although this was not always visible in the journal's content. According to Thomas Tietze (1973), during the 1920s *JASPR* adopted a "policy of suppression of all evidence unfavorable to the Margery case" (p. 63).⁶ This included the rejection of negative re-

⁵There were, of course, exceptions to these emphases. Some articles in the *RM* dealt with ESP manifestations with no emphasis on biological aspects (e.g., Richet, 1920), and some *PSPR* papers focused on physical phenomena (e.g., Dingwall, 1926).

⁶This suppression did not extend to J. B. and L. E. Rhine's involvement with Margery, as argued by Matlock (1987).

views of a book by Malcolm Bird that defended Margery and of a paper by E. E. Dudley on the infamous thumbprints of Margery's spirit control Walter (Tietze, 1973, pp. 63, 159). The fact that no papers critical of Margery appeared in ASPR publications during this time and that Margery's husband authored papers about her mediumship (e.g., Cran- don, 1925) suggests an editorial policy designed to defend Margery's mediumship at all costs.

In Germany, Albert F. von Schrenck-Notzing founded the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie* (ZP) in 1926 as a continuation of the previous *Psychische Studien*. Schrenck-Notzing was able to do this because of his financial independence, which allowed him to decide what was going to be published in the ZP, but also to "hire and fire editorial staff at will, and to set the agenda for parapsychological research in Germany. . ." (Wolffram, 2005, p. 166). Schrenck-Notzing remained the most influential figure behind the journal, controlling the content of the journal until his death in 1929 (the journal stopped publication in 1934). This produced considerable controversies with other German parapsychologists, such as Rudolf Tischner and Rudolf Lambert (Wolffram, 2005).

In the pages of the ZP one can see a variety of publications, some of which appear in Schrenck-Notzing's (1929) collected works. Among these are the following discussions about methodology that served as prescriptions for German researchers. In "Ein elektrischer Apparat für Medienkontrolle," (first published in 1926), Schrenck-Notzing discussed Karl Krall's system of electrical control of mediums, and presented his adaptation of the system. Electrical controls, he argued, could settle the often discussed propensity of some mediums to liberate their limbs so as to fake telekinetic phenomena. Another essay published in 1927, "Die Beweisführung in der Paraphysik," in part a reply to the critiques of Richard Baerwald, was also devoted to methodological issues. Schrenck-Notzing argued that we should not ask more proof than that which we ask of other sciences. In the case of Willy and Rudi Schneider, critics of their physical phenomena argued that the brothers were skillful magicians. But Schrenck-Notzing claimed that he and others had investigated the Schneiders controlling them to such an extent that such criticisms need to be considered speculations unsupported by the facts. In the paper, Schrenck-Notzing described specific forms of the control of mediums, arguing that sometimes the medium can be controlled through holding his or her limbs or putting the medium in a cage, or through the use of luminous substances that could put on the

medium's clothing, or on the objects that were expected to be moved telekinetically. In other words, Schrenck-Notzing was trying to limit the applicability of the fraud as an explanation by showing knowledge of the problem and of procedures necessary to control for such artifacts. In these articles in the *ZP* Schrenck-Notzing attempted to develop a scientific and critical parapsychology, and to justify belief in telekinesis and materialization.

The *ZP* also included many reports of phenomena (e.g., Schrenck-Notzing, 1928), as well as conceptual discussions of different sorts, among them such varied issues as criteria to determine what constitutes a fact in parapsychology (Kronfeld, 1929), parapsychological terminology (Prübusch, 1929), the application of psychoanalysis to psychic phenomena (Winterstein, 1930), and critiques of discarnate agency as an explanation of mediumship (Hänig, 1934).

In 1920, the *Studievereniging voor Psychical Research* was founded in the Netherlands under the direction of the well-known psychologist Gerard Heymans. The board of the society decided to establish a journal to publish their experimental reports. The journal was called *Mededeelingen der Studievereniging voor Psychical Research (MSPR)*. The first issue was published in 1921 and included the famous report of the telepathy experiments conducted by Drs. Heymans, Brugmans and Weinberg (1921) of Groningen University, with a student named Van Dam. A second experimental article by Brugmans (1923) discussed his research on the "passive condition" of van Dam during the experiments, as assessed by the galvanic skin response (see also Schouten & Kelly, 1978).

Soon after the birth of the Dutch SPR there were two camps. On one side, there were those who wanted to conduct laboratory experiments, and on the other side, there were those who wanted to conduct sittings with mediums under "natural" circumstances, but under conditions that were as tightly controlled as possible. Several extensive reports of such sittings were published in the *MSPR*, among these the sittings in 1920 with the famous British medium A.V. Peters in Utrecht and the psychometric séances with Mrs Akkeringa in 1922 (Van der Hoop & Van Suchtelen, 1923).

Dr Paul Dietz, W.H.C Tenhaeff, and the publisher Emil Wegelin had founded the independent *Tijdschrift voor Parapsychologie (TP)* in 1928. This was, in fact, a commercial magazine. Tenhaeff soon suggested that it would be better for the field if the *MSPR* was incorporated in this

new publication, and the first issue of the *TP* was published in November 1928. From the first issues of the *TP*, Tenhaeff had a very prominent position because he was the primary editor. He intended to publish “experimental” work. However, by “experimental” Tenhaeff was not referring to what later became known as the Rhine approach. Experimental work for Tenhaeff was, in addition to Rhine’s approach, the use of such psychological methods as introspection, the historical-bibliographical method, and the in-depth evaluation of spontaneous cases. Tenhaeff’s (1940) article on reports of spontaneous occurrences of the phenomena of “colored hearing” provides one example of this wider definition of “experimental.” Another later example is Tenhaeff’s long article about the personality structure of psychics, in which he argued for links between the personal and emotional history of psychics and their ESP abilities, and response preferences (Tenhaeff, 1957).

By the end of the Second World War Tenhaeff was the most important parapsychologist in the Netherlands. It was decided at that time that the *TP* should become the official magazine of the Dutch SPR. Tenhaeff did not allow members of the younger generation such as George Zorab and Jan Kappers to have much influence on either the Society or the *TP*. While Tenhaeff’s dominance of the journal was clear, Kappers did write some articles (six papers, e.g., Kappers, 1954) and Zorab wrote a much larger number (47 papers) during the 1946–1957 period. One remarkable example of Zorab’s work, especially since it was written in English, is an article of Zorab entitled “Collectively Perceived Apparitions and Psychoanalysis” (Zorab, 1953). Tenhaeff dominated the *TP* until he died in 1981. His control of *TP* was not healthy, particularly during the period between the late 1960s and 1970s. Being 70 years old in 1964, Tenhaeff lost track of the way parapsychology was developing, causing a number of political problems with the new generation. The details of these years are beyond the scope of this paper.

In the late 1980s a new editorial team that included Dick Bierman, Hans Gerding and Hein van Dongen, brought a new focus to the *TP*. The journal became more academic and included papers about the “new” parapsychology, for example one that linked the field to physics through a discussion of the observational theories, while still keeping spontaneous cases reports and personal experiences. By the end of the 1990’s the journal had changed once again. Today it is less academic, its articles are written in a more popular style, and it is printed with an attractive lay out that includes illustrations.

Tenhaeff was often criticized because he did not publish in English. Most of his books and articles in the *TP* were in Dutch. In order to meet this criticism Tenhaeff decided to reprint some of his most important research in an English language publication called *Proceedings of the Parapsychological Institute of the State University of Utrecht*, which appeared in December 1960. The first issue dealt with qualitative research on the use of paragnosts (Tenhaeff's term for psychics) for police investigations (Tenhaeff, 1960a), two examples of well-documented spontaneous cases (Tenhaeff, 1960b), and the chair experiments with Gerard Croiset (Tenhaeff, 1960c). Only three issues of the proceedings were published.

Experimental Parapsychology

Probably the first journal dedicated to experimental parapsychology was the Dutch publication *Driemaandelijksche Verslagen van het Psychofysisch Laboratorium te Amsterdam*. The publisher was Floris Jansen who started his Psycho-Physical Laboratory in Amsterdam in 1906 (Kramer, 2006). Jansen, a former medical student at Amsterdam University, was mainly self-taught. When it came to his research Jansen was convinced that there must be a continuum in evolution from biological to psychological forms of life. He was not a spiritualist, and believed that physical mediumship and such phenomenon as Reichenbach's Od, were examples of the connections between biology and psychology.

In the first issue of his journal, issued in the spring of 1907, Jansen (1907a) stated that the journal would cover as much experimental work as possible on the relationship between biological and psychological systems, and the energy of the ether. While literature reviews would be included, the priority was going to be experimental reports. Jansen (1907c) reported on his own experiments to test the validity of Paul Joire's sthenometer (an instrument to measure an individual's psychic force). Furthermore, Jansen repeated Reichenbach's Od experiments with an improved experimental design, and studied "mental suggestion" (Jansen, 1907b, 1907d). However, due to financial reasons, the journal did not last very long. Four issues (in Dutch and German editions) were published between April 1907 and April 1908. By July 31st of 1908, Jansen went bankrupt and his laboratory and journal were discontinued.

As experimental parapsychology was developed in the United States through the work of J.B. Rhine and his associates (Rhine, 1934; for

an overview see Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980), a need was felt to create a new publication. The *Journal of Parapsychology* (*JP*, Fig. 2) was founded in 1937 and continues to be published to date (on the *JP* see Mauskopf, 1987; Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980). The first two volumes of the *JP* were edited by William McDougall and J.B. Rhine, with Charles E. Stuart as Assistant Editor. As argued by Tietze (1973): “With the 1937 publication of the first volume of the *Journal of Parapsychology*, a new era of psychological research began. Published by Duke University, the [*JP*] consisted of careful, well-ordered reports of experimental studies...” (p. 176).

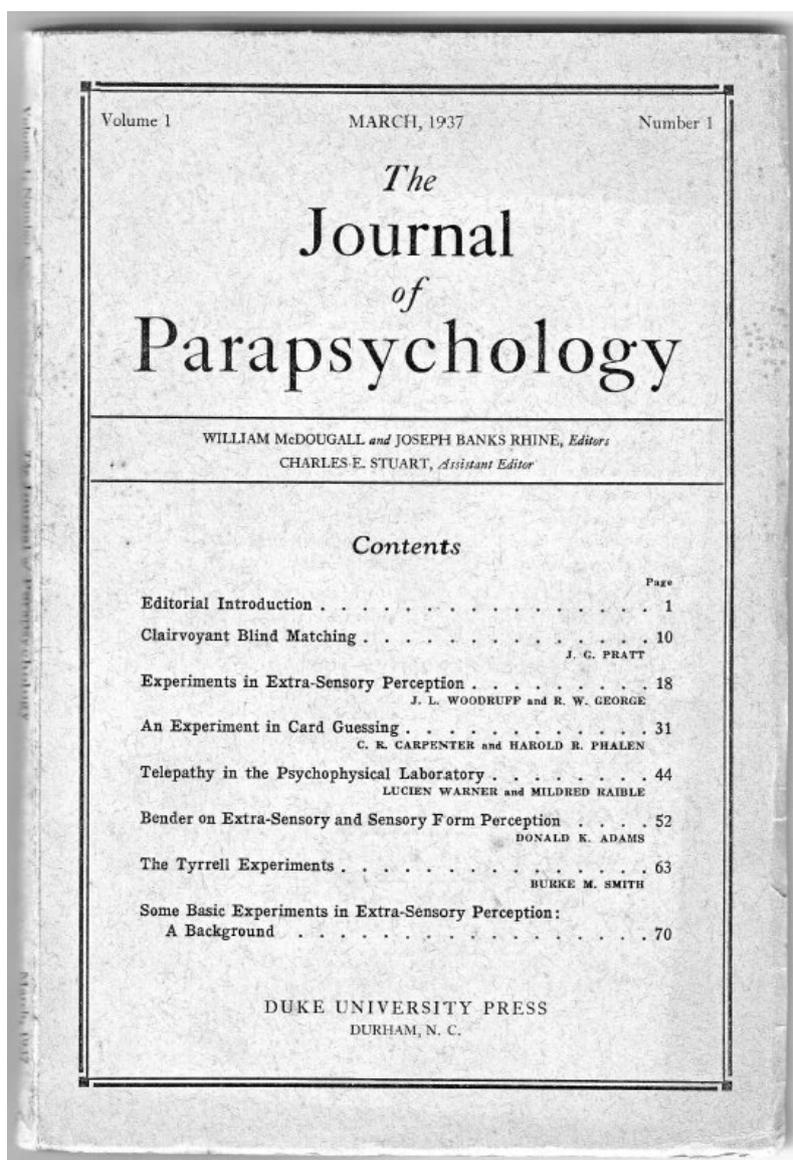


Figure 2. Cover of first issue of the *Journal of Parapsychology*. Reproduced with permission.

The *JP* was one of the vehicles through which J. B. Rhine and his associates at Duke University articulated their experimental research pro-

gram. The perspective of the journal was discussed in an unsigned editorial published in the first issue that has been attributed to McDougall (Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980, p. 147), but that may have been authored by Rhine as well. The editorial presented an agenda for the new publication, as well as for the field at large. The term parapsychology, which had been used before in Germany to designate psychical research (e.g., Driesch, 1932), was given a new meaning:

“Parapsychology is a word that comes to us from Germany . . . We think it may well be adopted into the English language to designate the more strictly experimental part of the whole field implied by psychical research as now pretty generally understood . . . We do not claim that any sharp line can be drawn marking off the field of parapsychology within the larger vaguer province of psychical research. Rather, we anticipate that the stricter experimental methods will gradually invade other parts of the province annexing them to their own more special field, until possibly the two shall coincide.”

(McDougall & Rhine, 1937, p. 7).

This perspective is evident in the journal’s contents during the 1930s and 1940s. During this period the *JP* published many ESP experiments using such participants as mediums (Birge & Rhine, 1942), and children (L.E. Rhine, 1937). There was also work relating ESP scoring to such variables as distance (Rhine & Humphrey, 1942), and intelligence (Humphrey, 1945).

This was a field that was coming of age, which needed to move beyond amateur societies and into an academic laboratory approach such as that which had already proved fruitful in the work of J. B. Rhine (1934). The *JP* fully articulated the Duke Laboratory’s work and its experimental paradigm.

In fact, the *JP*, much more than its American competitor *JASPR*, emphasized experimental reports from the beginning of its publication. For the first decade of the *JP* (1937-1946) experimental papers constituted 52% of the total of articles published, while only 11% of *JASPR*’s papers reported experiments (Zingrone, 1988, p. 332).

“Rhinean” style experimentation was strongly supported in Italy for more than twenty years (1955-1977) by such journals as *Metapsichica* (1946-present), *Giornale Italiano per la Ricerca Psicica* (1963-1964), and

Rassegna Italiana di Ricerca Psichica (1964-1972). All these journals sprang from regional groups of parapsychologists which, in addition to some case research, conducted some laboratory studies of ESP abilities (e.g. Cassoli & Guarino 1964; Cerioli, 1955; Schepis 1939/1965). About 30% to 40% of the articles in that period were reports of original studies. In general it can be said that they succeeded in disseminating knowledge of parapsychology throughout the country. Over time, however, the acceptance of scientific parapsychology declined and these journals were forced to publish more popular and descriptive contributions, a process that caused an identity crisis among Italian parapsychologists.

The *European Journal of Parapsychology* (*EJP*) is an example of a modern journal published in the Netherlands that included many experimental papers. It was edited originally by Sybo Schouten and Martin Johnson of the Parapsychology Laboratory at the University of Utrecht. The first issue of the *EJP* was a so-called demonstration copy which appeared in August of 1975. In order to avoid selective reporting of research results, the journal encouraged the submission of the experimental design and methodology sections of the paper before the actual experimental work was conducted. The decision to accept or reject the paper, then, was based on the quality of the proposal, as opposed to its results. In this way, the editors hoped to prevent the lack of publication of well-conducted studies with statistically insignificant results (Johnson & Schouten, 1975). When the Parapsychology Laboratory was closed down in 1988 (Schouten, 1988-1989), Sybo Schouten made sure that the *EJP* could survive by moving it to the Koestler Chair of Parapsychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Edinburgh. Several years later the *EJP* moved to Sweden, where it was published at the University Göteborg under Adrian Parker. More recently it has returned to Edinburgh, where it is being published under the editorship of Paul Stevens and Ian Baker.

Other Journals

In Italy, *Luce e Ombra* (*LO*, 1901-present), has always had a clear spiritistic orientation. In the first years the content was in accordance with Christian beliefs. Many of its articles started with "INDGCR," the Italian acronym for "In the Name of Jesus Christ, Redeemer." However, between 1905-1906 *LO* progressively moved away from conventional religion and embraced a particular form of "scientific spiritism," a doc-

trine strongly based on mediumistic and psychical phenomena (Biondi & Ravaldini, 2000). Under the firm direction of Angelo Marzorati, until 1931, *LO* published many articles supporting a broad spiritualistic position. There were also many reports of séances with such mediums as Charles Bailey, Augusto Politi, Filippo Randone, and Linda Gazzera, as well as analyses of old cases of psychic phenomena. From 1906 on, the most frequent contributor to the journal was Ernesto Bozzano, a strong defender of ideas of non-physicality and discarnate agency (Ravaldini, 1993). His articles in the journal both publicized and defended survival and spirituality by focusing on a variety of conceptual issues (e.g., Bozzano, 1923) and phenomena (Bozzano, 1934). To appreciate Bozzano's work with this journal, suffice it to say that in the years between 1925 to 1935 he contributed 1,845 pages, out of a grand total of 6,779 pages, that is, 27% of the journal's content.

After Marzorati died in 1931, his successor, Antonio Bruers, argued in an editorial that "supernormal psychology" was the only science closely connected to the "mystery" of human beings (Bruers, 1932). Bruers argued that this field presented "an impressive series of facts that current scientific theory does not explain" (p. 6). Under Bruers editorship then, the purpose of the journal was precisely to discuss these issues. Between 1931 and 1939, *Luce e Ombra* changed its title to *La Ricerca Psichica* and in September of 1939 publication was suspended. After the WWII, however, the journal started again. It maintained its previous spiritistic orientation, but now had a new openness to different ideas and even to non-survivalist positions.

Similar to *LO*, in England *Psychic Science* (1922-1945, continued until 1947 as *Experimental Metaphysics*) was particularly open to spiritualistic perspectives, being the "Quarterly Transactions of the British College of Psychic Science." For example, criticizing the tendency of some people to explain phenomena by recourse to the subconscious mind, an editorial argued that, instead: "We are looking for a directive will, a sustained and coherent intent, and a selective intelligence, and it is and must be something superior to and distinct from that purely passive secondary and mechanical agent which we properly term the 'subconscious'" (Editorial Notes, 1924, p. 271).

In Argentina, a journal was founded in 1947 that focused on medical and biological aspects of psychic phenomena. The *Revista Médica de Metapsíquica* (1947-1948) of which only three issues appeared, represented the interests of a parapsychological association composed of

physicians. Its guiding principle was expressed in a motto printed on the cover of the journal: "Biology without metapsychics, a bird without wings." Some of the articles included an early EEG study, and a comprehensive case study of a single psychic (Canavesio, 1947, 1948).

Some publications have gone even further beyond the discipline-building perspectives of *JASPR*, *JP* and other modern journals that focus on particular approaches while still publishing investigations conducted under competing approaches. We are referring here to publications that do not allow opposing viewpoints. An American example is the popular magazine *Skeptical Inquirer* (*SI*, 1976–present, called *The Zetetic* for 1976-1977) published by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP). *SI*'s ideological and rhetorical policies have been discussed by Hansen (1992) and by Pinch and Collins (1984). The pages of this publication are devoted to debunking the claims of the paranormal and to expressing the viewpoint of skeptics of parapsychology. Practically everything *SI* publishes about the field is negative in tone. The goals of the *Inquirer*, as Truzzi (1991) once wrote, is "not inquiry but to serve as an advocacy body, a public relations group for scientific orthodoxy" (p. 25).⁷

The "advocacy" Truzzi refers to is not expressed through original research as is common in science at large, where there are competing research programs. *SI* articles report very little original research. Instead, they consist of reanalyzes or critiques of previous work, and of speculative and theoretical discussions of physical, biological and psychological processes that might explain psychic phenomena in normal terms. Examples of actual research in which data are collected and analyzed with particular hypotheses in mind are rare in this magazine. This situation may indicate that its editors have formed a conscious strategy to combat the proponents of paranormal interpretations of psi phenomena. By avoiding publishing research, the magazine implies that there is nothing to study, thus making it easier to argue rhetorically that the phenomena under study by parapsychologists can be clearly and easily explained by known principles of the sciences. Otherwise, if *SI* publishes original research, it runs the risk of legitimizing the study of the anomalies that form the subject of parapsychology (and of other fields),

⁷McConnell (1987) has argued that one of the tactics used by the *SI* to ridicule parapsychology is to associate its claims with all sorts of wild popular beliefs so as to create the "impression that scientific parapsychology is part of a mélange of ignorance" (p. 191)

a legitimacy its editors want to deny.⁸

Another case in point is that of the *Revista de Parapsicología*. This popular magazine was published in Brazil from 1973 to 1974 by the Centro Latinoamericano de Parapsicología, a group under the direction of the Jesuit priest Oscar González Quevedo. The magazine functioned basically as an instrument of propaganda for González Quevedo's system of parapsychology. His system was designed to destroy spiritism and its interpretations of psychic phenomena by using explanations that focused on the powers of the subconscious mind (including psi from the living explanations), by maintaining that psychic abilities are pathological, and by defending the supernatural, that is, divine character of some phenomena. A clear religious point of view is obvious in the *Revista*, especially with regard to such claims as the supernatural nature of the Lourdes healings.⁹

Like the *Skeptical Inquirer*, the *Revista* published little that may be considered original research. In addition, like the *Inquirer*, the *Revista* argued that its main purpose was to educate the public and to dispel superstition. Both magazines represent examples of extreme ideological agendas. While all journals have an agenda, very few limit themselves to papers that conform to a specific point of view. Most other publications discussed here – *ASP*, *JP*, *LO*, *PSPR*, *PS* – allow a variety of views towards psychic phenomena in their pages, but the *Inquirer* and the *Revista* have always presented a corporate opinion.

Concluding Remarks

Our purpose in this paper has been to present information about the existence and approaches of selected journals that have discussed psychic phenomena. We hope that our brief discussion has successfully brought to the attention of modern researchers a variety of publications, some of which are all but forgotten. We also hope that our notes have contributed as well to a breach in the language barrier, prevalent today, in which journals such as *Annales des sciences psychiques*, *Luce e Ombra*, *Psychische Studiën*, and *Tijdschrift voor Parapsychologie* are ignored by many English speaking individuals.

⁸Pinch and Collins (1984) argue that it is precisely this lack of commitment to research that allows CSICOP and the *SI* to follow an ideal model of science that makes it easy to criticize the work of others.

⁹For a brief review of this system, see Rueda (1991, pp. 181-186). Such ideas are part of a previous tradition in which priests have interpreted parapsychology from religious perspectives (e.g., Omez, 1956/1958; Tonquédec, 1955).

Undoubtedly some readers will miss more in-depth discussions of content, and of the historical and social contexts in which the journals were published. Other readers may also want to see discussions of additional journals. Among the more recent journals we could have added are such titles as the *International Journal of Parapsychology*, the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, *New Horizons*, *Parapsychology Review*, *Psi Research*, *Quaderni di Parapsicologia*, *Revista Argentina de Psicología Paranormal*, *Spiegel der Parapsychologie*, *Theta*, and the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie und Grenzgebiete der Psychologie*. Unfortunately *EJP* restrictions on article length do not allow us to expand our discussion or add other publications.

The fact that almost every group publishes their own journal in order to have a “voice” is an indication of the power of the printed word, especially as it is embodied in periodical publications in which messages may be delivered repeatedly. Journals express philosophical outlooks, give publicity to particular ideas, and attempt to organize and reorganize disciplines by actively maintaining particular agendas. Examples of this include the efforts of early SPR writers (in *PSPR*), Hyslop (in *JASPR*), Bozzano (in *LO*), Schrenck-Notzing (in *ZP*), Tenhaeff (in the *TP*), and Rhine (in the *JP*).

The mesmeric, spiritualistic and spiritistic journals promoted the importance of animal magnetism and discarnate agency, respectively, as explanations of a variety of phenomena. Such journals as *PSPR*, *JASPR*, *ZP*, *TP*, and *JP* helped parapsychology develop a variety of approaches that are still influential today. The fact that they provided a forum in which methodological issues were discussed guided later research efforts and helped psychical research to develop as a science.

More systematic studies of the journals in question could contribute to our understanding of the development of parapsychology as a scientific and scholarly discipline, as has been done, for example, in psychology (e.g. Danziger, 1990). Unfortunately, our journal literature lacks the systematic historical studies that are more common for the journals of other disciplines (e.g., Meadows, 1980; for an overview of more recent work see Hamlin, 2005).

Many questions could be asked in studies of the journals mentioned in this paper. For example, how did the early mesmeric journals deal with mediumship and with the spiritualist movement? How was the survival question depicted in later journals such as the *JP*? Journals are particularly valuable in attempts to trace the historical development

of particular theoretical concepts or general ideas. For example, one might investigate how the understanding of the role of the subconscious mind and altered states of consciousness figured in the manifestation of ESP, of physical models of PK, or of the idea of the distribution of psychic abilities among the general population have changed over time.¹⁰

The journal literature may be useful to trace methodological changes over time. An example from psychology is Danziger's (1990) study of the use of case studies and statistics in psychology. Other research might include the frequency of multiple authorship in parapsychology, and how do depictions of specific issues or methods differ in parapsychology journals as compared to journals of other disciplines. Much can be learned about the structure of a discipline by mapping patterns of collaborative work (Harsanyi, 1993). It is also possible to conduct interesting citation analyses that can be helpful in charting intellectual communities as well as in the influence of particular publications or ideas (Hérubel, 1999), on the literature as a whole.

Following Zingrone (1988) in parapsychology, and the bibliometric studies of journals of other disciplines (e.g., Davoust & Schmadel, 1991), one can see that there is much to chart in quantitative studies of the journal literature. Such studies may help us to understand more deeply the variety of individual and national traditions, both in terms of type of research and writings style. Furthermore, such analyses might assist us in documenting such changes over time, including developments in methodology, rearrangements at structure of accepted conventions in writing style, and the use of graphic modes of representation.¹¹

Of course such studies need to be conducted using other sources of information as well, archival materials among them. In addition to journal papers we need to pay attention as well to the lives of researchers, focusing on such issues as their education and training, considering social, intellectual and cultural aspects. In any case, a deeper understanding of the circumstances and content of journals such as the ones discussed in this paper have many lessons to teach us about our field. It is our hope that our brief review will inspire research along the lines we

¹⁰This does not mean that the study of journals has been ignored in parapsychology. For example, studies of the work of the SPR (Gauld, 1968) and of J.B. Rhine (Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980) have used journal publications. But much more could be done with parapsychology journals (e.g., Zingrone, 1988).

¹¹There is an extensive literature about the sociology and rhetoric of scientific publications that would be useful in conducting such studies. Examples include the publications of Bazerman and Paradis (1991), Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), and Gross, Harmon and Reidy (2002). Hamlin (2005) reviews some recent anthologies of papers on the topic.

have suggested.

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